TEN/110
Intermodality programme/
Marco Polo

Brussels, 17 July 2002

OPINION
of the
Economic and Social Committee
on the
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system
COM(2002) 54 final - 2002/0038 (COD)

On 21 February 2002, the Council decided to consult the Economic and Social Committee, under Article 71 of the Treaty establishing the European Community, on the

> *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system*
> (COM(2002) 54 final – 2002/0038 COD).

The Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society, which was responsible for drawing up the Committee's work on the subject, adopted its opinion on 19 June 2002. The rapporteur was **Mr Levaux**.

At its 392nd session (meeting of 17 July 2002), the Economic and Social Committee adopted the following opinion with 124 votes in favour and one abstention:

1. Introduction: Presentation of the proposal for a Regulation

1.1 The European Commission's White Paper of 12 September 2001 entitled "European transport policy for 2010: time to decide" provides for the replacement of the PACT programme, which came to an end on 31 December 2001, by a new programme to promote intermodality, to be known as the "Marco Polo programme".

1.2 This new programme takes account of the lessons drawn from the PACT programme, as set out in the Commission Staff Working Paper entitled "Results of the PACT programme 1997-2001"; the PACT programme has also been the subject of an external evaluation covering the period 1997-1999.

1.3 The main aim of the Marco Polo programme is to reduce road congestion and to improve the environmental performance of the whole transport system by shifting part of the increase in the volume of freight from road transport to short-sea, rail and inland waterway transport.

1.4 As was the case with the PACT programme, the Marco Polo programme intends to provide financial assistance to commercial actions in the market for freight transport services.

1.5 Unlike the PACT programme, however, Marco Polo will foster modal shift projects in all segments of the freight market, and not only in combined transport, which involves the use of roads for the initial or final part of the journey.

1.6 The Marco Polo programme will give priority to international, rather than national, projects and will be based on three main approaches:

– provision of start-up support for new, non-road freight transport services, which should be viable in the medium-term ("modal shift actions");

– provision of support for launching freight services or facilities of strategic European interest ("catalyst actions"); and

– stimulation of cooperative behaviour in the freight logistics market ("common learning actions").

1.7 The main aim of the Marco Polo programme is to help shift freight from the roads to other modes of transport. The amount to be shifted will be equal to the anticipated growth in international road haulage.

2. General comments

2.1 Lessons drawn from the PACT programme 1997-2001

2.1.1 The ESC has noted with interest the studies commissioned by the European Commission which were intended to draw lessons from the PACT programme before it came to an end on 31 December 2001.

2.1.2 The ESC notes that, although the abovementioned studies made it possible to draw on the experience gained with the PACT programme when planning the Marco Polo programme, there is no continuity between the two programmes. Actions launched under the PACT programme were concluded at the start of 2002, without it being possible at that time to foresee when new actions under the Marco Polo programme could be presented, examined, adopted and funded. As the Marco Polo programme is due to come into force on 1 January 2003 (see Article 12 of the Regulation), the first actions cannot be launched at the very best until sometime in 2003. The ESC has, however, noted that the Commission has made provision in its own budget for "mini invitations to tender" in the course of 2002 covering a total of □**2 million. The ESC welcomes this solution but would point out that, given** the modest funding, it will regrettably not be possible to ensure continuity between the two programmes.

2.1.3 The ESC notes that the budgetary allocation initially foreseen for the PACT programme was □**35 million over a period of five years. This sum was likely to be used up by the** beginning of 2002, since, as the Commission points out, □**30 million had already been committed by** 30 September 2001.

2.1.4 The Commission indicates that it has been possible, with the abovementioned □**30** million and an average rate of aid of 25%, to fund actions totalling □**120 million.**

2.1.5 The ESC notes that the total amount of aid requested was □**203 million, which, on the** basis of an average rate of aid of 25%, would cover actions costing a total of □**812 million. The ESC** wonders about the discrepancy between the funding requested and the funding granted; this would seem to indicate that the initial budgetary allocation for the PACT programme was inadequate.

2.1.6 In Chapter 1 of the Explanatory Memorandum ("Lessons from the PACT programme 1997-2001") the Commission states in points 8 and 9 ("Quantitative results") that of the 65 actions

which were closed on 30 September 2001, 51% were considered to be fully successful, 22% were regarded as partially successful and 27% were deemed unsuccessful. This therefore means that only one action in two produced fully satisfactory results. The remaining actions made it possible to pinpoint a number of weaknesses in the logistics chain. Steps should therefore be taken to ensure that the Marco Polo programme provides better results.

2.2 **External evaluation of the PACT programme 1997-2001**

2.2.1 The ESC welcomes the fact that an independent external evaluation has been made of the PACT programme for the period 1997-2000.

2.2.2 The ESC does, however, wish to point out that this evaluation covers the first half of the programme but does not indicate the number of closed actions actually covered. (The Executive Summary of the Independent Evaluation of the PACT Programme in Annex I also fails to make this point clear.)

2.2.3 The ESC does, however, assume that, bearing in mind the delays in bringing the programme on stream in 1997 and the 65 closed actions recorded on 30 September 2001, the external evaluation was able to take account of a maximum of 30 or so actions of which, according to the Commission, an average of one in two was fully pertinent.

2.2.4 Under these circumstances, the ESC believes that once it is possible to make a definitive appraisal of the whole of the PACT programme, there should be a review of the conclusions drawn from this external evaluation – which are very important for the approach to be adopted in the Marco Polo programme.

2.2.5 Subject to this proviso, the ESC welcomes the fact that the recommendations made at the end of the external evaluation have been taken into account in the preparation of the Marco Polo programme.

2.2.6 The recommendation that the funding of feasibility studies as precursors to operational projects be stopped seems reasonable in view of the ESC.

2.2.7 The ESC believes that giving priority to financial aid for concrete actions in the form of, inter alia, start-up support does, indeed, represent a more effective approach.

2.3 **Current market developments and needs**

2.3.1 The ESC has taken note with interest of the analysis presented by the Commission.

2.3.2 The ESC is pleased to note that, when considering the non-road transport modes which are to ease road freight congestion, the proposal for a Regulation setting up the Marco Polo programme attaches the same importance to rail transport, short-sea shipping and inland waterways. In this context, the ESC points to the statistics quoted by the Commission in its report of 2 May 2002

(COM(2002) 215) on the application over the 1996-1999 period of Council Directive 92/106/EEC of 7 December 1992 on the establishment of common rules for certain types of combined transport of goods between Member States.

The 2,870 billion tonne-kilometres (tkm) of freight transported in total in 1998 are broken down as follows according to transport mode:

– road transport: 1,255
– maritime transport: 1,167
– rail transport: 241
– inland waterway transport: 121
– pipelines: 87

Over the 1996-1999 period, the rail and inland waterway legs of combined transport operations represented 26.5% of road transport operations by themselves over distances of more than 500 kilometres.

2.3.3 The ESC shares the Commission's standpoint with regard to air transport; this form of transport will not make a substantial contribution to reducing congestion in road freight transport in Europe. Air transport is, however, a mode which can be justified for certain types of freight, for intercontinental transport operations and for long-haul European transport operations, the number of which will increase with the EU enlargement.

2.3.4 The ESC takes the view that, in order to broaden the range of services provided, it would be appropriate not to fully exclude air transport from the Marco Polo programmes. Provision should therefore be made, subject to conditions to be defined by the Commission, for the possibility of funding actions with a view to including air transport, in a subsidiary capacity, in the scope of the Marco Polo programme; one example of such actions could be the installation of intermodal handling facilities.

2.3.5 In an earlier opinion[1], the ESC pointed out in points 3.2 and 3.3 that road transport accounted for 74.7% of the European Union's freight market and that rail transport, inland waterways and pipelines accounted for 13.4%, 6.8% and 5.1% respectively. The ESC further pointed out in point 3.4 of this opinion that: "*taken together, rail, pipelines and inland waterways currently carry a quarter of goods traffic and have reserve capacity that could be expanded if they were made to compliment each other better*".

2.3.6 The ESC is surprised that the Commission fails to mention the transport of products by pipeline; pipeline transport does, however, make a significant contribution to intermodal transport since, depending on the countries concerned, it can carry up to three-quarters of the freight carried by inland waterway transport.

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1 Opinion on the future of the trans-European inland waterway network – CES 24/2002 (not yet published in the OJ)

2.3.7 The ESC therefore takes the view that under the Marco Polo programme it should also be possible to finance actions for transferring freight from road transport to pipelines.

2.3.8 On the subject of **intermodal road and short sea shipping transport**, the ESC supports the Commission's call for the management and marketing of this form of transport to be simplified through the development of one-stop shops and, more generally, the establishment of "**freight integrators**", a new profession specialising in integrated goods transport using all available modes.

2.3.9 With a view to improving the image of short sea shipping – in particular container shipping – and promoting its use, it is undoubtedly necessary to publicise this mode, as the Commission is advocating.

2.3.10 In the ESC's view, more does, however, need to be done. The Commission should ask the Member States to encourage central and regional administrations to make it their standard policy to promote short sea shipping, rail and inland waterway transport, whenever possible. The example set by these public administrations would have an important "snowball effect" on investment in materials and equipment for alternative modes of transport and on the future choices of private transport enterprises.

2.3.11 Turning to **rail transport**, the Commission rightly highlights once again the lack of interoperability in terms of equipment, infrastructure, communications systems and operational rules, which is standing in the way of a genuine single market for rail transport.

2.3.12 The ESC supports all the measures taken by the Commission to harmonise conditions of access to rail infrastructure in the EU and, on a general level, all measures which permit optimal use of existing equipment.

2.3.13 The ESC regrets, however, that the Commission fails to point out on this occasion that the Member States and regions concerned will have to grant very substantial funding without delay in order to adapt, modernise and add to existing rail infrastructure, such as infrastructure linking up to maritime transport and inland waterway transport; it is only by optimising such infrastructure that it will be possible to meet the challenges which it currently has to face. The Member States and the regions concerned must, therefore, do more than voice their good intentions; they need to jointly provide the funding required to achieve their goals.

2.3.14 Turning to **inland waterway transport**, the ESC is pleased to note that this form of transport plays a full role in the Marco Polo programme.

2.3.15 In its recent own-initiative opinion referred to above[2], the ESC drew the attention of the Council and the European Parliament to the need to enhance the utilisation capacity of inland

2 See footnote 1.

waterway transport, as part of intermodal transport, by removing bottlenecks, as in the case of rail transport.

2.3.16 The ESC also suggests that the Commission promote the development of a multimodal transport by commissioning, for users, a "**European Guide**" to all multi-modal platforms. This guide could indicate the characteristics of the various platforms, including maritime ports, inland waterway ports and a number of airports. The document on multimodal platforms in the individual Member States, which has been provided by the Commission and which is appended to this opinion, represents a first step towards drawing up a "skeleton" list of these facilities, on the basis of which the proposed **European Guide** could be drawn up.

2.4 The Marco Polo programme

2.4.1 The Commission draws attention to the fact that, if no action is taken, road freight transport in the EU will increase by approx. 50% by 2010. This represents an additional 60 billion tkm. Cross-border road transport between EU Member States, alone, will double by 2020, i.e. there will be an estimated increase of 12 billion tkm per year. The socio-economic cost of the additional 12 billion tkm on roads has been estimated at more than □**3 billion per year. It is revealing to compare** this figure with the □**23 million annual budget for the Marco Polo programme.**

2.4.2 In its White Paper of 12 September 2001 entitled "European transport policy for 2010: time to decide" the Commission set out 60 measures – including the Marco Polo programme – for tackling the increase in transport volume. The aim for 2010 is that the traffic share between the various transport modes should be maintained at its 1998 level.

2.4.3 The ESC notes that the Commission is more ambitious in its proposal for a Regulation than in its White Paper, since under the Marco Polo programme the Commission hopes to maintain road freight at its current level and to have the additional 12 billion tkm absorbed by other modes of transport.

2.4.4 The ESC has already pointed out on a number of occasions that it fully supports the approach adopted by the Commission. It does, however, note that the deadline of 2010 is becoming increasingly difficult to respect since it is barely eight years away.

2.4.5 The ESC therefore proposes that the Commission draw up a timetable for the various measures to be taken by all the parties involved with a view to achieving the goals and respecting the deadlines set. Regular monitoring of the action taken, including the publication of an annual report, should make it possible to identify any delays and their causes and make up for lost time.

2.4.6 Should this not happen, the ESC believes that, in the absence of realistic deadlines, motivation is likely to flag. That would be particularly detrimental, bearing in mind the important issues at stake.

2.4.7 The ESC is pleased to note that the Commission points out that the Marco Polo programme will apply to all segments of the freight market and that combined transport will not be the only option taken into account.

2.4.8 If the goals set are to be achieved, the ESC thinks that all possible resources will have to be mobilised and nothing ruled out.

2.4.9 For this reason, the ESC fears that there may be some confusion as to the Commission's intentions since in points 44 and 45 of Chapter 3 of the Explanatory Memorandum ("Delimitation to other support initiatives") it makes a number of apparently contradictory statements on the funding of infrastructure. It is, in the ESC's view, vital to ensure that intentions and resources are in line with each other; to that end, point 44 should be amended so that projects requiring the establishment of ancillary infrastructure may be funded under the Marco Polo programme provided that such infrastructure promotes the transfer of traffic from the roads to other modes. The ESC proposes that Regulation (EC) 2236/95 be amended with regard to the granting of Community financial aid in the field of support networks for modal shifts so that the aid for ancillary facilities is set at a higher rate than the 20% stipulated for transport TEN infrastructure projects.

2.4.10 The ESC recognises that, in the field of freight transport at EU level, priority should be given to actions involving several states. Difficulties in ensuring the continuity and smooth flow of transport are encountered at the interfaces between Member States' systems and infrastructure. There are, however, also isolated bottlenecks within Member States which need to be removed as well. The ESC therefore requests that the Marco Polo programme be able to finance support measures within a Member State if such measures speed up international traffic, especially on busy routes.

2.4.11 **Start-up aid** (modal shift actions): the ESC is surprised at the empirical limits set by the Commission in point 50 of Chapter 3 of the Explanatory Memorandum (start-up aid for new services); these limits contrast with the considerable flexibility advocated elsewhere by the Commission in the management of this programme. The ESC accepts that the viability of new regular maritime, rail and inland waterway services may be linked to the load factor in respect of the equipment used. For spatial planning reasons, it is not, however, possible to judge how long such new services may continue to be loss-making; what is required, above all, is to stimulate the local market.

2.4.12 The ESC would also point out that the success of road transport can be attributed, inter alia, to three features peculiar to road transport: speed, maintenance of deadlines (reliability), and door-to-door service.

2.4.13 These three features, taken together, have made it possible to promote the development of the management concept of "zero stockholding". This concept now needs to be called into question in favour of a concept which is more in line with the modes of transport to be developed and which could be called "stock in circulation" management.

2.4.14 The logistical possibilities now available make it possible to ensure regular deliveries for users and to guarantee that reasonable deadlines are met whilst, at the same time, removing the abusive constraints imposed by the need for urgency which characterises present-day management.

2.4.15 **Catalyst actions**: the ESC supports the Commission's desire to "*attack core problems of running an efficient transport chain*" (see point 55 of the Explanatory Memorandum). The ESC does, however, note that all the examples quoted by the Commission in point 58 of Chapter 3 of the Explanatory Memorandum require major investment. This is the case, for example, with regard to:

– non-stop railway services, without changes of locomotives, on railway networks which have yet to be harmonised;

– the provision of inland waterway services between the North Sea and the Black Sea; this would require a continuous network of wide-gauge waterways;

– the introduction of high-speed goods trains; this would require the availability of suitable equipment and networks, which do not exist at the present time;

– the establishment of high-traffic density "motorways of the sea"; this would make it necessary to redevelop the ports situated on these "motorways", including the immediate land-side accesses.

2.4.16 **Common learning actions:** The ESC supports the policy advocated by the Commission under which transport enterprises using different modes are to be encouraged to network in order to create synergies, which promote efficiency.

2.4.17 The Commission rightly stresses the importance of providing support for the dissemination of the results obtained as this is a way of stimulating the replication of good ideas. The experience – albeit too short – of the PACT programme did, however, demonstrate the lack of replication, for a number of specific reasons. The ESC takes the view that, as the concept of sustainable development becomes more widespread, it may reasonably be expected that there will a rapid change in behavioural patterns, thereby making it possible to benefit to the full from the common learning actions.

2.4.18 The Committee endorses the approach adopted by the Commission and recommends that, when actions are being selected for assistance under the Marco Polo programme, special attention be paid to their replication potential.

2.5 External consultation

2.5.1 The Commission points out that it engaged in wide-ranging prior consultation before drawing up the proposal for a Regulation.

2.5.2 The ESC welcomes the attention paid by the Commission to hearing the views of the parties concerned before presenting its proposals. It does, however, regret the fact that it was involved in this consultation process only at a late stage.

2.5.3 The ESC therefore has to draw up its opinion within a short deadline, without being able to have at its full disposal the information gathered during the consultation phase.

3. Specific comments on the proposal for a Regulation setting up the Marco Polo programme

3.1 Article 1 – Subject matter

3.1.1 The ESC notes that the budget allocated to the Marco Polo programme is €**23** million per year, which represents a total of €**115 million over the programme's five years.**

3.1.2 This amount is significantly higher than the €**35 million allocated to the PACT** programme but much less than the sum announced in the White Paper of 12 September 2001 entitled "European Transport Policy for 2010: time to decide"; the White Paper envisaged a budget of €**120** million for the Marco Polo programme over a period of just four years, which represents €**30** million per year rather than €**23 million.**

3.1.3 In Chapter 6 the Explanatory Memorandum to the proposal for a Regulation, the Commission points out that "[*it*] *is confident that a yearly budget of* €***23 million should be able to help shift an aggregate of 12 billion tkm of freight per year …***". The ESC is not convinced that this initiative, by itself, will be sufficient to achieve this annual transfer target. The ESC urges the Commission to point out in the preamble to the Marco Polo programme Regulation that it is calling upon the EU and the Member States to take the following additional measures:

– to act without delay to strengthen inspections and increase penalties in the event of infringements of labour laws, so as to establish fair competition between the various transport modes;

– to finance modal transfer infrastructure (e.g. terminals and access infrastructure) from public funds;

– to demand that operators commit themselves to providing, on an ongoing basis, services of general interest created with assistance from the Marco Polo programme or equivalent national programmes; financial assistance should be provided, where necessary, to offset the cost of meeting this demand.

3.1.4 The ESC would, however, reiterate that the Commission's calculations are in part based on the findings of the external evaluation of the PACT programme, the limitations of which were highlighted in point 2.2 above.

3.1.5 Furthermore, the ESC is surprised that, immediately after having set a budget of **23** million per year for the Marco Polo programme which "*should be able to help shift an aggregate of 12 billion of tkm of freight per year during the lifetime of the programme*" (Chapter 6, Article 1, fourth paragraph of the Explanatory Memorandum), the Commission makes the following statement: "*but even if this goal is not attained, a quantified objective for the instrument will substantially increase the possibilities for monitoring the performance of the programme, and is thus, in any case, positive*". The fact that the Commission envisages the possibility of the goal not being attained is not likely to enhance the credibility of the instrument. The ESC therefore proposes that this final sentence be deleted.

3.2 **Article 2: Definitions**

3.2.1 The ESC notes that action files are to be submitted by a group ("consortium") comprising at least two enterprises established in different states.

3.2.2 The ESC urges the Commission to stipulate that the enterprises making up a consortium must not belong to the same group and one of the enterprises must not be a subsidiary of the other. It proposes that indent (f) "consortium" of Article 2 Definitions be amended accordingly to read as follows: "'consortium', means any formal or informal arrangement by which at least two undertakings, which do not form part of the same group and one of which is not a subsidiary of the other, execute together and share the risk concerning, an action."

3.3 **Article 3: Scope**

3.3.1 The ESC has already pointed out that the rules stipulated in this Article are, in its view, too restrictive, insofar as in their current form, they require the actions to involve concrete measures linking the respective territories of the states concerned.

3.3.2 The ESC does, however take the view that there may well be localised actions which affect one single territory – and therefore one state only – but whose impact would benefit all users of the relevant modes of transport passing through the said territory. To quote an example, the development of multimodal platforms should be eligible for consideration under the Marco Polo programme since, even though they are situated in a single territory, they may be used by any international transport enterprise, irrespective of the enterprise's territory of origin.

3.3.3 The ESC urges the Commission to amend Article 3 of the Regulation in order to extend the range of actions eligible for consideration under the Marco Polo programme by making provision for justified exceptions to the rule whereby actions have to involve the territory of at least two states.

3.4 **Article 4: Eligible applicants**

3.4.1 The ESC endorses Article 4, subject to account being taken to the observation above with regard to the composition of a consortium. The ESC does, however, point out that the

requirement for projects to be submitted by "*a consortium of two or more undertakings, established in at least two different Member States* ..." would not apply in the exceptional cases referred to in point 3.3.2.

3.5 **Article 5: Modal shift actions**

3.5.1 The ESC notes that modal shift actions shall "not lead to unacceptable distortions of competition" (Article 5(1)(c)) and may receive financial assistance "limited to a maximum of 30% of all expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives [of the actions]". The ESC considers that the minimum subsidy threshold per modal shift action, set at **€1 million, should be reduced to €500,000,** in order to make it possible to finance innovatory actions costing in the region of **€1.6 million.**

3.6 **Article 6: Catalyst actions**

3.6.1 The ESC calls for the amendment of Article 6(1)(g) of the proposal in order to include actions on all EU transport networks and not just actions involving goods transported on the trans-European networks.

3.6.2 The ESC notes that catalyst actions may receive financial assistance "limited to a maximum of 35% of all expenditure necessary to achieve the objectives of [the actions]" (Article 6(3)). Expenditure on ancillary measures related to infrastructure works are also to be reimbursable at the same rate. The ESC considers that the minimum subsidy threshold per catalyst action, set at **€3 million, should be reduced to €1.5 million in order to make it possible to provide** financial assistance in respect of innovatory actions costing approximately **€4.3 million.**

3.7 **Article 7: Common learning actions**

3.7.1 The ESC notes that the ceiling on Community financial assistance for common learning actions is to be 50% of all the necessary expenditure. It considers that the minimum subsidy threshold per common learning action, set at **€500,000, should be reduced to €250,000 in order to** make it possible to provide financial assistance for innovatory actions costing **€500,000.**

3.8 **Article 8: Detailed rules; Article 9: Submission of projects; Article 10: Selection of projects**

3.8.1 The ESC endorses Articles 8, 9 and 10.

3.9 **Article 11: Committee**

3.9.1 The ESC notes that the Commission points out in Chapter 6, Article 11 of the Explanatory Memorandum that an advisory committee is to be set up but that, in the Commission's view, there is no need to set up a management committee in view of the modest budget allocated to the Marco Polo programme.

3.9.2 The ESC is surprised at the Commission's line of reasoning, which takes account only of the budgetary aspects of the project but fails to underscore the importance of the goals set, given the impact of the likely increase in road haulage.

3.9.3 Without wishing to call into question the rules which have been adopted, the ESC calls for a management committee to be given responsibility for carrying out a special monitoring of the implementation of the Marco Polo programme.

3.9.4 As indicated in points 2.4.5 and 2.4.6 above, the ESC calls for the establishment of a timetable for identifying the parties involved in the actions and monitoring the commitments entered into which will shift the growth in road freight between now and 2010 to other modes.

3.10 **Article 12: Budget; and Article 13: Set-aside for accompanying measures and programme evaluation**

3.10.1 The ESC pointed out earlier that it cannot make an informed appraisal of the proposed funding of **€115 million for the Marco Polo programme.**

3.10.2 The ESC notes that the Commission itself considers that "*the funding amounts proposed here are relatively limited in comparison to the overall Community budget (ca. 0.04%) ...*" (see Chapter 6, Article 11 of the Explanatory Memorandum).

3.10.3 For this reason the ESC considers that the Commission should make provision for the possibility of proposing an increase in the budget during the lifetime of the programme in order to provide additional funding for any actions additional to those currently planned by the Commission.

3.10.4 The ESC is pleased to note that a number of operations could also be co-financed by other EU funds such as the ERDF, INTERREG and PHARE.

3.11 **Article 14: Evaluation**

3.11.1 The ESC notes that the Commission is to present, by 31 December 2006 at the latest, an assessment report on the results of the Marco Polo programme, which comes to an end on 31 December 2007. The ESC highlights the lack of continuity, which it deplored earlier, between the PACT and the Marco Polo programmes.

3.11.2 The ESC points out that, by setting the 31 December 2006 deadline for the presentation of an assessment report on the results of the Marco Polo programme, the Commission runs the risk of encountering the same difficulties as it encountered with the PACT programme, namely that the assessment would be based on a small number of closed actions and that too little time would be left to prepare a new programme for achieving the objectives by 2010.

3.11.3 The ESC does, at all events, take the view that by 2006 or 2007 there will no longer be any point in introducing a new programme of the same type as PACT or Marco Polo since it will already be clear by then whether the targets for 2010 will be achieved.

3.11.4 The Commission should, in the ESC's view, make provision for extending the Marco Polo programme by two or three years (to 2008, 2009, or 2010) if additional actions are proposed in the light of the on-going external monitoring of the actions set in train, rather than a partial assessment.

4. Conclusions

4.1 The ESC generally endorses the proposal for the Marco Polo programme; this programme will extend the PACT programme, whilst offering a broader range of options. It will also help to transfer a significant part of the growth in cross-border road freight between Member States by 2010 to other modes.

4.2 The ESC does not, however, believe that the Marco Polo programme, by itself, will make it possible to achieve the annual modal shift targets set by the Commission. It proposes the following ten highly specific additional incentives:

– Tighter inspections and more severe penalties in the event of labour law infringements.

– Public financing of modal transport infrastructure, such as terminals and access facilities.

– Requiring operators to pledge to provide new ongoing services of general interest in order to secure modal shifts; failure to do this will mean that customers will not change their habits.

– Procedures should be set out forthwith for extending the Marco Polo programme by two or three years in order to ensure that it continues to operate up to 2010 (there is a need to avoid the hiatus which occurred between the PACT and the Marco Polo programmes).

– The greatest possible benefit should be drawn from the experience gained from the PACT programme by concluding the external evaluation of the programme; the positive effects of the PACT programme have not so far been fully evaluated.

– A timetable should be established for the measures implementing the actions set out in the Marco Polo programme.

– A management committee should be given the task of monitoring actions on an on-going basis with a view to making the necessary mid-term adjustments to the Marco Polo programme.

– Provision should be made for including in the projects eligible for support under the Marco Polo programme actions involving air and pipeline transport in a secondary capacity, provided that other modes are involved also.

– Financial aid should be approved for projects involving actions taking place in just one Member State, provided that the impact of such projects will benefit all users of international shipments passing through the Member State in question.

– **A European Guide**, covering all multimodal platforms in the EU, describing their respective characteristics and laying down minimum standards, should be drawn up for the benefit of all users.

4.3 While recognising that the stakes for the environment are particularly high, the ESC takes the view that they need to be reconciled with the increased demand for transport which will be generated in the coming decades by economic development and the enlargement of the EU.

The only way to reconcile these demands is to adopt a global policy which would change certain economic practices and include firm commitments for the building of transport infrastructure.

4.3.1 In the light of the practice of "zero stockholding" which is resulting in ever shorter delivery deadlines and placing non-road transport at a disadvantage, the ESC proposes that the Commission considers a switch to "stock in circulation" which would permit delivery deadlines more in tune with real needs.

4.3.2 In conclusion, the ESC draws attention to the fact that, bearing in mind that implementation of a common transport policy to address the abovementioned demand was envisaged in the Treaty of Rome, more decisive measures need to be taken in the short and long term with a view to avoiding congestion, whilst not jeopardising EU competitiveness and the environment in the EU. Decision-makers need to reflect on the following figures:

– In the period up to 2020 traffic will double, this will represent an extra 12 billion tkm per year, which will involve an estimated annual socio-economic cost of □**3 billion (compared with the** modest annual budget of □**23 million allocated to the Marco Polo programme.**

– According to a recent study, in order to meet the demand for both goods transport and passenger transport by 2030, the enlarged EU will have to make investments totalling □**550 billion – or** □**18** billion per year if it is to continue to have a competitive, environmentally-sound infrastructure network; new forms of financing projects will therefore have to found before the review of the TENs is carried out in 2004.

Brussels, 17 July 2002.

The President of the Economic and Social Committee	The Secretary-General of the Economic and Social Committee

Göke Frerichs **Patrick Venturini**

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N.B.: see appendix overleaf.

Appendix

**List of multimodal platforms,
broken down by Member State**

GERMANY

Aken	Aschaffenburg	Augsburg	Basel
Berlin	Bielefeld	Bonn	Braunschweig/Wolfsburg/Salzgitter
Bremen	Bremerhaven	Burnsbütel	Cuxhaven
Deggendorf	Dessau/Aken	Dörpen	Dortmund/Bönen
Dresden	Duisburg	Düsseldorf-Neuss	Eberswalde Havel or Wass.
Eisenhüttenstadt	Emden	Emmelsum/Wesel	Emmerich
Erfurt	Frankfurt am Main	Freiburg	Germersheim
Gernsheim	Hagen	Hamm	Hamburg
Hannover	Heilbronn	Hohenbudberg	Ingolstadt
Karlsruhe	Kassel/Belseförth	Kehl	Kelheim
Kiel	Koblenz	Köln	Landshut
Leipzig	Mainz	Leer	Magdeburg
Mannheim/Ludwigshafen	München	Neumünster	Nordenham
Nürnberg	Offenburg	Osnabrück	Paderborn
Papenburg	Passau	Peine	Pfullendorf/Ravensburg
Regensburg	Rheine	Riesa	Rosslau
Rostock	Saarbrücken	Saarlouis/Dillingen	Salzgitter
Stade/Bützfleth	Straubing	Stuttgart	Trier
Ulm	Velten	Wanne/Herne	Weil am Rhein
Wetziar	Wolfsburg/Fallerslebe	Wörth	Wuppertal
Würzburg/Schweinefurt			

AUSTRIA

Bludenz/Wolfurt	Enns	Graz	Hall in Tirol	Krems	Linz
Salzburg	St. Michael	St. Pölten	Villach	Wiels	Wien

BELGIUM

Antwerpen	Athus	Avelgem	Brussel/Bruxelles	
Charleroi	Doel	Genk	Gent	
Gent/Rodenhuize	La Louviere	Liège/Renory/Bressoux	Meerhout	
Mouscron	Muizen	Oostende	Puurs	
Roeselare	Vilvoorde/Grimbergen	Wielsbeke	Willebroek	Zeebrugge

DENMARK

Aalborg	Aarhus	Hirtshals	Kobenhavn	Odense	Padborg	Taulov

SPAIN

Algeciras/San Roque	Alicante	Barcelona	Bilbao	Cordoba	Irun
Linares	Lleida	Madrid	Murcia/Cartagena	Pamplona/Noain	Port Bou
Tarragona	Valencia/Silla	Valladolid	Vigo	Vitoria	Zaragoza

FINLAND

Helsinki	Jyväskylä	Kotka	Kuopio	Lahti	Lappeenranta
Oulu	Pori	Saima ports	Seinäjoki	Tampere	Turku

GREECE

Athina	Thessaloniki

IRELAND

Cork	Dublin	Dundalk

ITALY

Alba	Bari	Bologna	Brindisi	Cagliari	Catania	Chiasso
Falconara	Fiorenzuola	Francavilla Fontana		Genova	Gioia Tauro	La Spezia
Latina	Livorno	Luino	Messina	Milano	Modena	Napoli
Novara	Padova	Palermo	Parma	Pescara	Pomezia	Pozzolo
Ravenna	Rivalta Scrivia	Roma	Rovigo	Rubiera	Sassari	Torino
Trieste	Udine	Venezia	Vercelli	Verona		

FRANCE

Alsace	Colmar - Neuf – Brisach Mulhouse – Ottmarsheim Euroairports Mulhouse	CNC Mulhouse CTC Strasbourg Port Autonome de Strasbourg	Eurofret Strasbourg Les Ports Rhénans Sud
Bordeaux – Bayonne	Port Autonome de Bordeaux Centre Européen de Fret de Bayonne Mougherre Lahonce	Bordeaux Hourcade Bordeaux Fret Aéroport de Bordeaux Mérignac	Dax Bayonne Hendaye
Bourgogne	Dijon Sud Dijonnais	Plateforme du Gatinais Technopole de la Porte d'Or	Aéroport (Chalon + Macon)
Centre	Centreco – Orléans	Tours	Vésoul
Dunkerque - Lille	Port Autonome de Dunkerque Lomme Sequedin Garromanche	Douai Lille Saint-Sauveur Dourges	Port fluvial de Lille Port d'activité Lesquin
Languedeoc Roussillon	Centre Rail-Route CNC– Montpellier LRP Montpellier Eurogare Montpellier Méditerranée	Distriport du Boulou Espace Grand St Charles– Perpignan	Aéroport de Montpellier Sète
Lorraine	Metz	Nancy	
Lyon - Rhône Alpes	CNR – Lyon Port de Lyon Edouard Herriot Aéroport de Lyon Satolas CNC – Saint-Priest	Isle d'Abeau Lyon-Mions SOGARIS Aéroport	Parc de la Plaine de l'Ain Grenoble Chalon-sur-Saône
Nantes Atlantique	Angers Port Atlantique Nantes St Nazaire	CNC Le Mans Centre de l'agglomération Nantaise	Nantes - Montoir Cognac – Angoulême
Paris	Aéroport de Paris Port de Paris Terminal TC de Valenton Bonneuil PIN de Rungis Sites de Cergy Pontoise St Ouen	Parc d'activités Paris Est Zones Parsi Sud Seine et Marne & Essone Garonor – Aulnay-sous-Bois	Sogaris - Rungis PF de St Mard Bonneuil-sur-Marne Gennevilliers
Picardie	Amiens		

Provence - Marseille	Port Autonome de Marseille DistriPort - Marseille Fos	CNC Marseille-Canet CNC d'Avignon Parc de Nice Parc multisites d'Orius Provence	Anjoly – Vitrolles Clésud - Grans Miramar
Rouen - Le Havre	Port Autonome de Rouen Port autonome du Havre	Rouen - St Etienne du Rouvray Rouen - Vallée de seine	CNC - Sotteville les Rouen Le Havre Combi
Toulouse	Aéroport de Toulouse Eurocentre	Toulouse – Fenouillet MIN de Toulouse	Agen

LUXEMBOURG

Bettembourg	Mertert

NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam	Arnhem/Nijmegen	Born	Born/Zuid-Limburg
Delfzijl/Eemshaven	Groningen	Hertogenbosch	Meppel
Moerdijk	Oss	Ridderkerk	Rotterdam
Twente	Utrecht	Venlo	Zaanstad

PORTUGAL

Leixoes/Porto	Lisboa	Vale do Tejo/Riachos

SWEDEN

Älmhult	Gävle	Göteborg	Helsingborg
Jönkoping	Lulea	Malmö	Norrköping
Örebro	Stockholm/arsta	Sundsvall	Trelleborg
Umea			

UNITED KINGDOM

Barking	Belfast	Birmingham	Cardiff
Cleveland	Coatbridge	Daventry	Doncaster
Felixstowe	Harwich	Leeds	Liverpool
London	Manchester	Seaforth	Southampton
Strathclyde	Thamesport	Tilbury	Wakefield
Widnes			