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Committee on Transport and Tourism

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*****I**

DRAFT REPORT

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 on a Community-fleet capacity policy to promote inland waterway transport (COM(2013)0621 – C7-0265/2013 – 2013/0303(COD))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

Rapporteur: Corien Wortmann-Kool

Symbols for procedures

*	Consultation procedure
***	Consent procedure
***I	Ordinary legislative procedure (first reading)
***II	Ordinary legislative procedure (second reading)
***III	Ordinary legislative procedure (third reading)

(The type of procedure depends on the legal basis proposed by the draft act.)

Amendments to a draft act

Amendments by Parliament set out in two columns

Deletions are indicated in ***bold italics*** in the left-hand column. Replacements are indicated in ***bold italics*** in both columns. New text is indicated in ***bold italics*** in the right-hand column.

The first and second lines of the header of each amendment identify the relevant part of the draft act under consideration. If an amendment pertains to an existing act that the draft act is seeking to amend, the amendment heading includes a third line identifying the existing act and a fourth line identifying the provision in that act that Parliament wishes to amend.

Amendments by Parliament in the form of a consolidated text

New text is highlighted in ***bold italics***. Deletions are indicated using either the ■ symbol or strikeout. Replacements are indicated by highlighting the new text in ***bold italics*** and by deleting or striking out the text that has been replaced.

By way of exception, purely technical changes made by the drafting departments in preparing the final text are not highlighted.

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DRAFT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION

on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 on a Community-fleet capacity policy to promote inland waterway transport (COM(2013)0621 – C7-0265/2013 – 2013/0303(COD))

(Ordinary legislative procedure: first reading)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission proposal to Parliament and the Council (COM(2013)0621),
 - having regard to Article 294(2) and Article 91(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, pursuant to which the Commission submitted the proposal to Parliament (C7-0265/2013),
 - having regard to Article 294(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,
 - having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of ¹,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of ²,
 - having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the opinion of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (A7-0000/2013),
1. Adopts its position at first reading hereinafter set out;
 2. Calls on the Commission to refer the matter to Parliament again if it intends to amend its proposal substantially or replace it with another text;
 3. Instructs its President to forward its position to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments.

¹ OJ C xx, xx.xx.201x, p. xx.

² OJ C xx, xx.xx.201x, p. xx.

Amendment 1

Proposal for a regulation Recital 5

Text proposed by the Commission

(5) The measures in connection with the modernisation of the EU fleet referred to in Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 concern only social matters. Other types of support measure for creating a context favourable to innovation and the environment are not provided for.

Amendment

(5) The measures in connection with the modernisation of the EU fleet referred to in Article 8 of Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 concern only social matters ***and safety of the working environment***. Other types of support measure for creating a context favourable to innovation and the environment are not provided for.

Or. en

Amendment 2

Proposal for a regulation Recital 8 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(8a) The reserve funds should aim to enhance the multiplier effect of grants funded from the Union's budget as well as that of financing instruments from the European Investment Bank (EIB) for measures supporting the innovation of vessels and their adaptation to technical progress as regards the environment. The Commission should present options with regard to leveraging the funds with financial instruments from existing Union funds, such as the Connecting Europe Facility, and from the EIB,

Or. en

Amendment 3

Proposal for a regulation

Article 1 – paragraph 1

Regulation (EC) No 718/1999

Article 8 – indent 3

Text proposed by the Commission

– improve skills in inland navigation in order to safeguard the development and future of the profession,

Amendment

– improve skills in inland navigation ***and logistics*** in order to safeguard the development and future of the profession,

Or. en

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Background

Regulation (EC) No 718/1999 sets up measures to support the structural improvements in the waterway sector, in particular with respect to the fleet capacity of Member States with inland waterways linked to those of another Member State.

Within this framework Reserve Funds –financed by the inland waterway transport industry from the surplus funding from structural improvements schemes conducted up to 28 April 1999 and by the special contributions from the ‘old-for-new’ rule– have been constituted.

The Reserve Funds, administrated by the Member States, could only be used for the following aims:

- a) to support measures taken at Community level designed to prevent any new increase of the fleet capacity in the event of serious market disturbance;
- b) to support social measures and promote adaptation of vessels to technical progress with regards safety aspects, under the condition that this measures have unanimous support of the organisations representing inland waterway transport.

Over the years the funds have grown to a cumulative value currently of around EUR 35 million. The inland navigation sector and the Member States tried to utilise the funds but the Commission considered that the requests were not within the scope of the Regulation. In fact, the limited scope of Article 8 of this Regulation has been so far a barrier to trigger the use of the funds.

Therefore the Commission proposed to broaden the scope of the Regulation towards training schemes for all crew members and to make it possible to use the funds for innovation of vessels and their adaption to technical progress as regards to the environment.

Rapporteur’s views

Your Rapporteur welcomes the Commission’s proposal to broaden the scope of the existing Regulation to allow the Reserve Funds to be used to support more efficiently the inland navigation sector and create a context favourable to innovation and improved safety and environmental performance. She would like to stress that the proposal is unanimously supported by the inland navigation sector.

A characteristic of the inland waterway sector is its structure largely based on SMEs, i.e. owners-operators who work and live with their families on the vessels. These SMEs are particularly vulnerable to the crisis. It is therefore vital to provide support to maintain and reinforce the inland waterway sector.

Among the advantages of the inland waterway transport, your Rapporteur would like to underline its cost-efficiency as well as its energy and environmental performances, pointing

out at the same time that these performances could be further improved. While road transport suffers from congestion, resulting in economic and environmental loss, the inland waterway network still offers a large potential to absorb traffic without risk of congestion. These advantages should be further exploited.

The intention of the inland waterway sector to invest into greening and innovation measures is very much welcomed by the Rapporteur. However, the funds available within the framework of this Regulation are rather limited with regard to the costs required to modernise the fleet. Therefore, your Rapporteur would like to encourage the European Commission to investigate together with the sector how the funds could be used in conjunction with the financial instruments from the EIB and existing EU funds, such as CEF funds, in order to optimise the financial means dedicated to the sector.

Furthermore, your Rapporteur regrets the absence of reference to intermodal freight logistics. Clearly, inland waterways have a very important role to play in the reinforcement of a sustainable freight transport chain in Europe. The current trend in Europe is, unfortunately, a decline of the waterways modal share. This trend needs to be reversed so that Europe could respond to the challenges of transport, i.e. congestion, environmental impact and energy needs.

Finally, your Rapporteur believes that a well-structured policy with achievable short- and mid-term goals would be an asset to a sector with high potential. Certainty concerning the legal framework is with no doubt a pre-condition to attract or stimulate investments in the sector thereby ensuring the sustainable development of the inland waterway market. She therefore calls on the Commission to put flesh on the bones of NAIADES II and provide as soon as possible concrete actions that takes into account the specificities of the sector largely based on SMEs.