

Tuesday 22 November 2016

P8_TA(2016)0436

Unleashing the potential of waterborne passenger transport**European Parliament resolution of 22 November 2016 on unleashing the potential of waterborne passenger transport (2015/2350(INI))**

(2018/C 224/04)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) of 1974, as amended,
- having regard to the International Maritime Organisation Protocol of 1978 Relating to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships of 1973,
- having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2006,
- having regard to the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) to the UNFCCC and the 11th Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP 11) held in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper of 28 March 2011 entitled 'Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system' (COM(2011)0144),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 21 January 2009 entitled 'Strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2018' (COM(2009)0008),
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010 ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 May 2010 on strategic goals and recommendations for the EU's maritime transport policy until 2018 ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 September 2015 on the implementation of the 2011 White Paper on Transport: taking stock and the way forward towards sustainable mobility ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 concerning the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterway and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the Commission's report of 24 May 2016 on the application of Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010 concerning the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterway and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (COM(2016)0274),

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129.

⁽³⁾ OJ C 81 E, 15.3.2011, p. 10.

⁽⁴⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0310.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 334, 17.12.2010, p. 1.

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- having regard to the Commission Communication of 10 September 2013 entitled ‘Towards quality inland waterway transport — NAIADES II’ (COM(2013)0623),
 - having regard to Directive 2006/87/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 laying down technical requirements for inland waterway vessels ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to Directive 2009/45/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 May 2009 on safety rules and standards for passenger ships ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1090/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 November 2010 amending Directive 2009/42/EC on statistical returns in respect of carriage of goods and passengers by sea ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Council Directive 98/41/EC of 18 June 1998 on the registration of persons sailing on board passenger ships operating to or from ports of the Member States of the Community ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 3051/95 of 8 December 1995 on the safety management of roll-on/roll-off passenger ferries (ro-ro ferries) ⁽⁵⁾,
 - having regard to Directive 2012/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 November 2012 amending Council Directive 1999/32/EC as regards the sulphur content of marine fuels ⁽⁶⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission report of 16 October 2015 entitled ‘REFIT Adjusting Course: EU Passenger Ship Safety Legislation Fitness Check’ (COM(2015)0508),
 - having regard to the Commission report of 31 March 2016 entitled ‘REFIT Evaluation of Directive 2000/59/EC on port reception facilities for ship-generated waste and cargo residues’ (COM(2016)0168),
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A8-0306/2016),
- A. whereas Europe’s geography, with its long coastlines and many islands and rivers, offers extraordinary opportunities for sustainable waterborne passenger transport;
- B. whereas waterborne passenger transport in the fields of coastal (short sea) shipping, inland and maritime ferries, urban and peripheral mobility, cruises and tourism offers great potential for using available excess capacity in terms of both infrastructure and vessels, and plays a crucial role in connecting the different regions of the European Union, making it an important factor in enhancing cohesion; whereas cruise and ferry activity, moreover, stimulates coastal tourism, being one of the main maritime activities in Europe;
- C. whereas in recent years there has been a trend towards intensive development of vessels for different areas of navigation, for example river-sea vessels, which meet the requirements for sea-going vessels and are also able to navigate shallow waters;
- D. whereas technological developments have once again made waterborne transport an alternative to congested access roads to city centres;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 389, 30.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 163, 25.6.2009, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 325, 9.12.2010, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 188, 2.7.1998, p. 35.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 320, 30.12.1995, p. 14.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 327, 27.11.2012, p. 1.

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- E. whereas waterborne passenger transport and waterborne freight transport face different challenges and have different needs in terms of infrastructure, environmental challenges, operational issues, security and port-city relations, while both market segments are handled by one port authority;
- F. whereas the integration of waterborne passenger hubs into European policy on interconnecting infrastructure, as already implemented through Regulations (EU) No 1315/2013 and (EU) No 1316/2013 on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) and the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), respectively, will provide further European added value;
- G. whereas possibilities for loans and guarantees for waterborne projects are also available under the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) as a complementary instrument to the traditional grants;
- H. whereas inland waterway transport has been recognised as an environmentally friendly mode of transport, requiring special attention and support, and whereas the White Paper recommends promoting maritime and inland waterway transport, increasing the share of coastal and inland shipping and improving transport safety;
- I. whereas the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the proposal for the European Accessibility Act provide sound guidance not only for the implementation and, if appropriate, future review of Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010, but also for the adoption of passenger rights legislation within an intermodal context, given that such legislation should include barrier-free accessibility for passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility;
- J. whereas, while waterborne passenger transport is considered a safe transport mode, several tragic accidents have occurred in the past in the waterborne passenger transport sector, including those involving the *Estonia*, the *Herald of Free Enterprise*, the *Costa Concordia*, the *Norman Atlantic* and the *UND Adryatik*;
- K. whereas in its maritime transport policy strategy to 2018 the EU sets out its goal of becoming the world leader in maritime research and innovation, as well as shipbuilding, with a view to improving energy efficiency and intelligence in ships, reducing their environmental impact, minimising the risk of accidents and providing better quality of life at sea;
- L. whereas river cruise ship tourism and waterborne transport of passengers on rivers, canals and other inland waterways is growing in many sections of European rivers and the urban nodes along them;
- M. whereas the EU has adopted a number of macro strategies predicated on the utilisation of waterways, including the Danube, Adriatic-Ionian, and Baltic strategies;
1. Takes the view that waterborne passenger transport (WPT) must be put higher on the transport policy agenda of the EU and of its Member States; considers, therefore, that they should work towards a 'single area for waterborne passenger transport', for instance through simplifying the administrative burden arising from cross-border passenger shipping;

Competitiveness

2. Encourages the Member States, regional and local authorities and the Commission to give consideration to WPT, and especially to improve the associated infrastructure, in both its core and comprehensive networks, within the TEN-T and the CEF by strengthening its interconnection with, inter alia, rail hinterland infrastructure, including the provision of infrastructure and information so as to meet the mobility needs of all travellers;
3. Encourages the development of the motorways of the sea — including by third countries —, which promote efficient multimodal transport, facilitate this mode's integration with other transport networks and modes, remove bottlenecks in key network infrastructures and ensure territorial continuity and integration;

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4. Stresses the need to eliminate bottlenecks in the connections between the extended Western European inland waterway system and the existing Eastern European system, which has suffered considerable and, in places, total degradation;
5. Calls on the Commission to publish an annual overview of WPT projects co-funded by the EU within the framework of cohesion, structural, regional, Interreg, Horizon 2020, CEF and TEN-T funds and the European Fund for Strategic Investments;
6. Calls on the Commission to publish a summary report on the implementation of EU strategies in the WPT segment;
7. Stresses the key relevance of European statistical data for formulating plans and policies for the waterborne transport sector, particularly as regards the number of cross-border maritime and inland waterway services provided by both ferries and cruise ships, given that there are areas where transport between different localities can only be undertaken on the water; asks Eurostat to include in their statistical data on maritime cruise passengers 'port-of-call passenger visits', namely the number of passengers embarking and disembarking at each transit port, and not only the cruise passengers embarking on holiday each year (turnover); including these numbers would give a more realistic picture of the added value of the cruise sector and of WPT in general;
8. Calls on the Commission to develop a system for harmonised collection of statistics on accidents and incidents for inland waterway vessels, including cross-border traffic;
9. Believes that the integration of WPT into urban and regional public transport networks could considerably enhance mobility efficiency, environmental performance, quality of life, affordability, relief of congestion of land-based transport networks, and comfort in cities; calls on the Commission to fully support investment in quality hinterland infrastructure, which can contribute to decreasing local traffic congestion and ensuring that local people are not negatively affected; calls on the Commission to set up lists of best practice examples in this field;
10. Calls on the Member States to promote and support local initiatives aimed at activating inland waterway transport as a means of supplying agglomerations, including by developing distribution centres in river ports and developing passenger transport, primarily to make the areas concerned more attractive to tourists;
11. Emphasises that WPT should be better integrated into information, booking and ticketing systems in order to improve the quality of public services and further develop the tourism sector, particularly in remote and isolated areas; stresses the need to take WPT operators into account in the work on the European integrated ticketing system;
12. Encourages the Commission to finance better organised and more efficient projects for integrated transport services, leading to: a progressive reduction in energy consumption; a reorganisation of the timetables of the various public and private air, sea and land carriers with a view to the intermodal and efficient management of passenger transport; consolidation of tickets issued by public and private operators in a single pass available via a digital application;
13. Points out that, where possible, practices whereby freight vessels also deliver passenger services and vice versa, for instance in the case of ferries, should be promoted, as they offer potential for ships to achieve better occupancy rates and greater financial efficiency as well as alleviating road congestion;
14. Welcomes the efforts of the WPT sector to switch to cleaner, energy-efficient ships with lower emissions, developed as part of a European framework aimed at making waterborne transport greener; believes that this will lead to cheaper solutions that are sustainable, more attractive and thus economically more competitive, making the sector 'cheaper, cleaner, greener' overall;

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15. Notes that the different challenges of the major coastal zones in the EU call for different actions (more ferry services in the North Sea, upgrading and technical uptake of ferries in the Mediterranean, etc.);

16. Is convinced that the EU passenger-ship-building industry must remain a key competitive player, to be encouraged more actively, while reducing its environmental footprint by boosting research activity and innovation within the industry;

Environmental sustainability

17. Calls on the Commission to integrate WPT into its strategy and to take steps to reduce CO₂ emissions in line with the COP 21 agreements and thus to minimise external costs;

18. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to improve environmental standards with a view to reducing air pollution, along the lines of the Baltic Sea standards for sulphur emissions limits, fuel quality and more fuel-efficient engines;

19. Emphasises that decarbonisation of transport is requiring significant efforts and progress in terms of research and innovation; supports the Commission in its promotion of LNG, non-fossil alternative fuels, electric and hybrid systems based on renewable sources, and solar and wind energy for maritime vessels, and encourages it to tailor research and innovation with a particular focus on practicability for the WPT sector;

20. Recalls that further to Directive 2014/94/EU on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure, maritime ports of the TEN-T Core Network need to provide LNG bunkering facilities for vessels and seagoing ships by 2025 and inland ports need to do so by 2030;

21. Calls on the Commission to encourage energy self-sufficiency through the use of solar panels to be placed on the buildings of port terminals and storage of the energy produced during the day for subsequent use at night;

22. Underlines that the ferry sector is an important component of the short sea shipping (SSS) market and is therefore crucial to maintaining its dynamism and competitiveness, while at the same time improving its environmental performance and energy efficiency;

23. Welcomes the Commission's REFIT initiative for port reception facilities as an opportunity for aligning the current directive with international developments, and supports and encourages its plans for new legislation under the ordinary legislative procedure; points out that this should not keep Member States from launching more sustainable initiatives, including good information and monitoring systems on waste management, both on ships and in ports;

Safety and security

24. Stresses that prevention of pollution and accidents is vital to the role of the European Maritime Safety Agency in improving the safety of cross-border maritime ferries and cruises, as well as in ensuring consumer protection;

25. Recalls that staff on ferries and cruise ships must be trained to assist passengers effectively in the event of an emergency;

26. Welcomes the Commission's proposal for a directive on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation, which sets harmonised standards for the qualification of crew members and boatmasters with a view to improving labour mobility in inland navigation;

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27. Stresses that, when it comes to the further development of information systems such as conventional radar, SafeSeaNet, Galileo and the River Information Services (RIS), the focus should be on improving safety, security and interoperability, and encourages Member States to make the use of RIS mandatory;

28. Invites the competent authorities to propose a clear framework allocating responsibilities and costs, with a view to improving security, and to address additional staff training, instruction and guidance, especially the issue of accepting training using approved simulators as part of the training programme within the framework of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and International Labour Organisation (ILO) rules; considers that the quality and safety of services can be best improved with qualified staff;

29. Welcomes the Commission's new legislative proposals to simplify and improve the common rules on safety of ships carrying passengers in EU waters, with a view to enhancing safety and competition, by making the rules clearer and simpler and bringing them into line with legal and technological developments;

30. Acknowledges that, as security is a growing concern, additional measures might be needed which take account of the specific features of ferry traffic and operations in ports so as to ensure the smooth operation of daily ferry connections;

31. Points out that a significant number of rivers constitute borders and encourages the authorities responsible to ensure cooperation and well-integrated and efficient safety, security and emergency systems that operate from both sides of the border;

32. Points out that a number of enclosed seas, for example the Baltic and the Adriatic, are bordered by several Member States and also by countries that do not belong to the EU, and therefore calls on the authorities responsible to provide for an effective safety, security and, in particular, emergency system;

33. Emphasises that, when international maritime ferries operate in EU territorial waters, EU and Member State legislation must apply;

Service quality and accessibility

34. Encourages the Commission to integrate the principles of Regulation (EU) No 1177/2010 into its proposal on intermodal passenger rights, including aspects of barrier-free accessibility for people with disabilities or reduced mobility, and also to take account in it of the special needs of the elderly and families travelling with children; encourages the Commission to present annual statistical data on the evolution of numbers of passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility;

35. Stresses the importance of the WPT sector in developing sustainable tourism and overcoming seasonality, in particular in remote and peripheral regions of the Union such as coastal, island, lake and rural regions; considers, furthermore, that SMEs should be a focal point for the promotion of tourism services; calls on the Commission, the Member States and local and regional authorities to make fullest possible use of EU funding opportunities for SMEs, including subsidies for local communities in the aforementioned outlying regions;

36. Notes the great potential of creating convenient connections between inland waterway routes and the European network of cycle routes for increasing the attractiveness to tourists of many EU regions; stresses the need to take into account the needs of people travelling with bicycles using waterborne passenger transport;

37. Considers that tourism in coastal regions and islands is insufficiently developed owing to the lack of interconnectivity; considers that the Commission should take into account the fact that there is a greater demand for quality transportation services in these areas;

38. Takes the view that the WPT sector is important even in areas where it is not at present economically viable, such as more thinly populated remote islands;

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39. Recalls that some ferry connections are lifelines — vital for territorial, social and economic cohesion in the true sense — connecting outermost regions to the mainland and the economic and industrial growth areas, thus contributing to European cohesion and integration;

40. Underlines that the framework for providing connections with islands, island regions and remote areas should be promoted, with measures to facilitate better-quality ferries and appropriate terminals;

41. Highlights the potential for, and desirability of, integrating WPT into a multimodal mobility framework, taking account of public transport in large agglomerations, for both commuters and tourists; considers in this connection that further improvements are needed in order to develop mobility as a service by enabling integrated ticketing schemes in order to enhance reliability, comfort, punctuality and frequency, to ease pressure on logistics chains and to achieve faster boarding times with a view to attracting passengers;

42. Emphasises that, in order to maintain a high level of quality services, as well as in the interests of maritime safety, it is essential to develop knowledge and skills in the maritime sector in the EU;

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43. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.
