

Brussels, September 2002

Common Initiative by the undersigned Federations from the Transport Sector in Favour of the Marco Polo Program

Dear Minister,

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a Regulation on the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system known as **the Marco Polo program** (COM (2002) 54).

The proposal's scope is part of the overall goal of guaranteeing sustainable mobility and of keeping road traffic viable by shifting cargo away from this mode to more environmentally and socially friendly transport means such as rail, inland navigation and short-sea-shipping. In this respect, the Commission proposes modal shift, catalyst and common learning actions that would eventually contribute to the creation of successful structures for an environmentally sound transport system. The success of Marco Polo implies that the different components are not separated from each other.

Against this background, it is crucial not to reduce the budget of € 115 million that the Commission has foreseen for this program until 2007.

The most important characteristic of the Marco Polo program is its broader scope compared with the previous PACT program. While PACT predominantly focused on improving the possibilities for combined transport, Marco Polo aims at a more holistic approach to achieve an environmentally sustainable development in the transport sector. Any reduction of the budget would thus endanger the Marco Polo program as a whole. Given its ambitious goals and its way to calculate environmental benefits, it would be short-sighted to keep Marco Polo "budget neutral" to PACT.

The budget allocated by the Commission is justified in a number of respects:

- the existence of the Marco Polo program itself is at stake
- sustainable development is a top priority for the EU.

In this perspective, we refer to the conclusions of the Gothenburg Summit in 2001 and to the White Paper on Transport Policy to 2010. Moreover, the European Parliament supports the policy initiatives that lead to sustainable transport in Europe.

The undersigned representatives from the sectors of rail, waterborne and intermodal transport welcome unanimously the proposed Marco Polo program as an important step into the right direction towards sustainable transport policy in Europe.

Therefore, they urge the European Ministers of Transport

- **not to reduce any budget related provisions within Marco Polo**
- **to keep the initial scope of Marco Polo unchanged**

In turn, the undersigned federations will fully commit themselves to make Marco Polo a success. **However, we need your support in keeping the program a workable one.**

Yours sincerely,




 Johannes Ludewig
 Executive Director
 Community of European Railways
 johannes.ludewig@cer.be

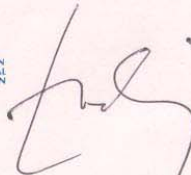


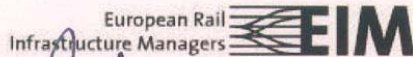

 Theresia K. Hacksteiner
 Secretary General
 European Barge Union
 hacksteiner@mail.ivr.nl





 Jürgen Sturm
 Secretary General
 European Federation of Inland Ports
 efip@skynet.be





 Klaus Ebeling
 Secretary General
 European Intermodal Association
 klaus.ebeling@eia-ngo.com




 James Evans
 Secretary General
 European Rail Infrastructure Managers
 james.evans@eimrail.org




 Klaus Meyer
 Secretary General
 European Rail Freight Association
 klaus.meyer@uitp.com



Karin de Schepper
 Secretary General
 Inland Navigation Europe
 karin.de.schepper@inlandnavigation.org



Willy De Decker
 Marketprospector
 Promotion Shortsea Shipping Centre Flanders
 willy.de.decker@sssbe.com



Wolf Gehrman
 Secretary General
 International Union of Private Wagons
 uip@online.be



Rudy Colle
 Director General
 International Road-Rail Union
 rudycolle@uirr.com