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Monitoring of the developments in pan-European transport networks: The European Commission briefing on the progress made in developing the Trans-European Transport Network

The European Commission briefing on the progress made in developing the Trans-European Transport Network

Submitted by the European Commission

1. The European Commission announced on 28 March 2012 the projects selected to receive over €160 million in EU co-financing from the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) programme to continue improving transport infrastructure across the EU. The 26 selected projects will use the EU's financial support to speed up the implementation of important priorities of the TEN-T Programme in order to contribute to delivering a safe, competitive and efficient transport infrastructure network.
2. The 2011 Multi-Annual Programme Call granted €161.3 million in total funding and aimed to finance the highest priorities of the TEN-T network, focusing on three fields:
 - (a) Motorways of the Sea (MoS - TEN-T Priority Project 21), providing viable alternatives for congested roads by shifting freight to sea routes – 7 projects selected, €47.8 million in funding;
 - (b) River Information Services (RIS), involving traffic management infrastructure on the inland waterway network – 4 projects selected, €10.2 million in funding;
 - (c) European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) – 15 projects selected, €103.3 million in funding.
3. The TEN-T Executive Agency, which is entrusted with the financial and project management of the TEN-T programme, received 47 eligible proposals. 26 of these were selected, after a meticulous selection procedure, as the ones best meeting the criteria set out in the 2011 Multi-Annual Call, which was published on 28 June 2011.

4. The selected projects, whose objectives range from improving viable, regular and reliable sea-based transport services in Motorways of the Sea to equipping trains and lines with the most advanced version of ERTMS, involve 21 Member States. The grants will also help to mobilise substantial public and private financing.

Background Information

5. The European Commission has tabled in October 2011 a plan which would fund €50 billion worth of investment to improve Europe's transport, energy and digital networks. Targeted investments in key infrastructures will help to create jobs and boost Europe's competitiveness at a time when Europe needs this most. The "Connecting Europe Facility" will finance projects which fill the missing links in Europe's energy, transport and digital backbone. It will also make Europe's economy greener by promoting cleaner transport modes, high speed broadband connections and facilitating the use of renewable energy in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy. In addition the funding for energy networks will further integrate the internal energy market, reduce the EU's energy dependency and bolster the security of supply. To assist with the financing of the Connecting Europe Facility, the Commission has also adopted the terms for the Europe 2020 Project Bond Initiative which will be one of a number of risk-sharing instruments upon which the facility may draw in order to attract private finance in projects.

6. By focussing on smart, sustainable and fully interconnected transport, energy and digital networks, the Connecting Europe Facility will help to complete the European single market. The Connecting Europe Facility will better mobilise private financing and allow for innovative financial instruments such as guarantees and project bonds to gain maximum leverage from this EU funding injection.

7. According to the Commission's proposal, the Connecting Europe Facility would invest €31.7 billion to upgrade Europe's transport infrastructure, build missing links and remove bottlenecks. This includes €10 billion ring fenced in the Cohesion Fund for transport projects in the cohesion countries, with the remaining 21.7 billion available for all Member States for investing in transport infrastructure. The idea is to improve links between different parts of the EU, to make it easier for different countries to exchange goods and people with each other. By focussing on transport modes that are less polluting, the Connecting Europe Facility will push our transport system to become more sustainable. It will also give consumers more choice about how they want to travel.

8. Transport systems in Europe have traditionally developed along national lines. The EU has a crucial role to play in coordinating between Member States when planning, managing and funding cross-border projects. A well-functioning network is essential to the smooth operation of the single market and will boost competitiveness. It has estimated that by 2020, €500 billion will be needed to realise a real European network, including €250 billion for removing bottlenecks and completing missing links in the core network.

9. The Commission has adopted in October 2011 a proposal to transform the existing patchwork of European roads, railways, airports and canals into a unified transport network (TEN-T). The new core network will remove bottlenecks, upgrade infrastructure and streamline cross border transport operations for passengers and businesses throughout the EU. It will improve connections between different modes of transport and contribute to the EU's climate change objectives.

10. The new core TEN-T network will be supported by a comprehensive network of routes, feeding into the core network at regional and national level. This will largely be financed by Member States, with some EU transport and regional funding possibilities, including with new innovative financing instruments.

11. The TEN-T network consists of two layers: a core network to be completed by 2030 and a comprehensive network feeding into this, to be completed by 2050. The comprehensive network, will ensure full coverage of the EU and accessibility of all regions. The core network will prioritize the most important links and nodes of the TEN-T, to be fully functional until 2030. Both layers include all transport modes: road, rail, air, inland waterways and maritime transport, as well as intermodal platforms.

12. The TEN-T guidelines set common requirements for the TEN-T infrastructure – with tougher requirements for the core network. This will ensure fluent transport operations throughout the network. The policy also fosters the implementation of traffic management systems which will allow optimising the use of infrastructure and by increasing efficiency and supporting innovative propulsion technologies, to reduce CO2 emissions.

13. The Commission proposed to create corridors to facilitate the implementation of the core network, covering the most important cross-border projects. Ten corridors will provide the basis for the co-ordinated development of infrastructure within the core network. Covering at least 3 modes, 3 Member States and 2 cross-border sections, these corridors will bring together the Member States concerned, as well as the relevant stakeholders, for example infrastructure managers and users. European co-ordinators will chair "corridor platforms" that will bring together all the stakeholders – these will be a major instrument to guarantee co-ordination, co-operation and transparency.

14. The core network will connect:

- (a) 83 main European ports with rail and road links
 - (b) 37 key airports with rail connections into major cities
 - (c) 15,000 km of railway line upgraded to high speed
 - (d) 35 cross border projects to reduce bottlenecks
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