



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 28.7.2016
C(2016) 4844 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion concerning the proposal for a Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications in inland navigation and repealing Council Directive 96/50/EC and Council Directive 91/672/EEC {COM(2016) 82 final}.

The Commission's proposal aims at facilitating labour mobility in the inland waterway transport sector by ensuring that skilled workers' qualifications are recognised throughout the Union. Inland waterway transport (IWT) is a cost-saving and energy-efficient transport mode that can support EU energy efficiency, growth and industrial development goals. The future contribution of the IWT sector to these EU policy goals is, however, hampered by difficulties in terms of labour mobility, manpower shortages and skills mismatches.

To address this issue, the proposal will streamline the legal framework governing the professional qualifications in inland navigation through a new approach on the recognition of qualifications based upon the competences required for the operation of vessels. It will also provide new career prospects for workers in this sector. These measures will help build up the internal IWT labour market so that the IWT sector can fully contribute to the above-mentioned EU policy goals.

The Commission welcomes the Senato della Repubblica's support for the aims of the proposal that is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and also the Council, in which the your government is represented. The Council has reached a General Approach under the Dutch Presidency and the European Parliament is expected to deliver its opinion before the end of the year and to start the negotiations with the Council under the Slovak Presidency. The Commission hopes that an agreement will be reached in a timely manner.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Senato della Repubblica and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue with in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Violeta Bulc
Member of the Commission*

*Mr Pietro GRASSO
President of the Senato della Repubblica
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