

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0629/04

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to the Commission

Subject: Trans-European Networks - development of the Danube

As part of the revision of the Trans-European Networks, the Commission has proposed that development of the Danube should be a priority project. However, the Commission's aims in terms of the extent of development or the depths to be reached are not clear.

In the current debate and in various documents, reference is constantly being made to the so-called 'Van Miert Group' recommendations, which firstly identify a number of bottlenecks in the Danube and then propose that improvements be made to these bottlenecks to achieve a draught of 2.5 m.

A draught of 2.5 m is not specifically mentioned or called for in these documents, however, and this allows the Member States broad scope for interpretation and creates uncertainty about the extent of development envisaged for the Danube.

Environmentally and economically speaking, the decision on this issue is of vital importance. The more the depth increases, the greater the impact on the Danube's ecosystem and the higher the costs.

1. With this in mind, is the possible co-financing of the Danube projects based on achieving a specific depth?
2. If so, what would that be?
3. If not, does the Commission believe that the aim of generally improving the stretches defined as bottlenecks is sufficient to be able to apply for and receive financial support as part of the Trans-European Networks?