Common transport policy: medium and long term programme 1995-2000

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Parliament adopted by 304 votes to 10 with 21 abstentions a report by Mr Eolo PARODI (UPE,I) on the Commission communication concerning the Common Transport Policy (Action Programme 1995-2000). In general terms, Parliament regrets the absence of proposals specifically relating to the environment in the Commission's working programme. It calls for a review of the substantial aids which currently distort competition between the various modes of transport and regrets that the programme contains no data on measures to combat organized crime in connection with transport operations effected under the Community transit system. Concerning social aspects, it calls for a detailed study into the impact of transport liberalization. It considers that the Commission should give greater attention to monitoring the implementation of rules relating to working conditions and times in this sector. Road transport: in this sector Parliament calls on the Commission to table a proposal for the introduction of uniform motor vehicle taxes and uniform taxes on mineral oil for long distance road haulage. It regrets the lack of any overall strategy to curb the projected increase in traffic and calls for the introduction of a strategic road safety ban, including in particular the harmonization at European level of three-point seat belts on coaches and buses and compulsory wearing of seat belts, roadworthiness checks, a points system for driving licences, speed limits, permitted alcohol levels for drivers, insurance procedures in the event of an accident, road signposting, vehicle safety equipment, and the compulsory fitting of spray suppression systems on lorries. Parliament also called on the Commission to confirm the precise emission reduction targets in order to achieve a 20% reduction in the 1990 C02 emissions by the year 2005 and to reduce emissions of other harmful substances to 50%. * Air transport: regretting the absence of a global air transport strategy, Parliament stresses once again the need to establish a unified European Union air traffic management and control system and in particular the adoption and strengthening of standards concerning airworthiness certificates, the safety of aircraft cabins, civil aviation accidents and disasters, the health of cabin crews, common requirements in terms of vocational training and qualifications, noise pollution and emissions produced by aircraft and the protection of passengers. It calls for the strict application of the principle of 'one time, last time' to state aids in the air transport sector and stresses the need for an authority to oversee ATC (Air Traffic Control) at European level. It welcomes the fact that the Commission document addresses the issue of nitrogen emissions from aircraft and calls on the Commission to submit as a matter of urgency proposals in relation to flying time and working hours of pilots and cabin staff. * Transport by inland waterway: Parliament expresses the hope that a report on measures to encourage the position of inland waterway transport will be submitted before 1 January 1998. The report should pay particular attention to the danger that the continued scrapping of smaller vessels will deprive increasingly large areas in the Union of inland waterway transport services, the strengthening of the position of inland waterway transport in intermodal transport and an accompanying social policy in order to prevent reorganization problems. * Transport by sea: Parliament considers that transport by sea, in particular cabotage, should be regarded as part of the Trans-European Networks and linked more effectively to the other modes of transport (road, rail, inland waterway, inland ports). The programme of action should seek to improve national coastguard services, introduce binding rules concerning the inspection of vessels, the designation of sensitive areas in Community waters and the establishment of the safest sea routes for different kinds of vessels. It calls for the adoption of legal and tax incentives to encourage the development of the European fleet, such as the setting-up of the EUROS register and the introduction of measures to discourage the use of flags of convenience. * Rail transport: while considering the proposed liberalization measures to be broadly sufficient for the development of European railways, Parliament expresses the view that rail liberalization will achieve success only if all modes of transport bear the external costs to which they give rise. It therefore calls for harmonization of the rules of competition and social provisions for all modes of transport. * Transport in urban areas: the European Parliament calls for the action programme to include measures to increase accessibility in urban areas (use

of electric vehicles, development of public transport, establishment of free car parks on the outskirts of main towns and cities, coupled with a frequent and subsidized shuttle service, the establishment of cycle paths, the safety of pedestrians and restriction of air and noise pollution). It considers that particular attention should be paid to people with reduced mobility and that the notion of public service should be redefined in order to reconcile market forces with the uncompromising ethics of public service. Finally, it calls for measures to improve urban waterway transport and to seek ways of developing more environmentally-friendly means of propulsion. * Trans-European Networks: Parliament considers it essential to increase substantially funding for Trans-European Transport Networks, stressing the particular priority which must be given to encouraging partnership arrangements between the private and public sectors. Finally, in order to achieve maximum cost-effectiveness with minimum environmental impact, Parliament stresses the need for measures to promote combined transport systems. * External relations: Parliament calls for the European Union to reach specific air and land transport agreements with all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean area wherever possible, giving priority to transport safety. Finally, it calls on the EU to adopt a common policy on external civil aviation agreements and calls on each bilateral agreement negotiated between the European Union and a third country to cover areas such as the granting of cabotage rights for foreign airlines on a reciprocal basis.