Regional policy, transport and structural policy: improvingsocial cohesion, competitiveness and development

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The European Parliament adopted the resolution by Leoluca Orlando (V,IT) on the communication from the Commission on Cohesion and Transport. The report welcomes the long-awaited Commission communication, while stressing its failure to provide sufficient detail as regards coordination measures between transport and cohesion policies. It calls on the Commission to take account of the specific issue of transport in rural, sparsely populated, remote and island areas where the scattered population raises particular social and regional problems. It stresses the potential role of the Structural Funds, especially the ERDF, in improving urban transport and network interconnection. The Parliament underlines the priority to be given to transport projects and calls on the Commission to consider novel combinations of transport within the framework of intermodal transport, for example, in the case of coastal and island regions, a sea-air combination. It calls on the Commission to ensure the coordination of all Community activities, especiall trans-European networks, the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, the EIF and the EIB, affecting the transport sector, as part of an ambitious regional planning policy as set out in the ESDP. The report insists that public transport services should be maintained and calls for priority to be given to measures to ensure accessibility between the peripheral and core regions by means of specific measures in the field of public transport policy. It proposes that the current limit of 25% on Objective 2 funding for public transport should be lifted. The Parliament also considers that in town planning, the needs of pedestrians and cyclists must be taken into account. It is convinced that improving pan-European transport links between the European Union and the neighbouring areas, including in the former Soviet states and the Mediterranean countries, is of utmost importance for the future relations and calls for transport infrastructure improvements to be regarded as eligible funding when consideration is given, in the future, to the revision of Tacis and Meda.