Short-distance sea transport : an effective alternative in a sustainable transport chain. 2nd report

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PURPOSE : to promote short-distance transport by sea in Europe (second two-yearly progress report). CONTENT : the Commission presented a communication on short-distance transport in 1995 and a follow-up report in 1997. The Commission is now presenting a new communication which contains a follow-up report. In its communication, the Commission reviews the possibilities offered by short-distance transport by sea in the framework of sustainable, safe mobility and studies the incorporation of this mode into Community logistic and intermodal chains, its image and the barriers to its development. There are 3 main reasons for promoting short-distance transport by sea in the Community, an activity which, like the Commission has noted, has developed considerably between 1990 and 1997: a) to favour sustainable development of transport in general by promoting this mode which constitutes an ecological and safe replacement to road transport the network of which is saturated; b) to reinforce cohesion within the Community, to improve links between Member States and between the regions of Europe and to revitalise the peripheral regions; c) to ensure that short-distance transport by sea becomes an integral part of the transport logistics chain and takes the form of a truly door-to-door service. In order to carry out these objectives, the Commission recommends taking the following measures: - working towards making sea transport safer and more ecological, and thus more sustainable, so that companies introduce these benefits as slection criteria in their commercial strategies; - working towards the integration of short-distance transport by sea in the intermodal transport chain. It is necessary to make this mode an interesting option for transport users by offering them door-to-door services which are of a high level of quality, regularity and frequency; - looking to combine the different modes and intervene in logistic management of the supply chains in order to offer complete door-to-door services with one single office; - look to combine, if possible, the short-distance transport by sea with, in particularly, more ecological modes of intermodal transport in the chain; - advertise short-distance transport by sea by making Round Tables participate and put them in charge of the relations in the Member States; - to prompt the port authorities to foresee the construction of terminals especially for short-distance transport by sea and reserve it to this activity; - to increase the production of ports so that short-distance sea transport is able to reply to supply demands just in time; - create a framework to invent the best port practices and disseminate the gathered information to the ports and their clients; - reconsider the obligation imposed in certain ports to systematically appeal to the pilot services; - create a Round Table in charge of examining questions relating to short-distance transport by sea; - continue the sum of infrastructure costs and study the concept of covered costs based on the same principles for all the modes of transport; - to foresee the adoption of the identical application forms in the Member States for the arrival and departure of vessels.