Revision of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) guidelines

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted an own-initiative report by Jens GIESEKE (EPP, DE) on the revision of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) guidelines.

A TEN-T fit for the future

Members consider the revision of the TEN-T regulation as an important opportunity to make the network sustainable and modernise it to take account of new market realities, climate, environmental and societal changes and digital needs, to increase the efficiency of the existing network and to accelerate the deployment of alternative fuels for transport.

It is also important to further develop the TEN-T to focus on the interconnection between the core network and the comprehensive network in rural, peripheral, sparsely populated, island and outermost regions and on those sections with the greatest potential for creating socio-economic benefits.

The report stressed the need to:

- give priority, within the TEN-T framework, to the full deployment of alternative fuels for all modes of transport, in particular renewable fuels with a view to decarbonisation;

- promote transport links in and with urban nodes, railway stations, ports, airports, logistics hubs and multimodal platforms, including through the completion and improvement of links with them, as well as through the introduction of through ticketing, thus promoting an efficient modal shift, in particular by strengthening public transport systems and improving connectivity between urban nodes and rural areas;

- ensure that TEN-T stimulates innovative digital applications in all modes, including intelligent transport systems, the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), vessel traffic monitoring and information systems, river information services, air traffic management systems and infrastructure structural health monitoring systems;

- improve the resilience of infrastructure to the consequences of crises such as pandemics and climate change and establish a monitoring plan for regular and standardised maintenance of TEN-T infrastructure, including bridges and tunnels.

Financing, governance and monitoring

For sufficient investment in TEN-T infrastructure, it is essential that all relevant EU funds (CEF, InvestEU, European Structural and Investment Funds, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Horizon Europe, etc.) and EIB lending are tailored to the specific needs of the transport sector.

Members called on Member States to commit to ensuring sufficient funding and on the Commission to strengthen synergies and coherence between relevant EU instruments beyond the CEF (e.g. the European Regional Development Fund) and to make the most of blending instruments to attract private investors. Funds from the Next Generation EU instrument represent in this context a unique opportunity to ensure the development of the TEN-T core networks before 2030.

Concerned about delays in the completion of cross-border projects, which further increase project costs, Members urged Member States to strengthen their cooperation with authorities in other Member States on cross-border projects, including by agreeing on the establishment of a joint authority to coordinate timetables and deadlines. The Commission is invited to strengthen its monitoring of the implementation of the TEN-T by making use of the powers already conferred on it by the Regulation.

Transport modes

The report focuses on the following priorities:

- improving the quality of TEN-T road infrastructure across the EU;

- working with regions and cities, particularly at cross-border level, to complete the infrastructure down to the last kilometre, to enable more seamless and efficient use of infrastructure and services to avoid congestion and reduce emissions;

- strengthening rail links, in particular cross-border links and connections between economic centres, given the central role of rail transport in decarbonising the transport sector;

- set regular, periodic, binding targets for the deployment of the ERTMS, with a view to completing its integration into the TEN-T core network by 2030;

- strengthen modal shift in international passenger transport by exploiting the potential of night trains in terms of the environment and competitiveness;

- developing high-speed, high-quality passenger rail services on all TEN-T core networks;

- focusing on the cross-border dimension of seaports and enhancing the capacity, quality and navigability of inland waterways.

Strategic orientation

The report underlines the strategic interest for the EU to maintain close transport links with third countries through the TEN-T and to further integrate the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) partner countries, the Western Balkans and the South-East Europe Transport Community, as well as the Eastern Partnership countries, thereby promoting better connectivity with the peripheral areas of the EU. The importance of maintaining TEN-T links with the United Kingdom is also stressed.

Members called on the Commission to ensure that the EU's strategic interest, the prohibition of price dumping, full respect for high European labour standards and the principle of reciprocity in terms of access to public procurement markets are fully applied during tender procedures for TEN-T projects.