

Rotterdam, CESNI 10 Years Anniversary Closing Speech

Ivan Bilić-Prčić, CESNI Chair, Croatian delegation

Dear colleagues, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As we come to the close of today's celebration, let us take a moment to reflect on what we have achieved together over the past ten years.

When CESNI was founded in 2015, it was with a clear vision: to bring together expertise from across Europe, to strengthen inland navigation, and to ensure that our technical standards meet the highest levels of safety, sustainability, and innovation. CESNI was born with the regulations for vessels, it grew further with training of crew and more recently with information technologies. Ten years later, we are proud to say that this vision has become a reality.

I remain convinced that other areas can be added in the future. It is in everyone's interests to have European standard tailored to the needs of inland navigation.

Thanks to your dedication, your cooperation, and your tireless work, CESNI has grown into a respected and indispensable platform — not only for harmonising standards, but also for uniting people, institutions, and ideas across borders.

Our collective achievements in this decade are significant:

- We have developed common standards that enhance safety and efficiency on European inland waterways vessels.
- We have built bridges between regulators, industry, and experts.
- And we have demonstrated that through dialogue and collaboration, inland navigation in Europe can be stronger, greener, and more competitive.

But anniversaries are not only a time to look back — they are also a moment to look ahead. The next decade will bring us

new challenges: digitalisation, the energy transition, and the demand for ever-greater sustainability. CESNI is ready to meet these challenges standing on a strong foundation and strengthened by the trust and cooperation that unite us.

Before I close, allow me to borrow the words often attributed to Nobel laureate Gabriel García Márquez: *“Do not cry because first ten years are over; smile because it happened.”*

Today, we smile — not only because we are celebrating ten remarkable years, but because we know that this is just the beginning of an even more promising journey together.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all of you — past and present members and experts of CESNI, our partners, and our friends — for your commitment, your expertise, and your passion. Without you, none of this would have been possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, it has been an honour to celebrate this milestone with you today. With gratitude for the past and confidence in the future, I now declare the official closing of the CESNI 10-year anniversary.

Thank you!