

Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network

2001/0229(COD) - 01/10/2001 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: To amend EU guidelines on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T). **CONTENT:** Guidelines spelling out the EU's priorities for the completion of the trans-European transport network are enshrined in Council Decision 1692/96/EC. A five year revision clause obliges the Commission to update, and where necessary, revise these guidelines taking into account economic and technological advances. Recommendations outlined in the White Paper on Transport have been taken on board by the Commission in its proposed amendments to the guidelines. The revision is a first step towards the presentation of a new T-TEN proposal awaited in 2004. Almost half of all goods and passenger traffic is handled by the T-TEN network thus establishing it as a major player in today's European transport establishment. The unprecedented increase in road, rail and air transport however has left the network suffering from overload fatigue. Congestion on the main arteries has become a matter of serious concern. Some 10% of the road network and 20% of the rail network are bottlenecks and one flight in three is delayed by more than 15 minutes. In a further assessment of the existing transport situation the Commission notes that there is a growing imbalance between transport modes. National governments are clearly channelling funds towards the completion of the road network at the expense of rail and air travel. A further gap in the completion of the European transport infrastructure is the linking of national projects to border regions. It would appear that whilst national priorities are progressing at a significant pace the vital linkage required to complete the trans-national nature of the project is failing to be realised. Bearing in mind these short coming the European Commission proposes that the new guidelines should focus less on large scale projects and more on a few clearly defined strategies. Resources should therefore be ploughed into: 1. Developing the network to reduce bottlenecks. 2. Completing the list of 14 priority projects, with a limited number of new projects. (Of the 14 projects established in 1994 only three have been completed). 3. Raising the minimum level of Community support from 10 to 20% for cross-border rail projects crossing natural barriers. Significant amongst the first of these priorities is the shift towards investing in the freight transport sector. This is foreseen through the completion and development of port connections, a high-speed network for passengers, integration of rail and air and the development of an intelligent transport systems. Concerning the second priority and plans for a limited introduction of new priority projects, they are: - the high capacity rail link through the Pyrenees, the global satellite radio-navigation and positioning system (Galileo); the Eastern European high-speed train/combined transport system, the Fehmarn Belt bridge /tunnel between Denmark and Germany, improved navigability on the Danube between Straubing and Vilshofen, interoperability of the high-speed Iberian rail network, adding the mixed freight/high speed line between Montpellier and Nimes, extending the Brenner project from Munich to Verona to add to the Verona-Naples route and the Bologna-Milan branch. The cost is expected to mount to EUR 66 million and will be secured through national, regional and Community public and private funds. Lastly, concerning financial support for critical cross-border projects, this has been devised in an attempt to boost trans-frontier linkages. Experience has shown that in some cases, especially where cross-border rail projects are concerned the current maximum level of support at 10% is not enough to encourage public or private investment. Hence the decision to increase the threshold to 20%.