



Brussels, 2 June 2025  
(OR. en)

9473/25

TRANS 209  
FIN 608

## NOTE

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the <u>Transport</u> , Telecommunication and Energy Council on 5 June 2025 Transport infrastructure financing post-2027 - Information from the Presidency

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### Information from the Polish Presidency after the high-level meetings held in the first semester of 2025

Strong and reliable transport is a catalyst for **strengthening the functioning of the single European market**, ensuring territorial cohesion, and increasing the **competitiveness of the EU economy in the world**. The need to build and finance an effective and efficient transport infrastructure is confirmed by the reports of Enrico Letta *Much more than a market – Speed, Security, Solidarity. Empowering the Single Market to deliver a sustainable future and prosperity for all EU Citizens* and Mario Draghi *A competitiveness strategy for Europe*. Investments in transport infrastructure have a multiplier effect: every euro invested in TEN-T returns in the form of increased mobility, trade, employment and security.

At the same time, a well-functioning transport network and resilient infrastructure are prerequisites for **ensuring the EU's security**, providing effective **mobility for troops and military equipment**, and guaranteeing the necessary level of deterrence. It was also one of the key points developed in of the Niinistö report *Safer Together Strengthening Europe's Civilian and Military Preparedness and Readiness*.

Furthermore, the **renewed TEN-T** sets further goals for transport development with a timeframe of 2030, 2040 and 2050. In order to meet the ambitious schedules and the required technical parameters, significant mobilisation and close cooperation are necessary, especially on **cross-border sections**.

The **quantification of needs** leads us to very high amounts, such as **845 billion EUR** for the civilian TEN-T projects only by 2040, as evaluated by the European Coordinators.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and the resulting repercussions for European and global security, pose an existential challenge to the European Union. Military mobility is an essential enabler for European security and defence. It enhances the ability of the armed forces of Member States and their allies to swiftly move troops and equipment across the EU in the event of a conflict or an intensification of hybrid warfare. Strengthening the logistics of the armed forces also matches the need to make our economy more connected and competitive – a perfect fit in terms of dual use.

Strengthening **Military Mobility and developing dual-use infrastructures** are key elements for enhancing the EU's defence and security capabilities, as acknowledged in the *White Paper on European Defence - Preparedness 2030*. To this end, it is essential to provide adequate financial, as well as technical and administrative support, such as joint procurement and uniform standards.

Although considerable progress has been made in recent years, there remain considerable obstacles to moving troops and equipment unhindered across the EU. Currently, the European Commission together with the EUMS and the Member States is working on the list of dual-use hotspots. The preliminary estimates identify at least 500 hotspots to be addressed in the short and medium terms.

In order to make these ambitious goals of the EU transport policy a reality, a fundamental conclusion is that the **mobilisation of all available funding is necessary**. The ambitious objectives of EU transport policy require stable and adequate financial security in the next Multiannual Financial Framework for 2028-2034.

The Polish Presidency organised **a series of high - level events** to discuss the best ways to address the challenges facing the transport sector:

- The high-level conference *A new era of European transport – challenges of the TEN-T policy* (**Łódź, 13 February 2025**), at which an open letter, signed by over 50 transport stakeholder organisations, calling for the increased EU funding for transport, was handed over to the Polish Presidency and the Director General of DG MOVE,
- The informal meeting of transport ministers dedicated to military mobility and cybersecurity (**Warsaw, 18 March 2025**),
- The conference *Competitiveness of rail transport - a challenge and a necessity* (**Wrocław, 29-30 April 2025**),
- An informal meeting of maritime ministers during the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Maritime Congress (**Szczecin, 15 May 2025**), where the *Declaration on enhancing the competitiveness and resilience of the European shipping and maritime manufacturing sectors and the EU Maritime Industrial Strategy* was announced.
- The Aviation Summit *Towards safe, clean and competitive European aviation* (**Kraków, 29-30 May 2025**).

During the debates it was broadly acknowledged that **Europe needs an integrated and resilient transport infrastructure, supported by stable EU funding** to ensure both security and economic development of the EU. **Increasing financial resources** for the implementation of transport investments, as well as taking into account military mobility requirements in infrastructure projects, are of key importance in this context. At the same time, the increasing cost of the **maintenance of the ageing infrastructure** should also be addressed. The quality of the existing infrastructure remains pivotal for the military mobility and deterrence.

**Transport investments are essential to ensure territorial cohesion, resilience of supply chains and increased EU competitiveness.** At the same time, the development of key technologies focused on green and digital transformation, such as sustainable alternative fuels, charging and refuelling infrastructure, intelligent transport systems and digital traffic management, should be supported.

From the point of view of the EU as a whole, we should aim to intensify investment in critical infrastructure, including the development of integrated high-speed rail network as well as national, regional and local connections, while ensuring their compatibility, the modernisation and expansion of maritime and inland ports, intermodal terminals and aviation infrastructure.

The future of transport in the EU will depend on a combination of **innovation and investment in physical infrastructure**. Combining these two directions is key to building a resilient transport system.

The European Union should therefore focus on addressing the needs of the transport sector most effectively and developing **targeted yet flexible financial mechanisms**. These mechanisms should facilitate more effective coordination of actions at national and EU levels and address the specific challenges of dual-use projects. While the introduction of repayable financial instruments for military projects is an acknowledged development, transport initiatives, including dual-use projects, would benefit more from non-repayable support, given the high risk of their limited bankability.

Results of meetings organised by the Polish Presidency demonstrated that, in the current geopolitical context, **security and competitiveness remain key issues for the transport sector**. Positions presented at the events emphasised the key importance and urgent need of securing stable and adequate financing from the EU budget for investment in transport projects. We hope that the discussions held under the Polish Presidency will contribute to shaping future strategic priorities in the area of transport policy at the EU level which will be also relevant in the context of the upcoming debate on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034.