



TRANS-EUROPEAN NETWORKS – GUIDELINES

The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) retains the trans-European networks (TENs) in the areas of transport, energy and telecommunications, first mentioned in the Maastricht Treaty, in order to connect all the regions of the EU. These networks are tools intended to contribute to the growth of the internal market and to employment, while pursuing environmental and sustainable development goals. The end of 2013 saw a fundamental reform of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T).

LEGAL BASIS

Articles 170-172 and 194(1)(d) of the TFEU (the latter with specific reference to energy).
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/EU.

OBJECTIVES

The Maastricht Treaty gave the EU the task of establishing and developing TENs in the areas of transport, telecommunications and energy, in order to help develop the internal market, reinforce economic and social cohesion, link islands, landlocked and peripheral regions with the central regions of the EU, and bring EU territory within closer reach of neighbouring states.

RESULTS

A. General guidelines and ideas

In its 1993 White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment, the Commission emphasised the fundamental importance of the TENs to the internal market, and in particular to job creation, not only through the actual construction of infrastructure, but also thanks to their subsequent role in economic development. In 1994, the Corfu and Essen European Councils approved 14 priority projects (PPs) for transport and 10 PPs for the energy sector.



B. Sectoral legislative measures

1. Transport

a. 1996 guidelines

Decision No 1692/96/EC of 23 July 1996 on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network set out the general parameters for the overall network. It established the characteristics of the specific network for each mode of transport and identified eligible projects of common interest as well as PPs. Emphasis was placed on environmentally friendly modes of transport, in particular rail projects. The TEN-T covers the entirety of the EU's territory and may extend to the countries of the European Free Trade Association and to the south-east European and Mediterranean partner countries. Initially, it incorporated the 14 projects of common interest adopted by the Essen European Council. Decision No 1346/2001/EC of 22 May 2001 amending the TEN-T guidelines as regards seaports, inland ports and intermodal terminals completed a Community 'transport development plan' for all modes of transport.

b. 2004 revision of the TEN-T guidelines

The 2004 and 2007 enlargements, coupled with serious delays and financing problems – in particular with regard to cross-border sections – led to a thorough revision of the TEN-T guidelines. The number of PPs listed was increased to 30, all of them being required to comply with EU environmental legislation. A new concept of 'Motorways of the Sea' (MoS) was introduced with a view to making certain sea routes more efficient and integrating short sea shipping with rail transport.

'European coordinators' for particularly important projects were appointed in 2005 to act as mediators in contacts with national decision-making authorities, transport operators and users, and representatives of civil society. A Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency (TEN-T EA) was set up in October 2006, tasked with the technical and financial preparation and monitoring of decisions on projects managed by the Commission.

c. 2013 revision: integrated network, dual-layer structure (core/comprehensive) and TEN-T corridors

The objective of the new EU transport infrastructure policy is to transform the existing patchwork of European roads, railways, inland waterways, airports, inland and maritime ports and rail/road terminals into an integrated network covering all Member States. The lack of a coherent transport infrastructure of this type constitutes a serious barrier to the smooth functioning of the internal market. The creation of this network requires the preparation and implementation of thousands of projects intended to eliminate existing bottlenecks, bridge missing links and improve interoperability between different modes of transport, as well as between regional and national transport infrastructures. Moreover, among the priorities for the development of the TEN-T infrastructure is the application of innovative technological solutions, which have a vital role to play in the transformation of transport to make it accessible to all and create a safer, sustainable, low-carbon and energy-efficient system.



The new EU transport infrastructure policy establishes, for the first time, a dual-layer structure for EU transport routes, comprising a comprehensive network (ensuring effective connections to all the EU regions) and a core network (composed of the strategically most important elements of the comprehensive network). The projects on the comprehensive network should be finalised by the end of 2050, while those that form part of the core network should meet the TEN-T criteria by the end of 2030.

Furthermore, nine major multimodal corridors have been introduced as a new policy instrument to facilitate the coordinated implementation of projects located on the core network. These corridors are meant to bring together public and private stakeholders in order to join up resources for the development of the core network. To make sure that the corridors are implemented effectively and efficiently, each is supported by a European coordinator.

The TEN-T policy also focuses on the development of the MoS, as well as on the implementation of the European Railway Transport Management System (ERTMS). Thus, two additional European coordinators, one for each of the above-mentioned actions, were appointed to lead the process of their harmonised implementation. In 2015, each of the European coordinators drew up a work plan for an MoS or an ERTMS corridor respectively. These work plans are to be updated on a regular basis, taking into account the progress made in the projects' implementation. Moreover, a major revision of the implementation of the core network had been scheduled to take place in 2023.

In 2014, the Trans-European Transport Network Executive Agency was renamed the Infrastructure and Networks Executive Agency (INEA). Apart from continuing the execution of the TEN-T and the 2007-2013 Marco Polo Programmes, it was tasked with the technical and financial management of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and parts of Horizon 2020, the latter being another EU programme that provides support for research in smart, green and integrated transport, among other fields (for more information on the financing of the TENs, see [3.5.2](#)).

d. Preparation for the next TEN-T revision

In September 2018, the Commission launched public consultations to examine the progress made so far in terms of the implementation of the TEN-T since the guidelines entered into force. The evaluation is being undertaken in preparation for the TEN-T revision, and is also intended to assess the effectiveness of the TEN-T policy in such key areas as alternative fuels, digitalisation and multimodal transport. According to the 2021 Commission work [programme](#) adopted on 19 October 2020, the revision of the Regulation on the TEN-T is scheduled for the third quarter of 2021.

2. Energy

a. 1996 guidelines

At the 1994 Essen summit, several energy network projects were awarded priority status. Decision No 1254/96/EC of 5 June 1996 laid down a series of guidelines for trans-European energy networks (TEN-E), intended to enable the European Union to identify eligible projects of common interest, and to help create a framework conducive to their implementation, coupled with sectoral objectives for electricity.



b. Current guidelines

Decision No 1364/2006/EC of 6 September 2006 introduced new guidelines for updating the TEN-Es, thereby repealing the previous guidelines of 1996 and 2003. The current objectives are to diversify sources of supply, to increase security of supply by strengthening links with non-EU countries (accession countries and other countries in the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea and Caspian Sea basins, as well as in the Middle East and Persian Gulf regions), to incorporate the energy networks of the new Member States into the TEN-Es and to ensure access to the TEN-Es for island, landlocked and peripheral regions.

The EU has identified projects eligible for EU financing and divided them into three categories: projects of common interest relating to electricity and gas networks and displaying potential economic viability; PPs to be given priority when EU funding is granted, and projects of European interest which are also PPs and are of a cross-border nature or have a significant impact on cross-border transmission capacity.

The priorities for action in this area, which must be compatible with sustainable development goals, include: (a) using renewable energy and ensuring better connections between the facilities that produce it; (b) using more effective technologies that limit the environmental losses and risks associated with energy transportation and transmission; (c) establishing energy networks in island and ultra-peripheral regions while promoting the diversification of energy sources, and (d) ensuring the interoperability of existing EU networks with those of new Member States and non-EU countries. Annex I to the decision identifies 32 projects of European interest for electricity and 10 for gas, while Annexes II and III list 164 projects for electricity and 122 for gas.

In the 2007-2013 multiannual financial framework, a total of EUR 155 million was allocated to the TEN-Es. Four European coordinators were appointed in 2007.

The new title on energy in the TFEU (Article 194(1)(d)) provides a solid legal basis for promoting energy network interconnections.

3. Telecommunications

Decision No 2717/95/EC of 9 November 1995 established a series of guidelines for the development of the EURO-ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network) as a TEN. It identified objectives, priorities and projects of common interest for the development of a range of services, based on the EURO-ISDN, with a view to a future EU broadband communications network.

Decision No 1336/97/EC of 17 June 1997 laid down guidelines for the trans-European telecommunications networks (TEN-Telecom). It set out the objectives, priorities and broad lines of the measures envisaged. The priorities adopted included applications contributing to economic and social cohesion and the development of basic networks, particularly satellite networks. These guidelines were modified slightly by Decision No 1376/2002/EC of 12 July 2002.

The guidelines identified projects of common interest and specified procedures and criteria for their selection. The Community programme eTEN, which is a key instrument of the action plan known as 'eEUROPE 2005: An information society for all', also



built on the EURO-ISDN programme. Completed in 2006, it sought to support the trans-European deployment of services based on telecommunications networks. EU investment is currently focused on modernising existing networks.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Parliament has strongly supported the TEN policies, and has regularly drawn attention to delays in the implementation of PPs, called for firm timetables, and called on the Member States to increase the budgetary resources available, particularly for the TEN-T network. It has ensured that priority is given to promoting projects with clear 'European added value', which have positive and long-term effects on the environment and employment and remove bottlenecks, particularly in rail and combined transport.

With the adoption of its resolution of 12 July 2007 on keeping Europe moving – Sustainable mobility for our continent^[1], Parliament took stock of the situation and laid down new objectives, in particular the need to complete the entire TEN in order to make the most of all modes of transport ('co-modality'), and to redistribute the balance between modes ('modal transfer') in order to reduce the environmental impact of transport. It encouraged rail, bus and maritime transport, which still account for only a small share of the market.

Moreover, in its resolution of 22 April 2009 on the Green Paper on the future TEN-T policy^[2], Parliament reiterated its call for priority to be given to rail (notably for freight), ports, sustainable maritime and inland waterways and their hinterland connections, and intermodal nodes in infrastructure links with new Member States and non-EU countries. In this context, Parliament is encouraging the extension of the TEN-T to the countries covered by the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and to the Mediterranean partner countries.

Over the past 15 years, Parliament has assisted in the revision of overlapping legislation on the TEN-T. Together with the Council, it adopted, under the ordinary legislative procedure, Decision No 661/2010/EU of 7 July 2010 recasting the TEN-T guidelines. This repealed Decision Nos 1692/96/EC, 1346/2001/EC and 884/2004/EC, and included a new annex containing maps of the 27 Member States and stipulating target dates for establishing the network in all of them.

On 19 November 2013, Parliament approved the new TEN-T guidelines on the basis of precise targets and increased EU financing, and set out a clear vision for the establishment of the core and comprehensive transport networks, with target dates of 2030 and 2050 respectively. Parliament insisted, inter alia, that the selection of projects be based on the idea of EU added value (resulting from policy choices and/or financial intervention leading to significant and measurable improvement in transport connections and transport flows). Moreover, Parliament pointed out the need to define a 'socio-economic cost-benefit analysis' as a quantified *ex ante* evaluation that is carried out on the basis of a harmonised methodology for determining the value of a project or programme. In Parliament's view, the methodology should also take into account all

[1]OJ C 175 E, 24.7.2008, p. 556.

[2]OJ C 184 E, 8.7.2010, p. 35.



social, economic and environmental benefits and costs, and serve as an indicator of the contribution to wellbeing.

After the TEN-T Regulation (Regulation No 1315/2013) entered into force at the end of 2013, Parliament's support for the development of the TEN-T continued. In its resolution of 9 September 2015 on the implementation of the 2011 White Paper on Transport: taking stock and the way forward towards sustainable mobility^[3], Parliament underlined the importance of transport for the economy and for the mobility of people in the EU, while also stressing the need to invest in infrastructure. In Parliament's view, the completion of the TEN-T is a precondition for a sustainable and efficient EU transport system, which must be boosted by the CEF, as well as by the European Fund for Strategic Investments.

In 2018, the Commission presented a proposal for a regulation on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network. Parliament adopted its decision at first reading in February 2019 ([2018/0138\(COD\)](#)). The Council adopted a general approach on 2 December 2019. On 8 June 2020, Parliament and the Council agreed on a final compromise text, which is pending official approval by both institutions.

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[3]OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 155.

