

Proposal for a

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

amending Council Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 on a Community-fleet capacity policy to promote inland waterway transport

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Article 91(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national *parliaments*,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee¹,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions²,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure,

Whereas:

- (1) Council Regulation (EC) No 718/1999³ establishes the Union fleet capacity policy for vessels used to carry goods on inland waterways in the Member States.

¹ *Opinion of 21 January 2014 (not yet published in the Official Journal).*

² *Opinion of 31 January 2014 (not yet published in the Official Journal).*

³ *Council Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 of 29 March 1999 on a Community-fleet capacity policy to promote inland waterway transport (OJ L 90, 2.4.1999, p. 1).*

- (2) In connection with the modernisation and restructuring of the fleets, social measures should be envisaged ***preferably at an early stage*** to help workers who wish to leave the inland waterway industry or to retrain for jobs in another sector, together with measures to encourage the establishment of groupings of undertakings, improve operators' skills and promote the adaptation of vessels to technical progress, ***including with regard to environmentally-friendly vessels. The reserve funds referred to in Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 should be used for measures affecting owner-operators. Other dedicated funds that already exist at Union level could be used to support activities jointly undertaken by the social partners.***
- (2a) The Commission and the Member States should strengthen research and innovation in the inland waterway transport sector and in multi-modal port infrastructure through available financial instruments, including, where appropriate, under the Horizon 2020 and Connecting Europe Facility, ensuring the integration of that sector in multi-modal transport.***
- (3) To this end, the reserve fund set up in each Member State whose inland waterways are linked to those of another Member State and the tonnage of whose fleet is above 100 000 tonnes could be used if this is unanimously requested by the organisations representing inland waterway transport.
- (4) The reserve funds, consisting solely of financial contributions from the industry, have never been used.
- (5) The measures in connection with the modernisation of the EU fleet referred to in Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 concern only social matters ***and safety of the working environment***. Other types of support measure for creating a context favourable to innovation and the environment are not provided for.
- (6) The measures in Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 concerning vocational training or retraining schemes are relevant to all crew members leaving the sector, including owner-operators and not only to those who are qualified as workers.

- (7) Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 provides for measures that encourage owner-operators to join trade associations, but not for measures that strengthen the organisations representing inland waterway transport at Union level, whereas stronger Union-wide organisations can help to mitigate fragmentation in the sector.
- (8) Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 should therefore be complemented by measures aimed at establishing training or retraining schemes for crew other than those who qualify as "workers" leaving the industry, encouraging operators to join trade associations, strengthening professional associations and encouraging the innovation of vessels and their adaptation to technical progress as regards the environment and be amended accordingly.
- (8a) The Commission should support measures for innovation and the adaptation of the inland waterway fleet to technical progress as regards the environment, by promoting the use of financial instruments from existing Union funds such as the Connecting Europe Facility and Horizon 2020, and should suggest ways to leverage the reserve funds by means of those existing funds as well as financing instruments from the European Investment Bank.***
- (8b) Those funds having been set up by contributions from the sector, it should be possible for them to be used for the adaptation of vessels to technical and environmental requirements adopted after the entry into force of this amending Regulation, including the adaptation to the evolution of European standards on engine emissions, as well as for encouraging engine fuel efficiency, the use of alternative fuels and any other measures to improve air quality or for environmentally-friendly vessels, including river-adapted vessels.***

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 is replaced by the following:

'Article 8

Without prejudice to Article 3(5), any Member State may take measures in particular to:

- make it easier for inland waterway carriers leaving the industry to obtain an early retirement pension or to transfer to another economic activity, ***inter alia by providing comprehensive information,***
- organise vocational training or retraining schemes for crew members leaving the industry ***and provide appropriate information about those schemes,***
- improve skills in inland navigation ***and knowledge of logistics*** in order to safeguard the development and future of the profession,
- encourage owner-operators to join trade associations and strengthen the organisations representing inland waterway transport at Union level,
- encourage adaptation of vessels to technical progress in order to improve working conditions, ***including health protection,*** and promote safety,
- encourage innovation of vessels and their adaptation to technical progress as regards the environment, ***including environmentally-friendly vessels,***

- ***encourage ways of leveraging the use of the reserve funds in conjunction with available financial instruments, including, where appropriate, under the Horizon 2020 and Connecting Europe Facility, and financing instruments from the European Investment Bank (EIB).***

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament

For the Council

The President

The President
