

Guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network

2001/0229(COD) - 13/09/2006 - Follow-up document

This is the first annual report on the European Coordinators whose aim is to facilitate progress on the completion of certain trans-European network projects. The creation of the European Co-ordinators reflects the realisation that the major trans-European transport networks require considerable coordination between the Member States if they are to be successfully completed. In a bid to overcome the difficulties caused by the way in which investment procedures and decisions are compartmentalised within the Member States, a 2004 Decision on “guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network” enabled the Commission to designate six European Co-ordinators.

Having consulted both the European Parliament and the Member States, a list of six co-ordinators were approved. They are: Loyola de Palacio, Karel Van Miert, Étienne Davignon, Péter Balázs, Pavel Telicka and Karel Vinck.

A precise mandate for action was subsequently drawn-up by the Commission. Under the terms of this mandate the Co-ordinators are required to prepare annual reports on progress made in implementing trans-European transport network projects. They are also mandated to offer their assistance to the Commission in the programming of Community financial aid for the period 2007-2013.

The first report prepared by the Co-ordinators covers the period July 2005 - June 2006 – a period in which there was a high degree of uncertainty about the Community’s financial support, given that the inter-institutional agreement on the EU’s financial framework was only finalised in May 2006.

In their first major interim report, the Co-ordinators note that for many cross-border projects Community funding is decisive given that many Member States have difficulty bearing the financial cost on their own. The Co-ordinators also made note of the fact that an “over-all” approach is essential to the realisation of many projects and that it is vital that common planning and management structures are set up. Some already do exist – whilst others are in the process of being set up on the advice of the European Co-ordinators. The presence of a European Co-ordinator has had very positive impact on strengthening dialogue between the various interested parties.

The main recommendations of the European co-ordinators are:

- To concentrate available funds on cross-border sections and on those which offer a high level of Community added value.
- To prioritise major bottlenecks in order to contribute to the completion of a genuine trans-European, inter-connected and inter-operable network.
- To focus, right from the beginning of the design phase, on inter-operability.
- To offer higher levels of co-funding as an incentive to the Member States so that they begin work on cross-border projects.

For these recommendations to bear fruit, the co-ordinators stress the importance of optimum co-ordination. Further, special attention to trans-European transport projects should be given within the context of the National Strategic Reference programmes and the Structural/ Cohesion Funds.

The Commission concludes that the designation of European Co-coordinators for the five priority corridors and for the horizontal project ERTMS has been very positive. The European Co-ordinators are well recognised and received at both a national and local level. Further, their activities are transparent and open to scrutiny. Whilst the Co-ordinators' contribution is hard to quantify they nevertheless have proven themselves important players in pushing projects through. The Co-ordinators, for example, were decisive in concluding certain agreement and have been responsible for obtaining firm official commitments from the Member State to either carry-out studies or launch activities – decisions, which a few months ago would have been inconceivable.