Cohesion policy and thematic objective ‘promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures’ - Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation

2017/2285(INI) - 03/05/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 475 votes 153, with 22 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of cohesion policy and the thematic objective of ‘promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures’ - Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation.

In the 2007-2013 period, **EUR 81 billion**, or almost one third (31%) of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds), was invested in transport infrastructure. The strongest positive impact of EU transport infrastructure investment is particularly and more specifically visible in Central and Eastern Europe, to which 69 % of the total transport funding was allocated.

The transport sector remains a **key investment area** contributing to growth, competitiveness and development by boosting the economic potential of every EU region, thereby furthering economic and social cohesion, supporting the internal market.

Ensure availability of key funding sources: Members underlined that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) should remain the core EU sources for transport infrastructure investments under the thematic objective of ‘promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures’ in the next programming period.

Due to the high European added value and the extensive spill-over effects generated, these funding sources should remain available and provide balanced coverage for all EU Member States and regions. The relevant budgetary envelopes for the three funding sources need to be **strengthened** in a balanced manner.

The role of additional sources such as the **European Fund for Strategic Investments** (EFSI) and financial instruments needs to be defined in view of their **complementarity** to the ERDF and CF and their **additionality** to EIB lending operations. **The EFSI should serve as a platform for public-private partnerships (PPPs)** in matching financial instruments to private investment and to national/regional financing at project level.

Create an integrated funding framework: Parliament called for an adequate and ambitious common European transport policy based on a funding framework that is integrated and coordinated with the EU transport instruments. It considered that thematic concentration should be preserved in order to permit simplification and synergies between different funding sources at project level. Members proposed the creation of a single set of rules for all financing sources related to all thematic objectives and considered it necessary to streamline, standardise and accelerate public procurement and state aid compliance procedures.

Moreover, they called on the Commission, in the framework of the new Regulation(s) on post-2020 cohesion policy, to propose a greater earmarking of the funds available for **cities to bid jointly** for infrastructure or technologies that would contribute to decarbonising urban transport and reducing air

pollution from road vehicles. They also stressed the need to improve accessibility to transport for persons with a disability.

Removing bottlenecks: the Commission is called on, with the aim of promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures, to draw up a **checklist of eligibility criteria**, which better expresses local and regional needs concerning transport infrastructure, in order to help determine the overall transport envelope, the investments needed, and the priorities to be set. This checklist may include issues such as multimodal connectivity, local and regional specifics, the availability of alternative modes of transport, road and rail safety, and environmental impact.

The resolution noted the need for:

- more integrated investment in basic transport infrastructures in **less developed regions**, as well as in mountainous, remote, depopulated or outermost regions with low accessibility;
- ERDF support to **European Territorial Cooperation** to be strengthened through additional resources, focusing on key sustainable transport infrastructure investments (such as cross-border waterways, ports, bridges, railways, interconnecting transport modes and terminals, etc.). Focus should be on connectivity in cross-border regions, including EU external borders ;
- the closing of the transport infrastructure gaps with the **Western Balkans** in relation to integrated transport projects by focusing on further investment in connectivity and on tackling transport bottlenecks;
- support to be given to promoting smart traffic management, including through digitalisation, by making more efficient use of existing infrastructure and redirecting towards off-peak times.