



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



## **Council conclusions on the European maritime transport space without barriers**

*2935th TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS and ENERGY Council meeting  
Brussels, 30 March 2006*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union

HAVING REGARD TO

- the communications, conclusions, resolutions, action plans and specific measures aimed at promoting Short Sea Shipping adopted by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council since 1999,
- the conclusions adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Motorways of the Sea held in Ljubljana on 24 January 2006;
- the 2006 Commission Communication on the mid-term review of the Transport White Paper;
- the Commission Communication on the Integrated Maritime Policy and the Commission Communication on Ports Policy.

RECOGNISING that nearly 40% of Internal Market trade is carried by Short Sea Shipping, which is an essential part of co-modal European transport chains for moving intra-Community cargoes;

# **P R E S S**

ACKNOWLEDGING the progress made in the development of Short Sea Shipping over the years, in particular the work done by the national Short Sea Promotion Centres (SPCs), the European Shortsea Network and the Motorways of the Sea and Short Sea Shipping Focal Points;

CONSIDERING that Short Sea Shipping contributes to the attainment of the goals of the Lisbon Strategy and constitutes an effective way of reducing congestion and the harmful environmental effects of transport and, in a climate context, of reducing carbon dioxide emissions, of increasing and improving the flow of goods within the European transport system and cohesion within the Community, and of enhancing connections for peripheral regions and islands and Member States dependent on maritime transport;

EMPHASISING that the logistics and maritime transport industry has a primary responsibility for the development of Short Sea Shipping, and that the European institutions play a vital role in reducing administrative barriers and creating favourable conditions for the development of Short Sea Shipping;

UNDERLINING that there are still a number of administrative bottlenecks that hinder the development of Short Sea Shipping, in particular those pointed out in the Commission communication;

ACKNOWLEDGING that technical initiatives, in particular surveillance capabilities for goods and ships by coastal, port and customs authorities, including satellites (EGNOS/GALILEO and GMES), and also the upcoming e-maritime and e-Freight systems have an essential role in simplifying administrative procedures ; and considering that the SafeSeaNet network for vessel traffic monitoring, the Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) and Long-Range Identification and Tracking of Ships (LRIT) should be used to their full potential in order, inter alia, to simplify administrative procedures;

1. RECOGNISES the need to continue promoting Short Sea Shipping and ensuring the further development of Motorways of the Sea in order to reduce the overall environmental effects of transport and to provide an efficient, more competitive, seamless and cost-effective transport system for the European economy; and CONSIDERS that the present economic downturn renders more important the initiatives for the promotion of Short Sea Shipping;
2. WELCOMES the Commission's "Communication and Action Plan with a view to establishing a European maritime transport space without barriers"; and SUPPORTS the objective of extending the internal market to sea transport between ports located in the EU, by simplifying, and speeding up through, inter alia, the use of IT, administrative procedures in intra-EU maritime transport, aiming to make it more attractive, more efficient and more competitive;
3. STRESSES the importance of the better regulation strategy and the need for the Commission to coordinate its activities in the different domains in order to eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy and not offset the benefits of the European maritime transport space without barriers by the introduction of new administrative burdens;

4. UNDERLINES the urgent need to give priority to the amendment of the regulation laying down the implementing provisions of the Community customs code announced in the Communication in order to reduce the barriers for intra-Community maritime transport solutions and to call on Member States to develop systems for simplified national administrative procedures;
5. WELCOMES the Commission's proposal for a Directive aiming at rationalising vessel-related and goods-related reporting and forms required by maritime transport directives and replacing Directive 2002/6/EC on reporting formalities for vessels arriving in and/or departing from ports; UNDERTAKES to give it proper priority within the legislative work programme to further rationalise administrative procedures for vessels arriving at and departing from EU ports by making compatible IMO/FAL requirements and community regulations;
6. INVITES the Commission to study the possibility of simplified administrative procedures for vessels sailing mainly between EU ports and having a call in a third country or a free zone, while maintaining high anti-fraud and anti-counterfeit standards;
7. RECOMMENDS the continuation of the exchange of views between the Commission, Member States and the industry concerned to find the most practical way to favour competition within and between ports to promote Short Sea Shipping;
8. INVITES the Commission to present, as soon as possible, guidelines to clarify the application of Community legislation requesting veterinary, zootechnical and phytosanitary documentary checks, as well as checks in other possible domains, in order to speed up port operations, consistent with customs legislation;
9. INVITES the Commission to carry out, in cooperation with Member States and stakeholders, the necessary preparatory tasks and studies for the presentation in 2010 of further medium term measures;
10. EMPHASISES the need for further action to reduce the administrative barriers for maritime transport, in particular for Short Sea Shipping, on the basis of existing systems and best practices; and to rationalise rules on carriage of dangerous goods for Short Sea Shipping without reducing the current safety level;
11. STRESSES the need to facilitate transport by sea by reaching a level of fully IT-based communications, including to enhance electronic data transmission, on the basis of existing or established systems, through the development of e-Maritime systems and single electronic window solutions, providing, where appropriate, Community funding support within the ceilings of the present and upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework;

12. UNDERLINES the need to take initiatives, together with third countries, at the appropriate international bodies to reduce administrative barriers for international maritime transport, with the aim to levelling the playing field for maritime transport;
  13. SUPPORTS the Commission in improving the management and development of the central SafeSeaNet system at policy level, considering the possibility of processing port information through SafeSeaNet; AGREES that the Commission and Member States should organise a rational distribution of information regarding ships and goods through interoperable SafeSeaNet and e-Customs systems;
  14. AGREES that Member States should – as far as possible – coordinate inspections in ports and study the possibility of establishing separation areas for intra-EU goods, improve use of electronic manifests, and, where appropriate, the use of Pilot Exemption Certificates, and to further facilitate administrative communication by reducing language barriers;
  15. STRESSES the imperative need for all these actions aiming at facilitating the Short Sea Shipping to be implemented without reducing protection at EU external borders or affecting the environment, safety, security or customs and tax revenue and without inducing adverse effects on other goods, shipping and port operations;
  16. INVITES the Commission to present, as soon as possible, the future vision for the implementation and correlation between modern information based initiatives, such as e-Freight, e-maritime, SafeSeaNet and e-Customs;
  17. INVITES the Commission to monitor the progress made in the establishment of the European maritime transport space without barriers, and to present remedial action if needed, at the latest in the regular report on Short Sea Shipping scheduled for 2012. "
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