

**Question for written answer E-003233/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Need for a long-term strategy regarding the problem of drought and inland shipping

In the wake of unprecedented dry summer months, inland shipping is trying to keep its head above water. The low water levels caused by the drought led to major bottlenecks on the Rhine and largely stopped navigation in recent months¹. In particular, large vessels lying deep in the water struggle to make their way through the narrow channels. The lack of capacity in inland shipping has a negative impact on the entire logistics and industrial chain and energy supply in Europe.²

The low water level is not a new phenomenon and will occur more frequently in the future. This vision of the future makes the call for smaller, manoeuvrable vessels that require less depth ever louder³⁴ and calls for a long-term European strategy for the problem of drought and inland shipping.

1. As a result of capacity shortages in inland shipping, companies are looking for alternative forms of transport, such as road haulage⁵. What is the European Commission's assessment of this in light of the substantial ambitions for this sector with regard to the modal shift?
2. Is the Commission working on a long-term strategy on drought and inland shipping, and if so, when can the European Parliament expect this strategy?
3. In the context of the above-mentioned strategy, how does the Commission view the long-standing process of decommissioning small ships from active shipping – including at the initiative of the CCNR⁶?

¹ <https://www.nu.nl/economie/6218663/problemen-binnenvaart-beginnen-ook-in-nederland-steeds-meer-pijn-te-doen.html>

² <https://nos.nl/artikel/2440311-hoe-het-lage-peil-in-de-rijn-de-duitse-economie-in-het-nauw-brengt>

³ <https://www.nt.nl/binnenvaart/2022/08/24/70-van-binnenvaartvloot-is-klaar-voor-de-sloop/>

⁴ <https://www.nporadio1.nl/fragmenten/nieuwsweekend/f16dd818-aa4e-44a1-b519-3e947707e99a/2022-08-13-door-droogte-komt-kleine-binnenvaart-bovendrijven>

⁵ <https://www.bnr.nl/nieuws/mobiliteit/10485043/vervoerders-in-problemen-droogte-was-vroeger-een-incident-nu-een-structureel-probleem>

⁶ Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine