

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Session document

A6-0217/2009

2.4.2009

*****I**

REPORT

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006 establishing the second ‘Marco Polo’ programme for the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system (‘Marco Polo II’)
(COM(2008)0847 – C6-0482/2008 – 2008/0239(COD))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

Rapporteur: Ulrich Stockmann

RR\779851EN.doc

PE418.255v02-00

EN

EN

Symbols for procedures

- * Consultation procedure
majority of the votes cast
- **I Cooperation procedure (first reading)
majority of the votes cast
- **II Cooperation procedure (second reading)
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position
majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend
the common position*
- *** Assent procedure
*majority of Parliament's component Members except in cases
covered by Articles 105, 107, 161 and 300 of the EC Treaty and
Article 7 of the EU Treaty*
- ***I Codecision procedure (first reading)
majority of the votes cast
- ***II Codecision procedure (second reading)
*majority of the votes cast, to approve the common position
majority of Parliament's component Members, to reject or amend
the common position*
- ***III Codecision procedure (third reading)
majority of the votes cast, to approve the joint text

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the Commission.)

Amendments to a legislative text

In amendments by Parliament, amended text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. In the case of amending acts, passages in an existing provision that the Commission has left unchanged, but that Parliament wishes to amend, are highlighted in **bold**. Any deletions that Parliament wishes to make in passages of this kind are indicated thus: [...]. Highlighting in *normal italics* is an indication for the relevant departments showing parts of the legislative text for which a correction is proposed, to assist preparation of the final text (for instance, obvious errors or omissions in a given language version). Suggested corrections of this kind are subject to the agreement of the departments concerned.

CONTENTS

	Page
DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION	5
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	19
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS	22
PROCEDURE.....	25

DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006 establishing the second ‘Marco Polo’ programme for the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system (‘Marco Polo II’) (COM(2008)0847 – C6-0482/2008 – 2008/0239(COD))

(Codecision procedure: first reading)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2008)0847),
 - having regard to Article 251(2) and Articles 71(1) and 80(2) of the EC Treaty, pursuant to which the Commission submitted the proposal to Parliament (C6-0482/2008),
 - having regard to Rule 51 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the opinion of the Committee on Budgets (A6-0217/2009),
1. Approves the Commission proposal as amended;
 2. Calls on the Commission to refer the matter to Parliament again if it intends to amend the proposal substantially or replace it with another text;
 3. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council and Commission.

Amendment 1

Proposal for a regulation – amending act
Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission

(3) In order to cope with this growth, greater use must be made of short sea shipping, rail and inland waterways than at present, and it is necessary to stimulate further powerful initiatives from the transport and logistics sector, to encourage new approaches and the use of technical innovations in all of our transport modes and their management.

Amendment

(3) In order to cope with this growth, greater use must be made of short sea shipping, rail and inland waterways than at present, and it is necessary to stimulate further powerful initiatives from the transport and logistics sector, ***including dry ports and other platforms that facilitate intermodality***, to encourage new approaches and the use of technical innovations in all of our transport modes

and their management.

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation – amending act Recital 3a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(3a) It is the European Union's task to strengthen modes of transport that are environmentally friendly, whether or not this leads to a specific shift or avoidance effect in the case of road haulage.

Justification

The high overall growth rates in goods transport make it look sensible to boost environmentally-friendly transport modes, quite apart from their modal shift and avoidance effect.

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation – amending act Recital 8

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(8) The eligibility thresholds for proposals for funding should be lowered and expressed in terms of yearly tonne-kilometres shifted, except for Common Learning Actions. There is no further need for a specific threshold applying to Traffic Avoidance actions and a minimum project duration is established for this kind of projects and Catalyst and Motorways of the Sea projects.

(8) The eligibility thresholds for proposals for funding should be lowered and expressed in terms of yearly tonne-kilometres shifted, except for Common Learning Actions. ***These thresholds should be computed over the entire implementation period of the project without setting any yearly rate of implementation.*** There is no further need for a specific threshold applying to Traffic Avoidance actions and a minimum project duration is established for this kind of projects and Catalyst and Motorways of the Sea projects.

Amendment 4

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Article 1 – paragraph 2

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Article 4 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

‘1. Actions shall be submitted by undertakings established in Member States or participating countries, as provided in **paragraph 3 and 4 of Article 3.**’

Amendment

‘1. Actions shall be submitted by undertakings **or consortia** established in Member States or participating countries, as provided in **Article 3(3) and (4).**’

Amendment 5

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Article 1 – paragraph 5 a (new)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Article 8

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

5a. Article 8 is replaced by the following:

Actions shall be submitted to the Commission in accordance with the detailed rules issued under Article 6. Submissions shall contain all the information necessary to enable the Commission to make its selection in accordance with Article 9.

If required, the Commission shall provide assistance to applicants to facilitate their application process, for instance by way of an online helpdesk.

Justification

For many SME's there are barriers to start an application procedure for Marco Polo. The availability of technical assistance during the application process for Marco Polo, such as a help desk, could lower these barriers and increase the participation of SME's in Marco Polo.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Article 1 – paragraph 6 – point -a (new)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Article 9 – paragraph 1 – point b

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(-a) Paragraph 1(b) is hereby amended as follows:

‘(b) the conditions set out in the appropriate column of Annex I [...], ;’

Justification

As Annex II is deleted there cannot now be a reference to it.

Amendment 7

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Article 1 – paragraph 6 – point a

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Article 9 – paragraph 1 – point d

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(a) In the first paragraph, point (d) the **words** ‘the relative environmental merits of the actions’ **are replaced by** ‘the relative merits of the actions in terms of reduction of external costs’.

(a) In the first paragraph, point (d) the **phrase** ‘the relative environmental merits of the actions’ **is amended as follows: ‘the relative environmental merits of the actions and the relative merits of the actions in terms of reduction of external costs’.**

Amendment 8

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Article 1 – paragraph 6 – point b

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Article 9 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

6b. Article 9, paragraph 2 shall be

replaced by the following:

'The Commission shall, after having informed the committee referred to in Article 10, adopt the decision to grant financial assistance.'

Amendment 9

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Article 1 – paragraph 7

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Article 14 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

'2. The Commission shall present to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions **an evaluation report** on the results achieved by the Marco Polo Programme for the period **2003-2009 by 30 June 2011.**'

Amendment

'2. The Commission shall present to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions **a Communication** on the results achieved by the Marco Polo Programme for the period **2003-2010. It shall do so before drawing up a proposal for a third Marco Polo Programme and shall take account of the Communication's findings when drawing up the proposal.**'

Justification

When preparing for a third Marco Polo Programme there is a need for a comprehensive assessment of the Programme's results so far. The analysis should be put to Parliament as a Communication and serve as the basis for debate on a Marco Polo III Programme. The assessment period for the Communication should be extended so that the impact of this Regulation can influence the assessment.

Amendment 10

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Article 1 – paragraph 7 a (new)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Article 14 – paragraph 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

7a. The following paragraph shall be

added to Article 14:

'2a. The Communication referred to in paragraph 2 shall in particular deal with the following:

- the impact of Regulation (EC) No .../2008 of the European Parliament and the Council of ... amending Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006 establishing the second “Marco Polo” programme for the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system (“Marco Polo II”),*
 - the experience of the Executive Agency for Competition and Innovation with programme management,*
 - the need to differentiate between transport modes in the conditions for funding, on the basis of safety, environmental performance and energy efficiency,*
 - the effectiveness of Traffic Avoidance Actions,*
 - the need to set up demand-driven assistance at the application stage, taking into account the needs of small and micro transport companies,*
 - the recognition of economic recession as an exceptional reason for extending the duration of projects,*
 - product-specific lowering of eligibility thresholds,*
 - the possibility of indicating the targets for minimum funding thresholds for proposed projects in terms of energy efficiency and environmental benefits in addition to tonne-kilometres shifted,*
 - the appropriateness of including the transport unit in the definition of the term “freight”.*
- the availability of complete yearly overviews of projects which have been co-*

Commented [j1]: not quite sure what this means

financed,

- the possibility of ensuring consistency between the Marco Polo Programme, the Logistics Action Plan and the TEN-T programme by taking the appropriate measures in order to coordinate the allocation of community funds, in particular for Motorways of the Sea,

*- the possibility of making costs incurred in a third country eligible **if promoted by undertakings from a Member State,***

- the need to take into account the specific characteristics of the inland waterway sector and its small- and medium sized enterprises, for example by way of a dedicated programme for the inland waterway sector,

- the possibility of extending the programme to the neighbouring countries,

- the possibility of further adapting the programme to the insular and archipelagic Member States."

Commented [j2]: does this mean if the project is carried out by undertakings from a Member State?

Justification

Amendment 11

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 1: Funding conditions – Type of action: C. Modal shift – Article 5(1)(c) – point d

Text proposed by the Commission

(d) when the action requires reliance on services provided by third parties ***not part of the consortium***, the applicant submits proof of a transparent, objective and non-discriminatory procedure for selection of the relevant services.

Amendment

(d) when the action requires reliance on services provided by third parties ***to the subsidy agreement***, the applicant submits proof of a transparent, objective and non-discriminatory procedure for selection of the relevant services.

Amendment 12

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 1: Funding conditions – Type of action: A. Catalyst – Article 5(1)(a) – point f

Text proposed by the Commission

(f) when the action requires reliance on services provided by third parties ***not part of the consortium***, the applicant submits proof of a transparent, objective and non-discriminatory procedure for selection of the relevant services.

Amendment

(f) when the action requires reliance on services provided by third parties ***to the subsidy agreement***, the applicant submits proof of a transparent, objective and non-discriminatory procedure for selection of the relevant services.

Amendment 13

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 1: Funding conditions – Type of action: B. Motorways of the Sea – Article 5(1)(b) – point g

Text proposed by the Commission

(g) when the MoS action requires reliance on services provided by third parties ***not part of the consortium***, the applicant submits proof of a transparent, objective and non-discriminatory procedure for selection of the relevant services.

Amendment

(g) when the MoS action requires reliance on services provided by third parties ***to the subsidy agreement***, the applicant submits proof of a transparent, objective and non-discriminatory procedure for selection of the relevant services.

Amendment 14

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 1: Funding conditions – Type of action: D. Traffic avoidance – Article 5(1)(d) – point f

Text proposed by the Commission

(f) When the traffic avoidance action requires reliance on services provided by third parties ***not part of the consortium***, the applicant submits proof of a

Amendment

(f) When the traffic avoidance action requires reliance on services provided by third parties ***to the subsidy agreement***, the applicant submits proof of a transparent,

transparent, objective and non-discriminatory procedure for selection of the relevant services.

objective and non-discriminatory procedure for selection of the relevant services.

Amendment 15

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 2: Funding intensity and scope – Type of action: A. Catalyst – Article 5(1)(a) – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

(a) Community financial assistance for catalyst actions shall be limited to a maximum of 35 % of the total expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and incurred as a result of the action. Such expenditure shall be eligible for Community financial assistance, to the extent to which it relates directly to the implementation of the action. The eligible costs related to ancillary infrastructure shall not be higher than **10%** of the total eligible costs for the project.

Amendment

(a) Community financial assistance for catalyst actions shall be limited to a maximum of 35 % of the total expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and incurred as a result of the action. Such expenditure shall be eligible for Community financial assistance, to the extent to which it relates directly to the implementation of the action. The eligible costs related to ancillary infrastructure shall not be higher than **20%** of the total eligible costs for the project.

Amendment 16

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 2: Funding intensity and scope – Type of action: B. Motorways of the Sea – Article 5(1)(b) – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

(a) Community financial assistance for MoS actions shall be limited to a maximum of 35 % of the total expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and incurred as a result of the action. Such expenditure shall be eligible for Community financial assistance, to the extent to which it relates directly to the implementation of the action. The eligible costs related to ancillary infrastructure shall not be higher than **10%** of the total

Amendment

(a) Community financial assistance for MoS actions shall be limited to a maximum of 35 % of the total expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and incurred as a result of the action. Such expenditure shall be eligible for Community financial assistance, to the extent to which it relates directly to the implementation of the action. The eligible costs related to ancillary infrastructure shall not be higher than **20%** of the total

eligible costs for the project.

eligible costs for the project.

Amendment 17

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 2: Funding intensity and scope – Type of action: C. Modal Shift – Article 5(1)(c) – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

(a) Community financial assistance for modal shift actions shall be limited to a maximum of 35 % of the total expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and incurred as a result of the action. Such expenditure shall be eligible for Community financial assistance to the extent to which it relates directly to the implementation of the action. The eligible costs related to ancillary infrastructure shall not be higher than **10%** of the total eligible costs for the project.

Amendment

(a) Community financial assistance for modal shift actions shall be limited to a maximum of 35 % of the total expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and incurred as a result of the action. Such expenditure shall be eligible for Community financial assistance to the extent to which it relates directly to the implementation of the action. The eligible costs related to ancillary infrastructure shall not be higher than **20%** of the total eligible costs for the project.

Amendment 18

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 2: Funding intensity and scope – Type of action: D. Traffic avoidance – Article 5(1)(d) – point a

Text proposed by the Commission

(a) Community financial assistance for traffic avoidance actions shall be limited to a maximum of 35 % of the total expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and incurred as a result of the action. Such expenditure shall be eligible for Community financial assistance, to the extent to which it relates directly to the implementation of the action. The eligible costs related to ancillary infrastructure shall not be higher

Amendment

(a) Community financial assistance for traffic avoidance actions shall be limited to a maximum of 35 % of the total expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of the action and incurred as a result of the action. Such expenditure shall be eligible for Community financial assistance, to the extent to which it relates directly to the implementation of the action. The eligible costs related to ancillary infrastructure shall not be higher

than **10%** of the total eligible costs for the project.

than **20%** of the total eligible costs for the project.

Amendment 19

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 3: Form and duration of subsidy agreement – Type of action: A. Catalyst – Article 5(1)(a)

Text proposed by the Commission

Community financial assistance for catalyst actions shall be granted on the basis of subsidy agreements, with appropriate provisions for steering and monitoring. As a rule, the maximum duration of these agreements shall be 62 months, and the minimum 36 months. In case of extraordinary implementation delays adequately justified by the beneficiary, an exceptional extension of 6 months can be awarded.

Community financial assistance shall not be renewable beyond the stipulated maximum period of 62 months, or in exceptional cases 68 months.

Amendment

Community financial assistance for catalyst actions shall be granted on the basis of subsidy agreements, with appropriate provisions for steering and monitoring. As a rule, the maximum duration of these agreements shall be 62 months, and the minimum 36 months. In case of extraordinary implementation delays, **for example due to an exceptional economic downturn**, adequately justified by the beneficiary, an exceptional extension of 6 months can be awarded.

Community financial assistance shall not be renewable beyond the stipulated maximum period of 62 months, or in exceptional cases 68 months.

Commented [j3]: I would suggest avoiding the repetition of the word "extraordinary" which is why I have substituted it throughout

Amendment 20

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 3: Form and duration of subsidy agreement – Type of action: B. Motorways of the Sea – Article 5(1)(b)

Text proposed by the Commission

Community financial assistance for MoS actions shall be granted on the basis of subsidy agreements, with appropriate provisions for steering and monitoring. As a rule, the maximum duration of these

Amendment

Community financial assistance for MoS actions shall be granted on the basis of subsidy agreements, with appropriate provisions for steering and monitoring. As a rule, the maximum duration of these

agreements shall be 62 months and the minimum 36 months. In case of extraordinary implementation delays adequately justified by the beneficiary, an exceptional extension of 6 months can be awarded.

Community financial assistance shall not be renewable beyond the stipulated maximum period of 62 months, or in exceptional cases 68 months.

agreements shall be 62 months and the minimum 36 months. In case of extraordinary implementation delays, ***for example due to an exceptional economic downturn***, adequately justified by the beneficiary, an exceptional extension of 6 months can be awarded.

Community financial assistance shall not be renewable beyond the stipulated maximum period of 62 months, or in exceptional cases 68 months.

Amendment 21

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 3: Form and duration of subsidy agreement – Type of action: C. Modal Shift – Article 5(1)(c)

Text proposed by the Commission

Community financial assistance for modal shift actions shall be granted on the basis of subsidy agreements. As a rule, the maximum duration of these agreements shall be 38 months. In case of extraordinary implementation delays adequately justified by the beneficiary, an exceptional extension of 6 months can be awarded.

Community financial assistance shall not be renewable beyond the stipulated maximum period of 38 months, or in exceptional cases 44 months.

Amendment

Community financial assistance for modal shift actions shall be granted on the basis of subsidy agreements. As a rule, the maximum duration of these agreements shall be 38 months. In case of extraordinary implementation delays, ***for example due to an exceptional economic downturn***, adequately justified by the beneficiary, an exceptional extension of 6 months can be awarded.

Community financial assistance shall not be renewable beyond the stipulated maximum period of 38 months, or in exceptional cases 44 months.

Amendment 22

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 3: Form and duration of subsidy agreement – Type of action: D. Traffic avoidance – Article 5(1)(d)

Text proposed by the Commission

Community financial assistance for traffic avoidance actions shall be granted on the basis of subsidy agreements, with appropriate provisions for steering and monitoring. As a rule, the maximum duration of these agreements shall be 62 months and the minimum 36 months. In case of extraordinary implementation delays adequately justified by the beneficiary, an exceptional extension of 6 months can be awarded.

Community financial assistance shall not be renewable beyond the stipulated maximum period of 62 months, or in exceptional cases 68 months.

Amendment

Community financial assistance for traffic avoidance actions shall be granted on the basis of subsidy agreements, with appropriate provisions for steering and monitoring. As a rule, the maximum duration of these agreements shall be 62 months and the minimum 36 months. In case of extraordinary implementation delays, ***for example due to an exceptional economic downturn***, adequately justified by the beneficiary, an exceptional extension of 6 months can be awarded.

Community financial assistance shall not be renewable beyond the stipulated maximum period of 62 months, or in exceptional cases 68 months.

Amendment 23

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 4: Contract value threshold – Type of action: B. Motorways of the Sea – Article 5(1)(b)

Text proposed by the Commission

The minimum indicative subsidy threshold per MoS action shall be **250 million** tonne-kilometres or its volumetric equivalent of modal shift per year, to be implemented over the entire life of the subsidy agreement

Amendment

The minimum indicative subsidy threshold per MoS action shall be **200 million** tonne-kilometres or its volumetric equivalent of modal shift per year, to be implemented over the entire life of the subsidy agreement

Amendment 24

Proposal for a regulation – amending act

Annex I – Funding conditions and requirements according to Article 5(2)

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006

Point 4: Contract value threshold – Type of action: C. Modal Shift – Article 5(1)(c)

Text proposed by the Commission

The minimum indicative subsidy threshold

Amendment

The minimum indicative subsidy threshold

per modal shift action shall be **80 million** tonne-kilometres or its volumetric equivalent of modal shift per year, to be implemented over the entire life of the subsidy agreement. Modal shift actions aiming at implementing a shift to inland waterways will be subject to a special threshold of **17 million** tonne-kilometres or its volumetric equivalent of modal shift **per year, to be implemented over the entire life of the subsidy agreement**

per modal shift action shall be **60 million** tonne-kilometres or its volumetric equivalent of modal shift per year, to be implemented over the entire life of the subsidy agreement. Modal shift actions aiming at implementing a shift to inland waterways will be subject to a special threshold of **25 million** tonne-kilometres or its volumetric equivalent of modal shift **over the entire three-year period**

Justification

Lowering the amount set by the Commission to increase participation of inland shipping. Also taking into account the fact that new projects rarely achieve 17 million tonne-kilometres of modal shift in the first year of their existence. Therefore the threshold should be set for a three year period with a minimum of 25 million tonne-kilometres modal shift in total, rather than 3 x 17 million tonne-kilometres.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Introduction

Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006 established the second ‘Marco Polo’ programme for the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system.

The programme’s purpose is to reduce overload in road transport, increase the transport system’s environmental compatibility and strengthen its intermodality. This should contribute to an efficient and sustainable transport system that can add value throughout the European Union without adversely affecting its economic, social or regional cohesion.

The programme runs from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013. By the end of the programme, the traffic that forms a large part of the expected annual increase in international road transport should have been transferred to short sea shipping, rail, inland waterway or a combination of transport modes in which road journeys are as short as possible.

The results of the call for submission of proposals in 2008 for the second Programme and the conclusions of the external assessment of the first Programme have shown that it is bringing about a discernible shift in transport. But it is highly probable that the aim laid down in its legal basis of avoiding or displacing a substantial part of the overall growth forecast for international road transport in Europe will not be achieved.

Applications for financial support and hence the proposed projects to avoid road transport or shift it off the road are declining every year. The lack of interest of potential applicants can be attributed mainly to the lack of motivation of potential beneficiaries of financial assistance because of the programme’s complexity, inappropriate funding mechanisms or poor promotional support.

For the programme to achieve its aim, Marco Polo II must be made more attractive. This will mean changing the legal basis. Verification procedures need to be simpler and clearer. In addition, the conditions and requirements for funding need adjusting. The changes should be made as fast as possible to secure the greatest possible effect.

Main changes in the Commission proposal

- Easier access to the Programme for small businesses

Single-person businesses are also able to submit projects. It will no longer be necessary to set up a consortium.

- Lowering and simplifying thresholds for the eligibility of projects

Projects (except for the ‘Common Learning’ category) need only fulfil the condition of the modal shift threshold, which is no longer indicated for the lifetime of the project but

calculated per year; the monetary threshold has been dropped. Most of the thresholds have been lowered, and a particularly low threshold has been introduced for inland waterway projects (17 million tonne-kilometres). These changes will bring the programme further small-scale projects. The specific 10 % threshold for traffic avoidance measures has been dropped.

- Increasing grant intensity

First, the weight of the transport mode and equipment taking on freight is taken into account when calculating the modal shift. Second, the financial aid is raised from €1 to €2 per 500 tonne-kilometres of shifted goods transport, as decided earlier in a Commission decision.

- Simplification measures

The current procedure for funding infrastructure is complex, includes numerous additional exceptions and conditions with regard to project completion deadlines and provides a complicated method for calculating the financial support ultimately available for the individual projects.

In the proposed change eligible costs for additional infrastructure will be a maximum of 10 % of the eligible overall costs of the project. This applies to all types of action except 'Common Learning'.

The decision on granting financial aid is no longer taken in the comitology procedure, but only by the Commission or the Executive Agency for Competition and Innovation, to which management of the programme was transferred early in 2008. The detailed provisions for the procedure on submission and selection of actions under the Programme are still decided under the comitology procedure, though not annually but once for the total duration of the programme. In this way it is hoped to shorten the management cycle (at present 470 days).

- Project length

A minimum duration of three years is introduced for all action types except Common Learning. The maximum duration of contracts can be extended by six months in the event of exceptional delays in implementation, provided they are adequately explained by the beneficiary. Common Learning contracts can be extended from 26 to 52 months.

Rapporteur's comments

According to the results of an external evaluation by Ecorys in 2007, only 64 % of the aims of the first Marco Polo Programme were fulfilled in the case of shifting road haulage to other transport modes. In view of the declining number of successful projects, the aim of the second Programme, to shift a substantial share of the 60 % additional growth of international freight transport by road (20.5 thousand million tonne-kilometres) to other transport modes, will probably not be fulfilled.

The reason for the declining number of successful projects is mainly the lack of motivation of funding beneficiaries to submit projects. This is due primarily to the programme's complexity, unclear funding conditions and low grant intensity. So the rapporteur wholeheartedly supports the Commission's proposed adjustments to increase the attractiveness and effectiveness of the second Marco Polo Programme running until 2013 and endowed with 450 million euros, and hopes that the proposed measures will be adopted without delay.

However, in view of the debate on a third Marco Polo Programme, the rapporteur calls on the Commission to submit a Communication to Parliament on the impact of this Regulation. At the same time the Commission should assess the experience of the Executive Agency for Competition and Innovation, which has been managing the Marco Polo Programme since March 2008. The Commission should also ascertain whether differentiating funding conditions according to transport modes and the product-specific lowering of targets could further enhance the programme's attractiveness, as perishable goods can only be shipped over short distances. The Commission should also reassess the Traffic Avoidance action, for which not one single project has been funded by the Marco Polo Programme so far, as part of its planning for a third Programme. The Commission should also verify whether there is a need to step up technical assistance for Member States with the application process and to prolong project durations in times of economic recession, so as to give enterprises more time to meet the modal shift targets. Again, the Commission should examine whether including the transport unit in the definition of 'goods' is appropriate. And the question of indicating the eligibility thresholds for funding proposed projects in terms of environmental benefit instead of tonne-kilometres shifted per year should also be considered.

23.2.2009

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON BUDGETS

for the Committee on Transport and Tourism

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1692/2006 establishing the second ‘Marco Polo’ programme for the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system (‘Marco Polo II’)
(COM(2008)0847 – C6-0482/2008 – 2008/0239(COD))

Rapporteur: Anne E. Jensen

SHORT JUSTIFICATION

The Marco Polo programme aims to reduce congestion as part of a coherent EU transport policy strategy which includes the internalisation of external costs and the use of market-based instruments to reflect the utilisation of infrastructure.

During the implementation of the Programme poor results have been obtained. An external evaluation on the results of Marco Polo estimated that the Programme would not achieve its objectives in terms of modal shift and gave some recommendations for improving its effectiveness. As a matter of fact only 64% of the objective of modal shift has been achieved.

More in particular, the results of the Marco Polo calls are summarized in the table below:

CALLS	MP I 2003	MP I 2004	MP I 2005	MP I 2006	MP II 2007	MP II 2008
Available budget (in M€’)	15	20.4	30.7	35.7	56	58**
Committed budget (in M€)	13	20.4	21.4	18.9	45	34
Received proposals	92	62	63	48	55	46
Concluded contracts	13	12	15	15	20	28

Planned freight to be shifted (in billion tkm)	12.4	14.4	9.5	11.5	23.6	16
Expected real modal shift (bn tkm)	7.5*	7.5*	7.5*	7.5*	n/a	n/a
Modal shift objectives (bn tkm)	12	12	12	12	<20	<20

* Yearly average of a global estimation by external evaluation in 2007, confirmed by the EACI in 2008.

** Due to under spending €20 million were transferred to another programme

Therefore the Commission came up with a new proposal to improve the Marco Polo Programme and to increase its effectiveness in terms of its traffic avoidance and modal shift objectives.

The Marco Polo II regulation foresees modification in the fields of:

- measures to facilitate participation by small enterprises;
- measures lowering the tonne-kilometre thresholds for eligibility;
- raising funding intensity;
- simplification of the Programme procedures.

Draftswoman position

Your Draftswoman welcomes the Commission proposal, as she agrees with the general objectives to improve the Marco Polo Programme.

In particular she appreciates that the proposal goes in the direction of a simplification of the procedures to respond to calls for tenders and promotes the participation of smaller enterprises. It should be stressed that the simplification also foresees the elimination of the Comitology procedure for the yearly selection of projects to be funded.

She believes that the more red tape that exists in the application procedures and implementation of projects, the more time will be wasted and credits not fully taken advantage of, as the external study showed in respect of Marco Polo I Programme.

That said, the Draftswoman stresses that, should a problem of low implementation of the credits devoted to Marco Polo II still persist, they should be allocated to other programmes in the field of transports.

The Committee on Budgets calls on the Committee on Transport and Tourism, as the committee responsible, to propose approval of the Commission proposal.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Title	Marco Polo II programme
References	COM(2008)0847 – C6-0482/2008 – 2008/0239(COD)
Committee responsible	TRAN
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	BUDG 13.1.2009
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Anne E. Jensen 21.1.2009
Discussed in committee	10.2.2009 23.2.2009
Date adopted	23.2.2009
Result of final vote	+: 15 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Reimer Böge, Costas Botopoulos, Göran Färm, Vicente Miguel Garcés Ramón, Salvador Garriga Polledo, Nathalie Griesbeck, Catherine Guy-Quint, Jutta Haug, Anne E. Jensen, Janusz Lewandowski, Vladimír Maňka, Gérard Onesta, László Surján, Kyösti Virrankoski, Ralf Walter
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	

PROCEDURE

Title	Marco Polo II programme
References	COM(2008)0847 – C6-0482/2008 – 2008/0239(COD)
Date submitted to Parliament	10.12.2008
Committee responsible Date announced in plenary	TRAN 13.1.2009
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary	BUDG 13.1.2009
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Ulrich Stockmann 5.1.2009
Discussed in committee	17.2.2009 30.3.2009
Date adopted	31.3.2009
Result of final vote	+: 33 -: 0 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Gabriele Albertini, Inés Ayala Sender, Paolo Costa, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Petr Duchoň, Saïd El Khadraoui, Robert Evans, Emanuel Jardim Fernandes, Francesco Ferrari, Brigitte Fouré, Mathieu Grosch, Georg Jarzembowski, Stanisław Jałowiecki, Timothy Kirkhope, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Jörg Leichtfried, Eva Lichtenberger, Erik Meijer, Luís Queiró, Reinhard Rack, Ulrike Rodust, Gilles Savary, Brian Simpson, Renate Sommer, Dirk Sterckx, Ulrich Stockmann, Michel Teychenné, Yannick Vaugrenard, Armando Veneto, Roberts Zile
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Anne E. Jensen, Marie Panayotopoulos-Cassiotou
Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote	Elisabeth Schroedter
Date tabled	2.4.2009