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Answer given by Mr Tzitzikostas
on behalf of the European Commission
(19.1.2026)

1. The legislative dossier proposing to amend the Combined Transport Directive¹ (CTD) has been under consideration by the co-legislators since 2024. While the Commission worked closely with the Belgian and Hungarian Presidencies, negotiations proved challenging, and no Council general approach has been reached. Formal discussions in the European Parliament have not yet started.

Therefore, the CTD was included among the draft laws which the Commission is planning to withdraw in 2026. In line with the interinstitutional agreement on better law-making, both the European Parliament and the Council can now express their views on this intention. The Commission will then carefully take their views into account before deciding on next steps.

2. The CTD is not designed as an instrument to ensure the connectivity of peripheral or isolated regions, for which other EU instruments - such as public service contracts or alternative measures permitted under EU law - should be considered. Rather, the Directive aims to reduce the externalities of long-distance road transport within the Union by promoting modal shift. For this reason, the proposal covered ferry operations only where longer maritime legs can effectively replace extended road routes.

3. The proposed amendments to the CTD sought to establish fair, technology- and geography-neutral eligibility criteria, ensuring that all operations - regardless of their mode combinations - would be assessed on the basis of a uniform external cost reduction.

¹ Council Directive 92/106/EEC, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/106/oj/eng>.