

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0510/01
by Karla Peijs (PPE-DE)
to the Commission

Subject: TEN's and the development of the inland waterways

A report on bottlenecks in waterways was submitted to the European Commission (Round Table on bottlenecks in waterways, 23 November 2000, Lille, France).

The report, drawn up by the inland waterway sector, reviews the status of the trans-European transport network of waterways five years after the European TEN framework decisions were put in place. The Report reviews the history of the TEN policies, starting with the White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment (1992). The initial list of projects has been evaluated and defined in further detail by the Christophersen Group and has been shaped by the principles established at the Essen Council in 1994. The result was a fine-tuning of the major transport projects and the outcome was the following:

A list of 14 priority projects which does not contain any projects related to inland waterways: while recognising that public investment in infrastructure is under severe pressure as a result of budgetary constraints, it is nevertheless regrettable that waterways development finds itself at the bottom of the priority list.

The waterways network urgently needs investment in its infrastructure in order to facilitate intermodal transport (sea-river, river-rail, river-road), to remove a number of existing bottlenecks and to construct a number of missing links that will enhance the network function.

In view of the increasing lack of space and the fact that waterborne transport is cheap, clean and green :

Why has the Commission not allocated a larger share of the EU-TEN funds to stimulate the development of the waterways network (1.5% to inland waterways compared to 55% to rail)?

Can the Commission explain why it has not played a more active role in the coordination to develop TEN waterways projects crossing national borders?

In view of the enlargement of the European Union, what actions has the Commission in mind to realise optimal inland waterway-transport on the Danube towards the Black Sea (e.g. obstructions between Straubing and Vilshofen)?