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on short sea shipping
(2004/2161(INI))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

Rapporteur: Robert Navarro

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on short sea shipping (2004/2161(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its resolution of 7 July 2000 on the Commission communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions ‘The Development of Short Sea Shipping in Europe: A Dynamic Alternative in a Sustainable Transport Chain - Second Two-Yearly Progress Report’¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 12 February 2003 on the Commission White Paper ‘European transport policy for 2010: time to decide’²,
 - having regard to the Commission White Paper ‘European transport policy for 2010: time to decide’ (COM(2001)0370 – C5-0658/2001),
 - having regard to the Commission communication ‘Programme for the Promotion of Short Sea Shipping’ (COM(2003)0155),
 - having regard to the Commission communication on short sea shipping (COM(2004)0453),
 - having regard to the Commission communication 'Community guidelines on State aid to maritime transport' (C(2004) 43),
 - having regard to the outcome of the informal Transport Council of 9 and 10 July 2004,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A6-0055/2005),
- A. whereas short sea shipping is the waterborne transport of cargo and passengers by sea or inland waterway and part of the logistic transport chain in Europe and the regions connected to Europe, and whereas short sea shipping is an integrated part of the logistic transport chain between supplier and user and is a means of waterborne transport in geographical Europe whether intra-Community or between the European Union and third countries, such as countries on the Mediterranean or on the Black Sea,
- B. whereas the newly conceived trans-European network of 'Motorways of the Sea', particularly the 'Motorways' in the Baltic, Western Europe, South-East Europe and South-West Europe, should have the aim of concentrating the movement of goods on maritime logistic routes in such a way as to improve existing short sea shipping services or create new, viable, regular and frequent short sea shipping services for the movement of goods

¹ OJ C 121, 24.4.2001, p.489.

² OJ C 43 E, 19.2.2004, p.250

and passengers between the Member States, so as to reduce road congestion and/or improve transport links with peripheral or island regions and States,

- C. whereas short sea shipping, which accounts for more than 40% of intra-Community traffic, forms an integral part of the European transport system given that short sea shipping means the movement of cargo by sea between European ports or between those ports and ports situated in non-European countries with a coastline on the enclosed seas bordering Europe,
- D. whereas short sea shipping also offers significant potential for passenger transport,
- E. whereas short sea shipping needs to be developed to fulfil its economic and commercial, social and environmental role; whereas national governments, together with regional and local authorities, will have to provide the necessary political, economic and financial support to achieve this goal, in cooperation with the industries involved,
- F. stressing that, in view of its potential in terms of compatibility with the environment, combating the congestion affecting many roads, and limiting costs, short sea shipping is capable of becoming an even more important link in the intermodal transport system in Europe, with a promising future, if a series of Community, national, regional and local measures are taken by the public authorities and by the private sector in order to develop it fully,
- G. whereas short sea shipping has an important role to play in the economic and social development of all European regions, particularly coastal regions and outlying maritime regions, and, consequently, for Community cohesion,
- H. whereas the development of short sea shipping also affords a unique opportunity to create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the maritime sector in the years ahead,
- I. whereas, by fostering trade, short sea shipping also promotes the social and economic growth of third countries bordering the peripheral maritime regions and interested in links with the infrastructure of the European transport network,
- J. reiterating the idea that, even though the maritime and logistical industry is chiefly responsible for developing short sea shipping, intervention on the part of European, national and regional institutions is nevertheless essential to create favourable conditions for such development; whereas there have been some positive initiatives, such as the definition of national focal points, agreements on European Union legislation in relation to the Marco Polo programme and the simplified use of IMO-FAL forms (International Maritime Organisation - Facilitation of international transport) ,
- K. welcoming the regional initiatives to promote short sea shipping and create short sea shipping links, such as the initiative for the Mediterranean region involving Spain, Italy, France, Portugal and Greece, and the initiatives taken by Member States to promote and implement the concept of motorways of the sea in the four areas defined by Decision No 884/2004/EC¹, in particular the initiatives in the Baltic Sea region, the initiatives taken by

¹ Decision No 884/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 amending Decision No 1692/96/EC on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (OJ L 167, 30.4.2004, p. 1).

the countries of the Mediterranean Arc including France, Spain, Greece and Italy and the Atlantic Arc Commission,

1. Calls for short sea shipping to be promoted more strongly as a credible, sustainable and safe link in the European transport system which is well integrated in the transport chain thanks, for example, to inland waterway transport and rail links, in order to reduce congestion; calls for the modal shift from road transport to short sea shipping to be encouraged and/or for links to be improved with outlying and island areas and states dependent on maritime transport and between regions separated by natural barriers, whilst strengthening cohesion within the European Union and between the Union and its neighbours;
2. Calls for the administrative procedures which hinder the development of short sea shipping to be reduced as much as possible without compromising aspects relating to security and safety, and particularly procedures which disrupt the logistical process and weaken the competitive position of this mode of transport by comparison with road transport; considers that procedures should be simplified and made easier, in particular by making full use of electronic communication possibilities;
3. Calls for the development of high-quality corridors for short sea shipping between European Union Member States, with the full participation of all interested parties, public and/or private, where it is possible to make appropriate use of the instruments recently created by the European Union, in particular those relating to the trans-European transport network and the Marco Polo programme;
4. Calls for priority to be given to investment in infrastructure in order to improve access to ports from both land and sea, including for example cross-border projects within the trans-European transport network;
5. Supports, in this context, the Commission programmes aimed at simplifying the legal framework applying to short sea shipping and inland waterway transport, encouraging the creation of one-stop shops organised under private or public law in accordance with the legal situation in each Member State by simplifying administrative and customs formalities and through multimodal partnerships, for example between road hauliers and maritime carriers, which will also enable small and medium-sized undertakings to take full advantage of intermodal transport;
6. Stresses the need for cooperation between all the interested parties, both public and private, in promoting and developing the quality of short sea shipping operations at regional, national and European level;
7. Stresses the potential of short sea shipping as a complementary mode of transport available very quickly and at low cost pending completion of certain trans-European transport network railway infrastructures; stresses, for example, the pressing need for alternative means of transport between France and Spain pending the opening, in about 2020, of a connection between Montpellier and Figueras;
8. Calls for short sea shipping to be promoted as an environmentally-friendly mode of transport and consequently for the establishment of 'Motorways of the Sea' with solid

environmental requirements;

in Bezug auf die Einführung gemeinsamer Haftungsregelungen:

9. Calls for fresh consideration to be given at Community level to unifying liability systems for the multimodal chain, particularly by evaluating the various possible civil liability models and taking an active part in the work being undertaken at international level (in particular within the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)) with the aim of a worldwide and/or European uniform system of liability which is tailored to the needs of intermodal transport in Europe and is a more uniform, simpler and more advantageous system;

as regards Intermodal Loading Units (ILU):

10. Stresses the need to settle the issue of the standardisation of ILUs, developing an acceptable standardisation system allowing the most widespread and effective use of loading units, with interoperability being ensured between all modes, and particularly between maritime transport, inland waterways, rail and road transport;
11. Recalls in this connection its resolution of 12 February 2004¹ on a first reading of a proposal for a directive on intermodal loading units that a European intermodal loading unit should be created, combining the advantages of a container with those of a swap body and thereby maximising intermodality; urges the Council to adopt a Common Position on the proposal so that the legislative procedure can be completed as soon as possible;

as regards customs:

12. Recalls that, as a maritime freight transport mode, short sea shipping is covered by Community customs legislation;
13. Declares itself in favour of optimum use of the exemptions offered by European customs rules and the promotion of customs facilities operated under simplified systems for goods which may be moved freely within the framework of authorised regular shipping services;
14. Invites, in this context, all the parties concerned to develop and use the New Computerised Transit System (NCTS) which has been introduced by the customs administrations and which is likely to make customs operations for short sea shipping more efficient and less lengthy;

as regards electronic communication:

¹ OJ C 97 E, 22.4.2004, p. 612.

15. Calls for the setting-up of further electronic offices at sea ports where all the mandatory formalities can be completed in a single operation;
16. Calls on the Member States to consider the possibility of offering electronic communication equipment to their ports, with the necessary Community funding, using a centralised system of electronic communication wherever possible (one-stop-shop);
17. Stresses that, in order to speed up the development of electronic communication, the setting-up of electronic port communities and their networking within the Union, and if possible also with States adjoining the Union, should be proposed and promoted throughout the European Union, with account being taken of best practice already developed in several Member States;

as regards support structures for short sea shipping:

18. Welcomes the European Short Sea Network action plan and calls on the promotion centres to implement it as quickly as possible;
19. Appreciates the important work being carried out by national short sea shipping promotion centres and their European network, and calls on the Member States to support these offices in appropriate cases, in accordance with Community legislation;
20. Stresses that a strategic environmental impact assessment of the planned 'Motorways of the Sea' must be performed jointly by Member States and the Commission; considers that this EIA should examine the environmental impact not only of the route itself but also of port developments and the impact on transport movements in the hinterland;
21. Calls on the Commission to accompany its promotion of short sea shipping by proposing improvements in social standards for employees in this sector;

as regards environmental aspects:

22. Recalls the need to promote the positive environmental image of short sea shipping, particularly as regards water and air pollution, and therefore to lay down minimum environmental requirements such as the use of low-sulphur fuel and limits for emissions (of SO_x, NO_x, CO₂, etc.) into air and water; considers that greater attention should also be devoted to promoting the Clean Ship concept adopted at the fifth North Sea Ministerial Conference held in 2002;
23. Stresses nevertheless the need for stricter Community legislation on gaseous emissions and water pollution generated by short sea shipping;

24. Reiterates the need to encourage and continue research into less polluting fuels;
25. Reiterates the need to update statistical data on the growth of the various modes of transport in Europe, especially data on the origin and destination of goods transported by land, in order to help in the intermodal shift to sea transport;

as regards Motorways of the Sea:

26. Recognises the great importance of the concept of 'Motorways of the Sea' and their ability to become a useful tool for promoting short sea shipping, making it possible to provide encouragement, primarily by cofinancing infrastructure measures in appropriate cases, for a modal shift from road to sea or to improve accessibility between outlying and island regions and central market areas in an appropriate manner;
27. Notes the current debates on the 'Motorways of the Sea Quality Label' which could be developed for intermodal operations using short sea shipping and meeting a number of quality criteria; notes that the 'Motorways of the Sea Quality Label' could be awarded to existing high-quality operations and to other operations where commitments are given to achieving a required quality standard, with or without support from public funds granted in accordance with Community rules, notably the competition rules;
28. Calls for the adoption of effective, clear and adequate financing arrangements for actions linked to 'Motorways of the Sea' and short sea shipping lines, allowing the optimum level of complementarity or indeed additionality of financing so as to enable lasting and viable new lines to be set up (which, however, must not on any account be detrimental to existing short sea shipping services) where necessary with the involvement of public services, in compliance with Community rules;
29. Urges that aggregation of demand should be included as a priority criterion in the conditions envisaged in the Community guidelines on State aid to maritime transport;
30. Calls for clarification of the Community rules applicable to the signing of agreements initiating the exploitation of 'Motorway of the Sea' operations and the competition-related conditions for national public financing of short sea shipping projects and 'Motorways of the Sea';
31. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

The Commission communication is above all a document drawn up in stages with the aim of assessing the situation of short sea shipping, the obstacles facing it, the action taken by the Commission and the partners to remedy the situation and the various legislative dossiers under way to contribute to the development of short sea shipping. Finally, the Commission assesses recent and forthcoming developments with regard to the motorways of the sea and the Marco Polo programmes (I and II).

2. Background

The Commission submitted a communication on short sea shipping in 1995 and a progress report in 1997.

In its 1999 communication the Commission included a second progress report. It also analysed a number of obstacles which hindered the development of short sea shipping and advocated a comprehensive door-to-door approach linked to the creation of one-stop shops to promote the mode.

When adopting the report by Mrs Karla PEIJS (PPE/DE, NL), Parliament welcomed the Commission communication on the development of short sea shipping in Europe. Parliament proposed the further development of best practices which could where appropriate lead to key performance indicators (KPIs) for short sea shipping. It called on the Commission to consider more closely the question of the links between short sea shipping and river transport or other means of transport such as railways or infrastructures for access to the hinterland, so as to ensure that both the industrial and commercial sectors have the infrastructure necessary to sustain their economic activities.

In its 2001 White Paper¹ the Commission set a number of ambitious targets to ensure competitive and sustainable mobility in Europe. It highlighted the important role to be played by short sea shipping in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It stressed the need to simplify the regulatory framework for short sea shipping. It introduced the concept of motorways of the sea, pointing to the need to promote mass maritime transport links providing a way around the bottlenecks posed by the Alps and Pyrenees. It indicated in this connection that the motorways of the sea should be made part of the trans-European transport network in the same way as motorways or railways.

Parliament supported these proposals for short sea shipping in its report on the White Paper adopted on 12 February 2002 (rapporteur: Mr Izquierdo Collado). The report called for the introduction of coordinated measures in the areas of shipping, ports and intermodality policy in order to boost the role of ports as transport network hubs. It also advocated the simplification of the regulatory framework for short sea shipping by encouraging the creation of one-stop-shops and easing administrative and customs formalities.

¹ European transport policy for 2010: Time to decide, COM(2001) 370, 12.9.2001, p. 45 et seq.

In June 2002 an informal meeting of European Union transport ministers entirely devoted to short sea shipping was held in Gijón, Spain. Following this meeting, the Commission drew up a programme for the promotion of short sea shipping. The programme sets out 14 actions aimed at improving short sea shipping and removing obstacles to its development.

3. Situation of short sea shipping

3.1. Modal share

Short sea shipping's share of all intra-European transport rose by 25% in TK between 1995 and 2002 and now accounts for 40% of all goods transported within Europe (as against 45% for road transport). The fastest rise was seen in the container transport segment of short sea shipping. The number of short sea shipping lines in the EU is estimated at 1 600.

3.2. Environmental impact

Recent data - particularly comparative data - on harmful emissions produced by ships and the environmental impact of short sea shipping show that, overall, short sea shipping has a much smaller negative impact than road transport if account is taken of all the external costs.

4. Action taken and progress made

4.1. Innovation, research and technological development

- Facilitation

- Authorised regular shipping services which make it possible to avoid customs checks for Community goods between two EU ports. However, this system should be applied to all vessels assigned to the authorised regular line and designated by the operator;
- the introduction of administrative one-stop shops along the whole route to coordinate the work of on-board administration;
- the introduction of a new computerised transit system (NCPS): since mid-2003, 3000 offices in 22 countries have introduced this computerised system for processing administrative documents;
- the adaptation of the customs procedure code so that declarations can be processed electronically.

- Legislative flanking measures

The Commission refers to texts such as the directive on intermodal loading units (ILU) aimed at improving the interoperability and efficiency of the intermodal chain by harmonising the characteristics of ILUs (currently blocked in the Council), and the directive on port services aimed at opening up the market for the provision of port services (rejected by Parliament in conciliation; a new proposal with specific provisions for the TENs and short sea shipping was adopted by the Commission on 13 October 2004).

4.2. Community programmes providing financial support for short sea shipping

- Marco Polo

Under this programme to support the starting-up of modal shift actions away from road transport¹, 19 projects were selected for the call for proposals in 2003, 12 of which were short-listed by the Commission. More than 50% relate to short sea shipping, requesting support totalling EUR 20 million. The total budget allocated by the EU was EUR 15 million.

Given that the projects are financed in line with the objectives of modal shift, Community financial support is determined by the Commission on the basis of the number of tonne-kilometres shifted from road to short sea shipping or a combination of modes of transport in which road journeys are as short as possible. Support is initially fixed at EUR 1 for each shift of 500 tonne-kilometres of road freight.

- Motorways of the sea

The TEN-T programme for motorways of the sea² is intended to finance infrastructure and facilities for intra-Community maritime transport flows on a larger scale than 'classical' short sea shipping, with Member States being more closely involved, focusing on wider transport areas with a higher level of service. Even though the funding of new services proposed by the industry and chiefly focusing on start-up aid must generally be provided under the Marco Polo Programme and, where strategic infrastructure and facilities are required, through Member State submissions to the TEN programme, the definition of motorways of the sea in relation to 'classical' short sea shipping remains unclear, and doubts remain as regards the adequacy of the proposed financial support in the light of the investment which will be necessary to launch such services. Guidelines on the financing of motorways of the sea are currently being adopted by the Commission, and funding could start in 2005.

TEN and Marco Polo funding may be completed by and combined with state aid, in accordance with the Community rules in force.

Your rapporteur also takes the view that the concept of motorways of the sea should be more closely linked to the wider issue of strengthening regional solidarity within the European Union. Motorways of the sea have a crucial role to play in regional planning and economic and social development in the EU's regions. Accordingly, your rapporteur hopes that consideration will be given to the possibility of recognising priority projects in the field of short sea shipping as a service of general economic interest where they play a significant role in strengthening regional cohesion within the European Union.

5. Remaining obstacles to development

- Promoting short sea shipping (motorways of the sea) requires a sufficient concentration of tonnes transported, as only then will it be profitable to make the heavy investment needed to provide regular, frequent and varied services. There is still a need for a ratchet effect which could be brought about by an interventionist policy aimed at attracting and convincing large

¹ Regulation No 1382/2003 of 22 July 2003 on the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system (Marco Polo Programme).

² See Article 12a of Decision 884/2004.

transport organisers, large shippers and road transport operators of the advantages of short sea shipping with door-to-door land links, whilst at the same time doing more to involve the world of logistics in infrastructure decisions taken by public authorities.

- The lack of a uniform liability system creates significant legal uncertainty with regard to the law applicable to multimodal transport operations and the financial consequences for the shipper and the multimodal transport undertaking. As the Commission has stated in the past, this uncertainty is limiting the attractiveness of multimodal transport, and thus of short sea shipping.

- The problem posed by inadequate dedicated port capacity and high-quality intermodal land links, particularly links between ports and large-capacity rail and road infrastructure in the hinterland.

- The question of funding:

If the ambitious goals of Marco Polo II are to be achieved, the financial amounts envisaged in the Commission proposal must at least be upheld. The extension of Marco Polo to include the international links proposed by the Commission must be supported. As logistical chains do not stop at the borders of the European Union, it would appear useful to invite the countries of 'larger Europe' to take part in the programme as well.

- The cross-border cooperation which is to be developed between local authorities could be strengthened, particularly for the motorways of the sea. Intermodal transport, and especially the motorways of the sea, is based on networks. Sources of transport remain regional, and it is therefore essential that the regions, acting through Europe, should improve the coordination of infrastructure and transport modes so that transport flows can be managed more effectively.

- A comparative analysis between door-to-door service costs including a short sea shipping link and similar services entirely by road gives a better result for the former (quoted market costs and costs including external impact). Some obstacles to the evaluation of the cost factor remain, however: the duration of intermodal transport including short sea shipping - particularly owing to the lack of multimodal superstructure, the lack of interoperability between the various multimodal transport operators involved, different national networks and excessively long transit times.

6. Conclusions: what remains to be done

It is clear that short sea shipping plays an extremely important role in the regulation of traffic on the European road network. The main obstacles still need to be removed: a reduction in administrative fees, the abolition of customs procedures and the introduction of more efficient checks.

For this purpose, your rapporteur advocates the following action:

Settle the issue of the standardisation of ILUs: find an acceptable standardisation system for ILUs allowing the most widespread use of loading units already used by the market, with interoperability being ensured between all modes and particularly between maritime and road

transport. Such an approach would make it possible to encourage the mass flows necessary to short sea shipping and, in particular, to the motorways of the sea;

Take action on the duration of transport, particularly transit times, in intermodal chains including a short sea shipping segment, by improving information on the monitoring of goods (intelligent transport) and greater flexibility and coordination between transport operators in the use of alternative routes, along with improved communication links with the hinterland;

Relaunch the Community debate on the unification of the legal system for the multimodal chain, particularly by evaluating the various possible civil liability models. This evaluation could result in proposals for a more uniform Community liability system. If they are to be widely accepted, they should be based on efficiency, following the widest possible consultation and approval of the various stakeholders in the transport sectors concerned;

At the same time, encourage EU participation in discussions at international level;

Adopt effective, clear and adequate financing arrangements for actions linked to the motorways of the sea and short sea shipping lines, making it possible to achieve optimum complementarity and indeed additionality of funding, which will allow lasting new lines to be set up whilst avoiding any possible distortion of competition with existing services;

Define more precisely the legal system applicable to international conventions to be signed between public authorities in order to set up projects linked to motorways of the sea. Clarify the Community rules applicable to tender procedures for allocating services on motorways of the sea. Specify the conditions for compliance with competition rules applicable to national public funding for short sea shipping and motorway of the sea projects. Avoid giving preference to a particular legal framework a priori, so as to leave the framework for the project as open as possible;

Continue the Commission action programme (COM(2003) 155 final):

- continued introduction of electronic offices in sea ports where all the mandatory formalities can be undertaken in a single operation;

- endeavour to make optimum use of the exemptions offered by European customs rules and promote simplified systems for goods in customs transit in conjunction with those freely provided within the framework of authorised regular services;

- promote cooperation between various inspection services;

- draw up quality criteria for short sea shipping links in close cooperation with business, to provide a framework within which to offer a reliable level of service to users of the motorways of the sea.

PROCEDURE

Title	Short sea shipping
Procedure number	2004/2161(INI)
Basis in Rules of Procedure	Rule 45
Committee responsible Date authorisation announced in plenary	TRAN 28.10.2004
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary	IMCO 28.10.2004
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision	IMCO 15.3.2005
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary	
Motion(s) for resolution(s) included in report	
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Robert Navarro 16.9.2004
Previous rapporteur(s)	
Discussed in committee	19.1.2005 14.3.2005
Date adopted	15.3.2005
Result of final vote	for: 41 against: 0 abstentions: 0
Members present for the final vote	Margrete Auken, Inés Ayala Sender, Etelka Barsi-Pataky, Paolo Costa, Michael Cramer, Arūnas Degutis, Christine De Veyrac, Armando Dionisi, Saïd El Khadraoui, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Mathieu Grosch, Ewa Hedkvist Petersen, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Stanisław Jałowicki, Georg Jarzembowski, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Jaromír Kohlíček, Jörg Leichtfried, Fernand Le Rachinel, Bogusław Liberadzki, Evelin Lichtenberger, Patrick Louis, Erik Meijer, Robert Navarro, Josu Ortuondo Larrea, Willi Piecyk, Luís Queiró, Reinhard Rack, Luca Romagnoli, Gilles Savary, Ingo Schmitt, Renate Sommer, Dirk Sterckx, Ulrich Stockmann, Gary Titley, Marta Vincenzi, Roberts Zīle
Substitutes present for the final vote	Jean Louis Cottigny, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Helmuth Markov
Substitutes under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	
Date tabled – A6	18.3.2005 A6-0055/2005
Comments	