

Logistics in the EU and multimodal transport in the TEN-T corridors

In line with EU climate and energy targets, EU transport policy supports multimodal transport which combines transport modes while limiting their overall impact on the environment. The European Parliament is to vote in January 2017 on an own-initiative report proposing to make multimodality the cornerstone of the trans-European transport network's implementation.

Background

Key to the economy, mobility of goods extends beyond freight transport to the whole logistics sector. With its services and processes of management, warehousing and distribution of goods flows, EU logistics represented a market size of about [€878 billion](#) in 2012. Public planning focuses mostly on the freight-transport segment – which however accounts for only about [44 %](#) of total logistics costs – and provision of the necessary infrastructure. Within freight transport, road freight is dominant both in terms of activity and negative impacts generated, and is expected to grow by about [40 %](#) in 2030. Against this background, the EU aims for a transition towards sustainable multimodality, using interoperable transport modes to best advantage, and making multimodal freight transport efficient and attractive for shippers.

Towards multimodal transport of goods in the European Union

Shifting the balance between different modes of transport was already the main objective of [Directive 92/106/EEC](#), which set common EU rules for combined transport of goods. After a 2007 [Freight transport and Logistics action plan](#) proposed a number of measures, including e-freight (flow of goods accompanied by flow of electronic information), the [2011 White Paper](#) on transport set as one of its objectives to shift 30 % of long-distance road freight in the EU to rail and inland navigation by 2030, and 50 % by 2050.

To secure adequate infrastructure, the [guidelines](#) for the development of the trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) were revised in 2013 and underpinned with a dedicated financial instrument, the Connecting Europe Facility ([CEF](#)). Their aim is efficient EU transport infrastructure made up of two layers: the essential 'core network', to be completed by 2030, and the larger 'comprehensive network', to be completed by 2050. The backbone of the core network is the nine multimodal 'core network corridors', which partly integrate the earlier [rail freight corridors](#) and serve as a tool for coordinated planning and development.

Compared to the rise of combined transport in the USA, the uptake in the EU has been relatively slow, with average growth rates for transport combining road with rail or inland navigation forecast at [about 4 %](#). A 2016 [study](#) affirms that reaching the modal-shift objective defined by the White Paper will require more active support from the Member States, focusing on rail-to-road terminals and transshipment technology.

Position of the European Parliament

Ahead of the [revision](#) of Directive 92/106/EEC, an own-initiative [report](#) by the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) calls on the Commission to ensure proper transposition of the agreed legislation, promote multimodality building within TEN-T and further reduce regulatory, operational and technical barriers affecting EU logistics. While the integration and interconnection of transport modes figure among the funding objectives of the [2016 CEF call](#), the report asks the Commission to make logistics a focal point of investment, and to consider a specific CEF 2017 call on logistics. The Commission should also facilitate the use of new technologies in freight transport logistics and adopt measures to make the sector more attractive to workers.

On 5 December 2016, the TRAN Committee adopted the [report](#) prepared by Inés Ayala Sender (S&D, Spain) with a [large majority](#). The vote in plenary is [scheduled](#) for January 2017.

