Budapest Convention (2005) on the Contract for the Carriage of Goods by Inland Waterways (CMNI): authorisation for Austria, Belgium and Poland to ratify or accede

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PURPOSE: to authorise Austria, Belgium and Poland to ratify or to accede to, the Budapest Convention on the Contract for the Carriage of Goods by Inland Waterways (CMNI).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: The Union is working towards the establishment of a common judicial area based on the principle of mutual recognition of judicial decisions. The Budapest Convention on the contract for the carriage of goods by inland waterways (CMNI) is a valuable instrument for promoting inland navigation across Europe.

The Convention has been adopted by the Diplomatic Conference organised jointly by the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine and the Danube Commission in collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

The Budapest Convention is not open to participation by regional economic integration organisations. As a result, the Union is not in a position to become a Contracting Party to the Budapest Convention. Eleven of the Member States of the Union, namely Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia are Contracting Parties to the Budapest Convention. Belgium ratified the Convention on 5 August 2008.

Austria and Poland, which have navigable inland waterways coming within the scope of the Convention, expressed their interest in becoming Contracting Parties. The remaining Member States of the Union indicated that they do not have inland waterways covered by the Budapest Convention and thus they do not have an interest in ratifying or acceding to the Convention.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes that the Council authorise Austria and Poland to ratify or to accede to, the Budapest Convention on the Contract for the Carriage of Goods by Inland Waterways (CMNI). The Convention, which entered into force on 1 April 2005, has proven to be a great success and contributes to the internal market in the field of transport. It aims to harmonise contractual and inland navigational standards among European countries.