

P6_TA(2009)0258

Green Paper on the future of TEN-T

European Parliament resolution of 22 April 2009 on the Green Paper on the future TEN-T policy (2008/2218(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication of 4 February 2009 entitled "Green paper: TEN-T: A policy review" (COM(2009)0044),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 26 November 2008 entitled "A European Economic Recovery Plan" (COM(2008)0800),
 - having regard to the Council conclusions on Greening Transport as adopted by the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council at its session on 8-9 December 2008,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication of 22 June 2006 entitled "Keep Europe moving – Sustainable mobility for our continent – Mid-term review of the European Commission's 2001 Transport White Paper" (COM(2006)0314),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication 23 January 2008 entitled "2020 by 2020 – Europe's climate change opportunity" (COM(2008)0030),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication of 18 October 2007 entitled "Freight Transport Logistics Action Plan" (COM(2007)0607),
 - having regard to the Commission communication of 14 May 2008 on the results of the negotiations concerning cohesion policy strategies and programmes for the programming period 2007-2013 (COM(2008)0301),
 - having regard to the Commission Report of 20 January 2009 on the implementation of the Trans-European Transport Network guidelines 2004-2005 (COM(2009)0005),
 - having regard to its resolution of 11 March 2009 on the Lisbon Strategy¹,
 - having regard to its resolution of 5 September 2007 on Freight Transport Logistics in Europe - the key to sustainable mobility²,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism and the opinion of the Committee on Regional Development (A6-0224/2009),
- A. whereas the political definition of the TEN-T policy as described in Decision No 1692/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 1996 on Community

¹ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2009)0120.

² OJ C 187 E, 24.7.2008, p. 154.

guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network¹ and Decision No 884/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 amending Decision No 1692/96/EC on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network² led to a "wish list" of 30 priority projects inspired mainly by national interests,

- B. whereas the external competitiveness of railway and maritime freight transport as compared with road transport must be improved in order to ensure that balanced use is made of motorways, maritime routes and rail freight corridors,
 - C. whereas the 30 priority projects led to a proposal of the Commission to provide around EUR 20 000 000 000 in EU funding within the 2007-2013 financial framework to the trans-European transport network as a whole which was finally reduced to around EUR 8 000 000 000, of which only EUR 5 300 000 000 for the 30 priority projects, at the Council's insistence,
 - D. having regard to the European Union's well-known inability to comply with the rules on TEN-T funding laid down in its Regulation (EC) No 680/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2007 laying down general rules for the granting of Community financial aid in the field of the trans-European transport and energy networks³, which creates uncertainty in planning the funding of projects,
 - E. whereas it is necessary to strengthen the Commission's ability to pursue major cross-border projects, especially in the rail sector, that require ongoing closer cooperation between the Member States involved and funding over many years, extending beyond the time-frame of the multi-annual financial framework,
 - F. whereas the annexes to the above-mentioned Commission communication of 14 May 2008 show that around 49% of appropriations for transport projects are spent on roads, around 31% on railways and around 9% on urban transport, but it is not clear precisely which specific projects are co-financed,
1. Recognises that the first attempts at developing an EU transport infrastructure policy, inspired by the 'missing links' of the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), were boosted by the Commission communication of 2 December 1992 entitled "The future development of the common transport policy", with the justification to "achieve economic growth, competitiveness and employment" and were put on track by former Transport Commissioner Karel Van Miert; notes that Council Regulation (EC) No 2236/95 of 18 September 1995 laying down general rules for the granting of Community financial aid in the field of trans-European networks⁴ and Decision No 884/2004/EC tried to be oriented towards the abovementioned aims; and draws attention to the stimulus given to this policy by the Commissioner responsible for energy and transport matters, Vice-President Loyola de Palacio;
 2. Considers the reports of the TEN-T Coordinators to be interesting examples for further coordination and integration of a limited choice of important projects; therefore asks the

¹ OJ L 15, 17.1.1997, p. 1.

² OJ L 167, 30.4.2004, p. 1.

³ OJ L 162, 22.6.2007, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 228, 23.9.1995, p. 1.

Commission and the Member States to pursue the efforts aimed at the enhancement of the existing priority projects; considers that medium–long term investment should be continued in line with the objective of completing the whole network;

3. Welcomes the early submission of the above-mentioned Commission communication of 4 February 2009, with the aim to review fundamentally the EU transport infrastructure and TEN-T policy, according to challenges relating to current and future transport, cross-border mobility, and financial, economic, regional (including permanently disadvantaged regions), social, safety and environmental challenges;
4. In this respect, does not see the rationale for introducing the vague notion of a TEN-T conceptual pillar, which would overload the list of priorities; believes that, contrary to the expressed goal of the Commission, a pillar expressly displayed as conceptual will not improve the TEN-T policy's credibility, which will rather be achieved by developing concrete projects;
5. Agrees therefore to develop a more coherent and integrated network approach, reflecting the needs for intermodal connections for citizens and freight; emphasises therefore that priority must be given to rail, ports, sustainable maritime and inland waterways and their hinterland connections or intermodal nodes in infrastructure links with and within new Member States and that particular attention must also be paid to cross-border transport links, as well as to better links with airports and sea ports in the trans-European networks; emphasises that attention should be paid to the different but complementary needs of both passengers and freight; recommends that Member States and regional authorities improve intermediate stations and local interconnections as links to TEN-T in order to minimise the costs associated with being in a peripheral area;
6. Calls on the Commission to provide particular support for priority projects with intermodal links and consistent interoperability that pass through several Member States; points out that connecting economic areas along these priority projects is a national task;
7. Notes with approval that environmentally friendly forms of transport receive a disproportionately large share of consideration in the list of priority projects; calls on the Commission in this connection to ensure that these proportions are preserved in future when projects are implemented;
8. Stresses the need to integrate climate protection and sustainable development for all modes of transport in the European infrastructure policy to comply with the EU targets to reduce CO₂ emissions;
9. Calls on the Commission to urge the Member States to integrate European environmental legislation into decision-making and planning for TEN-T projects, such as Natura 2000, SEA, EIA, Air Quality, Water Framework, Habitat and Bird Directives as well as the Transport and Environmental Reporting Mechanism (TERM)-reports on indicators for transport and environment by the European Environment Agency;
- 10 Urges the Commission to minimise unclear or contradictory provisions relating to declarations of common interest and the application of environmental legislation; believes, furthermore, that once TEN-T status is granted to projects, the Member States should not abuse the European legislation referred to in paragraph 9 in order to block the implementation of TEN-T projects;

11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take into account as relevant factors for European transport infrastructure policy new developments, such as the global financial crisis, demographic change, enlargement, new neighbouring countries, and intensified connections with Eastern and Mediterranean countries;
12. Stresses that, especially in the present context of the economic crisis, the development of TEN-T and the integration of transport in the Union with that of the neighbouring countries is the most reliable means of ensuring both the long-term sustainability of the internal market and economic and social cohesion in the Union;
13. Calls on the Commission to intensify its efforts to improve European coordination of territorial development (Territorial Agenda of the European Union as well as the principle of Territorial Cohesion) and transport planning by taking account of regional accessibility through improved networks between the regions; notes that large differences between mountainous, coastal/island, central, peripheral and other trans-border areas have to be considered, as does the need for better integration of urban mobility systems into the TEN-T;
14. Calls on the Commission to give particular priority to key projects relating to the main rail, road and inland waterway routes to ensure cross-border connections with the new Member States and with third countries;
15. Suggests in this connection that the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) should be included as a basis for planning and that the available ESPON studies should be included as scientific, planning-oriented background information on transport development;
16. Emphasises the need to incorporate both the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and those of the Recovery Plan in the development of TEN-T policies, given the key importance of the mobility, accessibility and logistics thereof for EU competitiveness, and to improve territorial cohesion;
17. Calls on the Commission and Member States to integrate green corridors, rail freight networks, European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) corridors, maritime "highways", such as short sea shipping, existing inland waterways with limited capacity or locks with insufficient capacity, dry ports, logistics platforms, and urban mobility nodes, as well as the projected extension of the TEN-T to the countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and Eastern and Mediterranean countries into an intermodal TEN-T concept, based on planned actions in favour of more environmentally friendly, less oil consuming and safer modes, to ensure an optimal use of all modes of transport and promoting the compatibility of connections between the various modes of transport, in particular rail links in ports; moreover, calls for consistency between the current and future TEN-T framework and the legislation proposed on rail freight corridors;
18. Notes that until recently only 1% of the European infrastructure funds were used for inland waterways according to the latest research; considers that sufficient European support is needed to develop the inland waterway infrastructure in Europe, in order to use the full potential of the inland waterways as a sustainable and reliable mode of transport;
19. Calls on the Commission to seek to ensure that the expansion of rail freight transport is intensified with a view to higher network efficiency and faster transport;

20. Welcomes in this connection the Commission proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning a European rail network for competitive freight (COM(2008)0852) and the above-mentioned Commission communication of 18 October 2007;
21. Underlines the importance of enabling information sharing in intermodal transport, in order to promote and support interaction between soft infrastructure and hard infrastructure (information systems such as ERTMS/RIS/ITS/SESAR/Galileo), to improve interoperability, rolling stock (ERTMS hard- and software equipment in trains and noise reduction of freight wagons), green logistics, intermodal connections and nodes, decentralised door-to-door supply chain services and mobility management;
22. Stresses the importance of developing harmonised and standardised Intelligent Transport Systems for the TEN-T in order to have more efficient, fluent, safe and environmentally friendly transport management;
23. Recommends that implementation of the TEN-T be improved by providing better access to information through systems like the TENtec Information System by establishing an open method of coordination involving benchmarking and the exchange of best practices;
24. Focuses on the need to boost the efficiency of existing infrastructure within TEN-T projects in the short term, in particular where the implementation of such projects has already started, in order to make the corridors more viable and efficient and without simply waiting for the long term realisation of very large projects within these corridors;
25. Supports the Green Paper's "Structural option 3 for the shaping of TEN-T", i.e. a dual layer, consisting of a comprehensive network, based on the current TEN-T maps, and an intermodal "core network", still to be defined and with rail, sustainable waterways and ports and their connection with logistical centres as priorities;
26. Supports the concept of a 'core network' consisting of a 'geographical pillar' and a 'conceptual pillar', whereby the 'conceptual pillar' contains criteria and objectives enabling projects, corridors and network parts to be identified flexibly over time rather than rigidly at the start of the budgeting period for the entire period; takes the view that it should be possible to expand TEN-T flexibly during the budgeting period in order to adapt to changing market conditions;
27. Recognises the crucial role of Member States, in consultation with their regional and local authorities, stakeholders of civil society and local populations, in deciding, planning and financing transport infrastructure, including European cross-border coordination and cooperation; expects more coherence from the Council between requests for TEN-T projects and decisions on TEN-T budgets; in view of the mid-term review of the EU financial framework and also with regard to the current discussion on the EU Recovery Plan, asks Member States to properly consider the issue of the necessary financial support to the transport infrastructures which are part of the TEN-T network as a priority according to the EU policy so far established;
28. Fully agrees with the Community aim of reducing administrative burden and therefore strongly encourages the Commission to revise the financial frameworks for the TEN-T priority projects with a view to further cutting red tape;

29. Asks the Member States and the Commission to reinforce the coordination of the policies pursued at national level in order to establish consistency in the co-financing and the realisation of the TEN-T programme in accordance with Articles 154 and 155 of the EC Treaty;
30. Emphasises in this regard that the financial crisis puts greater pressure on the European Union, Member States and regions to base decisions concerning transport infrastructure projects on sound cost-benefit assessments, sustainability and the European trans-border added value;
31. Notes, however, that investing in transport infrastructure is one key way of tackling the economic and financial crisis, and therefore calls on the Commission to speed up the infrastructure projects linked to TEN-T and financed under the Structural and/or Cohesion funds; calls on Member States to reassess their investment priorities taking into account this approach, in order to speed up the TEN-T projects under their responsibility, particularly in cross-border sections;
32. Reminds the Commission that EU co-financing for transport infrastructure projects by TEN-T, cohesion, regional funds and the EIB must correspond with the following criteria: economic viability, enhanced competitiveness, promotion of the single market, environmental sustainability, transparency for taxpayers and citizen's involvement (partnership principle); in this respect, emphasises the importance of developing public-private partnerships to finance TEN-T projects and the need to come up with flexible solutions for the problems that arise in works of this scale (geographical and technical difficulties, public opposition, etc.);
33. Calls on the Commission to ensure in this connection that projects assessed under EU financial programmes take account of their possible impact on national financing for other necessary investments which are not supported from EU funds; takes the view, in particular, that the appropriations used by Member States to supplement EU-funded projects should not be allocated at the expense of maintaining or investing in feeder lines; takes the view, rather, that projects should therefore be drawn up and assessed at least partially on the basis of their potential for integrating (and not neglecting) the development and maintenance of the necessary supplementary feeder infrastructure;
34. Underlines the quickly growing investment needs of the European air transport market under the Single European Sky II package as well as the proposed "total aviation system approach"; therefore calls on the Commission to consider raising the share of the available funding for airports and ATM/ANS when revising the TEN-T budgetary framework;
35. Notes that more research and development is needed on best and most efficient practice in transport infrastructure financing and its positive impact on competitiveness and quantitative and qualitative employment, including public-private partnership experiences in this regard, as has been started already in current Commission studies;
36. Stresses the need to set up a task force within the TEN-T Executive Agency in order to increase the use of public-private partnership to finance some priority project or sections, and to diffuse the solutions as best practice;
37. Stresses that increased reliance on public-private partnerships and the European Investment Bank would be no substitute for a significant portion of budgetary funding for large-scale

projects with an intergenerational pay-back period;

38. Favours reconsideration of the TEN-T's budget by the Member States in the context of the mid-term review of the financial perspectives 2009-2010, with a view to reversing the drastic cutting back of other projects and the ambitions to develop railways and waterways that go hand in hand with them;
39. Stresses the need to allocate a percentage of toll revenue from road infrastructure to funding TEN-T projects in order to increase the leverage effect on borrowing;
40. Asks the Commission to set out a selection of examples of regional trans-border rail connections, which have been dismantled or abandoned, favouring especially those which could interconnect with TEN-T;
41. Asks the Commission and the Member States to consider the Eurovelo-Network and Iron Curtain Trail as an opportunity for promoting European trans-border cycling infrastructure networks, supporting soft mobility and sustainable tourism;
42. Asks the Commission, in order to boost the competitiveness of the whole rail TEN network, to propose – by the end of its mandate - a legislative initiative concerning the opening of the rail domestic passenger markets as from 1 January 2012;
43. Regrets the slow pace of implementation of priority projects in border areas, particularly those in the Pyrenees that are vital for the Iberian Peninsula and France;
44. Encourages the Commission to keep the Parliament and the European Council involved in its (multi)annual proposals and choices on co-financing TEN-T projects;
45. Asks the Commission to report to the European Parliament and the Council, for every priority project, regularly and at least once a year, on the state of play of each project, on the reliability of the project's costs, on the feasibility of each project and on the timing of project's implementation;
46. Calls on the Commission and the EIB to submit an annual list of specific co-financed projects to Parliament and Council in the case of regional, cohesion and EIB co-financing of TEN-T projects, as is already the case for TEN-T co-financing;
47. Maintains that, from an ecological and economic point of view, multimodal transport systems, enabling different means of transport to be used on a given route, are in many cases the only viable and sustainable option for the future;
48. Emphasises that, within the newly enlarged Schengen area, the transport infrastructure between Western and Eastern Europe is of immense significance given the economic growth potential - especially in the new Member States - linked to it; calls on the Commission and the Member States to develop and promote transnational road and rail links between Eastern and Western Europe, supporting in particular cross-border transport infrastructure through a specific action programme implemented in cooperation with local, regional and national authorities; also, points out that better interconnection of TEN-T and third country transport networks would improve the position of border areas in particular and bring added value to interregional cooperation and the EU as a whole;

49. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.