

Guest Column



MARIJKE VAN HAAREN

Creating a synergy effect

Working together is more than sharing information, it is leaving the past behind and trusting a good relationship which will bring you much further than working all alone.

As chairwoman of the Dutch Federation of Inland Ports (NVB), I have seen many good developments in the world of inland ports in the Netherlands during the past few years. On all levels - national, regional and local - I notice that the awareness of the importance of inland ports for the regional and local development is increasing. Since its establishment in 1996 the NVB has worked very hard to get inland ports on the economic and political map. And with success. Nowadays the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Environment regards the NVB and its members as important players in the maritime sector. The NVB, being the representative of the Dutch inland ports, is frequently consulted by the Dutch government to discuss many port-related subjects, for example changes or improvements in regional waterways, but also subjects on the European level such as the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

Last year we updated and presented our policy plan for the coming five years. Together with our members we set the course until 2020, also based on national and international developments. The NVB achieves its goals together with logical partners and in relevant networks. That sounds obvious, but it is really important to stay up-to-date and work together in a world where the word 'cooperation' becomes increasingly important. It is the so-called synergy effect, where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

We set the goal to work on the different subjects thematically and/or regionally. For example professionalising port management and development, by clustering ports in a region. Together we can learn from and help each other, and by doing so we strengthen the inland ports more and more to serve as a good hinterland for the seaports of the Netherlands, Europe and the world.

Together with other stakeholders - such as inland shipping, inland waterways, seaports, other transport modes and inland port management - we work on the development of a well-organised and professionalised hinterland. In the years to come we will face several opportunities and challenges, such as environmental developments and port dues. This development has already started in several regions in the Netherlands. Creating partnerships between ports is our business; the NVB encourages this and facilitates in sharing information and knowledge.

This year we celebrate our 20th anniversary on 7 October in the Amsterdam port region. The theme of the congress will be 'Connect & Renew'. I hope to see you there, to connect, renew and celebrate the inland ports and their relevant network as part of a well-connected hinterland.

Marijke van Haaren

*Chairwoman Nederlandse Vereniging van Binnenhavens
(Dutch Federation of Inland Ports)*