

Inland waterway transport: Community fleet capacity policy

1998/0281(SYN) - 28/09/1998 - Legislative proposal

OBJECTIVE: the proposal for a regulation seeks to ensure that inland waterway transport can offer an alternative to other forms of transport and thus contribute to achieving the aim of sustainable mobility.

SUBSTANCE: because of the specific characteristics of the inland navigation sector, in particular as regards capacity, and the structural changes on the transport market necessitated by the liberalisation of the market on 1 January 2000, there is a need to have a joint approach to achieving the same objective to ensure transitional arrangements for regulating capacity and then a standby mechanism. This new proposal replaces Council Regulation 1101/89/EEC and enables Community coordination of capacity policy to be maintained while not negating the benefits of the structural improvement measures carried out at Community level since 1989, and while moving from a phase of Community intervention on the market over a maximum five year period in order to ensure uniformity and the necessary market transparency. The gradual reduction of the 'Old for New' ratios over a five year period will enable the sector to prepare for the free market: - to soak up (over five years) the extra costs arising from the higher special contributions paid before 28 April 1999; - to allow more efficient modernisation of the fleet; - to feel reassured about the future in that the standby mechanism provides a means of maintaining a form of surveillance without constraints, based on the market observation system now being set up, which should prevent subsequent slipping back towards overinvestment and overcapacity in the sector.