Ports: an engine for growth
Where we’re headed one year on
In 2013, the European Commission put the European seaports on the political agenda of the European Union and proposed a strategy to develop their competitiveness together with an action plan combining legislative and non-legislative measures¹.

Why a European Port Policy?

1. The European major ports serve the trade and the economy not only of their Member State, but of several other Member States and the European Union as a whole. 75% of vessels calling at European ports are carrying out intra-EU trips.

2. A European level playing field must be ensured as European ports are competing across borders within the EU. European ports also compete with ports of neighbouring third countries; in particular, they are facing significant competition from North African ports in the transhipment of containers market.

3. European ports face common challenges which will require substantial private and public investment: adapting infrastructure to changing demands, notably the increasing size of vessels; and helping to comply with new environmental legal requirements such as the obligation to provide waste reception facilities, LNG refuelling stations and shoreside electricity.

4. European ports are the gateways of the trans-European corridors. 329 ports of common interest have been identified in the EU legislation, including 104 ports of strategic interest (“core ports”) which must be better connected to the rail, inland waterway and road networks. Structural performance gaps between those ports lead to unnecessary land and sea traffic and a less efficient use of the network.

Key Goals

Connect ports
Develop efficiency
Attract investment
Promote social dialogue
Encourage sustainability and innovation

### Main measures undertaken and in preparation

| 1 | Integrate ports in the trans-European corridors |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| **What has already been done?** | **In preparation** |
| The Commission appointed «European coordinators» in March 2014 for each of the corridors. The Coordinators have started preparing Work Plans with the assistance of the Commission. The Commission has asked ports’ managing bodies to collect information on the most relevant investments for the functioning of the corridors. | Representatives of ports with a direct impact on the functioning of the corridors will be invited, together with other corridor infrastructure managers, to meetings of the Corridor Fora (next meeting in June 2014). The European Coordinators are due to establish the Corridor Work Plans by 31 December 2014. Updates will be possible if substantial changes are needed. |

| 2 | Target EU funding support with the «Connecting Europe Facility» |
|-----------------------------------------------|
| **The integrated development of ports and their rail and inland waterways connections and maritime infrastructure have been recognised as priorities in the annual and multiannual programmes adopted on 30 March 2014 to allocate the budget of the “Connecting Europe Facility”, a new programme dedicated to infrastructure funding for the period 2014-2020.** | The European Commission plans to publish the calls for proposals of both the annual programme and the multiannual work programme in September 2014. Project promoters will have until February 2015 to submit applications for funding. |
### Main measures undertaken and in preparation

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<td>Directive 2014/23/EC was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 28 March 2014. It sets common rules on the awarding of concession contracts and will apply to concession contracts (not land lease) in ports once it has been transposed into national law within two years. The Commission has proposed a Regulation (the “Port Transparency Regulation”) establishing a framework on the market access to port services (many of which are not concessions) and the transparency of public funding. The market access rules will not apply to cargo-handling and passenger services.</td>
<td>The Commission will follow and assist the examination of the proposed Regulation by the future European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Some of the compromise amendments prepared by the Transport Committee of the European Parliament, although not yet voted on, provide a good basis for further discussion. In the meantime, the Commission will pursue infringement procedures in cases of seriously abusive restrictions of port services, using existing case law derived from Article 49 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (freedom of establishment).</td>
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### What has already been done?

The Commission’s Communication – Blue Belt, a Single Transport Area for Shipping – released on 8 July 2013 provides a roadmap for simplifying the procedure for intra-EU shipping. As a first step, simplified procedures for Regular Shipping Services under the Customs Code were adopted on 5 November 2013.

### In preparation

Further discussions with the customs authorities, including the Directorate General for customs will take place to implement the “Blue Belt” concept. Further actions will be considered to promote «port friendly» practices regarding customs procedures.

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### Administrative simplifications (Blue Belt etc.)

The draft Block Exemption Regulation of December 2013 announces that port criteria are to be included in a future review of the Regulation by December 2015. 11 Individual state aid decisions adopted since May 2013 provide additional clarity on the concepts and methods used by the Commission to consider whether public funding in a port is state aid and if so whether it is “compatible” i.e. allowed.

### Modernisation of state aid rules

Criteria will be prepared for the inclusion of ports in the revision of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER). The adoption of the “Port Transparency Regulation”, with rules on the transparency of public funding will enable an effective application of the state aid rules. In accordance with well-established case law, the financial compensation granted to operators selected according to the procedure of the Regulation will not be considered as state aid. The Commission will also consider establishing specific sector guidelines for state aid in ports.
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<th>Promote a good social climate in ports and improve the health, safety and training of port workers</th>
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<td>A Committee for a European Social Dialogue was established in June 2013. Four meetings have already taken place to elaborate a report on female employment and a detailed agenda on health and safety issues. The Commission is providing administrative and technical support to the dialogue, notably through the “Portrait” project entirely financed by the Commission.</td>
<td>The social partners work in an autonomous way. However the Commission will follow the dialogue closely and assist whenever possible to advance the discussions in the Social Dialogue Committee.</td>
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<th>Raise the environmental profile of the European ports and promote innovation</th>
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<td>In the Clean Power Transport Directive, the European Parliament and the Council finally agreed in March 2014 to include provisions which require all core ports to provide Liquified Natural Gas refuelling points and shoreside electricity (unless not economically viable) by 2025.</td>
<td>The Commission will provide financial support to ports implementing good environmental practices and investing in Liquified Natural Gas and shoreside electricity infrastructure. The Commission will develop analytical tools and criteria that ports can use on a voluntary basis to vary port infrastructure charges according to environmental criteria in a cost effective way. The industry will be invited to assist in this in order to contribute to the greening of the shipping industry at low cost. The Commission will work with the industry to establish an innovation and research agenda on ports and logistics, notably in the programme Horizon 2020.</td>
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Map of the trans-European core ports and corridors

Legend

- BALTIC - ADRIATIC
- NORTH SEA - BALTIC
- MEDITERRANEAN
- ORIENT / EAST-MED
- SCANDINAVIAN - MEDITERRANEAN
- RHINE - ALPINE
- ATLANTIC
- NORTH SEA - MEDITERRANEAN
- RHINE - DANUBE

Core port or cluster of core ports of the trans-European network
A few striking figures

329 trans-European network ports, of which 104 core ports

€485 Million in grants from the European Commission to port projects since 2007

€2.18 Billion of loans from the European Investment Bank to port projects since 2009

89 port projects supported by the European Commission in 17 Countries since 2007

European Ports employ 469,000 people directly and help sustain 3 Million jobs
3.7 Billion tons handled in European ports in 2012

2.2 Million ship calls in EU ports in 2012

75% of calls for intra EU trips

30% of containers handled in three major ports

28% of containers handled in transhipment operations

€2.1 Billion euros: the investments in Liquified Natural Gas refuelling stations to be made by 2025

Vessels of 10,000 TEU or more make up 48% of new containership order book
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