

Trans-European networks: rules for granting financial assistance (Regulation (EC) No 2236/95). 1998 annual report

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The committee adopted the report by Konstantinos HATZIDAKIS (EPP/ED, GR) on the Commission's 1998 annual report on Trans-European Networks. The committee felt that the current levels of funding for the development of a trans-European transport network (TEN-T) were decidedly inadequate and needed to be increased to offset the reduction suffered in the 1990s when Member States were forced to cut public spending in order to qualify for economic and monetary union. It pointed out that an integrated package of financial measures, including public and private partnerships and venture capital sources, was needed in order to press ahead with implementation of the TEN-T, and called on the Commission and the European Investment Bank to act together with national governments to secure such a package. The report also called for greater importance to be accorded to improving access from Europe's island, landlocked and peripheral regions to the central regions. The committee was critical of the fact that the Commission report did not specify what funding had been provided by national, regional and local public bodies and by the private sector with a view to setting up the TEN-T and called for this omission to be put right in future reports. It also expressed concern that funding for 7 of the 14 priority projects agreed on at the Essen Summit in 1994 (which it felt were an essential outward sign of the EU's real commitment to implementing a proper policy in this area) was still not totally guaranteed and that no clear timetables had been drawn up for their implementation. It therefore urged the Member States to honour the commitments endorsed by the Essen Summit and called on the Commission to lay down a timetable for the completion of the projects.