Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 31 January 2024
(OR. en)

6008/24
ADD 5

Interinstitutional File:
2024/0011(COD)

TRANS 33
MAR 16
CODEC 230
IA 27

COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	26 January 2024
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
No. Cion doc.:	SWD(2024) 16 final
Subject:	COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT Accompanying the document Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2005/44/EC on harmonised river information services (RIS) on inland waterways in the Community

Delegations will find attached document SWD(2024) 16 final.

Encl.: SWD(2024) 16 final

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 26.1.2024
SWD(2024) 16 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

Accompanying the document

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council

amending Directive 2005/44/EC on harmonised river information services (RIS) on inland waterways in the Community

{COM(2024) 33 final} - {SEC(2024) 38 final} - {SWD(2024) 15 final}

A. Need for action

What is the problem and why is it a problem at EU level?

River Information Services (RIS) support traffic and transport management in inland navigation. They aim to contribute to: (i) a safe and efficient transport process; and (ii) the use inland waterways to their fullest extent. The legislative process to regulate RIS at EU level started in 2005 with the adoption of the RIS Directive (Directive 2005/44/EC). The Directive lays down a framework for the deployment and use of harmonised, interoperable and open RIS aiming to increase the safety, efficiency and environmental friendliness of inland waterway transport (IWT) in the EU. At the same time, the Directive sought to facilitate interfaces between IWT and other transport modes (i.e. multimodal transport). Within the EU framework, the Directive sets out: (i) the general requirements for how RIS should be set up by the Member States; (ii) the areas for which standards need to be developed; and (iii) the principles to be followed. The actual technical guidelines and specifications are developed by the Commission and are adopted through secondary legislation.

Following an evaluation of the Directive carried out in 2021 and the stakeholder consultation, the problem identified in the impact assessment is the slow and fragmented deployment of RIS, which hampers the competitiveness and safety of the sector, and its contribution to the objectives of the European Green Deal.

What should be achieved?

The revision of the RIS Directive should provide an effective framework for the deployment and use of harmonised RIS in the EU with a focus on: (i) enabling improvements in the competitiveness and safety of the sector; and (ii) its contribution to the objectives of the European Green Deal. To this end, the initiative aims to address the problem identified. The specific objectives of the initiative are to: (i) ensure improved RIS data availability, improved access to RIS, and the use of harmonised standards; (ii) facilitate the integration of IWT into the multimodal chain; (iii) ensure the greater uptake and interoperability of digital solutions; and (iv) address data-protection concerns.

What is the value added of action at the EU level (subsidiarity)?

The 2021 evaluation concluded that the benefits of the Directive could not have been achieved at the national level, primarily due to the high fragmentation of both standards and implementation practices. The evaluation highlighted that the fragmentation in the deployment of RIS requires EU-level intervention due to the cross-border character of the IWT sector. This initiative will provide additional EU added value by improving the efficiency of RIS (in terms of technical standards, adoption processes, and the improved exchange of information), and by better integrating inland waterways into multimodal supply chains. Furthermore, even though the problem is geographically limited, impacting only those Member States with connected navigable waterways, action at EU level is more likely to ensure that solutions: (i) are uniform for all Member States concerned; and (ii) consistent with relevant initiatives under the European Green Deal, the sustainable and smart mobility strategy, and the NAIADES III action plan.

B. Solutions

What are the various options to achieve the objectives? Is there a preferred option or not? If not, why?

Three policy options (PO-A, PO-B, PO-C) have been designed and assessed to address the problems and the problem drivers that have been identified. All policy options contain various measures to help achieve the objectives of the initiative, although each option has a different level of effectiveness and efficiency.

PO-A includes two policy measures that are common to all three policy options: (i) ensuring data availability and quality in the Electronic Document and Records Management System (ERDMS); and (ii) introducing the European committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) for developing technical specifications for RIS. In addition, PO-A relies on guidelines to increase harmonisation of implementation of RIS, and introduces a complaint mechanism at the level of the Member States. In terms of links with other modes, PO-A provides for voluntary links with electronic freight transport information (eFTI) platforms. In addition, it provides legal clarity over the use of personal data where required.

PO-B goes further in supporting the development of RIS, by adding new standards on data for navigation and voyage planning, and establishing a RIS platform for data exchange. Additionally, it: (i) sets standards; (ii) requires links between RIS and systems used in other transport modes (e.g. maritime); (iii) mandates links with eFTI; and (iv) introduces standards for voluntary exchanges of information with maritime ports. It also aligns the scope of application with that of the TEN-T network.

PO-C strengthens the provisions of PO-B and adds further elements. To support the monitoring of implementation, it introduces a performance-measurement framework. It adds a number of elements requiring the electronic reporting of voyage plans to national transport authorities, and the sharing of all necessary cross-border data for traffic and transport management by the Member States. Furthermore, it makes mandatory the data exchanges with inland ports, while also introducing templates for personal data exchanges when required by national and international legislation.

PO-B is the preferred policy option, because it brings the best balance between the objectives that must be achieved, and has the best benefits-to-costs ratio of the policy options. It ensures a degree of proportionality in the intervention, and is fully in line with the subsidiarity principle. In addition, it does not introduce burdens for the private sector.

What are different stakeholders' views? Who supports which option?

Stakeholders widely supported the involvement of CESNI in the development and adoption of technical specifications. Stakeholders were also in agreement that RIS COMEX provides an important basis for further development of the RIS platform. A small number of RIS experts expressed the view that the Directive was already sufficiently broad, and that focus should instead be placed on implementation and on the introduction of guidelines, which was reflected in the approach under PO-A. Differences in opinions appeared in particular between Member State authorities and vessel operators over the likely costs and benefits of the complaint mechanism (Member States tended to be against) and of electronic voyage

reporting (vessel operators tended to be against). The links between RIS and eFTI triggered some discussions, with some Member State authorities considering that these links need to become mandatory, while vessel operators were more sceptical (while some saw this as a potential opening for business-to-business applications). Last but not least, there was clear concern from the side of vessel operators (and in particular those representing SMEs) about the use of personal data (though there did not appear to be a clear understanding of what would qualify as personal data).

C. Impacts of the preferred option

What are the benefits of the preferred option (if any, otherwise main ones)?

The preferred policy option (PO-B) results in total benefits estimated at EUR 450.4 million, expressed as present value over the whole period 2025-2050 relative to the baseline.

Vessel operators would benefit from adjustment-cost savings due to better-quality information and reduced efforts to collect the necessary information to plan their voyage (EUR 72.1 million expressed as a present value over 2025-2050 relative to the baseline). PO-B would also result in administrative-cost savings for vessel operators (of EUR 28.5 million), by reducing the need to re-register cargo information and report cargo information to ports. *RIS software-services providers* would experience adjustment-cost savings due to improved access to better-quality information, which will reduce the costs of their software applications (by EUR 8.1 million). For *national public authorities*, PO-B would result in administrative-cost savings through the electronic processing of cargo information (instead of paper cargo reports) and the phase-out of national platforms, which would be gradually replaced by RIS COMEX.

PO-B is also expected to result in indirect *benefits to society*, in terms of savings in external costs, estimated at EUR 311 million expressed as present value over the whole period 2025-2050 relative to the baseline. These are driven by the greater use of IWT and the shift away from road transport.

When considering the costs, the net benefits for the preferred policy option are estimated at EUR 356.7 million, expressed as present value over the whole period 2025-2050 relative to the baseline. PO-B has the highest benefit-to-cost ratio (4.8) of all the three options.

What are the costs of the preferred option (if any, otherwise main ones)?

For national public authorities, PO-B is expected to result in one-off adjustment costs of EUR 18.3 million to set up the required digital infrastructure, and administrative costs of EUR 75.3 million for managing and maintaining the required systems and services, expressed as present value over 2025-2050 relative to the baseline.

What are the impacts on SMEs and competitiveness?

The IWT sector is characterised by a very high share of SMEs – and even micro-enterprises – among the vessel operators, which are often family-owned businesses. Software-services providers represent a niche market, with less than 50 companies active in this area, most of which employ fewer than 250 people. For vessel operators, PO-B would result in net cost savings estimated at total EUR 100.6 million, expressed as present value over the whole period 2025-2050 relative to the baseline, primarily materialising in: (i) time saved for

planning voyages; (ii) time saved on reporting requirements; and (iii) improvements in navigation efficiency. Software-services providers would benefit from cost savings of total EUR 8.1 million through reduced efforts to collect basic information. Considering the very large share of SMEs among vessel operators and software-services providers, most of these net cost savings are expected to be attributed to SMEs, although the available data did not make it possible to estimate the split of these cost savings between the two groups of operators (i.e. SMEs and others).

Will there be significant impacts on national budgets and administrations?

Total costs for national public authorities are estimated at EUR 93.6 million, out of which EUR 18.3 million would be in adjustment costs and EUR 75.3 million in administrative costs. PO-B would also result in EUR 30.6 million in administrative-cost savings. Thus, the net costs for national public authorities are estimated at total EUR 63 million, expressed as present value over the whole period 2025-2050 relative to the baseline.

Will there be other significant impacts?

The initiative will have a positive impact on the application of the 'digital by default' principle. PO-B establishes a RIS Platform for exchange of RIS information. Furthermore, by mandating the use of eFTI, and by introducing better links with ports and other modes, PO-B will improve the interoperability of IWT through digital solutions. The revision does not aim to replicate existing systems and initiatives but to increase the links between existing systems and make use of existing solutions. It also does not aim to develop into a single digital tool for IWT, as it forms part of a family of applications like the databases for crews and vessel information.

Proportionality

The preferred policy option is considered to be the most proportionate option to what is necessary to reach the overall policy objectives.

D. Follow-up

When will the policy be reviewed?

Five years after the end of the implementation date of all the relevant legislation (including the adoption and entry into effect of the necessary implementing and delegated acts), the Commission should carry out an evaluation to verify to what extent the objectives of the initiative have been reached.