

Measure 42: Marco Polo Programme

First page:

<p><i>Policy package:</i> 5: Intermodal</p>
<p><i>Measure 42:</i> Marco Polo Programme to promote alternative solutions to freight road transport</p>
<p><i>What is the problem being addressed ?</i> This measure establishes a programme aiming to help to curb the trend that market shares of road freight transport increase further. The Marco Polo aims to improve intermodal services and by means of this shift freight from road freight transport to other modes. Therefore the measure should contribute towards making the market shares of the modes of transport by 2010 to return to their levels at 1998 and lay the ground for a shift of balance from 2010 onwards, thereby contributing to an efficient and sustainable transport system. This is the wider (WP) policy context in which the Marco Polo Programme is established. Since the programme improves services on infrastructure networks it is also closely linked to infrastructure network policies, like the WP-measures proposed under the heading “Eliminating bottlenecks”. In this sense, the measure should encourage a switch to more efficient and cleaner forms of transport including better organisation and logistics, as required by the 6th Community Environment Action Programme.</p>
<p><i>Measure’s costs and/or benefits:</i> The Programme runs from 2003 to 2010, with a budget of 75 € million for the EU 15 for the period of 2003 to 2006. Each additional fully participating country will add to the budget. The budget for the remaining period will be discussed in 2006.</p>
<p><i>Legislative implementation at the EU level:</i> The Marco Polo Programme was adopted by Council and Parliament REGULATION (EC) No 1382/2003 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 22 July 2003 on the granting of Community financial assistance to improve the environmental performance of the freight transport system. A proposal for a revised Regulation – Marco Polo II – has been adopted by the Commission on 15 July 2004.</p>
<p><i>What are the objectives ?</i> The Programme aims to realise various types of actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Modal Shift</u> actions: the main output indicator is tonne-kilometre shifted from road freight transport to other modes (rail transport, inland water transport, short sea shipping). This is also the variable to which the financial support is linked.• <u>Catalyst actions</u>: since these actions should also lead to Modal shift the main output indicator again is ton- or tonne-kilometre shifted from road transport to intermodal transport.• <u>Common learning actions</u>: aimed at improving commercial services. The main output variables are not formally specified in the regulation but possibly might be quality (e.g. time) and price parameters of intermodal commercial services. <p>The target, announced at the launch of the Marco Polo Programme, is to shift 12 billion tonne-kilometre/year off road. Given the experience with the precursor programme PACT (which served as a laboratory for the Marco Polo Programme and which achieved a shift of 2.2 billion ton km per year in the period 1996-1998, according to the PACT evaluation report) it is not unreasonable to assume that the Programme may indeed result in substantial shifts from road freight transport to other modes. Furthermore in various research projects (like the SPIN- and IDIOMA projects) significant and commercial viable shift possibilities transport industry have been identified. So the target may very well be met.</p>
<p><i>Interactions with other WP measures:</i></p>

The Marco Polo Programme is closely linked to other Community policies, like policies aiming to improve infrastructure (measures 44 and 45), stimulation of transport modes (like maritime transport and inland waterway transport) and in general all policies that may directly or indirectly affect modal shares (e.g. road pricing). Specifically with regard to the new member States there is a close link with the measure aiming to keep modal shares of rail transport at 35% (Measure 74).

Second page:

Output indicators:

An immediate output indicator is the “number of new freight services started with help from Marco Polo”. More sophisticated output indicators could then be built based on data collected in the project selection process, as for instance:

- Tonne-km shifted from road transport to other modes (in total and per individual project proposal in Marco Polo)
- Service improvement: reduced time or costs or reliability of services per unit transported

The variable “tonne km shifted” is a project selection criterion for modal shift actions and catalyst actions and will therefore have to be estimated and available in these cases when project proposals are approved. It is important to note also that, since Marco Polo improves intermodal services on infrastructure networks, aggregating impacts across WP-measures could lead to double counting. For example the indicator “project tonne-kms shifted” on infrastructure improved by other WP-measures should be subtracted if one aggregates impacts over WP-measures. Similar problems could occur with other measures (like those on sea motorways).

Outcome indicators: intermediate impacts on transport markets

The most relevant indicators in the market are:

- Vehicle-km across modes (network use of different infrastructure networks)
- Productivity improvements in intermodal transport
- Transport price levels reduction
- Customer service levels improvement

Improvements in intermodal services may be realised both in service costs (e.g. by productivity improvements) and service quality. Furthermore new services may developed leading to changes in network use.

Outcome indicators: final impacts on transport users and non users

- Reduction in congestion levels
- Reduction of accidents
- Reduction of emission levels
- Reduction of external costs