



Plenary sitting

A8-0136/2018

4.4.2018

REPORT

on the implementation of cohesion policy and the thematic objective of 'promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures' - Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation (2017/2285(INI))

Committee on Regional Development

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EXPLANATORY STATEMENT - SUMMARY OF FACTS AND FINDINGS

For decades EU's cohesion policy stands as the single most visible instrument of European added value. The investments through the EU budget not only deliver the long-term objectives of the Union but also impact all citizens, local communities and businesses. The presence of cohesion policy locally has led to credibility and visibility through success stories.

Transport infrastructure investments under thematic objective 'promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures' are among cohesion policy's most tangible achievements, which contribute to closing different divergence gaps within the EU and to building a strong single market for a competitive Europe.

This report is in the context of Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation and aims to assess the achievements, to give an overview of the challenges and to refer to the post-2020 period. The latter is especially important in view of the upcoming MFF proposal, subsequent negotiations and the regulatory framework for the next programming period.

Investments achievements and impact 2007-2013

The trans-European transport network (TEN-T, Articles 170-172 TFEU) aims to develop an integrated multimodal network allowing people and goods to move quickly and easily across the EU. As suggested in 'Europe on the Move' comprehensive set of initiatives, it contributes to competitive, connected and clean mobility for all Europeans.

Since 2013 (Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013), the European Union has developed a new TEN-T policy, whose main feature was a systematic EU-wide network approach. It established priority areas for action, in particular in cross-border sections. It also deals with infrastructure disparities and inadequate interoperability, improves multi-modal connections, reduces levels of greenhouse gas emissions, and increases the attention on connections with third countries. However, with a total budget of EUR 8.013 billion allocated to the TEN-T Programme in the 2007-2013 financial perspective, the co-funding rates (to a maximum of 30% of the budget for infrastructure works of a project and 50% for studies) were insufficient, especially in countries with the lowest quality of infrastructure.

Meanwhile, in total, across the EU27 as a whole, EUR 81 billion, or almost a third (31%) of the overall amount of European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) support, was earmarked for investment in transport in the 2007-2013 period. Of this, over two-thirds (69%) was accounted for by the newest members (EU12 countries, around EUR 55.6 billion), where the need of transport investments was the highest. This means that from 309 Operational Programmes negotiated with the European Commission (ERDF and CF), 238 included support to the transport sector. Of these, the majority were implemented at a national level (representing 67 percent of the total allocation of funds). This resulted in 4900 km of new roads and 28,000 km of reconstructed roads, realized mostly in the newest Member States, the construction of 1 100km of new railways and the upgrading of 3 900 km of railway lines (2 600 km of the lines constructed or upgraded on the TEN-T). This assured road access for 8.2 million more citizens and reduced travel time.

There are also many good cases of European investments in transport in 2007-2013, serving as good examples, that are worth to mention - the completion of Trakia motorway from Sofia to the Black Sea port of Burgas, linking the capital city, a centre of economic activity, with

the largest port and contributing vitally for the development of the Bulgarian economy, the Modernisation of railway line E30/C-E 30, Kraków – Rzeszów section in Poland; Rehabilitation of national road DN6 Alexandria – Craiova in Romania, Track modernisation Votice to Benešov u Prahy in the Czech Republic, Leipzig City Rail Tunnel (Modules 5 and 6) in Germany and many others.

Progress in the 2014-2020 period

Compared to the 2007-2013 TEN-T Programme, the CEF Transport Programme in 2014-2020 allocates more funding to projects in advanced stages of implementation, works or mixed projects (combining studies and works). With EUR 24.05 billion available for infrastructure projects under CEF, it reaches with about EUR 47 transport financing per European citizen. Among the 20 largest projects financed under the 2014-2015 CEF calls, 79% are rail projects.

Meanwhile, the European Structural and Investment (ESI) funds foresee a total of approximately EUR 70 billion for transport projects programmed in the 2014-2020 period: EUR 35.6 billion for transport under the Cohesion Fund and EUR 34.5 billion for transport under the European Regional Development Fund. Despite the delayed implementation of the programming period, there is no major negative impact on transport investments. However, the progress of road transport investments is far more obvious than rail under the Cohesion funds. From 9,647 km planned roads for reconstruction, 1,973 km are already decided; from 3,103 km new roads planned, 1,195 km are already decided. Meanwhile, statistics differs concerning rail investments, where from 7,052 km planned for reconstruction rails, 982 km are already decided and from 628 km new rails planned, only 16 km are decided.

Transport infrastructure challenges

Infrastructure quality is divergent across the EU. It needs to be modernised and maintained. The required funding must be made available from both public and private sources. 80% increase in freight transport and more than 50% increase in passenger transport is expected by 2050. Missing links and existing bottlenecks are serious obstacles to traffic flows. Considering that infrastructure shapes mobility, equally developed infrastructure in eastern and western parts of the EU is required. Otherwise, we risk to continue facing all negative effects on the economy, industry and society, especially in regards to congestion, deaths on the road, environmental impact and etc.

Congestion affects both road and air traffic and costs Europe around 1% of annual GDP. The situation will worsen since freight and passenger transport alike are set to grow. At the same time, deaths from road accidents across the EU has fallen substantially over time with almost 40% for the last seven years.

There is still need to promote low-emission green transport by 2050 since the EU must cut transport emissions at least by 60% compared with 1990 levels, if we are to limit global warming to an increase of just 2°C. Furthermore, despite improvements in energy efficiency, transport still depends on oil for 96% of its energy needs.

Another serious challenge is the increased interest from external investors in European transport network and the urgent need to act on European level to ensure that the transformation of transport is defined together with our partners rather than determined

elsewhere in the world.

The challenges to EU's transport infrastructure investments

EU's investments in tangible infrastructure contribute to the visibility and the credibility of the Union locally. The development of infrastructure needs to match the projected rise in European transport demand. The latter is expected to cost EUR 1.5 trillion up to 2030. Moreover, up to 2020, the Commission estimates that around EUR 500 billion will be required to complete only the trans-European network, and of that amount, around half is needed to overcome the main bottlenecks. Even though the EU budget provides substantial funding for infrastructure in Europe, the largest part of financing for projects still comes from the Member States.

First, the key role of European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) in the post-2020 period also requires significant budgetary and implementation commitment in order to cover EU's ambitions related to regional transport infrastructure as a prerequisite for growth and development. At current, the level of ambition and the investment estimations exceed again the available resources.

Second, optimisation of performance is highly required. For keeping the transport sector competitive in the global marketplace and at the cutting edge of technological advances in transport, the budget of EUR 6.3 billion for smart, green and integrated transport for the 2014-2020 period for Horizon 2020 is highly insufficient, leading again to oversubscription for proposals and lack of funding for quality projects.

Third, there are also certain shortcomings related to efficiency in project pipelines. They include lagging behind schedule due to the enormous complexity, lack of financing and/or financial guarantees, incoordination, administrative burden to managing authorities and to the beneficiaries and contractors, project preparation and planning, and regulatory constraints.

Then the European Investment Bank (EIB) loan amounts are generally limited to 50% of the project's investment, which could be insufficient for large-scale strategic projects in countries where transport investments are mostly needed. At the same time, Member States still do not dispose with the same capacity for working with financial instruments, organizing PPPs and implementing synergies between various types of financing, which affects negatively their progress. The existing support services effectively are not present locally to address those capacity weaknesses.

Finally, there should be no single strategy for investing in European regions, since in some cases statistical bias renders entire regions ineligible due to the existence of economically strong metropolitan centres in the current NUTS2 classification. In certain Member States the NUTS 2 typology does not correspond to the regional governance structure, which leads to planning and implementation difficulties.

Europe also needs functionality and the full potential of TEN-T through its completion and comprehensive connectivity between the cross-border regions. At this stage, advisory assistance and capacity building at project level remain outside the scope of the existing instruments. We face the urgent need to support the economy and employment in our border regions.

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the implementation of cohesion policy and the thematic objective of ‘promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures’ - Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation (2017/2285(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to cohesion policy and the thematic objective of ‘promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures’ - Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation¹,
- having regard to Common Provisions Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013, Article 37 on financial instruments supported by ESI Funds²,
- having regard to European Regional Development Fund Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013, Article 5(7) on promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures³,
- having regard to Cohesion Fund Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013, Article 4(d) on promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures⁴,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU⁵,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010⁶,
- having regard to Decision No 1386/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 ‘Living well, within the limits of our planet’⁷,
- having regard its resolution of 13 of March 2018 on lagging regions in the EU⁸,
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2017 on promoting cohesion and development in the outermost regions of the EU: implementation of Article 349 of the TFEU⁹,

¹ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 343.

² OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 358.

³ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 295.

⁴ OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 284.

⁵ OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 1.

⁶ OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129.

⁷ OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 171.

⁸ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2018)0067.

⁹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0316.

- having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2017 on the right funding mix for Europe’s regions: balancing financial instruments and grants in EU cohesion policy¹,
- having regard to its resolution of 9 September 2015 on the implementation of the 2011 White Paper on Transport: taking stock and the way forward towards sustainable mobility²,
- having regard to its resolution of 22 April 2009 on the Green Paper on the future of TEN-T policy³,
- having regard to the Commission’s Seventh Report on economic, social and territorial cohesion of 9 October 2017 entitled ‘My Region, My Europe, Our Future’ (COM(2017)0583),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 6 February 2018 entitled ‘A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans’ COM(2018)0065,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 24 October 2017 entitled ‘A stronger and renewed strategic partnership with the EU’s outermost regions’ (COM(2017)0623),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 20 September 2017 entitled ‘Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions’ (COM(2017)0534),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 17 December 2013 entitled ‘Together towards competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility’ (COM(2013)0913),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 8 March 2011 entitled ‘A Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy in 2050’ (COM(2011)0112),
- having regard to the Commission White Paper of 28 March 2011 entitled ‘Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system’ (COM(2011)0144),
- having regard to the Commission Green Paper of 4 February 2009 entitled ‘TEN-T: A policy review - Towards a better integrated Transeuropean transport network at the service of the common transport policy’ (COM(2009)0044),
- having regard to Commission synthesis report of August 2016 entitled ‘WP1: Synthesis report: Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF)’,
- having regard to Commission synthesis report of June 2016 entitled ‘Regional development trends in the EU - WP1: Synthesis report: Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund

¹ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0222.

² OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 155.

³ OJ C 184E, 8.7.2010, p. 35.

(ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF)',

- having regard to Commission final report of May 2016 entitled 'WORK PACKAGE 5: Ex post evaluation of Cohesion Policy programmes 2007-2013, focusing on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF)',
 - having regard to Commission staff working document of 10 April 2017 entitled 'Competitiveness in low-income and low-growth regions: The lagging regions report' (SWD (2017)0132),
 - having regard to Commission working document of 4 May 2010 entitled 'Consultation on the future trans-European transport network policy' (COM(2010)0212),
 - having regard to the European Environment Agency report entitled 'Approximated European Union greenhouse gas inventory: Proxy GHG emission estimates for 2016',
 - having regard to the study entitled 'The world is changing, transport, too', commissioned by Parliament's Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, March 2016,
 - having regard to the study entitled 'The future of the EU's transport infrastructure', commissioned by Parliament's Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, January 2010,
 - having regard to the Eurostat statistical book of 2016 entitled 'Energy, transport and environment indicators - 2016 edition',
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure, as well as Article 1(1)(e) of, and Annex 3 to, the decision of the Conference of Presidents of 12 December 2002 on the procedure for granting authorisation to draw up own-initiative reports,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Regional Development and the opinion of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A8-0136/2018),
- A. whereas thematic concentration, aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) and supporting regions' efforts towards implementing the Europe 2020 strategy, has purposely focused investments under thematic objective 7 on improving the quality of transport infrastructure, including the efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- B. whereas the CF and the ERDF provide support for the development of both the TEN-T network and regional and local transport infrastructure not located on the TEN-T, in particular in less developed Member States and regions where considerable effort is still needed to close missing links, remove bottlenecks and modernise rolling stock;
- C. whereas the transport sector and the infrastructure for that sector are central and essential to the development of any country, as well as to the wellbeing of the Member States' populations, which is why the transport sector remains a key investment area contributing to growth, competitiveness and development by boosting the economic potential of every EU region, thereby furthering economic and social cohesion,

supporting the internal market and by so doing facilitating cohesion, integration and social and economic inclusion, countering imbalances between regions, facilitating access to services and training in the most remote regions currently at risk of depopulation, and strengthening business start-up and development networks;

- D. whereas in the 2007-2013 period, EUR 81 billion, or almost one third (31 %) of the ESI Funds was invested in transport infrastructure; whereas the strongest positive impact of EU transport infrastructure investment is particularly and more specifically visible in Central and Eastern Europe, to which 69 % of the total transport funding was allocated;
- E. whereas the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework is marked by increased ESI Funds and CEF budgets; whereas, despite the adverse effects of the recent economic and financial crisis and the delayed implementation of the programming period, there is no major impact on transport investments; whereas EU transport infrastructure investments are one of the policies that provide the highest EU added value due to the spill-over effects within, inter alia, the single market, which effectively make all Member States net beneficiaries of the investment;
- F. whereas success stories involving road, rail and port projects backed by the EU budget contribute to the economy, growth, industry, export, tourism, trade, job creation, the revival of regions and reversal of depopulation trends; whereas there are examples of EU added value such as the modernisation of railway line E30/C-E30 from Kraków to Rzeszow in Poland, the Sofia to Plovdiv railway in Bulgaria, the Leipzig City Rail Tunnel (Modules 5 and 6) in Germany, the track modernisation from Votice to Benešov u Prahy in the Czech Republic, the reconstruction of Ülemiste Junction in Tallinn, Estonia, the rehabilitation of national road DN6 from Alexandria to Craiova in Romania, the Madrid to Valencia-Murcia high-speed railway in Spain, the completion of Trakia motorway from Sofia to the Black Sea port of Burgas, Budapest Metro Line 4 in Hungary, the Sofia Metro Lines in Bulgaria and many more;
- G. whereas TEN-T and transport infrastructure such as road, (high-speed) rail investments, waterways and air are EU priorities, and if European investments were to lag behind, increased FDI could fill the gap while relocating profits, taxes and job opportunities outside of the EU, perhaps increasing the dependence and macroeconomic instability of the regions; whereas such a process would undermine the Union's regional presence and policies in the long term and would lead to fragmentation and divergence;
- H. whereas the development of the Core Network Corridors includes a number of integral components such as alternative fuels infrastructure (charging equipment) and intelligent and innovative transport systems, and plays an essential role as an enabler of the decarbonisation of the transport system as a whole;
- I. whereas smart, future-proof, sustainable and fully interconnected transport, energy and digital networks are a necessary condition for the completion and smooth operation of the European single market and for linking Europe with the world market; whereas these are genuine arteries for European economic productivity growth, territorial cohesion and the wellbeing of its citizens;
- J. whereas a more integrated approach to investments in transport infrastructure will remove bottlenecks, improve multimodal connectivity and increase investments in shifts

from road to rail, as well as in environmentally friendly vehicles such as, for example electric vehicles, as well as rail and waterways; whereas this will lead towards energy diversification in transport and greener transport networks, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving air quality, and stimulating further actions to fight climate change;

- K. whereas transport is an important building block in the EU's energy-climate policy, and whereas the EU's targets for the minimum share of renewable energy and for reducing greenhouse gas emissions cannot be reached without a significant contribution from transport;
1. Underlines that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), the CF and the ERDF should remain the core EU sources for transport infrastructure investments under the thematic objective of 'promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures' in the next programming period; proposes that, due to the high European added value and the extensive spill-over effects generated, these funding sources should remain available and provide balanced coverage for all EU Member States and regions in order to contribute to the implementation of EU cohesion policy;
 2. Notes that the intervention logic behind EU transport infrastructure investment should remain a well-balanced construction of centrally managed and shared management sources in order to address policy and funding needs; recalls that the CEF aims to address centrally the EU-wide priority of core TEN-T corridors, including safety, technological innovation and environmental aspects; recalls also that the ERDF and CF have a strong regional dimension that responds to local demand (urban and peri-urban areas) and regional specifics; points out that they support the connectivity to TEN-T and mobility through secondary and tertiary nodes and multimodal terminals (comprehensive TEN-T network); underlines, in this context, that the relevant budgetary envelopes for the three funding sources need to be strengthened in a balanced manner in order to avoid asymmetric distribution of investment between the levels; calls on the Commission to facilitate simplified, timely and flexible procedures for the transferability of resources between regions, operational programmes and programme axes under ESI Funds in order to adequately respond to the changing economic reality and regional demand;
 3. Considers that the role of additional sources such as the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) and financial instruments needs to be defined in view of their complementarity to the ERDF and CF and their additionality to EIB lending operations; notes that the 2017 CEF Transport Blending Call has also been designed to strengthen those synergies, but also the exchange of best practices between Member States and that further support for capacity is needed; highlights in this regard that EFSI should serve as a platform for public-private partnerships (PPPs) in matching financial instruments to private investment and to national/regional financing at project level; notes that bankable infrastructure projects should primarily be supported by loans, EU guarantees or blending, in addition to ERDF, CF or CEF funding; believes, however, that grants should continue to be the main financial source of investment for funding sustainable public transport;
 4. Notes that infrastructure requires objective *ex ante* quantification of demand and future

needs prior to setting the budget and the delivery methods; underlines that it should be possible within these key network infrastructure objectives for the ERDF and CF eligibility criteria to consider existing demand at an appropriate territorial level; notes also that cross-European, regional and local transport network modelling can be effective in demonstrating where investment would best deliver European added value;

5. Calls on the Commission, with the aim of promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures, to draw up a checklist of eligibility criteria, which better expresses local and regional needs concerning transport infrastructure, in order to help determine the overall transport envelope, the investments needed, and the priorities to be set; notes the importance of taking as a basis the data from the EU Transport Scoreboard, which is of high quality, reliable, up-to-date, structured and available; notes, furthermore, that this checklist can include issues such as multimodal connectivity, local and regional specifics, the availability of alternative modes of transport, road and rail safety, and environmental impact;
6. Notes the need for more integrated investment in basic transport infrastructures in less developed regions, as well as in mountainous, remote, depopulated or outermost regions with low accessibility to be targeted more intensively by ERDF, CEF and CF transport infrastructure investments after EU added value has been provided by an adequate cost-benefit analysis, and the need to improve work on multimodal connectivity; emphasises that improving accessibility in these regions is a precondition for economic development; calls on the Commission and the Member States – via a public consultation prior to project implementation – to encourage more active public sector involvement in transport solutions at national, regional but also at local/urban and rural level with the aim of developing optimal transport investments;
7. Notes that sustainable innovations in transport require synergies and additionality between the three main instruments – ESI Funds, CEF and Horizon 2020 as well as its successor;
8. Calls for ERDF support to European Territorial Cooperation to be strengthened through additional resources, focusing on key sustainable transport infrastructure investments (such as cross-border waterways, ports, bridges, railways, interconnecting transport modes and terminals, etc.); understands that the focus should be on connectivity in cross-border regions, including EU external borders, advisory assistance and capacity building at project level; calls for barriers to be dismantled in order to facilitate investments, and notably cross-border investments (in waterways, rail and road transport) and access to external markets;
9. Calls for the closing of the transport infrastructure gaps with the Western Balkans in relation to integrated transport projects by focusing on further investment in connectivity and on tackling transport bottlenecks, particularly in view of the Commission's communication on the European perspective for the Western Balkans; recalls, in this context, the importance of European Territorial Cooperation and the macro-regional strategies for integrated transport projects, while taking note of the need to better coordinate transport plans and projects with the aim of closing transport gaps, e.g. with the Western Balkans; further recalls in this context that seaports and waterways are very often cross-border entities and should benefit from the same co-

financing rate as cross-border rail and road projects;

10. Emphasises the need to integrate climate protection into cohesion policy in relation to the sustainable transport objective, hence pursuing the EU's objectives to reduce CO₂ emissions; calls on the Commission to require the Member States to integrate EU environmental legislation into the process of adopting and planning projects eligible for funding, particularly Natura2000, strategic environmental assessments, the environmental impact assessment, air quality, the Water Framework Directive, the Habitats and Birds Directives, and the European Environmental Agency's Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism (TERM);
11. Emphasises that more support should be given to promoting smart traffic management, including through digitalisation, by making more efficient use of existing infrastructure and redirecting towards off-peak times;
12. Calls for an adequate and ambitious common European transport policy based on a funding framework that is integrated and coordinated with the EU transport instruments; considers that thematic concentration should be preserved in order to permit simplification and synergies between different funding sources at project level; proposes the creation of a single set of rules for all financing sources related to all thematic objectives; considers it necessary to streamline, standardise and accelerate public procurement and state aid compliance procedures;
13. Invites the Commission and the Member States to continue the co-financing of projects in the next programming period in accordance with the 'use it or lose it' principle;
14. Welcomes the work of the Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions (JASPERS), the European Public-Private Partnership Expertise Centre (EPEC) and the European Investment Advisory Hub (EIAH); expects, however, that the transport infrastructure operations of the EIB Group within the EU devote significantly more resources to providing comprehensive advisory assistance to local, regional and national authorities at an earlier stage in the identification and pre-assessment of projects with EU added value;
15. Calls on the Commission, in the framework of the new Regulation(s) on post-2020 cohesion policy, to propose a greater earmarking of the funds available for cities to bid jointly for infrastructure or technologies that would contribute to decarbonising urban transport and reducing air pollution from road vehicles;
16. Supports the allocation of adequate resources for research, programmes and projects promoting road safety in Europe, in line with the Valletta Declaration on Road Safety;
17. Stresses the need to ensure that resources are made available to support sustainable urban mobility, the development of intelligent transport systems, projects for cyclists and pedestrians and improved accessibility to transport for persons with a disability;
18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the European Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and the governments and national and regional parliaments of the Member States.

20.3.2018

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND TOURISM

for the Committee on Regional Development

on cohesion policy and the thematic objective of ‘promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures’ – Article 9(7) of the Common Provisions Regulation (2017/2285(INI))

Rapporteur: Kosma Złotowski

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Transport and Tourism calls on the Committee on Regional Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- A. whereas thematic concentration, aiming to increase the effectiveness of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) and to support regions’ efforts towards implementing the Europe 2020 strategy, has purposely focused investments under thematic objective 7 on improving the quality of transport infrastructure, including the efficient use of existing infrastructure;
- B. whereas cohesion policies need to be stepped up to reverse the growing differences between Member States, including by increasing the budget of the European Union;
- C. whereas the Cohesion Fund (CF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) provide support for the development of both the TEN-T network and regional and local transport infrastructure not located on the TEN-T, in particular in less developed Member States and regions where considerable effort is still needed to close missing links, remove bottlenecks and modernise rolling stock;
- D. whereas the transport sector and the infrastructure for that sector are central and essential to the development of any country, as well as to the wellbeing of the Member States’ population, which is why the transport sector remains a key investment area contributing to growth, competitiveness and development by boosting the economic potential of every EU region, thus furthering economic and social cohesion, supporting the internal market and thereby facilitating cohesion, integration and social and economic inclusion, countering imbalances between regions, facilitating access to

services and training in the most remote regions currently at risk of depopulation, and strengthening business start-up and development networks;

- E. whereas the development of the Core Network Corridors includes, as an integral part, components such as alternative fuels infrastructure (charging equipment) and intelligent and innovative transport systems, and plays an essential role as enabler for the decarbonisation of the transport system as a whole;
 - F. whereas around EUR 24 billion have been allocated under the 2014-2020 financing period through the CEF, especially for rail projects;
 - G. whereas the total budget for Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) Transport is EUR 24.05 billion for the period 2014-2020, of which EUR 11.305 billion is made available specifically for projects located within the territories of Member States that are eligible for the Cohesion Fund;
 - H. whereas sustainable investment plays a critical role not only in tackling capacity constraints and deteriorating infrastructure, but also in providing long-term maintenance;
 - I. whereas Member States face the common challenge of financing transport infrastructure with a tight budget and creating a network that better integrates and connects the different transport modes, as well as ensuring efficient transport services and passenger safety;
 - J. whereas most of the EU funds allocated for transport are managed inside the Commission by DGs other than DG Move, a situation which does not favour a harmonised approach to the completion of TEN-T;
1. Notes the still limited progress made in the completion of the strategic parts of the core and comprehensive TEN-T networks through projects planned under the ERDF and the CF, and a low rate of project selection; regrets the delayed implementation of the current programming period, which has had a significant negative impact on railway transport investments; invites the Commission therefore to investigate how present limitations in implementation could be overcome, and calls on it to propose ways of increasing the project selection rate;
 2. Recalls that the Member States were obliged by the regulations and the partnership agreements completed with the Commission to present, by the end of 2016, their transport strategies up until 2030; calls on the Commission, therefore, to provide Parliament with an evaluation of the proposals from national strategies, national Operational Programmes and TEN-T, and to elaborate and make public an informal strategy for transport based on the national strategies developed by Member States under the partnership agreements; calls on the Commission to also draw up, make public and continuously update a TEN-T map of the transport projects under implementation or proposed under the Member States' Operational Programmes for both the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 financing periods; calls on the European Court of Auditors (ECA) to compile special reports about the implementation of projects across Member States regarding project preparation periods, procurement procedures, the cost of feasibility studies and engineering, the cost of construction, and economic efficiency;

calls on the Commission, moreover, to take the ECA's Special Reports into consideration and to evaluate the possibility of sharing best practices in order to harmonise procedures and establish standard costs that would allow the better spending of EU money;

3. Calls on the Commission to review its internal administrative rules in order to increase DG Move's involvement in decisions on transport-related projects and procedures; calls also on the Commission to evaluate the possibility of improving and strengthening the involvement of responsible DGs in transport-related operational programmes in order to better implement the TEN-T Regulation;
4. Calls on the Commission to use the findings of the aforementioned evaluation for post-2020 transport policy regulations;
5. Stresses that several Member States are still lagging behind as regards meeting basic EU common transport policy targets on reducing emissions, the modal shift towards rail and sustainable inland waterways, especially when comparing central and eastern Member States with western ones; points out that their specific needs are not always aligned with the EU's investment priorities and calls, therefore, for the necessary support and help from the Commission in financing transport projects under the ERDF and the CF and for support for the medium- to long-term investment programmes; recommends also that the Commission allocate technical assistance to countries falling behind with regard to the achievement of fundamental EU objectives in the transport sector;
6. Calls for continued and balanced support to the TEN-T core and comprehensive networks and horizontal priorities, and invites the Commission and Member States to make full use of the potential of the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund for European cross-border infrastructure projects, in order to complete the core and comprehensive Trans-European Transport Network, as well as to maintain, upgrade and renovate existing infrastructure and better integrate national transport networks into cross-border connections in terms of interconnectivity, intermodality and interoperability; stresses in this context the need for adequate budget envelopes and clearly structured funding programmes under the transport and cohesion policies post 2020, with a focus on dismantled and abandoned regional cross-border missing links;
7. Acknowledges the wider application of the blending approach; calls, however, for a substantial increase in the exchange of best practice, technical assistance and preparatory toolkits for Member States to disseminate information on financial instruments; also recalls that financial instruments are not always appropriate to finance railway, inland waterways or cross-border projects and that smaller countries face difficulties in implementing PPPs; stresses in this context the need to catalyse public and private finance with a view to the completion of the TEN-T core network by 2030; stresses also the need to maintain a strong grant component in the EU funds as grants remain an essential tool in attracting private financing and closing gaps between Member States, as well as in guaranteeing a fair balance between public and private investors in the sharing of profits and losses; recommends that the Commission identifies suitable financial instruments to ensure interconnectivity throughout the EU, coupled with more efficient and safer transport services; emphasises, however, that new EU financing instruments or new EU funds cannot be created at the expense of

transport policy funding or any transport-specific financial envelopes;

8. Emphasises, in the light of the future challenges facing the EU transport policy in the global market, particularly with regard to new technologies, ITS and growing market competition, the necessity of maintaining at least the same level of funding for EU transport investment projects;
9. Calls for cohesion policy funds to be allocated to the development of multimodal infrastructure, including support for the design of multimodal terminals and the development of ITS systems for combined transport;
10. Invites the Commission and Member States to continue the co-financing of projects in the next programming period in accordance with the principle of ‘use it or lose it’;
11. Encourages the Member States and the regions to apply the user and polluter pays principle to charging for their road networks, in order to encourage green logistics and to generate revenue that can compensate the different public budgets involved;
12. Supports the allocation of adequate resources to research, programmes and projects promoting road safety in Europe, in line with the Valletta Declaration on Road Safety;
13. Encourages the Commission, the Member States and the regions to step up their support for the bicycle infrastructure, such as the further development of the EuroVelo network, in combination with European railway connections;
14. Stresses the need to ensure that resources are made available to support sustainable urban mobility, the development of intelligent transport systems, projects for cyclists and pedestrians and improved accessibility to transport for persons with a disability.

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	20.3.2018
Result of final vote	+: 35 -: 3 0: 1
Members present for the final vote	Daniela Aiuto, Lucy Anderson, Georges Bach, Deirdre Clune, Michael Cramer, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Andor Deli, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Jacqueline Foster, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Merja Kyllönen, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Peter Lundgren, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Georg Mayer, Gesine Meissner, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Renaud Muselier, Markus Pieper, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault d'Allonnes Bonnefoy, Dominique Riquet, Massimiliano Salini, Jill Seymour, Claudia Ţapardel, Keith Taylor, Pavel Telička, Peter van Dalen, Wim van de Camp, Janusz Zemke, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Substitutes present for the final vote	Jakop Dalunde, Mark Demesmaeker, João Pimenta Lopes, Matthijs van Miltenburg
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Gilles Lebreton

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

35	+
ALDE	Gesine Meissner, Dominique Riquet, Pavel Telička, Matthijs van Miltenburg
ECR	Mark Demesmaeker, Jacqueline Foster, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski, Peter van Dalen,
EFDD	Daniela Aiuto, Peter Lundgren
ENF	Georg Mayer
PPE	Georges Bach, Deirdre Clune, Andor Deli, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Renaud Muselier, Markus Pieper, Massimiliano Salini, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Wim van de Camp
S&D	Lucy Anderson, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Gabriele Preuß, Christine Revault d'Allonnes Bonnefoy, Claudia Țapardel, Janusz Zemke
Verts/ALE	Michael Cramer, Jakop Dalunde, Keith Taylor

3	-
EFDD	Jill Seymour
GUE/NGL	Merja Kyllönen, João Pimenta Lopes

1	0
ENF	Gilles Lebreton

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention

INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

Date adopted	27.3.2018
Result of final vote	+: 29 -: 10 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Pascal Arimont, Franc Bogovič, Victor Boștinaru, Mercedes Bresso, Steeve Briois, Rosa D'Amato, Raymond Finch, Iratxe García Pérez, Ivan Jakovčić, Marc Joulaud, Constanze Krehl, Martina Michels, Iskra Mihaylova, Andrey Novakov, Paul Nuttall, Younous Omarjee, Konstantinos Papadakis, Mirosław Piotrowski, Stanislav Polčák, Liliana Rodrigues, Fernando Ruas, Monika Smolková, Maria Spyragi, Ruža Tomašić, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Ángela Vallina, Matthijs van Miltenburg, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Derek Vaughan, Kerstin Westphal, Joachim Zeller
Substitutes present for the final vote	Elena Gentile, Elsi Katainen, Ivana Maletić, Tonino Picula, Bronis Ropé, Davor Škrlec, Damiano Zoffoli
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Ricardo Serrão Santos

FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE

29	+
ALDE	Ivan Jakovčić, Elsi Katainen, Iskra Mihaylova, Matthijs van Miltenburg
ECR	Mirosław Piotrowski, Ruža Tomašić
PPE	Pascal Arimont, Franc Bogovič, Marc Joulaud, Ivana Maletić, Lambert van Nistelrooij, Andrey Novakov, Stanislav Polčák, Fernando Ruas, Maria Spyraki, Ramón Luis Valcárcel Siso, Joachim Zeller
S&D	Victor Boştinaru, Mercedes Bresso, Iratxe García Pérez, Elena Gentile, Constanze Krehl, Tonino Picula, Liliana Rodrigues, Ricardo Serrão Santos, Monika Smolková, Derek Vaughan, Kerstin Westphal, Damiano Zoffoli

10	-
EFDD	Rosa D'Amato, Raymond Finch, Paul Nuttall
ENF	Steeve Briois
GUE/NGL	Martina Michels, Younous Omarjee, Ángela Vallina
NI	Konstantinos Papadakis
VERTS/ALE	Bronis Ropë, Davor Škrlec

0	0

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention