

European ports are thinking climate

By Isabelle Ryckbost (pictured)



The climate is changing. If we want to limit global warming to well below 2°C, everyone will have to contribute, also ports.

The COP21 UN climate talks in Paris in December failed in achieving an agreement on an emission reduction target for international shipping. Unfortunately, shipping being a global industry, this international Climate Summit would have been the right place and time to engage the shipping industry towards a carbon low future.

But what about ports? Should they wait for what will happen with the shipping sector?

Ports are not only accommodating ships. Ports are energy nodes and clusters of industry. Moreover, port authorities in Europe assume both

public and economic responsibilities. They need to secure their "licence", they must ensure towards the people living around the port and society as a whole that their operations and investments are sustainable. They cannot just wait and see. The recent fact finding survey which ESPO has been running in the framework of the EU funded Portopia project shows some interesting figures in that respect.

Overall, 78% of European port authorities consider it as an objective to ensure that port activity is sustainable in the long run. Looking at energy, the survey shows that 25% of ports have more than half of their traffic linked to energy commodities. It also reveals that 38% of port authorities are facilitators

of renewable energy production in the port. 16% of port authorities are even investing or co-investing in renewable energy production. Moreover, ports expect that jobs related to renewable energy will grow considerably in the next five years. Finally, energy consumption has become second in the ESPO top 10 ranking of environmental priorities of European ports that was published this spring.

It is without saying that tackling climate change is of paramount importance for ports. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and developing a low carbon strategy is on top of their agenda. This strategy is in the first place aimed at limiting the energy consumption linked to the transport and industrial activities in the port. But given the fact that ports play a crucial role in the energy landscape, this strategy can go

further. Since energy is an important commodity for many ports, climate change - and the fight against climate change - could become a game stopper. Ports realise that anticipating on this proactively, can allow ports to turn the path towards decarbonisation into a successful business case.

But working on mitigation will often not be sufficient. Even if it is "all hands on deck" to limit the warming of our planet, experts are telling us that we will not be able to avoid all negative consequences of climate change completely. Adapting the port infrastructure to the effects of the warming will be a must for every port. Ports are literally on the first row when sea levels are rising and when extreme weather conditions lead to strong winds, storms and extreme waves.

So standing on the side-lines is simply not an option for European ports.

That is why ESPO decided last December to join the PIANC-led Think Climate Coalition. Think Climate brings together major international associations with interests in waterborne transport infrastructure, in order to help the sector respond to climate change. By further understanding, providing targeted technical support and building capacity, the coalition has a double aim: first of all, to promote the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, by shifting to low carbon maritime and inland waterway transport infrastructure, secondly, address ways to adapt maritime and waterborne infrastructure and operations to the

potential impacts of climate change such as sea level rise and extreme weather conditions.

ESPO has a long tradition as initiator of bottom up initiatives, which are driving the port sector towards better performance, be it in the field of environment, societal integration or passenger issues. We hope we can play a role in strengthening knowledge and building further capacity on mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Besides, we are not starting from scratch. The ESPO Green Guide of 2012 already has a section dedicated to energy consumption and climate change that calls for concrete action and highlights the best practice examples of European ports.

Moreover, more than 25 European ports nowadays provide incentives to greener vessels on the basis of the Environmental Ship Index (ESI) tool. ESI has been developed by the World Ports Climate Initiative (WPCI) under the umbrella of the International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH) and recently celebrated its 5th year anniversary. ESPO fully supports since the beginning all the tools of WPCI and encourages its member ports to get involved.

We hope that through the Navigating a Changing Climate Action plan, developed by PIANC and the Think Climate partners, we can further encourage our ports to set Climate Change on their agenda and for those who are frontrunner to share their knowledge and experience with others.

We are certainly looking forward to the first Think Climate conference taking place on 27 and 28 March in Brussels. ●

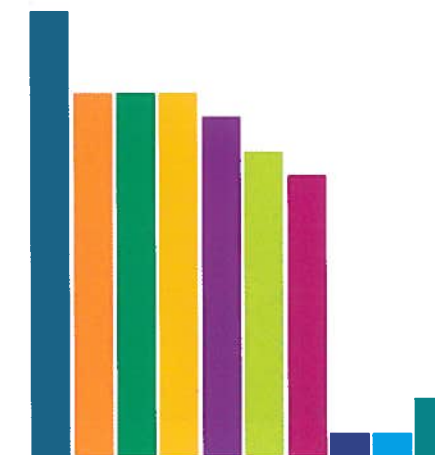
Approximate percentage of energy-related traffic in the port by volume (e.g. crude oil, refined petroleum products, coke and coal, LNG, etc.)



- 25% Less than 10%
- 30% 10% - 30%
- 20% 30% - 50%
- 25% More than 50%

25% OF PORTS HAVE MORE THAN 50% OF THEIR TRAFFIC LINKED TO ENERGY COMMODITIES

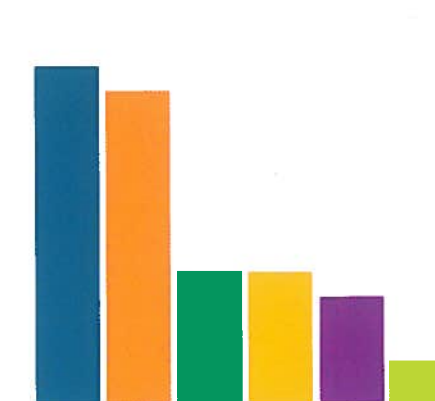
Energy sources for energy production in ports



- 38% Wind
- 31% Oil/petroleum
- 31% Coke and Coal
- 31% Solar
- 29% Natural gas/LNG
- 26% Biomass
- 24% Waste incinerator
- 2% Wave
- 2% Nuclear
- 5% Other

PRODUCTION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY IN PORTS IS INCREASING

Role of port authority in the production of renewable energy



- 41% Provider of land
- 38% Initiator/facilitator
- 16% Logistics support
- 16% Investor/co-investor
- 13% Operator of the facilities
- 5% Other roles

38% OF PORT AUTHORITIES ARE FACILITATORS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY PRODUCTION IN THE PORT

1) Trends in EU ports governance 2016, http://www.espo.be/media/espopublications/Trends_in_EU_ports_governance_2016_FINAL_VERSION.pdf
2) http://www.espo.be/media/news/2016.03.25-ESP-1842_Postkaart%20Environment_V6.pdf