



# **The liberalisation of maritime transport and the island regions in EU. Evidence from Greece**

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## **Abstract**

The liberalisation of maritime transport constitutes a substantial and vital progress not only in the maritime transport market but also in influencing the development of distant island regions. In the European Union (EU), the establishment of the legal framework and policy regarding the liberalisation is standing from the year of 1992. In Greece, the first attempt to harmonize the inevitable political and state framework was in 2001 (2932/2001 Act). Prevailing factors encumbered the liberalisation planning and implementing, mainly because of the incoherent procedures applied and the partial cover of principal issues regarding impingement of public interests and goods relative to island development.

In our paper, we provide strongly support to the argument that the major initiative considering the development of island regions throughout European territory is that European Policy for the liberalisation of maritime transport should be oriented to the distinctive needs of island regions. Moreover, we provide a “road map” for completion of the liberalisation procedures. Hence, we address specific proposals and measures towards the healing of the inadequate regional development.

*Keywords:* Maritime transport; Liberalisation; EU policy; Island regions.

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## **1. Introduction**

The general aim of this paper is to discuss the EU maritime policy and its relation to the islands regions across EU. The Greek Institute for Local Authorities (GILA) report for ‘The Inter-Island Transport problem, counter measures and the role of local Authorities’ ((2006), Chlomoudis, C. et al.) composed a substantial resource for our study.

As more than 90% of the EU’s external trade and some 43% of its internal trade is transported by sea, international maritime transport ought to be a liberalised activity. If it were not, nobody would benefit from the role this mode of transport plays in international trade<sup>1</sup>. However, it is only since 1st January 1993 that cabotage by sea<sup>2</sup> has

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<sup>1</sup> <http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/124040.htm>