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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: TEN-T Days (20-22 June 2016) - Declaration of Rotterdam

In view of the meeting of the Working Party on Transport Intermodal Questions and Networks on 23 May 2016, delegations will find attached a draft text on the above-mentioned subject.

Delegations are invited to concentrate their comments on the last three pages of this text (points 1 to 21).

DECLARATION
Implementing the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)
TEN-T Days 2016

Rotterdam

Introduction

A modern and efficient European transport system is critical to ensure the smooth functioning of the internal market and facilitate trade in goods and services across Europe. It is also essential to enhance Europe's links with other parts of the world and to strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion with the specific objectives of allowing the seamless, safe and sustainable mobility of persons and goods. Transport infrastructure is not only the backbone of a well-functioning European economy. Transport infrastructure also shapes mobility behaviours and solutions and, thereby, constitutes an indispensable basis for the achievement of our common transport policy objectives.

European transport policy provides an essential contribution to the EU's "Jobs, Growth and Investment" agenda. It also aims to further strengthen EU competitiveness within the framework of the Europe 2020 strategy. Furthermore, TEN-T policy supports the objectives of the Investment Plan for Europe launched by the European Commission in June 2015.

Considering that overall investments in transport infrastructure have clearly shown a downward trend in the course of the past few decades, it is essential to reconcile investment needs with a strong financial commitment from all parties involved to ensure that Europe remains a forward looking continent that seeks to promote creative solutions for smart and sustainable mobility and optimal use of infrastructure.

Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI)

The Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) aims to accelerate investments in projects with high European added value in transport, energy and telecommunications. The CEF puts a strong emphasis on a competitive selection process, innovative financing solutions and sectoral synergies, in order to leverage funding from public and private sources, contributing to the long-term competitiveness and growth of the European economy. Since its launch, the CEF has clearly demonstrated that the demand for funding of transport projects far exceeds the availability of grants. Grants are targeted towards projects that offer the highest European added value, focusing in particular on cross-border missing links, bottlenecks and multimodal connections.

Furthermore, the absorption of funds available under the CEF Cohesion envelope has been exemplary. It is estimated that by the evaluation of the third call for proposals, all the remaining funds will be fully committed to transport infrastructure projects with high EU added value.

Following the establishment of the Investment Plan for Europe, the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) was launched to mobilise at least €15 billion of additional investments across Europe. The EFSI addresses market gaps and mobilises private liquidities in support of strategic investments in key areas such as transport infrastructure. EFSI contributes towards the financing of transport projects. However, there are also many projects, including economically robust projects, which lack the financial viability to be financed by innovative instruments alone. In such cases, combining EFSI funds with CEF grants ("blending" of financial instruments) creates new opportunities to unlock additional private investments to support the implementation of the TEN-T, whilst optimising use of the EU budget.

The mid-term review of the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 provides a timely opportunity to reconsider the CEF financial envelopes. Increasing the availability of CEF grants and blending such funding with innovative instruments under the EFSI would create additional means to boost infrastructure development and sustainable transport solutions. This would help to achieve the objectives of both the TEN-T core and comprehensive networks by 2030 and 2050.

TEN-T core network corridor work plans

The first TEN-T core network corridor work plans were approved by the Member States in May 2015. They serve as a basis for Member States and other investors to secure relevant financial resources to support investments in the TEN-T network in coordinated manner and to ensure best value for money. This includes investments in projects to boost the competitiveness of rail freight, in particular through the development of Rail Freight Corridors, and to address rail noise.

Investments are also geared towards the deployment ERTMS, which is essential to ensure the emergence of a fully interoperable European railway network. Furthermore, investments cover areas such as inland navigation, intelligent transport systems, clean fuels, urban nodes and multi-modal terminals as well as the enabling of seamless multi-modal chains and digital solutions for freight and passengers. This creates unique opportunities for the core network corridors to become front-runners of a future-oriented transport system, including innovative mobility solutions, and to effectively contribute to the decarbonisation of transport

European TEN-T coordinators

The European TEN-T coordinators contribute to the reinforcement of governance structures at European, national and local level, promoting project maturity and smooth cross-border implementation, with the aim of developing seamless, interoperable, multimodal transport networks across Europe.

The following conclusions drawn by the coordinators offer the potential to boost the integration of infrastructure development and transport policy objectives, thereby stimulating the evolution towards a forward-looking European transport system:

1. to enhance multi-modality and efficient freight logistics, terminal infrastructure, terminal accessibility and relevant ICT infrastructure need to be developed from a reinforced corridor-wide perspective, as well as with a better integration of user needs and demand forecasts; corridors should serve as test cases for the digitalisation of freight transport;
2. to ensure the coordinated deployment of ITS along the core network corridors, based on comprehensive deployment plans in all Member States;

3. to promote innovation and the deployment of new technologies in transport, making optimal use of the results of research and development activities, in particular along the core network corridors;
4. to exploit the full potential of alternative fuel propulsion systems - biofuels, electric, hydrogen and natural gas – and the corresponding charging infrastructure to achieve the objective of decarbonising transport; national policy frameworks of the Member States should be highly ambitious, cooperation across national borders should be reinforced and the market take-up of alternative fuels should be stimulated through pilot actions along the core network corridors;
5. to improve "last mile" connections for people and freight, whereby urban nodes should be better integrated into the core network corridors; sustainable urban mobility plans are of vital importance to achieve this objective, making best possible use of multi-level governance;
6. to ensure continuity of the TEN-T and its corridors in different geographical areas and thereby to facilitate trade; international cooperation between the EU and third countries on transport infrastructure development should be strengthened, including the development of common standards.

Streamlining the regulatory framework

The 2015 Christophersen-Bodewig-Secchi Action Plan contains twelve recommendations contributing to the effective implementation of projects along the TEN-T. Some of the recommendations clearly identified bottlenecks in the current legal framework. The European Commission is conducting a detailed study into the regulatory and administrative procedures that impact upon the realisation of TEN-T core network projects, in particular waterborne and cross-border projects. The results of the Commission study will be presented in the autumn of 2016, taking stock of good practices and where necessary identifying ways to simplify and streamline procedures for projects of common interest and to create an improved regulatory framework for investments in the TEN-T.

Considering the above, Ministers:

- (1) REAFFIRM the importance of the full and timely implementation of the TEN-T, contributing to sustainable growth and jobs in the European Union.
- (2) EMBRACE the corridor approach and the horizontal priorities as crucial instruments to ensure coordinated investments and efficient cooperation along strategic transport axes.
- (3) UNDERLINE the need to develop multi-modality and efficient freight logistics, intelligent transport systems, urban nodes and clean fuels along the core network corridors, in line with the recommendations of the European TEN-T Coordinators.
- (4) WELCOME the work undertaken by the European TEN-T Coordinators to develop the corridor work plans and to advance cross-border projects situated on the core network corridors, as well as the various declarations agreed to that effect in Rotterdam.
- (5) TAKE NOTE of the presentation of a detailed implementation plan for Motorways of the Sea that is aligned with the core network corridors and contributes to a sustainable, smart and integrated maritime dimension of the TEN-T.
- (6) SUPPORT the new deployment plan for ERTMS that will allow for a more targeted investment strategy leading to an interoperable internal rail market and underline the importance of the stability of ERTMS specifications in the deployment phase.
- (7) COMMEND the Commission's efforts to further improve the competitive strength of rail transport and the functioning and integration of rail freight corridors.
- (8) RECOGNISE the need to address rail noise issues by aligning noise related national plans with the envisaged EU-wide solutions and refraining from introducing unilateral national measures affecting the Single European Rail Area.
- (9) UNDERLINE the importance of promoting the use of inland navigation, in particular by tackling key bottlenecks on the core network corridors, as recommended by the European Court of Auditors Report and promoting the deployment of River Information Services.

- (10) INVITE the European TEN-T coordinators to incorporate the findings of their Issue Papers in the corridor work plans.
- (11) REAFFIRM the importance of building and operating transport infrastructure and efficient networks as a key driver for growth, jobs and competitiveness.
- (12) RECOGNISE that considerable investment needs have been identified to complete the TEN-T network and that TEN-T projects generally have a direct, verifiable and long-term effect on growth and jobs and benefit the competitiveness of the EU as a whole.
- (13) UNDERLINE the undiminished and significant need for additional funding from public and private sources to cover estimated investments in the TEN-T network exceeded €500 billion until 2020, as well as the €1.5 trillion of investment needs until 2030.
- (14) ACKNOWLEDGE in this regard the importance of finding ways to reinforce the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) in the mid-term review of the current Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) in order to drive forward the investments identified on the TEN-T network.
- (15) UNDERLINE the need to fully exploit the possibilities offered by the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI), focusing on projects that can attract private financing and complementing the funding of the EU instruments in place.
- (16) HIGHLIGHT the need to further develop possibilities to blend funding and financing for TEN-T projects that have a higher risk profile.
- (17) STRESS the importance to further diversify the financing sources for infrastructure development and in particular to explore opportunities for cross-financing and to mobilise alternative resources, including electronic charging for the use of infrastructure.
- (18) ENCOURAGE Member States to take into account the needs of the CEF in the oncoming MFF with a view to completing the TEN-T.

- (19) INVITE the Commission to present an updated assessment of the TEN-T project portfolio by the TEN-T Days 2017 at the latest, based upon the results of the Fraunhofer study of 2015 and the new corridor work plans, in order to present new detailed figures on growth and jobs, including decarbonisation of transport.
- (20) RECOGNISE the complexity of procedural requirements relating in particular to public procurement provisions and other authorisations, including State aid rules, and call for simpler, faster and better coordinated procedures on such topics.
- (21) CALL on the European Commission to assess various ways to simplify procedures for projects of common interest on the core network.
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