



EU PORTS POLICY

Draft Regulation on market access to port services and financial transparency of ports

The ETA's Executive Committee has repeatedly rejected the European Commission's initiative to launch a "Port Package III" by way of a new Regulation proposal on market access to port services and financial transparency of ports.

In its 2013 **Position Papers** (find [here](#) and [here](#)) the ETA reflected the outcome of its 82 members' consultation operating in the TEN-T and other European ports within 21 European countries. The ETA underlined the towage industry's continuous efforts to respond to the evergrowing demands of its customers, the shipping industry and terminal operators by heavy investment in more powerful tugs, capable of handling ever larger vessels, requiring assistance from fewer tugs.

While European harbour towage providers are facing a very competitive environment in ports where the market size is large enough to attract several operators, the ETA members are firmly convinced that this legislative's intervention would not enhance competition but would put at risk the sustainability of their investments, inhibit further investment and consequently seriously threaten safe port operations.

In the meantime, over 540 amendments have been tabled prior to the vote in the Transport Committee of the European Parliament ("TRAN") which was adjourned in 2013 before the European elections and the appointment of the new European Commission.

Meanwhile, the European Council of Ministers has agreed on a Resolution which leaves out dredging from the scope of the Regulation and lets towage and mooring covered by the provision on market access, contained in Chapter II. Pilotage coverage by these provisions is left to the judgement of the Member States.

The newly composed TRAN Committee, now chaired by MEP Michael Cramer (Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance), is not expected to put the matter on the agenda before next December. It remains to be seen which will be the policy of the new Commissioner for Transport and Tourism Mrs Violeta Bulc with regard to furthering of the legislative procedure by way of a compromise, which the ports (ESPO) called "a half full/half empty glass".