P9_TA(2021)0010

Revision of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) guidelines


The European Parliament,


– having regard to its legislative resolution of 17 April 2019 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)²,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/2144 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2019 on type-approval requirements for motor vehicles and their trailers, and systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles, as regards their general safety and the protection of vehicle occupants and vulnerable road users³ (General Safety Regulation),


– having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond⁵,

– having regard to its resolution of 25 October 2016 on improving the connection and accessibility of the transport infrastructure in Central and Eastern Europe⁶,

⁵ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0169.
having regard to its resolution of 11 December 2018 on military mobility\(^1\),

having regard to its resolution of 15 January 2020 on the European Green Deal\(^2\),

having regard to Special Report No. 10/2020 of the European Court of Auditors of 16 June 2020 entitled ‘EU transport infrastructures: more speed needed in megaproject implementation to deliver network effects on time’\(^3\),

having regard to Review No. 09/2018 of the European Court of Auditors of 6 December 2018 entitled ‘Towards a successful transport sector in the EU: challenges to be addressed’\(^4\),

having regard to Special Report No. 13/2017 of the European Court of Auditors of 3 October 2017 entitled ‘A single European rail traffic management system: will the political choice ever become reality?’\(^5\),

having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,

having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A9-0251/2020),

A. whereas up-to-date, sustainable and accessible multimodal transport infrastructure and future-oriented logistics are fundamental for the good functioning of the internal market and the connection and competitiveness of the EU, and as an enabler of sustainable, affordable, smart, efficient, interoperable, and safe mobility;

B. whereas the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) should ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion and accessibility across the EU and its regions, including rural, remote, mountainous, sparsely populated, peripheral, island and outermost regions, thus stimulating economic growth and job creation and reducing inequalities, fostering digitalisation and innovation, tackling climate change and enhancing adaptability and resilience;

C. whereas the TEN-T makes a vital contribution to achieving the EU’s political goals in accession and neighbourhood policies, especially through cross-border projects, and whereas maintaining and strengthening close transport links with third countries, within the TEN-T, and further integrating the Western Balkan and Eastern Partnership countries is therefore of significant importance for the EU;

D. whereas the completion of the TEN-T is crucial to advancing towards more sustainable modes of transport such as rail and inland waterways, the deployment of alternative fuels in line with the goals of the European Green Deal and reducing greenhouse gas emissions;

\(^1\) OJ C 388, 13.11.2020, p. 22.
\(^2\) Texts adopted, P9_TA(2020)0005.
\(^4\) https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/LR_TRANSPORT/LR_TRANSPORT_EN.pdf
whereas a balanced development of transport corridors across Europe, ensuring north-south and east-west connectivity in the whole of Europe, is necessary in order to further strengthen economic, territorial and social cohesion;

F. whereas the ongoing negotiations on funding from the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) over the coming years should take into due consideration the commitment of the Member States to completing the TEN-T core network by 2030 and the comprehensive network by 2050;

G. whereas the timely completion of the TEN-T network seems, at the current pace, to be compromised, in particular with significant delays to cross-border projects and missing links and last mile connections due to financial, operational and administrative difficulties encountered by project promoters; whereas the European Court of Auditors (ECA) report indicates that shortcomings in the Commission oversight framework and the political decision-making processes at national level, and the weak impetus of and interest shown by some Member States in the TEN-T are key factors in delays;

H. whereas the resources allocated for completing the TEN-T in the framework of the CEF programme are under threat of being heavily decreased, especially after the European Council conclusions as adopted in July 2020, with an amount envisaged for the general transport envelope that is clearly insufficient;

I. whereas the implementation of the TEN-T network should be guided by the principle of equal treatment of the core network corridors, without favouring some at the expense of others;

J. whereas the TEN-T policy should promote the EU-wide deployment of solutions for innovative and accessible transport, modal shift, low and zero emission mobility, intelligent transport systems (e.g. ITS, River Information System (RIS)), charging and refuelling infrastructure and alternative fuels; whereas innovation and digitalisation of the TEN-T require additional investment;

K. whereas the ongoing COVID-19 crisis has shown the existential importance of the transport and logistics sector and its workers for the economy, which relies on seamless networks for the transport of passengers and goods as it arteries, and is essential for the functioning of supply chains; whereas the development of efficient and resilient transport infrastructure should be at the heart of all European and national recovery plans and efforts, with a particular focus on multimodal transport links between ports, airports, railways and roads;

L. whereas the European Year of Rail in 2021 is an opportunity to kick off a change that makes rail the backbone of the transport of passengers and freight across the Union and to point out the decisive role played by the TEN-T networks in advancing socio-economic cohesion and development, while enhancing the internal market and promoting more competitive and efficient sustainable transport modes with a view to increasing the modal shift to rail and to completing the Single European Railway Area by 2030;

**A TEN-T fit for the future**

1. Stresses the added value of the multimodal core network corridors covering the major
passenger and freight flows between and within Member States; considers the European added value of these projects to be a key factor generating public support; takes the view that their timely completion by 2030 is imperative, with the elimination of bottlenecks and missing links, as well as the completion of cross-border sections, being a priority, alongside the modernisation and upgrading of existing network sections on the corridors;

2. Recalls that the TEN-T policy should promote interoperable networks; notes that internal land border regions throughout the EU make up 40% of the EU’s territory and are home to a third of its population; reiterates that the revision of the TEN-T regulation and its implementation should pay particular attention to facilitating cross-border connections, improving interoperability and contributing to the multimodal integration of transport infrastructure throughout the Union;

3. Calls on the Member States that have not yet sufficiently aligned their national transport plans and programmes with the objectives of the TEN-T to address this shortcoming without undue delay, with a view to applying and complying with the deadlines, targets and time frames laid down in the relevant EU legislation; recalls, furthermore, that owing to the network character of the TEN-T, non-conformity or non-operability of a small segment can hamper the efficiency and competitiveness of the system as a whole; calls, therefore, for the urgent identification and completion of those hotspots and strategic segments;

4. Considers that the revision of the TEN-T regulation is an important chance to make the network future proof in order to ensure the good functioning of the EU internal market and the further realisation of the Single European Transport Area, as well as the EU’s global competitiveness for the decades ahead and to support its transition towards smart, sustainable, efficient and safe mobility; underlines, in this regard, the importance of updating the network to take into account new market realities, climate, environmental and societal changes and digital needs, of increasing the efficiency of the existing network and accelerating the deployment of alternative fuels for transport;

5. Considers it important to further develop the TEN-T to focus on the interconnection between the core and comprehensive networks including in rural, peripheral, sparsely populated and island and outermost regions and in sections with the greatest potential to generate socio-economic benefits; stresses that no major changes to the maps should be made until the core network is complete; underlines, however, the need for limited adjustments to the TEN-T in order to reflect the development of transport networks and with the aim of improving connectivity between different corridors and of peripheral regions, including reinforcing cross-border rail connections beyond the core axes, particularly smaller scale missing links with high European added value in cross-border regions and by strengthening the complementarity between TEN-T and regional policies, and of meeting evolving environmental, economic and societal needs; calls on the Commission to take over all adjustments laid down in the revision of the CEF\(^1\), as well as the requirements arising from the Commission’s proposal for a regulation on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the TEN-T (COM(2018)0277);

\(^1\) In particular, the adjustments laid down in Part III of the Annex (to the European Parliament legislative resolution on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)).
6. Urges the Commission to prioritise under the TEN-T the full deployment of alternative fuels for all modes of transport, especially renewable fuels, with a view to decarbonisation, including the development of relevant technologies, charging and refuelling infrastructure (i.e. e-charging facilities and LNG and hydrogen refuelling facilities), safety, security and interoperability standards, and the regulatory framework for alternative fuels in order to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, while respecting the principle of technology neutrality and ensuring technological diversity; calls for an EU roadmap for road infrastructure aligned with the roadmap of the automotive industry in order to ensure that infrastructure investments go hand in hand with vehicle production in the short- and medium-term;

7. Stresses the need to further promote transport links in and with urban nodes, railway stations and hubs, inland and maritime ports, airports, logistics hubs and multimodal platforms, including through the completion and upgrading of connections to them, both in the core and comprehensive networks, to ensure a seamless, efficient, accessible, integrated, smart, safe, interconnected, well-equipped and sustainable mobility system for passenger transport and freight logistics, as well as through the development of through ticketing, thus promoting an efficient modal shift, particularly by strengthening public transport systems and increasing connectivity of urban nodes and rural areas;

8. Stresses, therefore, that the upcoming revision of the TEN-T guidelines goes hand in hand with the announced revisions of the directive on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure\(^1\), the TEN-E regulation\(^2\) and the regulation on a European rail network for competitive freight\(^3\);

9. Underlines that research, innovation and digitalisation play a key role in further decarbonising transport while dealing with increasing transport volumes in terms of both passengers and freight, enhancing multimodal interoperability and making transport safer, more efficient and resilient, in line with the goals of the European Green Deal; stresses the need for the TEN-T to boost innovative digital applications in all modes, including intelligent transport systems, the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), vessel traffic monitoring and information systems, river information services, air traffic management systems (Single European Sky ATM Research) and monitoring systems for the structural health of infrastructures; reiterates in this context the importance of the completion of the Galileo project; encourages the Commission to promote among Member States the financing of these systems under the Recovery and Resilience Facility;

10. Points out that smart and autonomous mobility solutions are becoming commercially viable and that the upgrading of relevant transport and digital infrastructure in the TEN-T needs to be accelerated, while ensuring cross-border interoperability, data protection

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and cyber security, in order to facilitate the safe operation of automated and connected vehicles compliant with the newly adopted General Safety Regulation;

11. Highlights that European support for research and development of innovative modes of transport is greatly needed, such as, for example, for the development of unmanned aerial vehicles and maglev technology; stresses that European partnerships in the different modes of transport can have a very positive impact on the safe, efficient and smart deployment of the TEN-T;

12. Takes the view that network-wide and harmonised infrastructure standards are an enabler for a true European Single Transport Area; deems it important to maintain and upgrade existing infrastructure, particularly in cross-border sections, in view of technological progress, changing safety standards, increasing efficiency, higher-quality performance, capacity increases, new functions, improved cross-border reliability and interoperability and the need to adopt a life cycle approach and enhance infrastructure resilience to the impacts of crises such as pandemics and climate change; notes, however, that CEF funding is not sufficient to fulfil all these goals; points out that coordination between Member States is key to managing crises and ensuring the continuous flow of goods and the supply of essential goods to the Union’s population; calls on the Commission to propose a legislative framework to improve the risk-management, resilience and climate adaptation of transport infrastructure on the core network, all modes included;

13. Considers that poor maintenance of transport infrastructure can affect the continuity, sustainability, performance, safety and hence the resilience of the TEN-T; points out the importance of regular and standardised maintenance of the TEN-T infrastructure, in particular bridges and tunnels, to ensure lasting high-quality infrastructure; calls on the Commission to introduce a clear benchmark for quality requirements for infrastructure, in particular bridges and tunnels, and to develop a common European approach for inspections and quality ratings of TEN-T infrastructure; calls on the Commission to establish a core network monitoring plan on maintenance at European level; asks the Commission and the Member States, together with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the national promotional banks and institutions (NPBIs), to study new funding schemes to facilitate investments in maintenance of the network; calls on Member States, furthermore, to develop specific national plans for ordinary and extraordinary maintenance funding;

Financing, governance and oversight

14. Stresses that in order for investment in TEN-T infrastructure to be sufficient, it is essential that all relevant EU funds (CEF, InvestEU, European structural and investment funds, the Recovery and Resilience Facility, Horizon Europe, etc.) and EIB lending are tailored to the specific needs of the transport sector and that the Member States commit themselves to sufficient funding; deeply regrets the decision of the European Council to propose budget cuts for future-oriented programmes such as the CEF and InvestEU, especially taking into account the key enabling role the CEF programme plays in completing the TEN-T network; notes that the EU’s very ambitious decarbonisation agenda needs to be backed by corresponding funding and financing instruments in order to succeed while maintaining the competitiveness of the sectors involved; calls on the Commission to strengthen synergies and policy coherence between the relevant EU instruments beyond the CEF (e.g. the European Regional Development Fund) and,
furthermore, to optimise the use of blending tools in order to attract private investors and leverage public funding; points out that relevant climate- and environment-oriented financial instruments under the European Green Deal should be made available for investments in the TEN-T network that can help cut the transport sector’s emissions effectively;

15. Regrets that in the new multiannual financial framework (MFF) proposal and the recovery plan, Member States still do not give a strong signal towards infrastructure investments nor priority to the completion of the TEN-T; stresses, therefore, that the resources available under the Next Generation EU fund provide a unique opportunity to guarantee the development of the TEN-T core networks until 2030; calls on the Commission to update Parliament annually on construction progress; calls on the Commission, during negotiations with the Member States, to reserve an appropriate amount of the aid for the development of EU transport policies and to submit a final report to Parliament; invites the Commission to ensure that the national programmes implementing the Recovery and Resilience Facility accord a prominent role to investments in modern, digital, sustainable and safe transport infrastructure;

16. Recalls that the completion of the ERTMS, both trackside and on-board trains, is a fundamental prerequisite for the creation of a Single European Railway Area and for allowing the proper functioning of the rail market in the TEN-T corridors; underlines, in this regard, that approximately EUR 15 billion is needed for the completion of the ERTMS on the core networks, and that the Commission should play a prominent role in coordinating funding and deployment operations;

17. Stresses that compliance with the time limit set out in the proposed directive on streamlining the TEN-T should be taken into account when projects are evaluated in terms of the project selection maturity criteria established by the CEF; believes, moreover, that any delays that occur should justify an investigation into the state of progress of the project and a revision of the financial assistance received by the Union under the CEF, as provided for in Article 17(1) of Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013, which may result in the reduction or withdrawal of the grant;

18. Stresses that even though the TEN-T network is being implemented in steps and the completion of the core network is the short-term priority, as it constitutes the backbone of the development of a sustainable multimodal transport network and stimulates the development of the entire comprehensive network, it is important to ensure sufficient funding for the comprehensive network that is not covered by the core network in order to avoid growing disparities; highlights in this regard that both layers of the TEN-T are crucial for the connectivity and logistics integration of the EU;

19. Considers that EU funds, particularly those allocated under the CEF, should flexibly


and effectively contribute to the completion of cross-border projects and missing links in a corrective manner, where perceived mismatches or imbalances between the burden of costs to be financed at national level and the socio-economic benefits expected at each side of the border and from a wider European perspective put at risk the progress towards timely completion of the project; calls on the Commission, in this regard, to take a more targeted approach by applying higher co-financing rates to projects with the highest European added value in order to unlock national investments;

20. Is deeply concerned about delays in the completion of projects, especially cross-border projects, which hamper the timely establishment of seamless TEN-T core network corridors and which result in increased projects costs; calls on the Member States to meet their obligations for their parts of the network and ensure effective and timely administrative and judicial procedures with full respect for European and national law, and urges them to increase the digitalisation of administrative and judicial processes; reminds the Member States to strengthen cooperation with other Member States’ authorities in cross-border projects, e.g. through the establishment of a joint authority by mutual agreement, in particular with a view to coordinating timetables and deadlines, and urges the Member States to implement the new directive on streamlining the TEN-T without further delay; calls on the Commission to assist the Member States that wish to introduce substantive preclusion clauses – in conformity with Union law – that could speed up national judicial proceedings significantly;

21. Highlights that the implementation by Member States of EU streamlining measures in permit granting procedures, cross-border procurement procedures and other administrative procedures is crucial for reducing technical obstacles and the administrative burden, and thus possible delays and increased costs in TEN-T transport infrastructure projects; notes that this is of particular importance when it comes to giving more certainty to project promoters and potential private investors; calls on the Commission to add a chapter on reducing unjustified administrative burdens to the TEN-T progress report;

22. Urges the Commission to strengthen its oversight of the implementation of the TEN-T by making use of the powers already conferred on it by the regulation, reinforcing relevant instruments to require Member States to fulfil their obligations and strengthening the role of the European coordinators in the governance of the corridors, particularly in regard to cross-border links, as well as the ‘one-stop-shop’ role of the designated authority in the permit granting procedure; invites the Commission to strengthen and use the provisions of Article 56 of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 in its revision of the TEN-T guidelines aimed at encouraging Member States to speed up the planning and completion of projects; calls on the Commission to clarify how rules and requirements are to be interpreted for the purposes of evaluation, reporting and eligibility assessments; invites the Commission to promote the exchange of best practices on civil society and stakeholder involvement and consultation between Member States and to promote these at European, national, regional and local levels;

23. Calls on the Member States to strengthen the coherence between national transport plans and the TEN-T networks, in order to ensure the proper implementation of the

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1 As stated in the provisional agreement of 17 June 2020 resulting from interinstitutional negotiations on the regulation on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network.
TEN-T regulation;

24. Takes the view that the EU Agency for Railways (ERA) should be given a more prominent role in the implementation of the TEN-T, particularly with regard to cross-border interoperability, improving safety, increasing competitiveness and the deployment of the ERTMS; calls for an increase of the 2021 budget of the ERA, to equip it with adequate financial means to fulfil its tasks, particularly as 2021 has been designated the European Year of Rail;

Transport modes

25. Points out the importance of enhancing the quality of road infrastructure in the TEN-T throughout the Union;

26. Calls on the Commission, in this regard, to take further measures to increase the roll-out of alternative fuels and the deployment of electric charging points and hydrogen filling stations, taking into account possible future alternative fuel solutions and with full respect for the principle of technology neutrality;

27. Calls for measures to further strengthen road safety and maintain and improve operational safety throughout the life cycle of critical infrastructure, taking into account the needs of non-motorised transport users and with the aim of protecting vulnerable road users; recalls the importance of promoting innovative and smart road safety solutions in order to meet the EU’s strategic goal of Vision Zero; highlights the need to meet the new safety requirements of Directive (EU) 2019/1936 and points out that, to this end, further investment in the adaptation and maintenance of infrastructure are necessary and should be ensured; stresses that any simplification of regulatory requirements for project procedures in the revision of the TEN-T guidelines should not be undertaken at the expense of the highest safety standards;

28. Reminds the Commission and the Member States of the need to provide sufficient safe and secure parking areas for trucks along the TEN-T to increase both road safety and the well-being of network users, in particular transport workers;

29. Highlights that special certified sections of the TEN-T network, as well as on the network of motorways, should be introduced and adapted in order to meet minimum performance standards for automated and semi-automated vehicles and to comply with infrastructure performance standards regarding visibility, the state of traffic signals, road signs and road markings;

30. Points out the potential of novel and active modes of connected mobility in the urban and local transport of people and goods; calls on the Commission and the Member States to work closely with regions and cities, particularly across borders, to enhance and complete relevant missing last-mile infrastructure and inter-modal and cross-border connections throughout the TEN-T, thus enabling more seamless and efficient use of infrastructure and services which in turn prevents congestion and reduces emissions;

31. Reiterates the crucial role of rail transport in decarbonising the transport sector and recalls the importance of fully implementing the Fourth Railway Package in order for rail to develop its full potential; calls for the development of rail infrastructure to be accompanied by measures to reduce unjustified administrative burdens; calls on the
Commission to report to Parliament annually on progress in this domain; considers that promoting modal shifts and efficient rail and combined transport, in particular in cross-border situations and where there are missing links in intensively used sections, must be a priority for the TEN-T and ought to be carried out by fully deploying ERTMS, removing regulatory, operational and technical barriers in the network and ensuring equal access for rail operators, accelerating electrification, ensuring interconnection and interoperability, including through optimisation of infrastructure capacity and modernisation of rolling stock equipment, supporting research and innovation including the Shift2Rail joint undertaking, and optimising rail freight corridors in line with demand, particularly in logistics hubs such as ports and airports; stresses, moreover, the need to define transit and terminal nodes within the network, while equipping the core nodes with platforms for transit to smooth the flow of passengers and goods; underlines the importance of projects enhancing accessibility, especially for persons with disabilities and older persons;

32. Calls on the Commission to regularly adopt binding periodic targets for the deployment of the ERTMS, in order to complete its introduction within the core TEN-T network, due by 2030; considers that the ERA should act as an efficient and effective system authority and fulfil its enhanced role and responsibilities on ERTMS under the Fourth Railway Package; calls for a roadmap of ERTMS implementation on rail freight corridors to be financed through a Project of Common Interest under the Recovery and Resilience Facility; points out the importance of regulatory stability regarding the technical specifications for interoperability as a means of unlocking investments in the ERTMS and asks the Commission to analyse carefully further changes when updating the TSI for 2030 and to ensure compatibility;

33. Underlines that European rail infrastructure must ensure sufficient capacity for both freight and passenger trains, providing for higher infrastructure use and generating greater return on investments; urges the Commission to prioritise cross-border train connectivity in order to strengthen the modal shift in international passenger transport; stresses in this regard the potential of night trains for climate-friendly and competitive travel; takes the view that seamless cross-border rail transport on the TEN-T network and along the European rail freight corridors requires mandatory cross-border cooperation among infrastructure managers; calls on the Commission to put forward binding measures for infrastructure managers as part of the TEN-T review;

34. Underlines that the development of high-speed and high-quality passenger rail services throughout the TEN-T core networks must be a high priority over the coming years, with the aim of creating a widespread network of high-speed rail connections between the major European cities that currently lack access to such services and increasing substantially the competitiveness of sustainable land transport modes;

35. Stresses the importance of inland waterway transport as a sustainable transport mode and underlines the need to ensure future-proof high-capacity infrastructure, and the reliability, quality and good navigability of waterways, in particular against the background of climate change; recognises the important role of ports as strategic nodes in both the core and comprehensive networks; calls on the Commission to ensure seamless links between core and comprehensive inland and maritime ports and rail and road networks, in order to facilitate multimodality; calls for action to be taken to ensure the harmonised cross-border deployment of the RIS and to facilitate the uptake of innovative, efficient, and sustainable solutions in the sector;
36. Calls for a roadmap for inland waterways development, to be financed through a Project of Common Interest under the Recovery and Resilience Facility;

37. Emphasises the role that high-quality maritime links play, not only for the EU’s international trade, but also for intra-EU trade; underlines the important role of the Motorways of the Sea pillar of the TEN-T and short sea shipping as sustainable modes of transport in this context; considers that the purpose of the Motorways of the Sea pillar is to facilitate needs-based short sea links and services, seamlessly integrated with and complementing land transport, to facilitate cooperation between maritime ports and boost their connection to their hinterlands, and to promote the development and roll-out of clean and alternative fuels, subject to impact assessment, and energy efficiency solutions for maritime transport; calls on the Commission, therefore, to evaluate which core corridor end points should be made available as sea connections to other core corridors and where the TEN-T maps should be updated in line with the findings of that evaluation;

38. Stresses the vital role of maritime and inland ports as strategic nodes of the transport network, connecting short-sea and deep-sea shipping with rail, road, inland waterways and pipelines and being at the crossroads of logistics supply chains; underlines the importance of ensuring the accessibility of TEN-T ports for the largest vessels through capacity guarantee measures; highlights the cross-border dimension of maritime ports and stresses that ports are not only a component of maritime transport but are increasingly clusters of all modes of transport, as well as being part of the energy, industrial and blue economies; notes the importance and increased development of port cooperation and clustering; believes that the TEN-T should therefore facilitate projects meant to increase synergies within ports between transport, energy and digital infrastructures and provide for actions to upgrade rail and road connections to sea and inland waterways ports, where necessary, in order to support the modal shift and enhance sustainable logistics;

39. Highlights the importance of short sea connections for regional connectivity, particularly for peripheral regions and islands; considers that the Motorways of the Sea requirements exclude national short sea connections; urges the Commission, therefore, to simplify these requirements in the TEN-T regulation, in order to put maritime links on an equal footing with land-based links, taking into account, in particular, links to ports on the comprehensive network;

40. Emphasises the potential that exists for the shipping industry’s emissions to be reduced significantly by means of investments in port infrastructure that support the use of alternative fuels and the transition to battery charging and power supply while vessels are at berth; points out that such investments should be given particular priority as a way to promote multimodal transport based at ports; asks the Commission to further develop the financial instruments that are available to boost investments for that purpose and to further support the ongoing development of different clean technologies by stimulating research;

41. Urges the Commission to recognise the wider role of ports, beyond purely transport functions, when it comes to decarbonisation efforts, most particularly their potential to contribute to the exploitation of onshore and offshore wind energy opportunities;

42. Underlines that air transport and its related infrastructures, such as airports, are essential
for connecting the EU globally and internally, including its rural, sparsely-populated, peripheral, island and outermost regions, and for ensuring multimodality, for instance through interoperability in particular with rail transport, as well as creating synergies between the related EU agencies; regards the TEN-T as an important tool for accelerating the uptake of alternative fuels in the sector, as well as their charging and refuelling infrastructure, by providing the necessary capacity at airports in the core and comprehensive networks; considers the further development of the Single European Sky II+ initiative to be urgent and crucial to bringing about more efficient and sustainable infrastructure connectivity; recalls that the COVID-19 crisis has shown the value of air transport for the economy as well as the connectivity of passengers and goods, and therefore the need to ensure its resilience against new risks and crises;

43. Considers that the synergies and complementarities of the TEN-T and TEN-E should be promoted, while fully ensuring existing and future funding opportunities and levels of funding for the development of the TEN-T; highlights in this regard, that pipelines are not only seen as an element of energy infrastructure, but also as an enabler of the transition towards more sustainable transport; acknowledges the role of pipelines as a connection between industry clusters and transport hubs and as a means of transport for commodities, and underlines their importance for the implementation of certain decarbonisation technologies;

44. Stresses the need for all Member States to have a well-developed, smart, safe and sustainable TEN-T network which facilitates mobility, connectivity and territorial accessibility across the EU, particularly in peripheral regions, island and outermost regions, in order to promote and boost European and international tourism; calls on the Commission to explore possible synergies with EuroVélo and its 16 corridors, notably by increasing financial support, in order to promote local and environmentally friendly cycle tourism in Europe;

**Strategic orientation**

45. Highlights the strategic value for the EU of maintaining within the TEN-T close transport links with third countries and of further integrating the EU’s European Free Trade Area (EFTA) partner countries, the Western Balkans and the Southeast Europe Transport Community, and the Eastern Partnership countries and to promote better connectivity with the peripheral areas of the EU; also considers it expedient, in view of the strategic investments and surges in influence by third countries in this region, to extend its TEN-T transport connections to candidate countries, the countries of the Southern Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership, and to Asia, based on EU standards and assurances of reciprocity; highlights, moreover, the strategic importance of the Mediterranean Sea for the Union and the need to strengthen the infrastructure of the countries of the Southern Mediterranean and the island regions of the EU;

46. Points out the significance of maintaining the TEN-T links with the UK, starting with its recognition as a ‘neighbouring country’ as defined in Article 3(b) of the TEN-T regulation, while safeguarding the implementation and completion of jointly agreed TEN-T infrastructure projects and ensuring that the UK participates in the financing of this connection; calls on the Commission to pay special attention to the external borders of the EU and to monitor the impact of the withdrawal of the UK on border regions; recalls the major role of the UK and the so-called land bridge as part of the TEN-T network and recognises the negative impact of Brexit on the connectivity, accessibility
and economic cohesion between Ireland and continental Europe, as well as across the island of Ireland; calls on the Commission to ensure the effective connection of Ireland with mainland Europe, with particular attention to maritime routes, through the core and comprehensive network, whatever the shape of future EU-UK relations;

47. Underlines that the TEN-T, with its main hubs, has a strategic function for the Union; urges the Commission to develop plans to protect strategic infrastructure and the TEN-T as a whole; calls on the Commission to ensure that the EU’s strategic interest, the prohibition of price dumping, the full respect of high European working standards and the principle of reciprocity in terms of access to public procurement are fully applied during tender procedures for TEN-T projects;

48. Underlines the importance of increasing synergies between trans-European networks in the field of transport, energy and telecommunications, and between their respective corridors in order to ensure smooth market access and distribution of alternative fuels for transport and to take into account the evolving digital needs of the transport sector and its users;

49. Highlights that transport infrastructure policy offers a clear opportunity to increase synergies between defence needs and the TEN-T, with the overall aim of improving military mobility across the Union, taking into account geographical balance and considering the potential benefits for civil protection; insists that transport infrastructure in trans-European network sections that have been identified as being suitable for dual use should be adapted strictly in line with the dual use principle, to address both civilian and defence needs; calls on the Commission to maintain its original proposal for the financing of military mobility under the MFF 2021-2027;

50. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.