

Freight transport system: improving the environmental performance, programme Marco Polo PACT

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution by its rapporteur Philip Charles BRADBOURNE (EPP-ED, United Kingdom) on the freight transport system. Parliament put increased emphasis on enhancing intermodality and reducing congestion in freight transport by road. Actions under the Marco Polo programme should not lead to a shift of freight flows between short sea shipping, rail or inland waterways, unless the share of freight transport by road in the transport chain is substantially reduced. The Commission must present an assessment report on the Marco Polo programme by 31 December 2005. This report should, in particular, consider the possibility of topping up appropriations for the programme and the need to make funding available so as to eliminate infrastructure bottlenecks, notably in the context of projects already benefiting from the programme. Parliament went on to amend the amounts allocated for actions: -the minimum subsidy threshold per modal shift is EUR 0.5 million, instead of EUR 1 million. -a new paragraph is introduced stating that the minimum subsidy threshold for actions which contribute to reducing road transport by expanding existing short sea shipping, rail or inland waterway transport activities shall be EUR 250 000 -the minimum subsidy threshold per catalyst action is changed to EUR 1.5 million from EUR 3 million. -the minimum subsidy threshold per common learning action is now EUR 250000 rather than EUR 500000. The financial framework is unchanged, but Parliament stipulated that funding beyond 2006 would be subject to the approval of the budgetary authority. At the end of the mid-term review of the programme a report will be submitted to the budgetary authority on the take-up and implementation of the programme and resources. If 35% of the resources have not been committed, the equivalent outstanding amount will be placed in the performance reserve. At the end of the programme period, any uncommitted resources will be subject to a budgetary decision to determine the appropriate action to be taken.