

Inland waterway transport: Community fleet capacity policy

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The rapporteur will recommend the House to approve Council's common position with a view to adopting a Council regulation on a Community-fleet capacity policy to promote inland waterway transport. Most of the amendments from first reading in December 1999 have been incorporated in the common position. Parliament had tabled seven amendments, aiming at clarifying certain points of the proposal as well as increasing its efficiency. The proposal aims at replacing Council Regulation 1101/89 on structural improvements in inland waterway transport, which ceases to apply after 28 April 1999. Proposing to extend in part this regulation, the Commission seeks to maintain the market situation for this sector and to avoid serious disturbances by introducing transitional arrangements. This would avoid that the effects of scrapping measures, which were introduced in 1990 and aimed at reducing the sector's overcapacity, are nullified by the introduction of the free market in this sector. Thus, the systems carried out since 1990, the so-called "old for new" system is retained but the ratio will be gradually reduced over a period of four years, removing all conditions attached to putting new vessels into service. After this is achieved, the capacity regulation system will be replaced by a monitoring system and a standby mechanism which, solely in the event of a serious crisis in the market, will allow the "old for new" rule to be revived, with or without structural improvement measures. Mrs SCHIERHUBER takes the view that further delay could jeopardise the common position coming into force in time, thus risking serious disturbances in the market from 28 April 1999.