

**Question for written answer E-007642/2011
to the Commission
Rule 117
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Subject: Realistic measures to reduce sulphur emissions in SECA areas

In the autumn of 2008 agreement was reached within the IMO's Marine Environment Protection Committee that Annex VI to the MARPOL Convention should be revised in order to reduce sulphur emissions. The proposal concerns a reduction in the permitted sulphur content of bunker fuel.

Short sea shipping has had some success in transferring transport from road to sea. However, the adoption of the new limits on sulphur would greatly increase the costs of short sea shipping, and it is doubtful whether sufficient quantities of fuel with a sufficiently low sulphur content would already be obtainable in 2015: there is a danger that this could result in transport being transferred back from sea to road. This in turn would lead to increased CO₂ emissions.

It is extremely important that sea transport should also contribute to the EU's environmental objectives and that our seas, including inland seas, should be kept clean. At the same time, measures must be optimal to ensure that the objectives are attained and to avoid simply shifting environmental problems from one sector to another.

There are also question marks over competitiveness: will vessels from outside Europe, for example Russian vessels in the Baltic, be required to comply with the same standard and if so, how will their compliance be monitored?

1. In its reply to a previous written question, the Commission indicated that it was investigating possible measures to combat a modal shift back from sea to road when the new limit values are phased in. When will the conclusions regarding such possible measures, based on scientific facts, be presented? Will there be time to analyse the conclusions of these investigations before the planned transition in 2015?
2. Would a postponement of the new limit values till 2020 give industry a real chance of meeting the challenges and preparing itself for the phase-out so that it can be performed without causing a large-scale reversion to road transport, with the concomitant problems with regard to CO₂ emissions?
3. What is the situation with regard to phasing shipping into the emissions trading system, ETS?
4. How will the phase-out affect European maritime transport's competitiveness in relation to operators from outside Europe?