



2015/2324(INI)

25.5.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on Transport and Tourism

for the Committee on Regional Development

on an EU strategy for the Alpine region
(2015/2324(INI))

Rapporteur: Daniela Aiuto

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 the Alpine region, as defined in the Alpine Convention, like other European mountainous areas, poses a major challenge in terms of the development of its role within the European transport network, since it has a low population density, very specific types of connections and accessibility to services, and distinctive local economies;
- B. whereas the specific geomorphology of the macro-region should not be considered an obstacle to connectivity, but rather an opportunity to develop sustainable intermodal transport services based on regional best practice models and combined with the protection and promotion of the natural, environmental and cultural heritage and biodiversity and climate change mitigation;
- C. whereas financial resources should mainly be channelled towards and invested in the development of public transport connections in the Alpine regions, on the basis of indicators suited to the specific conditions in mountainous areas, through the improvement of existing rail connections, specifically cross-border transport, in the promotion of small town centres, through the enhancement of accessibility to work and sustainable tourist facilities, and in ensuring essential health, educational and childcare services, facilitating the creation of new quality local employment and protecting the environment and natural resources, including water resources;
- D. whereas the Alpine region is being adversely affected by a rural exodus and an ageing population; whereas an efficient public transport service, high-speed internet connectivity and sustainable year-round tourism could help make the Alpine region more attractive to young people and facilitate access to employment;
- E. whereas, five out of nine TEN-T core corridors, which are crucial for European and regional development and for achieving the goals set out in the Transport White Paper, extend through the Alps, and whereas their realisation requires joint and coordinated financial efforts on the part of the Member States until 2030;
- F. whereas, in order to give effect to the principles laid down in the Framework Convention and to the initiatives to be implemented at the practical level, a number of protocols and memoranda of understanding have been adopted, setting out specific measures on a range of subjects, including transport, tourism, soil conservation, spatial planning, sustainable development, nature conservation and landscape protection, with a view to pursuing joint projects related to trans-European transport networks, and whereas Member States accordingly entered into bilateral agreements for the purpose of implementing Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funding in conjunction with funding under their own national budgets;
- G. whereas the Commission's macro-regional strategy is intended to provide instruments that strengthen regional capacity, in particular by boosting sustainable transport connectivity, intermodality and interoperability in passenger and freight transport, so as to achieve the

shift of traffic from road to rail; whereas several regions taking part in other neighbouring macro-regions (Adriatic, Danube) should utilise overlapping areas in order to improve connectivity, accessibility and intermodality;

- H. whereas, in its communication on the EU strategy for the Alpine region, the Commission points both to the need to reduce the impact of transport across the Alps, so as to preserve the Alpine environmental heritage, and to the importance of implementing a strategy to bring about better environmental conditions for the population; whereas the balance to be struck between transport infrastructure and regional conservation has for decades been identified as a major challenge; whereas, nevertheless, every productive investment should be based on a lifecycle assessment, together with the environmental impact assessment necessary to forestall the main natural disaster risks in an area as vulnerable as the Alpine region;
1. Takes note of the territorial delimitation under the Alpine Convention and of the related protocols on transport and tourism, as well as of the Commission's action plan aimed at improving the sustainability of transport connectivity, within and to the region, and promoting intermodality, interoperability and the quality of intermodal transport and mobility systems, in accordance with best practice models;
 2. Welcomes the opening of the Gotthard Base Tunnel on 1 June 2016; invites the Commission and the respective Alpine Member States to evaluate the change of traffic flows and freight share, such as along the Brenner route, owing to new tunnels, before planning additional base tunnels; requests a sufficient number of rail-road terminals, where appropriate, along the corridors in order to promote the goal of shifting freight traffic from road to rail;
 3. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to strengthen multilevel governance in transport planning, and to implement for the essentially mountainous Alpine region a policy to develop transport infrastructure that is sustainable, inclusive and non-invasive for the region, preserving the latter, and promoting a balanced development of economically weaker regions and areas in terms of tourism, social cohesion, economic advancement and employment; stresses that, in the planning of transport infrastructure policy, it should be a priority to assess and minimise adverse impacts, inter alia, on the environment; calls for support to be provided with a view to encouraging a gradual shift from road to rail transport and transport powered by alternative energy sources in order to cut pollutant emissions;
 4. Calls on the Commission to focus also on optimising existing infrastructure network capacity, with the overall goal of better implementation of the TEN-T network; stresses that infrastructure projects which would result in an avoidable or disproportionate risk to the environment, natural resources or public health should not be financed;
 5. Stresses that the connectivity and accessibility of the region by day and night and at weekends should be improved and promoted by ensuring respect for the environment, the protection of water and ground resources and the involvement of local populations, by fully involving political actors and decision-makers at every level, in particular regional and local levels, as well as civil organisations (NGOs), and also by promoting public consultations;

6. Considers that developing infrastructure in mountainous areas would enable the development of, and increase the attractiveness for, SMEs, and would facilitate the establishment of specific industries in such areas that would benefit from being located there owing to the environment (temperature, clean air), which would create new jobs and contribute to the sustainable development of the region; encourages the Member States to repair and improve old disused trails for use by tourists, upgrading them and bringing them back into service, so as to prevent them from being abandoned and allowed to fall into disrepair and possibly hydrogeological destabilisation;
7. Calls on the Member States forming part of the Alpine region to cooperate in ensuring that transit fees are as uniform as possible and in line with European standards, especially for those countries that are compelled by their geographical location to cross others;
8. Takes the view that the development and accessibility of information and communication technologies should be increased by providing services more quickly and efficiently and by encouraging and promoting, where possible, alternatives to physical travel, such as teleworking, in order to reduce the number of journeys and their negative external effects, such as polluting emissions, and to facilitate a better work-life balance;
9. Calls on the countries concerned to identify strategic infrastructure projects that would help to strengthen cohesion and reduce road congestion by using intermodal transport services suitable for tourist areas and the growth of local economies, thus encouraging job creation; underlines the role of regional airports and ports in the peri-Alpine regions/ Mediterranean for the accessibility and connectivity of the Alpine region; considers it important to link them with the road and rail networks;
10. Calls on the Member States to invest in local job creation programmes and tourism infrastructure; calls for a strategic approach to be adopted to make tourism less of a seasonal activity and to facilitate sustainable access via public transport to tourist destinations such as ski resorts, encouraging the use of cycling in combination with train travel; underlines the importance of supporting networking and the publishing of best practice examples of sustainable tourism initiatives, such as structures designed for passive energy, resource-efficiency and using sustainable energy sources;
11. Points out that climate change is particularly significant for regions such as the Alps, whose morphology and natural habitats are particularly vulnerable; emphasises that the transport and tourism protocols within the Alpine Convention have been ratified by the EU and the Alpine Member States; calls on the Member States to monitor air pollution limits closely and to introduce sustainable transport policies in line with the Paris COP21 targets; considers that efforts should be made to encourage SMEs to invest in innovation and development in accordance with the COP21 targets;
12. Calls on the Commission to ensure easy and convenient access to documents both for European citizens and for the institutions, in order to ensure transparency regarding the use of public funds, and believes that, in cases where access is being sought for overriding reasons, including, among others, those relating to public health and the environment, this should be given priority over any consideration whatsoever relating to competition or commercial aims; notes that it will be necessary for Member States to invest EU funds earmarked for implementation of the Alpine strategy in a transparent manner, taking into account the constraints emerging from the environmental impact studies, and with better

cooperation and collaboration, so as to improve exchanges of good practice; considers that effective implementation, goal achievements and the economical use of resources should be reviewed annually by Parliament and the European Court of Auditors;

13. Considers that revenues from tolls and special tolls from the Alpine regions for transport projects in the Alpine regions should be earmarked – firstly for the development of the TEN-T Alpine corridors, secondly for regional access routes, and thirdly for local routes;
14. Calls on the Member States and regions to ensure that less accessible areas can be also be reached and emergency assistance provided, and that healthcare and first aid units are provided in areas where the transport situation is less favourable, taking into account their distance from major hospitals.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	24.5.2016
Result of final vote	+: 40 -: 2 0: 3
Members present for the final vote	Marie-Christine Arnautu, Georges Bach, Izaskun Bilbao Barandica, Deirdre Clune, Michael Cramer, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Andor Deli, Isabella De Monte, Ismail Ertug, Jacqueline Foster, Tania González Peñas, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Merja Kyllönen, Miltiadis Kyrkos, Peter Lundgren, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Georg Mayer, Cláudia Monteiro de Aguiar, Renaud Muselier, Jens Nilsson, Markus Pieper, Salvatore Domenico Pogliese, Gabriele Preuß, Dominique Riquet, Massimiliano Salini, David-Maria Sassoli, Claudia Schmidt, Jill Seymour, Claudia Țapardel, Keith Taylor, Pavel Telička, István Ujhelyi, Wim van de Camp, Janusz Zemke, Roberts Zīle, Kosma Złotowski, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska
Substitutes present for the final vote	Knut Fleckenstein, Maria Grapini, Karoline Graswander-Hainz, Werner Kuhn, Curzio Maltese, Jozo Radoš, Ulrike Rodust, Davor Škrlec, Evžen Tošenovský
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Beatrix von Storch