

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0511/01  
by Karla Peijs (PPE-DE)  
to the Council

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

A report on bottlenecks in waterways has been submitted to the European Commission (Lille, 23 November 2000). The report 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, which resulted in a list of 14 priority projects which does not contain any projects related to inland waterways. It is regrettable that waterways development finds itself at the bottom of the priority list.

The waterways net work 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 further development of intermodal transport, what actions have the Ministers of Transport of Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands taken to realise an integrated trans-European waterways network?

Are the Ministers aware of the fact that an optimised network for transport by container vessels necessitates a minimum height of bridges over TEN waterways of 7.10 m (3-layer containers).

There will be a meeting of European Transport Ministers in Rotterdam, the Netherlands on 5 and 6 September 2001 on Inland Shipping at which they will announce a 'Declaration of Rotterdam'. Do the Ministers intend to include in their declaration the list of Priority projects for waterways development, their budgets and the time-schedules linked to such projects?

Are the Ministers prepared to take more measures that maximise the shift in freight transport from road to water, in order to reduce traffic density (and its consequences such as noise and air pollution) on certain motorways?

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