



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on short sea shipping

***2772nd TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS and ENERGY Council meeting
Brussels, 11 December 2006***

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"HAVING REGARD TO

- (1) the Commission's 2003 Programme for the Promotion of Short Sea Shipping and the Commission Communication on the mid-term review of that Programme;
- (2) the Commission Communication on the mid-term review of the Transport White Paper;
- (3) the Commission Communication on Freight Transport Logistics;
- (4) the Presidency Conclusions on Short Sea Shipping of the meeting of the European Union Transport Ministers in Amsterdam on 10 July 2004;
- (5) the conclusions adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Motorways of the Sea held in Ljubljana on 24 January 2006;
- (6) the consultations on Short Sea Shipping in 2005 and 2006,

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CONSIDERS that the promotion of Short Sea Shipping contributes to the attainment of the goals of the Lisbon Strategy, contributes to the reduction of harmful effects caused by the rapid growth in heavy goods transport on roads, increases and improves cohesion within the Community, *inter alia*, by enhancing connections with peripheral and insular areas, states dependent on sea transport and neighbouring areas, and between areas divided by natural barriers;

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RECOGNIZES the positive development of Short Sea Shipping in the last years;

EMPHASIZES that it is important for the European Union and Member States to continue their work to facilitate and simplify operating conditions for Short Sea Shipping;

ACKNOWLEDGES that the actions proposed in the Commission's Programme for the Promotion of Short Sea Shipping go in the right direction and WELCOMES the significant improvements and growth of Short Sea Shipping;

NOTES that Short Sea Shipping plays an important role in Europe's transport system individually and in combination with other modes of transport;

RECALLS that an emphasis on freight logistics can be beneficial to Short Sea Shipping;

CONSIDERS that most of the actions in the Commission's Programme for the Promotion of Short Sea Shipping should be continued and retargeted as suggested by the mid-term review of the Programme to further improve the conditions for this mode;

WELCOMES the progress of the motorways of the sea projects in the process of being developed between the Member States;

UNDERLINES, however, that there are still a number of factors hindering the further development of Short Sea Shipping, such as: (1) there are still complex administrative procedures, specially applications thereof, for Short Sea Shipping, (2) this mode of transport has not yet been fully integrated into the door-to-door transport logistics chain, including inland destinations, and (3) this mode of transport requires high level of efficiency in ports, and facilitated access thereto, and the development of hinterland transport links;

AGREES, therefore, that the Member States, the Commission and industry should amplify their efforts, in particular in the following areas to improve the operating conditions for and attractiveness of Short Sea Shipping:

1. Regulatory framework

- The existing regulatory framework of Short Sea Shipping could be further streamlined to enhance overall efficiency, taking account of the principle of the Lisbon Strategy and better regulation;
- Given that Short Sea Shipping within the Community is subject to burdensome administrative procedures, the current procedures should be streamlined and simplified;
- In order to create a level playing field, harmonisation and approximation of diverse application of Community customs rules in various Member States should continue;

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- Pragmatic solutions should be sought as regards security procedures to minimise their hampering of Short Sea Shipping, such as the alternative or equivalent security arrangements, as provided for in Regulation (EC) No 725/2004, and the measures for roll-on-roll-off vessels, as provided for in Directive 2005/65/EC;
- Short Sea Shipping is energy-efficient and, in general, less harmful to the environment than other modes. Nevertheless, to maintain the environmentally friendly image and performance of Short Sea Shipping, environmental improvements particularly of emissions should be urgently pursued, specially in the areas of SO_x, NO_x and particulates. To this end, work should be intensified at the appropriate fora, in particular in the IMO.

2. Development and Promotion

- The promotion of Short Sea Shipping at Community and Member State level should be continued. The frameworks offered by the Motorways of the Sea concept, national Shortsea Promotion Centres and their European Shortsea Network, and Short Sea Shipping Focal Points should be fully utilised. Promotion should actively target all relevant actors in the door-to-door transport logistics chain, including inland destinations;
- The Shortsea Promotion Centres and their European Shortsea Network have contributed considerably to the promotion of Short Sea Shipping and its growth. Their work should be further encouraged so as to ensure that their efficient operation can continue;
- Community programmes, such as Marco Polo or trans-European transport network, including Motorways of the Sea, should continue to be implemented with increased intensity;
- Promotion should, in particular, continue urging market players to integrate Short Sea Shipping more tightly into the whole transport logistics supply chain, *inter alia* by developing ports, as strategic nodes, and links to the hinterland, and services;
- Ports, as efficient and seamless nodal points for transshipment between the land and the sea, should further enhance and improve their services for Short Sea Shipping; work towards ensuring high-quality services and unrestricted and efficient access to ports from sea and from the hinterland should continue;
- The promotion and the implementation of Short Sea Shipping and Motorways of the Sea should take into account special circumstances and particularities of different maritime areas and the regions in the hinterland;

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- Motorways of the Sea should be further developed as integrated short-sea solutions involving the co-ordination and the co-operation between all actors, private and/or public, in the door-to-door transport logistics chain, including inland destinations. The seamless flow of cargo is imperative for these Motorways of the Sea to become a viable choice;
- Work towards making Motorways of the Sea more operational is ongoing and should be intensified. The first Motorways of the Sea under TEN-T financial assistance programme can become operational by 2010. For this, analyses of the projects and the alignment of availability of financial resources should be carried out;
- Research and development in the maritime sector should focus on safer, cleaner and more efficient vessels, cargo handling technology, terminals, port operations, logistics and environmental improvements in shipping.

3. Co-operation between the Member States and the European Commission

- Real time vessel monitoring and positioning systems in relation to maritime traffic in European waters will assist the Short Sea Shipping performance. At the same time, technological development will contribute to improving safety at sea, reducing environmental risks and enhancing the surveillance of environmental incidents at sea. Advanced capabilities provided by GALILEO could contribute to the high performance of this mode;
- A single window for submitting administrative documents and one-stop administrative shops for physical checks would make an important contribution to the efficiency of Short Sea Shipping and to minimising its administrative burden. Electronic clearance, when needed, should be pursued throughout the Community;
- The Commission, in co-operation with the Member States, could examine how to make the information of "Authorised Regular Shipping Services" available in easily accessible form to all concerned and how to further improve the performance of "Authorised Regular Shipping Services" instrument;
- Work on identifying and eliminating bottlenecks hampering Short Sea Shipping and subsequent hinterland connections has been a success and should be continued together with disseminating best practices. All concerned by any new bottlenecks at any level of activity should be encouraged to report them to the bottleneck exercise so that further solutions can be sought between industry, the Member States and Commission;
- To make it easier to monitor the development of Short Sea Shipping, maritime statistical information should be further developed.

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PROPOSES that monitoring of the implementation of the Programme for the Promotion of Short Sea Shipping should be continued, and that the Programme should be reviewed at regular intervals; and

UNDERLINES that the monitoring of the Programme and any possible revisions should occur in close interaction between the Commission, Member States, Short Sea Promotion Centres, industry representing transport users and service providers".

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