

Short Sea Shipping

2004/2161(INI) - 12/04/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on an own-initiative report drafted by Robert NAVARRO (PES, FR) by 589 votes in favour, 7 against and 13 abstentions. It called for the modal shift from road transport to short sea shipping to be encouraged since the latter is an environmentally-friendly mode of transport. Motorways of the Sea with solid environmental requirements must be established.

Parliament stated that the administrative procedures which hinder the development of short sea shipping should be reduced as much as possible without compromising aspects relating to security and safety, particularly by making full use of electronic communication possibilities. It also called for the development of high-quality corridors for short sea shipping between EU Member States, with public and private participation as well as use of instruments relating to the trans-European transport network and the Marco Polo programme.

Priority should be given to investment in infrastructure in order to improve access to ports from both land and sea, including cross-border projects within the trans-European transport network. Parliament supported the Commission programmes aimed at simplifying the legal framework applying to short sea shipping and inland waterway transport, and encouraging the creation of one-stop shops by simplifying administrative and customs formalities. Parliament stressed the potential of short sea shipping as a complementary mode of transport available very quickly and at low cost pending completion of certain trans-European transport network railway infrastructures. It cited the pressing need for alternative means of transport between France and Spain pending the opening, in about 2020, of a connection between Montpellier and Figueras.

Parliament went on to discuss the following matters:

- a European uniform system of liability for the multimodal chain;
- the need to settle the issue of the standardisation of ILUs, with interoperability being ensured between maritime transport, inland waterways, rail and road transport;
- short sea shipping is covered by Community customs legislation, and the Parliament declared itself in favour of optimum use of the exemptions offered by Community customs rules and the promotion of customs facilities operated under simplified systems for goods which may be moved freely within the framework of authorised regular shipping services;
- the setting-up of further electronic offices at sea ports where all mandatory formalities can be completed in a single operation;
- support structures for short sea shipping: Parliament welcomed the European Short Sea Network action plan and called on the promotion centres to implement it as quickly as possible.
- a strategic environmental impact assessment of the planned Motorways of the Sea must be performed jointly by Member States and the Commission. This EIA should examine the environmental impact not only of the route itself but also of port developments and the impact on transport movements in the hinterland;
- further, on environmental matters, Parliament recalled the need to promote the positive environmental image of short sea shipping, particularly as regards water and air pollution, and therefore to lay down

minimum environmental requirements such as the use of low-sulphur fuel and limits for emissions (of SO_x, NO_x, CO₂, etc.) into air and water;

Finally, Parliament recognised the importance of the concept of Motorways of the Sea for short sea shipping, chiefly due to co financing infrastructure measures in appropriate cases. It called for the adoption of effective, clear and adequate financing arrangements for actions linked to Motorways of the Sea and short sea shipping lines, allowing the optimum level of complementarity or indeed additionality of financing so as to enable lasting and viable new lines to be set up.