

Special Report N°09/2020:

# The EU core road network: shorter travel times but network not yet fully functional



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**Why did we do this audit?**



**What questions did we ask?**



**What did we look at?**



**What did we find?**



**What do we recommend?**



## Why did we do this audit? (1/2)

### Background considerations

- Sustainable and efficient transport is important in linking regions and countries, thus connecting markets and people and contributing to economic activity, development and growth.
- Roads play a significant role, as they account for the largest share of transport in the EU: 76.7 % in tonne-kilometres of all inland freight transport in 2017 and 83.3 % in passenger-kilometres.



## Why did we do this audit? (2/2)



### EU Policy

- In 2013, a TEN-T Regulation introduced the concepts of TEN-T "comprehensive" and "core" networks, to be developed by Member States by 2050 and 2030 respectively
- Nine core multimodal corridors covering the most important traffic routes across the EU constitute around 70% of the core road network
- EU grants for roads in the 2007-2020 period amount to approximately €78 billion and are used to finance newly built roads and reconstructed or upgraded roads.



## What questions did we ask?

**We assessed progress towards completing a fully functioning TEN-T core road network and the Commission's role in achieving this objective**

1. Has the EU helped completing the TEN-T core road network and achieving results for those traveling on the network?
2. Has the TEN-T network functioned as planned, and the Commission adequately monitored progress towards completion of the network and the contribution of Member States in maintaining roads?



## What did we look at?

### Audit scope and approach

- Activities of the Commission on the strategic level
- Distribution of EU funding
- The Commission's monitoring of the core network implementation
- Aggregated use of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund for the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods, as well as CEF allocations
- Visits in 4 Member States: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Spain, Poland who represent around 62 % of the total EU funding and are crossed by six of the nine core network corridors.



## What did we find?

### Overall conclusions

- The development of the TEN-T core road network supported by EU funding and Commission action is making progress thereby achieving results for those traveling on the network
- However, certain key factors hamper full functionality of the TEN-T core road network

## Observation

1

The development of the TEN-T core road network supported by EU funding and Commission action is making progress thereby achieving results for those traveling on the network

- ❑ The **TEN-T** road network is **progressing**, with **central and eastern** European Member States still **lagging behind**
- ❑ **EU** funding has **contributed large amounts** to the development of the TEN-T since 2007
- ❑ The **Commission** has played an **important role** at **strategy** level
- ❑ **Reduced** travel **times** and **more kilometres** on motorway



# Observation 1

Four routes analysed

Example of reduced travel times and more kilometres on motorway

- Bucharest - Paris
- Burgas - Berlin
- Madrid - Warsaw
- Tallinn - Vienna
- All other corridors



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## Observation

# 1

## Four routes analysed

**Example of reduced travel times and more kilometres on motorway**

	Total journey (2019) (km)	Change in length of motorway (km)	Change in length of motorway (%)	Total time (2019) (minutes)	Time saved (minutes)	Time saved (%)
Bucharest-Paris	2 322	312	17%	1 291	33	2.5 %
Burgas-Berlin	2 038	339	30%	1 232	33	2.6 %
Madrid-Warsaw	2 919	400	17%	1 458	104	6.5 %
Tallinn-Vienna	1 705	380	189%	1 070	93	8.0 %

## Observation

2

However, certain key factors hamper full functionality of the TEN-T core road network

- ❑ **Most ESIF** funding for 2014-2020 was allocated **outside** the **TEN-T** core road network
- ❑ **Barriers** for seamless travel on the core road network: some cross-border sections are incomplete
- ❑ **Shortcomings** in the Commission's monitoring framework **undermine** its ability to take **corrective action**
- ❑ **Insufficient maintenance** by Member States puts the state of the core road network at risk in the medium to long term



# What do we recommend?

## 1

### Prioritise investment in the core road network

- ❑ The Commission should ensure that Member States have appropriate planning to have the entire TEN-T core network complete by 2030, indicating the schedule and budgetary availability.
- ❑ The Commission should take the appropriate steps so that Member States prioritise the available Cohesion Fund and ERDF for roads on investment in the core network with a view to completing it by 2030, especially in Member States where progress has been limited so far.



# What do we recommend?

## 2

### Enhance monitoring arrangements

The Commission should enhance the monitoring system to be able to monitor progress in the development of the TEN-T core network and undertake corrective actions provided for in the TEN-T Regulation. The monitoring framework should cover the entire core network and include the following elements:

- a) Intermediate targets to assess progress made by Member States;
- b) A systematic and uniform approach with fixed deadlines for Member States to provide data on completion of the core network and for the Commission to process and publish them; the system should be designed to allow monitoring of the results, such as time savings, average speed and capacity in order to help assessing the impact of the EU core network



# What do we recommend?

## 3

### Strengthen approach to maintenance

In order to ensure full functioning of the core road network in the medium to long term, the Commission should take appropriate measures in the revision of the TEN-T regulation to enhance long-term maintenance planning by Member States which provides information on financing resources required to cover long-term maintenance costs of the existing and planned infrastructure.

# THANK YOU

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@EUauditors

## EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

12, rue Alcide De Gasperi  
1615 Luxembourg  
LUXEMBOURG

