

PODCAST on port services

Voice 1: Brian

Voice 2: Sarah

JINGLE to open podcast

VOICE 1

You're listening to the European Parliamentary Research Service podcast on market access to port services.

VOICE 2

To improve the commercial efficiency and financial transparency of the EU's main seaports, the European Commission has set sail for a long-awaited modernisation of port services. Previous attempts proved very controversial, so will there be calmer waters ahead this time? Come on board with us as we tell you more about a key topic of the final plenary session of 2016!

JINGLE

VOICE 1

Serving as access points to Europe, the EU's approximately 1.200 seaports are fundamental to its economy, enabling the transit of some 74% of imports and exports of cargo and 37% of EU trade.

VOICE 2

They are also powerful job generators, employing more than 3 million people! And more than 90% of all freight and passengers passing through EU ports transits through the 329 seaports within the trans-European transport network. However, efficiency and productivity vary greatly between EU ports...

VOICE 1

So to redress disparities, guarantee a level playing field and improve the commercial efficiency of ports, the European Commission proposed in 2013 to introduce new rules for financial transparency of ports and to open six port services to market competition.

VOICE 2

However, the European Parliament, and the Council too, wanted the maintenance of port access paths and pilotage to be excluded from the scope of the proposal, so in the end only four services (refueling, waste collection, berthing and towing operations) will be liberalized.

VOICE 1

Cargo handling and passenger services, which many ports secure through public concession contracts, won't be opened to competition either.

VOICE 2

The European Parliament amended the Commission's proposal to maintain the existing national port models, and extended the list of minimum requirements for performing port services.

VOICE 1

MEPs also specified public service obligations, approved the financial transparency rules and asked the Commission to clarify what types of public investments in port infrastructure do not constitute state aid.

VOICE 2

The new rules will be submitted to the plenary during next week's session in Strasbourg, but will they be endorsed this time?

VOICE 1

Well... previous Commission attempts to modernise port services in 2001 and 2004 provoked strong controversy, mainly due to their social and labour market aspects,

but with these out of the proposal's scope, the chances of success are now much bigger!

VOICE 2

You are listening to the European Parliamentary Research Service podcasts.

MUSIC JINGLE TO CONCLUDE