

## **EU maritime green paper in a transport perspective – draft for speech at NSC seminar on Maritime policy, Stavanger, 20-21 November 2006**

Although maritime transport issues do not appear as separate headings in the table of contents, such issues are nevertheless well integrated into the different chapters of the green paper. In line with the holistic and cross-sectorial approach of the Green Paper, maritime transport issues are treated out of different perspectives such as competitiveness, economic development, accessibility to remote regions, environment, safety, security, employment and training, research & technology, fisheries, Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM), spatial planning, regulatory frameworks and tourism. The way transport issues are treated in the Green Paper is thus reflecting the fact that transport is not an end in-itself, but rather a means to promote regional development and social interaction in the widest sense.

In my speech, I will start out by giving some examples of how the Green Paper perceives the role of transport within the over all maritime policy. I will then go on to give a brief assessment of how transport issues are treated in the Green Paper in relation to the priorities of the NSC Transport group, and conclude by pointing to some issues which need a stronger emphasis in the maritime policy.

### Significance of transport for competitiveness, economic development,

According to the Green paper, shipping and ports are essential for international trade and commerce. The dependency of shipping is said to be increasing. Maritime transport and ports are key components of the logistics chain linking the single market to the world economy. Their continued efficiency and vitality is crucial to European competitiveness in a globalising world. The Green paper is also pointing to the important role of maritime transport in improving the accessibility and competitiveness of Europe's outermost regions.

The Green paper is also underlining that maritime transport is a catalyst for other sectors, generating employment and business in shipbuilding and maritime equipment industry.

### Environment and safety

Although shipping has a relatively low energy consumption per tonne of goods transported, the shipping sector remains a major source of air pollution in Europe according to the Green paper. The principal greenhouse gas emitted by ships is CO<sub>2</sub>, but also emissions of NO<sub>x</sub> is a major problem. These emissions need to be reduced in line with the air thematic strategy recently adopted by the Commission. Research and technology development are also vital areas in order to improve the environmental performance of shipping

The Green paper puts strong emphasis on maritime safety as a way to protect our maritime environment. Community legislation, measures and controls have been reinforced following the Erika and Prestige disasters in 1999 and 2002. Important measures in this respect have been the banning and gradual withdrawing of single-hull tankers, stricter enforcement and implementation of existing legislation, more controls and inspections in Eu waters and ports, as well as the creation of a European Maritime Safety Agency .

The Green Paper is also underlining the importance of incentives for improving maritime safety – awarding good performance and penalizing sub-standard performance.

## Employment, working conditions and training

The Green Paper is underlining the need to attract highly qualified people to the shipping industry as a way of maintaining Europe's competitive edge and for the sake of safety. At the same time the number of European seafarers is declining. This situation is attributable to low wages, low status and poor working conditions. In 2005, the Commission made proposals for reversing the negative trend in the number European seafarers and attracting people to the seafaring professions. EU actions should continue to address minimum training requirements, working conditions and enforcement

## International regulatory frameworks

The Green paper is pointing to a trend towards a "Common EU maritime space", possibly leading to a harmonisation of the framework conditions between sea and land transport. Today, sea journeys between member states are considered external due to international regulations. Short Sea Shipping would thus clearly benefit from such a harmonisation, as it would not longer be subject to the traditional administrative procedures and controls related to the crossing of external borders.

The Green paper maintains that the legal system relating to oceans and seas based on UNCLOS needs to be developed to face new challenges. The UNCLOS makes it harder for coastal states to exercise jurisdiction over transiting ships, despite the fact that any pollution incident in these zones presents an imminent risk for them. The Green Paper is thus recommending that ways of making exceptions to the principle of the exclusive jurisdiction of the flag state over its vessels should continue to be explored.

## **Assessment of how transport issues are treated in the Green Paper**

I hope that my speech so far has demonstrated that the Green Paper is handling transport issues in a coherent and integrated manner, reflecting the importance of maritime transport and ports for competitiveness, accessibility and sustainable development, and at the same time highlighting environmental and social challenges and solutions.

In relation to the current focus of the NSC Transport group, the GP is in particular offering new perspectives on the social and educational dimensions of transport (working conditions, recruitment to maritime professions). The GP is also offering new insights into the potential for innovation and technological developments in the transport sector

## Missing issues, need for shifted focus

However, from a transport perspective, **we would like to see a stronger emphasis on the financial and environmental benefits of shifting freight from road to sea.** Growing road congestion, poor rail performance and the expensive and time-consuming task of constructing new road and rail infrastructure are further underlining the importance of developing efficient maritime transport solutions. We believe that the Green Paper is somewhat static in this sense. **The Green Paper could in line with this have focused more on how to facilitate modal shift away from road,** reflecting current policy developments and financial instruments such as the Motorways of the Sea scheme and the Marco Polo Programme. We believe that the Green Paper should have put stronger focus on the need to improve the framework conditions

for sea based intermodal transport, creating an even level playing field with land-based transport modes (e.g. resolving administrative, legal and technical bottlenecks).

We also believe that there is a **need to strengthen the door to door perspective on maritime transport, also highlighting the importance of hinterland connections** to ports with road and rail. Hinterland connections are essential for the integration of short sea shipping (SSS) in the logistical chain and for the realisation of coherent land-sea corridors, without bottlenecks and missing links.

The Green Paper is raising the question of whether port activities should take place in a few, very efficient ports connected to Transport European Networks (TEN-T), or be distributed among a larger number, avoiding an excessive concentration of activity, with its attendant problems of congestion and pressure on the environment and the hinterland infrastructure. This is an important issue which we believe that the Green Paper should have elaborated more on. The major ports in the North Sea Region and their corresponding hinterland connections are becoming increasingly congested. **It is therefore important to strengthen selected secondary ports with a potential to relieve congestion in and around major ports.**

Furthermore, the Green Paper should **have put more emphasis on the significance of maritime transport for accessibility and cohesion.** Maritime services offer the potential to link peripheral areas and bypass congested central areas. It is argued that Short Sea Shipping could be the link in achieving objectives for shifting the balance between the modes (away from roads) and improving access to outlying areas.

We also believe that there is a **need to focus more on the external dimension of maritime transport.** For the North Sea Region, it is important to extend the Motorways of the Sea network further north along the Norwegian coast all the way up to the Barents Region. The “Northern Maritime Corridor” (being developed by an Interreg IIIB project under the same name) is regarded as a suitable framework for that. We are thus missing an explicit reference in the Green Paper as to how the EU intends to follow up on the various recommendations of the High Level Group report on the extension of the TEN-T to neighbouring countries and regions.