

Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network

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The committee adopted the report by Philip BRADBURN (EPP-ED, UK) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure: - waterways or canals which link two European motorways of the sea and help to shorten sea routes, increase efficiency and save shipping time should form part of the trans-European network of motorways of the sea; - Parliament should be consulted about the designation of a "European Coordinator". Moreover, the progress reports the Coordinator is required to prepare for the Commission should also be addressed to Parliament so that it can monitor progress properly; - the Commission should draw up a report every three years on the progress of priority projects and the level of involvement of the various financial partners concerned. If it proposes any amendments to the list of priority projects in Annex III, the Council and Parliament should be fully involved in this process under the codecision procedure; - funding should be concentrated on the priority projects, i.e. the projects in Annex III declared to be of European interest. Determination of the projects in Annex III is governed solely by the codecision procedure as laid down in the Treaty, and the committee specified that any arbitrary setting of priorities with regard to those projects should be inadmissible. MEPs were concerned that the codecision procedure should not be circumvented by the "Quick Start" initiative, adopted by the Transport Council in December 2003, which identifies a number of component projects, chosen from within the TENs 29 corridors, on which Community funding should be focused over the next three years. In another amendment, the committee attempted to provide a legal basis for the 'Quick Start' initiative by stating that the Commission could propose to Parliament and Council that some of the Annex III projects be pushed ahead as a priority; - Parliament should also be consulted before any withdrawal of the classification of a project as a project of European interest. Other amendments sought to modify some of the 29 projects listed in Annex III. In particular, MEPs felt that the current definition of Project 21 concerning motorways of the sea was too imprecise. They therefore called for the Commission to publish, within one year, "a list of specific projects upon which work may commence during the current programming period, for each of the seas concerned".