



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Presidents,

The Commission would like to thank the Congreso de los Diputados and the Senado for their 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 proposal aims to facilitate 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 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 Congreso de los Diputados' and the Senado's support for the aims of the proposal that is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council, in which 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 negotiations with the Council under the Slovak Presidency. The Commission hopes that an agreement will be reached in a timely manner.

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The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the issues raised by the Congreso de los Diputados and the Senado and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Violeta Bulc

Member of the Commission