



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 23 May 2011

10284/11

**TRANS 147
MAR 73**

REPORT

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: COREPER/Council

No prev. doc.: 10017/11 TRANS 139 MAR 69

Subject: *Preparation of the Council meeting (Transport, Telecommunications and Energy) on 16 June 2011*

Council conclusions on “The way ahead towards integrated and competitive EU inland waterway transport”

- Adoption

1. On 7 April 2011, the Presidency organised a High Level Conference on “Integration of Inland Waterway Transport into the Economy and NAIADES” in Esztergom (Hungary), which adopted conclusions¹.
2. On the basis of these conference conclusions, the Presidency prepared draft Council conclusions on inland waterway transport and submitted them for examination to the Land Transport Working Party.

¹ Doc. 9049/11 TRANS 119 MAR 60.

3. The Land Transport Working Party examined the draft Council conclusions on 4, 11 and 18 May 2011. At the last meeting, agreement was reached on a final text.
4. On 4 May 2011, the Commission presented its mid-term progress report on the implementation of the NAIADES Action Programme for the promotion of inland waterway transport², the findings of which were taken into account in the preparation of the draft Council conclusions.
5. Following the above, Coreper is invited to examine and endorse the draft Council conclusions as set out in the Annex, and submit them for adoption to the TTE Council on 16 June 2011.

² Doc. 8818/11 TRANS 114 MAR 57.

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COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON
THE WAY AHEAD TOWARDS INTEGRATED AND COMPETITIVE EU INLAND
WATERWAY TRANSPORT

The Council of the European Union,

HAVING REGARD TO:

- the Council conclusions of 2 December 2010 on full integration of waterborne transport into the EU transport and logistics chains³;
- the Commission White Paper “Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system”⁴;
- the Commission Communication on the promotion of inland waterway transport “NAIADES” – an integrated European action programme for inland waterway transport⁵;
- the Commission mid-term progress report on the implementation of the NAIADDES Action Programme for the promotion of inland waterway transport⁶;

³ Doc. 16266/10.

⁴ Doc. 8333/11.

⁵ Doc. 5583/06.

⁶ Doc. 8818/11.

CONSIDERING how important inland waterway transport is for the European economy and the sustainability of the European transport system; AFFIRMING that further action is needed to promote inland waterway transport in order to achieve its full economic potential and its integration into the logistics chains;

RECALLING the multi-purpose use of waterways and the potential contribution inland waterway transport can make towards diminishing external effects of transport through a more efficient use of energy and less emission of pollutants as well as through safer freight transport operations and reduced congestion on roads;

EMPHASISING the availability of free capacity on inland waterways and the possibility to increase inland waterway transport with relatively low infrastructure costs, including on short and medium distances;

UNDERLINING the decisive potential of spatial planning and territory management in the process of re-integration of economically, socially and environmentally sustainable inland waterways transport in the economies;

CONSIDERING that the preservation of the competitive advantages of inland waterway transport with regard to the environmental performance of the fleet is necessary;

HAVING REGARD TO the potential for technological development and environmentally friendly modernisation of the fleet which, however, is hampered by the insufficient financial strength of the sector;

- (1) CONSIDERS that it is necessary to improve navigability by removing existing bottlenecks along inland waterways and to establish intermodal connections from sea and inland ports to the hinterland, in particular links with rail, optimising ports as key modal interfaces and working towards full modal integration of logistic chains through the intelligent use of different transport modes and systems, based on their inherent characteristics;
- (2) EMPHASISES the importance of a well-maintained and modern network of smaller waterways as part of the supply chain, as well as the importance of facilitating the use and development of a diversified and economically viable fleet and of new logistic concepts;
- (3) UNDERLINES the potential of inland waterways for passenger transport and tourism;
- (4) CONSIDERS the further development and deployment of River Information Services (RIS) vital as a tool for safe, efficient and competitive inland waterway transport as well as for effective supply chain management; particular attention should be paid to the technical interoperability notably with other modal systems, such as SafeSeaNet, e-Maritime, e-Freight, and e-Customs, without prejudice to the competence of national and international authorities;
- (5) INVITES the Commission to consider, in close consultation with the sector (such as owners, operators and shipbuilders), appropriate non-discriminatory measures with a view to exploiting its potential for technological development and environmentally friendly transport;
- (6) POINTS to the need to attract qualified human resources onboard as well as to the field of ship operations, logistics and entrepreneurship;
- (7) NOTES the complexity of the current organisational structure of the sector and the need to facilitate decision-making between the different actors;

- (8) NOTES that the NAIADES Action programme will end in 2013 and the PLATINA support platform will come to an end in 2012; and STRESSES the need to ensure the continuity of the initiated measures on inland waterway transport and to keep the momentum created by NAIADES;
- (9) INVITES the Commission to launch an intermediate project, within the framework of the Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities, to bridge the gap between the end of PLATINA and the start of a possible follow-up to the current NAIADES programme; STRESSES the importance of sufficient financial resources for such an intermediate project, within the existing budget, to ensure an effective continuation;
- (10) INVITES the Commission to develop, at the latest by the end of 2011, a follow-up programme "NAIADES II", which should address the following issues:
- fleet modernisation;
 - strengthening of the market position of the sector;
 - human resources development, notably recruitment and training of personnel;
 - River Information Services;
 - safety and environment;
 - adaptation to climate change;
 - modal integration and logistics;
 - innovation and infrastructure;
 - the institutional and legal framework;
 - the external dimensions; and
 - communication and awareness-raising directed towards the industry, decision-makers and the general public;

- (11) NOTES that this programme shall also support the implementation and compliance monitoring of the existing legal framework and the preparation of new rules and standards, further development and operation of technical and statistical databases, reinforced co-operation between all EU stakeholders and administrations and support EU-wide thematic networks and expert groups;
- (12) UNDERLINES the importance of ensuring appropriate financial means, within agreed resources, in order to enable the effective implementation of the programme, without prejudice to the forthcoming negotiations on the next multiannual financial framework.
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