

Freight transport system: improving the environmental performance, programme Marco Polo PACT

2002/0038(COD) - 04/02/2002 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to grant Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system. **CONTENT** : the present proposal features in the Commission work programme for 2001 under the reference 2001/175. The Marco Polo programme was announced in the Commission White Paper also published in 2001. Taking into account the positive experiences with the PACT programme, the Community should dispose of a practical and market-oriented instrument, which supports its fight against congestion in the road freight sector and its ambitious goals to improve the environmental performance of the transport system as a whole. The present proposal intends to set up such an instrument (to be known as the Marco Polo programme). Therefore, the proposed Regulation establishes a single financing instrument for actions reducing road congestion and improving the environmental performance of the transport system for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2010. The proposed financial framework for the implementation of Marco Polo programme for the period 1 January 2003 to 31 December 2007 shall be EUR 115 million. The Marco Polo programme shall contribute to maintaining the modal repartition on freight transport at its 1998 levels. To achieve this objective, it shall support actions in reducing environmental impacts from freight transport. By the end of the programme, a traffic shift of the expected yearly aggregate increase of international road freight traffic, measured in tonne-kilometres, to short sea shipping, rail and inland waterways should be achieved. More specifically, as a benchmark, it sets the ambitious objective to maintain the traffic share between the various transport modes for the year 2010 at its 1998 level. The Marco Polo programme is one of the measures to achieve this objective in the international freight transport sector. The Marco Polo programme proposes three different types of intervention, which complement each other. Modal shift actions should lead to immediate and substantial traffic shift from road to the other less congested modes. These actions will have a high short term effect on traffic shift. Three main orientations are foreseen: 1) start-up support for new non-road freight transport services, which should be viable in the mid-term ("modal shift actions"); 2) support for launching freight services or facilities of strategic European interest ("catalyst actions"); 3) stimulating co-operative behaviour in the freight logistics market ("common learning actions"). The proposed Regulation is applicable to modal shift actions: - involving the territory of at least two Member States; - involving the territory of at least one Member State and the territory of a third country. The expected results of the Marco Polo programme are a yearly aggregate shift of 12 billion tonne-kilometre freight from international road transport to short sea, rail and inland waterway.