

# Procedure file

Basic information		
INI - Own-initiative procedure	<a href="#">2008/2007(INI)</a>	Procedure completed
European ports policy		
Subject 3.20.09 Ports policy		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	<b>TRAN</b> Transport and Tourism		20/11/2007
		ALDE <a href="#">ORTUONDO LARREA</a> <a href="#">Josu</a>	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	<b>ECON</b> Economic and Monetary Affairs	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>ENVI</b> Environment, Public Health and Food Safety	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>ITRE</b> Industry, Research and Energy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
	<b>REGI</b> Regional Development		22/01/2008
		PSE <a href="#">PRIBETICH Pierre</a>	
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Energy and Transport	TAJANI Antonio	

Key events			
18/10/2007	Non-legislative basic document published	<a href="#">COM(2007)0616</a>	Summary
17/01/2008	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
24/06/2008	Vote in committee		Summary
14/07/2008	Committee report tabled for plenary	<a href="#">A6-0308/2008</a>	
03/09/2008	Debate in Parliament		
04/09/2008	Results of vote in Parliament		
04/09/2008	Decision by Parliament	<a href="#">T6-0408/2008</a>	Summary
04/09/2008	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2008/2007(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Strategic initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 54
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	TRAN/6/58004

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		<a href="#">COM(2007)0616</a>	18/10/2007	EC	Summary
Document attached to the procedure		<a href="#">SEC(2007)1339</a>	18/10/2007	EC	
Document attached to the procedure		<a href="#">SEC(2007)1340</a>	18/10/2007	EC	
Committee opinion	REGI	<a href="#">PE400.699</a>	16/04/2008	EP	
Committee draft report		<a href="#">PE404.591</a>	30/04/2008	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		<a href="#">PE407.658</a>	04/06/2008	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		<a href="#">A6-0308/2008</a>	14/07/2008	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		<a href="#">T6-0408/2008</a>	04/09/2008	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		<a href="#">SP(2008)6073</a>	17/10/2008	EC	
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		<a href="#">SP(2008)6486</a>	17/12/2008	EC	

## European ports policy

**PURPOSE:** to set out a European Ports Policy.

**BACKGROUND:** more than 1 200 merchant ports dot some 100 000 km of European coasts. Several hundred others punctuate the 36 000 km of our inland waterways. They are key points of modal transfer and are of vital interest to handle 90% of Europe's international trade. They are essential for the development of short sea shipping and, in many cases, of inland waterways' traffic. Ports are a direct and in-direct source of more than half a million jobs, and ensure dynamism and development of whole regions including most peripheral ones.

**CONTENT:** the present Communication aims at a performing EU port system able to cope with the future challenges of EU transport needs; it sets an action plan for the European Commission. It follows up from an extensive consultation with the stakeholders in 2006-2007. It follows up the recently adopted Communication on an Integrated Maritime Policy (see [INI/2008/2009](#)).

Ports face the following challenges:

- An increase in the demand for low cost international transport;
- A major technological change, marked by the development of container transport and cleaner operation of ports, but for which a major adaptation effort in land acquisition and management, as well as in technology and social issues is required;
- The commitment to reduce greenhouse gases which calls for a decrease in harmful emissions and road congestion effects, as well as for modal diversification towards rail, inland navigation and maritime transport;
- The need to develop a recurrent dialogue on performance and development of ports between port stakeholders and within the city, the region, and beyond;
- The need to reconcile ports' development and management with transparency, competition, and, in general, the Community set of rules.

The Commission suggests several ways to overcome these challenges and calls on all public and private stakeholders to support this approach:

**Improve port performance and hinterland connections:** the Commission intends, at this stage, to leave this matter to regional and national authorities and to the market. It intends to evaluate the status and needs of ports' hinterland connections and their impact on the balance of traffic flows, during the mid-term review of the trans-European transport network in 2010.

**Expanding capacity while respecting the environment:** the Commission will issue guidelines on the application of the Community environment

legislation to port development. Directive 2000/59/EC, on port reception facilities, aims at reducing discharges of ship-generated waste and cargo residues into the sea. The Commission will consult the interested parties on means to improve the existing mechanism of the Directive and to come forward with an appropriate proposal. Finally, the Commission is committed to reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from shipping and will contribute to establishing measures aimed at reducing these emissions in ports, including through appropriate incentives.

Modernising ports: In order to simplify the short sea shipping procedures, the Commission has proposed the creation of a paperless environment for customs and trade. It will present a legislative proposal on the creation of a European Maritime Transport Space without Barriers in 2008. The Commission intends to publish in 2009 a policy document on the deployment of "e-maritime". Finally, the EU Research Framework Programmes, in particular FP7, support relevant research and innovation on port infrastructure and operations.

Increasing clarity for investors and users: The Commission will adopt guidelines on State aid to ports in 2008. It plans to take measures towards extending the provisions on transparency of Directive 2006/111/EC to all merchant ports, irrespective of their annual turnover. Finally, the Commission will help disseminate best practices on transparency in port charges and will make an inventory of the problems encountered with a view to addressing them in Community external relations when needed.

Establishing a structured dialogue between ports and cities: the Commission will examine possible sources of finance for supporting improved integration of ports with cities. It also considers assessing the impact of security measures and providing guidance on how to reconcile the need for sound security measures with a fair degree of openness and accessibility to port areas. The review of legislation on maritime and port security will provide an opportunity to assess port access requirements and to examine the development of a European model for multi purpose access cards.

Work in ports: the Commission will encourage the establishment of a European sectoral social dialogue committee in ports within the meaning of Commission Decision 98/500/EC. If such a committee is established, the Commission will promote an active contribution of the social partners to management of change, modernisation and more and better jobs. The Commission will also propose a mutually recognisable framework on training of port workers in different fields of port activities. Finally, it will closely monitor the implementation, in ports, of Community rules on the health and safety of workers at work.

## European ports policy

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the own initiative report by Josu ORTUONDO LARREA (ALDE, ES), warmly welcoming the Commission's communication on a European ports policy.

MEPs recall the crucial importance of the ports sector to the European Union from the economic, commercial, social, environmental and strategic points of view. They welcome the Commission's intention to publish guidelines on the application of Community environmental legislation to port development and their infrastructure and urge the Commission to publish these guidelines before the end of 2008. The aim of these guidelines should be to tackle the legal uncertainty deriving from certain environmental directives.

The resolution also stresses the need to develop an integrated European policy to boost regional competitiveness and territorial cohesion, taking account of social, environmental, economic and security aspects at all territorial levels, by organising interinstitutional, intersectoral and multi-territory partnerships. MEPs highlight the territorial dimension of the development of European ports, particularly the need for cross-border cooperation and coordination between neighbouring port regions.

Stressing the social and cultural role of ports for the population of the hinterland, MEPs call on the regional authorities concerned to implement a more multimodal transport policy to ensure that, in addition to motorways, more traffic goes by rail and inland waterways, to connect port areas effectively with the TEN-Ts and to give ports more effective hinterland connections, in particular through the use of railways and inland waterways.

The European Commission is called upon to systematically monitor the development of new technologies and management methods used internationally at ports and ship service, freight, passenger and land transport terminals. MEPs consider that the regions concerned should be entitled to draw on the structural funds, particularly to finance the acquisition of advanced technological installations, to create jobs in innovative fields and to rehabilitate urban areas freed up by the transfer of port business to out-of-town areas.

The Commission and the Member States are called upon, inter alia, to:

- promote cooperation between European ports;
- hasten the implementation of remote pilotage systems in order to increase efficiency and security in traffic management in ports as well as in roadstead areas;
- support research into safety issues, so as to keep accidents to a minimum and to improve the use of space in ports, and into environmental questions, so as to curb CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and pollution caused by waste.

MEPs welcome the Commission's intention to conduct a survey of the problems encountered by European ports in terms of competitiveness and costs. They call on the Commission to consider compiling a log of these problems, so as to specifically tackle problems generated by competition with non-EU ports and anti-competitive and discriminatory measures taken by EU neighbouring countries.

MEPs also welcome the Commission's intention to submit a legislative proposal on creating a barrier-free European maritime transport area in order to ensure fair competition between maritime transport and land transport in the Union. In this context, they recommend that Community-cleared goods should be exempt from customs controls in short-sea shipping in the Community and advocate the creation of separate port zones for intra-community and international traffic, together with simplification of internal transport, standardisation and identification of special containers.

Lastly, the Commission is called upon to publish guidelines for State aid to ports in 2008. These guidelines should cover the port area as such, with a distinction made between access and defence infrastructure, project-related infrastructure and superstructure and with no distinction made between different categories of ports.

## European ports policy

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The European Parliament adopted by 572 votes to 12, with 10 abstentions, a resolution on a European ports policy, in response to the Commission's communication on this issue.

The own initiative report had been tabled for consideration in plenary by Josu ORTUONDO LARREA (ALDE, ES) on behalf of the Committee on Transport and Tourism.

MEPs welcome the Commission's communication. They recall the crucial importance of the ports sector to the European Union from the economic, commercial, social, environmental and strategic points of view and consider that the Commission's role is important in order to ensure that all European ports are able to reach their full potential. MEPs believe that the European ports policy should promote the following four principles: safety, swift service, low cost, and respect for the environment.

**Environment:** MEPs welcome the Commission's intention to publish guidelines on the application of Community environmental legislation to port development and their infrastructure and call on it to publish these guidelines before the end of 2008. The Commission and the Member States are urged to support the proposals to replace the current fuel with diesel by 2020 as well as the possibility of including the maritime sector in the emissions trading scheme. MEPs also call on the Commission and the sector to encourage shipping companies to reduce the number of empty containers transported. Lastly, they believe that possible investments by public authorities to develop ports must not be seen as State aid where they are directly intended for environmental improvements or decongestion and reducing the use of roads for freight transport.

**Multimodality:** MEPs consider that maritime and river transport cannot be considered in isolation from land and air transport and that links to a port's hinterland are of great importance to its commercial success. They underline the need to establish interconnections between ports and consider that the co-modal participation of ports is needed in relation to both the trans-European transport networks (TEN-Ts) and the future Community green corridors. Stressing the social and cultural role played by ports for the population of the hinterland, MEPs support the intention of the Commission to evaluate ports' hinterland connections status and needs and their impact on a balanced network of traffic flows on the occasion of the mid-term review of the TEN-T in 2010. In this context, the Commission and the Member States are called upon to promote cooperation between European ports.

**New technologies:** MEPs consider that new technologies, particularly information technologies, are key elements that will enable European ports to increase their efficiency and profitability. They call on the Commission to systematically monitor the development of new technologies and management methods used internationally at ports and ship service, freight, passenger and land transport terminals. The Commission and the Member States are invited to hasten the implementation of remote pilotage systems and to support research into safety issues, so as to keep accidents to a minimum and to improve the use of space in ports, and into environmental questions, so as to curb CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and pollution caused by waste. Regarding the technological changes needed for the development of intermediate ports, MEPs consider that the regions concerned should be entitled to draw on the European Structural Funds, particularly to finance the acquisition of advanced technological installations, to create jobs in innovative fields, and to rehabilitate urban areas freed up by the transfer of port business to out-of-town areas.

**Cooperation and international aspects:** MEPs draw attention to the territorial dimension of the development of European ports, particularly the need for cross-border cooperation and coordination between neighbouring port regions. They highlight the importance of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the regional strategy for the Mediterranean, Baltic and Black Seas. The resolution encourages the use of European territorial cooperation programmes under the cohesion policy and cooperation programmes under the EU neighbourhood and enlargement policy. The Commission, the Member States and the relevant regional authorities are invited to employ a trans-border approach to the use of existing capacity when co-financing port infrastructure.

**Competitiveness:** MEPs welcome the Commission's intention to conduct a survey of the problems encountered by European ports in terms of competitiveness and costs. They invite the Commission to tackle problems generated by competition with non-EU ports and anti-competitive and discriminatory measures taken by EU neighbouring countries. MEPs also welcome the Commission's intention to submit a legislative proposal on creating a barrier-free European maritime transport area in order to ensure fair competition between maritime transport and land transport in the Union. In this context, they recommend that Community-cleared goods should be exempt from customs controls in short-sea shipping in the Community and advocate the creation of separate port zones for intra-community and international traffic, together with simplification of internal transport, standardisation and identification of special containers. The Commission is called upon to publish guidelines for State aid to ports in 2008.

**Social dialogue:** MEPs call for a European social dialogue committee to be set up and consider that it should deal with subjects related to ports, including workers' rights, concessions and the 1979 International Labour Organisation Convention No 152 on occupational safety and health (dock work). The resolution stresses the importance of protecting and securing the highest possible level of training for port workers and proposes that the topic of professional qualifications and lifelong training be addressed together with the social partners within the future European social dialogue committee.

**Scanning US-bound cargo:** the resolution urges the Commission to continue its efforts to ensure that the US regulation to scan 100% of US-bound cargo is changed. It calls on the Commission to evaluate the potential costs of this measure to business and to the EU economy, as well as its potential impact on customs operations.