

## Clearer rules on State aid to Motorways of the Sea

***The European Commission clarified today the way Member States may provide State aid to projects aimed at launching new Motorways of the Sea links. These projects are selected under the Marco Polo II and the trans-European transport networks programmes. If Community funding is available but not sufficient to fully support the projects, Member States may fill the funding gap.***

The Motorways of the Sea (MoS) are one of the main European transport policy initiatives. They are designed to move long-distance transport off the roads and onto the sea in an effort to fight growing congestion and greenhouse gas emissions in Europe.

The European Union is providing financial support for the start-up of MoS projects and for investment in the infrastructure needed through the TEN-T programme and the Marco Polo programme. European funding is available for the development of port and hinterland infrastructure, for the start-up of new shipping services as well as for investment in dedicated ships and equipment.

The European Commission has been looking into how to ease the funding procedures for the further development of the MoS, including state aid. The Communication adopted today supplements the state aid guidelines for maritime transport<sup>1</sup>. It allows for State aid to operational costs of Marco Polo selected projects up to 35% over five years, and for State aid to start up investments in TEN-T MoS projects up to 30% for two years.

As a consequence, the MoS projects will attract more public support, with benefits for the environment and the economy alike.

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<sup>1</sup> The Communication complements the 2004 Community Guidelines on State aid to maritime transport and aligns the ceiling and intensity of State aid for these projects with those of the Marco Polo II Regulation and the TEN-T Guidelines.