

Thursday 6 February 2014

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NAIADES II: An action programme to support inland waterway transport**European Parliament resolution of 6 February 2014 on NAIADES II: An action programme to support inland waterway transport (2013/3002(RSP))**

(2017/C 093/25)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Question for Oral Answer to the Commission on NAIADES II — An action programme to support inland waterway transport (O-000016/2014 — B7-0104/2014),
 - having regard to its resolution of 26 October 2006 on ‘the promotion of inland waterway transport: NAIADES, an integrated European Action Programme for inland waterway transport’ ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 10 September 2013 entitled ‘Towards quality inland waterway transport — NAIADES II’ (COM(2013)0623),
 - having regard to its resolution of 15 December 2011 on ‘the Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area — Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system’ ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 17 January 2006 on the promotion of inland waterway transport — ‘NAIADES — An Integrated Action Programme for Inland Waterway Transport’ (COM(2006)0006),
 - having regard to the Commission Staff Working Document of 10 September 2013 entitled ‘Greening the fleet: reducing pollutant emissions in inland waterway transport’ (SWD(2013)0324),
 - having regard to Rules 115(5) and 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the inland waterway transport sector makes a considerable contribution to the EU transport system by transporting goods between the EU’s ports and the hinterland;
- B. whereas inland navigation transport is energy-efficient and contributes to the goals of the low-carbon economy set out in the EU’s Transport Policy White Paper;
- C. whereas by exploiting the full potential of inland navigation transport the inland waterway sector could be a key link in Europe in terms of solving the congestion and environmental problems generated by goods imported through maritime ports;
- D. whereas modernisation of the inland waterway fleet and its adaptation to reflect technical progress would be needed in order to further improve the environmental performance of the vessels, developing inter alia River Adapted Ships for Sustainable Inland Navigation (RASSIN), and thereby ensuring the competitive advantage of inland waterway transport;
- E. whereas the weak economic situation in Europe has also impacted on the inland navigation sector, and whereas the inland shipping industry is in a difficult economic situation;
- F. whereas the current overcapacity is having a devastating impact on the inland shipping industry;
- G. whereas the inland waterway transport sector’s structure is largely based on SMEs, i.e. owner-operators who work and live with their families on the vessels, and whereas these SMEs are particularly vulnerable to the crisis;
- H. whereas social standards, such as working time, as well as education, are of crucial importance for this sector;
- I. whereas limited financial means are dedicated to the inland waterway sector, and whereas access to finance is increasingly difficult;

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 313 E, 20.12.2006, p. 443.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 168 E, 14.6.2013, p. 72.

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1. Welcomes the Commission's initiative to update and renew the NAIADES programme by 2020;
 2. Supports the specific actions defined in the NAIADES II action programme 2014-2020;
 3. Regrets the fact that the Commission did not accompany the NAIADES II proposal with adequate and dedicated funding to achieve the goals of the action programme and therefore calls for a well-structured policy with achievable short- and mid-term goals and a concrete roadmap that describes inter alia the resources for implementation;
 4. Calls on the Commission to provide as soon as possible concrete actions that take into account the specificities of a sector largely based on SMEs;
 5. Underlines the importance of high-quality infrastructure as a condition for developing and integrating inland waterway transport and inland ports into the trans-European transport network, calls upon the Commission and the Member States to integrate all important bottlenecks into the corridor implementation plans to be adopted, and highlights the fact that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) gives funding priority to the development of infrastructure for the greener modes of transport, such as inland waterways;
 6. Welcomes the fact that inland waterways have been embedded in six of the nine core network corridors of the TEN-T and hopes that bottlenecks and missing links will be suitably addressed, given that the CEF will prioritise spending on removing bottlenecks, bridging missing links and, in particular, improving cross-border sections of the core network; recalls that the CEF will also make it a priority to fund telematic application systems functioning as River Information Services (RIS);
 7. Urges the Commission and the Member States to pay particular attention to free-flowing rivers which are close to their natural state and which can therefore be the subject of specific measures; underlines the need to respect EU environmental legislation, as indicated in Articles 16 and 36 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T);
 8. Emphasises, in addition to the Member States' obligations to complete the core network, the responsibility of providing adequate and reliable infrastructure by regular maintenance so as to preserve good navigation status with a view to ensuring the role of inland waterway transport as a reliable and cost-effective mode of transport;
 9. Asks the Commission to speed up the integration of RIS, inland waterway transport market observation data and TEN-T corridor tools in order to support integrated multimodal transport governance; supports the expansion and integration of RIS data exchange into information streams of other transport modes in order to facilitate the integration of inland waterway transport with other transport modes, and calls upon the Commission to swiftly develop orientations to enable this integration to take place;
 10. Calls on the Commission to support the uptake of best practice on integrating inland waterway transport services into multimodal logistics chains;
 11. Stresses the importance of providing appropriate funding for new technology, innovation and sustainable freight transport services under the existing EU programmes such as the Connecting Europe Facility, Horizon 2020 and the Cohesion Fund in order to stimulate the uptake of innovation and increase the environmental performance of inland waterway transport, and asks the Commission to elaborate concrete funding programmes to realise this goal;
 12. Urges the Commission to come forward with options on how to leverage the reserve funds by using them in conjunction with financial instruments available under existing Union funds such as the CEF and from the European Investment Bank;
 13. Invites the Member States to further develop national strategies to stimulate inland waterway transport, taking into account the European Action Programme, and to encourage regional, local and port authorities to do likewise;
 14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
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