

# **Programme Marco Polo II (2007-2013), financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of freight transport**

2004/0157(COD) - 22/11/2005

The committee adopted the report by Reinhard RACK (EPP-ED, AT) amending - under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure - the proposed regulation establishing the second "Marco Polo" programme for improving the environmental performance of the freight transport system. The main amendments were as follows:

- as projects in the inland waterways sector are often not on a large enough scale to reach the minimum support threshold, the programme should stipulate that "several coordinated projects" may count as eligible actions;
- a number of amendments sought to reduce the minimum subsidy thresholds for the various categories of actions, thereby enabling more SMEs to participate;
- "freight tonne-kilometres" should be fixed as the evaluation criterion, rather than "tonne-kilometres", on account of the high proportion of volume goods, which tend to be bulky and limited in weight, and which account for the majority of vehicle-kilometres on roads. MEPs argued that transferring light goods from road to other modes would have a drastic impact on the number of trucks on the roads;
- the committee wanted it to be possible for projects to be submitted by a regional authority of a Member State or an intermediary organisation, thereby making things simpler and less burdensome for SMEs. Financial assistance contracts should also keep administrative burdens to a minimum;
- the exchange of best practice should be encouraged;
- if the results of the ex-post evaluation of the 'Marco Polo I' programme reveal a need to adjust the programme, provision should be made for the Commission to submit proposals accordingly.