



**2022/2021(INI)**

21.3.2023

## **OPINION**

of the Committee on Transport and Tourism

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

Large transport infrastructure projects in the EU – implementation of projects  
and monitoring and control of EU funds  
(2022/2021(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion (\*): Colm Markey

(\*) Associated committee – Rule 57 of the Rules of Procedure

PA\_NonLeg

## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Transport and Tourism calls on the Committee on Budgetary Control, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the findings of the European Court of Auditors Review No 05/2021 on the EU framework for large transport infrastructure projects: an international comparison; notes that the review identified four specific challenges for the Commission concerning large transport projects: insufficient cost-benefit analysis, high administrative burden, lack of a risk-based approach in monitoring and insufficient alignment between EU and national transport strategies; recalls the need for the Commission and the Member States to take the recommendations of the Court of Auditors fully into account in order to speed up the deployment of large infrastructure projects;
2. Highlights that certain Member States underperform regarding the implementation and maintenance of large infrastructure projects, especially in coordinating, selecting, monitoring and evaluating infrastructure projects;
3. Calls on the Commission to use a risk-based approach when monitoring EU co-funded projects, in line with the findings of the Court of Auditors' report;
4. Regrets the fact that the Court of Auditors found that many EU co-funded projects were subject to cost overruns and significant delays compared to initial estimates at the project planning stage; notes that the average budget overrun was more than EUR 2 billion per project, or an increase of 47 % on initial estimates; regrets, further, the fact that the audit found that the average delay to the EU co-funded projects studied was an unacceptable 11 years and calls on the Commission to reform the process of selecting, planning and implementing EU-funded projects in order to avoid significant cost and time overruns, to achieve the sound and efficient use of public money and to meet the deadlines set out in the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) and the relevant funding schemes; requests also that the Commission monitor large infrastructure projects jointly with the Court of Auditors;
5. Welcomes Directive (EU) 2021/1187 on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the TEN-T (the Smart TEN-T Directive)<sup>1</sup> and urges the Member States to implement it more effectively, particularly regarding cross-border sections, in order to prevent them from becoming bottlenecks and delays to the completion of the European transport corridors and the TEN-T;
6. Considers that the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) should act as an effective financial incentive to bridge the gap between national interests and European transport priorities, contributing to aligning the priority levels and timelines, in particular of cross-border projects or segments, while ensuring, at the same time, a fair distribution of funding; regrets the fact that neither the multiannual financial framework (MFF) nor national recovery plans strongly promote infrastructure investments or prioritise the completion

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ L 258, 20.7.2021, p. 1.

of the TEN-T; regrets the major disparities between Member States in terms of investments planned for transport infrastructure; calls on the Commission and the Member States to rapidly establish a financial framework to better foster and attract investments in infrastructure projects and to develop innovative financial arrangements, in particular through blending mechanisms in order to leverage private investments;

7. Calls for the CEF budget to be significantly increased and enhanced to meet the ambition and aggregated financial and investment needs required to complete the TEN-T in due time, as well as to cover the additional costs stemming from the reinforcement and enlargement of the TEN-T, particularly in cross-border sections, and the integration of military mobility, the war in Ukraine, the COVID-19 crisis and high inflation; notes that the current MFF reflects the priorities of the Union at the time of its adoption in 2020 and stresses that since then the geopolitical situation in Europe has changed and the MFF requires further adjustment;
8. Highlights the key role of CEF funding in large infrastructure projects; recognises the strategic value of the TEN-T and the CEF for meeting new objectives as regards the EU sustainable and smart mobility strategy, which complements the TEN-T and the trans-European energy network (TEN-E), and as regards enhanced military mobility in the EU and stronger connectivity with the Union's strategic partners; stresses, in particular, the importance of extending the TEN-T to encompass our partners in the Eastern Neighbourhood and increase the military mobility budgetary envelope, with particular attention to enhancing the strategic infrastructure segments of the transport network in order to support their dual use for military and civilian purposes and thereby increase the Union's resilience;
9. Highlights the fact that, while the realisation of the TEN-T will foster growth, jobs and cohesion throughout the Union and help it meet its socio-economic and climate goals, investments estimated at EUR 500 billion are needed to complete the TEN-T core network by 2030 and EUR 1.5 trillion for the entire TEN-T by 2050; highlights the fact that the revision of Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the TEN-T could result in a need for additional investments;
10. Stresses that Russia's illegal and unjustified war against Ukraine poses considerable challenges for the EU transport and tourism sector; notes, further, the impact that the war has had on inflation rates in the Union as a result of rising fuel and energy prices; underlines, in this regard, that high inflation hampers the financial soundness and achievement of transport projects; calls for a coordinated response from the Union alongside increased funding in order to address these issues and to avoid any delays in the implementation of large infrastructure projects; calls on the Commission to propose a methodology for assessing and adjusting the projects' costs and their financing, which includes, for example, the impacts of the overlapping energy, geopolitical and climate crises;
11. Calls, further, on the Commission to carry out an assessment of the economic and social consequences of Russia's illegal war in Ukraine on all modes of transport in the EU and to present a proposal with legislative and/or financial measures within the MFF in order to mitigate the negative effects;

12. Notes the Commission's intention to use the CEF to support interoperability and connectivity projects linking the EU and Ukrainian transport networks; asks that a separate envelope for solidarity lanes between the EU and Ukraine be established; stresses the need to increase the current CEF budget for the period 2021-2027 and calls for the creation, in the next MMF (2028-2035), of an additional budget envelope dedicated to 'external transport' in the CEF III, in order to increase cooperation with non-EU countries regarding cross-border projects and infrastructure deployment;
13. Stresses the strategic importance of frontloading the CEF to ensure that the earmarked money is utilised by the end of the current programming period;
14. Believes that, given the current geopolitical reality, the EU's new priorities should be matched with additional money and should not come at the expense of other transport programmes and priorities; stresses that in order to ensure the completion of the TEN-T on schedule, it is essential that the level of funding, including Union funding, matches the ambition and the aggregated financial needs of the infrastructure projects; asks that CEF funding for transport priorities be increased and ring-fenced; opposes the budget reallocations and cuts by the Commission, which is taking funding away from funding programmes established in the MFF and allocating it to new instruments, such as the reallocation of EUR 400 million from the CEF to the to the European Chips Act within the digital Europe programme; stresses that the CEF transport funds must be used solely for transport-related initiatives;
15. Calls for the European structural and investment funds to focus more on transport investments, for the CEF's efficient strategies to be replicated, for synergies to be sought between the governance of the European structural and investment funds and the CEF, which has demonstrated its great efficiency, and for the selection of projects with high European added value;
16. Recognises the need for greater investment in timely pre-feasibility studies and feasibility studies, scoping, detailed design and public consultation and participation in the early project stages to avoid costly delays at the later planning and construction phases and to address public concerns and mitigate the bases for serial and spurious objections that serve to unjustifiably delay the process; stresses the need to screen objections to ensure that any concerns raised are valid;
17. Takes note of the Commission communication on RePower EU and its intention to establish 'go-to' areas with simplified permit-granting procedures for critical energy infrastructure; notes that a similar concept could be extended to critical transport infrastructure projects; highlights the fact that in many Member States, priority treatment is given to certain project categories based on their strategic importance, characterised by shorter timelines and simultaneous and/or simplified procedures; considers that when such a framework exists within a national legal framework, this should automatically apply to projects on the TEN-T; calls for Member States whose national legal frameworks do not provide for priority treatment to establish it for transport projects;
18. Recognises the need for streamlined regulatory processes to ensure appropriate public consultation and environmental impact assessments while ensuring that critical

infrastructure projects are not unduly blocked; calls on the Member States to enforce the timelines set in the Smart TEN-T Directive for those regulatory processes in order to avoid unnecessary delays;

19. Stresses the need for the Member States to put in place a simplified harmonised permit-granting procedure, including for environmental assessments; notes that shorter timelines, simultaneous procedures and limited timeframes for the assessment of appeals have been indicated as necessary measures for a more efficient system at national level; calls on the Member States to establish a simplified common procedure with a view to limiting the administrative burden for project promoters and ensuring a more seamless and efficient procedure, without compromising the Union's standards on environmental protection and public participation under any circumstances;
20. Stresses that multiple, different and complex permit-granting procedures, cross-border procurement procedures and other procedures greatly hinder the timely implementation of projects and often result in significant delays and increased costs; highlights, in this regard, the benefits of having one designated authority for streamlining the administrative procedures at national level; recalls that the Smart TEN-T Directive requires the Member States to implement a single point of contact procedure in order to reduce the complexity, improve the efficiency and increase the transparency of the procedures;
21. Stresses that the Member States and project promoters should comply with the Smart TEN-T Directive in order to avoid delays and cost overruns and to ensure the timely completion of the TEN-T; in this regard, calls for the permit-granting procedures, including environmental assessments, to be carried out in accordance with the measures and shortened time frames of the directive;
22. Notes that *ex post* evaluation is an important tool for providing insights into the decision-making process, performance and outcomes of transport infrastructure projects and for informing the public; calls for systematic *ex post* evaluation of the large transport projects co-funded by the EU by recognised, independent third parties following the criteria of coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and European added value, including an updated cost-benefit analysis, and asks that it be ensured that these evaluations feed into procedures for future projects;
23. Recalls that maintenance is of paramount importance to ensure long-term high-quality properly functioning transport projects; highlights the fact that periodical and regular maintenance saves money over the lifetime of a project; calls for the proper maintenance of completed large infrastructure projects; calls on the Member States and project promoters to budget for maintenance costs during the planning stages for the lifetime of infrastructure projects; insists that this requirement should be a precondition for receiving funding under the CEF;
24. Calls on the Member States to use lessons learned from ongoing TEN-T projects when considering new infrastructure projects funded by the EU and to share best practices and relevant information in a timely and effective manner, with the ultimate aim of improving the implementation of transport infrastructure projects;
25. Strongly believes that large projects involving the modernisation and upgrading of

infrastructure on all transport modes, such as the electrification of the core rail network, will ensure European added value in terms of connectivity, climate and digital goals;

26. Urges the Member States to give completing the core TEN-T network in its entirety by 2030 priority over the completion of the extended and the comprehensive networks, while also ensuring the timely completion of the comprehensive network; calls for national projects that are not aligned with the TEN-T priorities not to be considered as a priority for receiving European funds;
27. Calls for alignment and coordination between the EU priorities and the national plans for transport infrastructure; stresses that the Member States should ensure coherence between the TEN-T Regulation and their national transport and investment plans; stresses that projects within the Member States' national plans should not be prioritised over projects that are aligned with the Union's transport objectives; highlights that EU funding and financial instruments financing large infrastructure projects should be used to promote broader European connectivity rather than to prioritise or protect national interests;
28. Calls for the prioritisation of cross-border interconnectivity projects aimed at removing bottlenecks, addressing missing links, identifying strategic segments and enhancing cross-border connectivity and projects for interconnectivity and for different transport modes promoting multimodality and sustainability; considers that cross-border and missing-links projects provide the highest European added value and stresses that their urgent achievement is of the highest priority;
29. Recalls the importance of increasing the connectivity of the network, which depends on interconnecting projects which are often implemented by several Member States along one corridor; highlights, further, the necessity to emphasise and incentivise good cooperation between authorities at all levels from different Member States in reducing delays and costs in cases of misalignment of schedules and priorities; calls for the strengthening of the role of the TEN-T coordinators in ensuring cooperation and the smooth delivery of cross-border projects and the deployment of infrastructure projects along the corridors;
30. Calls for stronger synergies across all modes of transport; notes the lack of airport and port connectivity by train in many Member States and calls for multimodal connectivity to TEN-T core ports and airports to be addressed;
31. Recognises that transport and energy systems are interconnected; calls on the Commission to ensure that the TEN-E is compatible, where applicable, with the TEN-T, as well as with the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation, in order to foster synergies between the networks and ensure that there are no gaps in the support architecture, in order to deliver strategic energy independence; calls for a large-scale deployment of recharging and refuelling infrastructure along the TEN-T in order to meet the Union's climate goals and to achieve a comprehensive approach to public spending on alternative fuels infrastructure; recognises the importance of the availability and delivery of substantial amounts of green energy for the successful decarbonisation of the transport sector;
32. Underlines the need to promote synergies between the TEN-T and the TEN-E in order

to significantly increase the production, supply and storage of renewable energy in the Union;

33. Highlights the potential of ports in wind-energy production for the creation of renewable fuel; recognises the synergistic role that the TEN-E and the TEN-T can play in realising this potential;
34. Notes the short-term necessity to import liquefied natural gas as a transitional fuel;
35. Calls on the Commission to submit an annual implementation report to the European and national parliaments outlining progress on the completion of the TEN-T, as well as the reasons for any delays; calls on the Commission to include a chapter on all projects funded by the CEF, on a country-by-country basis, which are facing delays of more than two years; calls for the Member States to identify the causes of delays and to propose action to ensure the speedy resolution of these issues; considers that unjustified significant delays should result in a reduction in or the withdrawal of grants under the CEF;
36. Calls on the Commission to introduce a legislative framework in order to create a Single European Digital Enforcement Area in order to enable the responsible enforcement authorities to conduct targeted risk-based checks and inspections of commercial transport by road;
37. Calls on the Commission to ensure that large transport infrastructure projects are aligned with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the sustainable and smart mobility strategy and contribute to the sustainability, safety, accessibility and interoperability of transport, as well as to job creation in the sector;
38. Stresses the importance of performing a thorough socio-economic cost-benefit analysis and environmental impact assessment with standardised methodology using the whole life-cycle approach for every large transport infrastructure project;
39. Highlights the need for significant investment at European and national levels to decarbonise the transport sector, in line with the principle of technological neutrality, and to support the deployment of innovative transport solutions and modal shift, zero- and low-emission mobility solutions; highlights, in this regard, the need to ensure the roll-out of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS), both on board and trackside, and of alternative fuels in order to address congestion and air pollution; emphasises, further, that investments are necessary to improve the safety, efficiency and accessibility of transport, as well as to increase the resilience of transport infrastructure to climatic and geopolitical hazards;
40. Highlights the need to prioritise smart and sustainable transport projects and to significantly increase capacity and interoperability in smart and sustainable modes of transport, including active mobility; considers that European policies and support should take the facilitation of cycling into due account when building or upgrading the TEN-T infrastructure, while the development of the EuroVelo network should be supported;
41. Asks the Commission to fully recognise the European added value of the EuroVelo

transport network and to dedicate a larger portion of transport funding to active mobility infrastructure such as cycling infrastructure;

42. Notes that alternative fuels, electrical grid infrastructure and an increased supply of sustainable energy are critical to meeting the objectives of the Green Deal and strategic independence;
43. Stresses the urgent need to complete the deployment of the ERTMS on interconnected rail systems by 2030; highlights that this process has been under way for more than 20 years and calls on the Member States with interconnected rail systems to explain the delays and immediately put forward national plans to deploy the ERTMS; recalls the exemption for Member States with an isolated network;
44. Welcomes the Commission's RePowerEU plan and asks it to address issues relating to the supply of renewable transport fuels and rising transport and energy costs and to improve energy independence in the Union;
45. Calls for the recognition of specific added value in projects contributing to the much-needed harmonisation of alternative fuels infrastructure deployment across the Union; calls for a swift agreement on and the implementation of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation;
46. Recognises the potential of maritime seaports as the clean energy hubs of the future and important facilitators of the energy transition across Europe; notes that in this role, maritime seaports will be essential to achieving the EU's climate objectives for 2030 and 2050, as well as the ambitions outlined in the REPowerEU plan; stresses that maritime seaports are increasingly assuming new responsibilities and are involved in new services, such as sustainable energy production, research on the blue economy, and military mobility; notes that in their role as multi-service actors, maritime seaports can substantially contribute to a sustainable, digital and resilient European economy;
47. Recognises the need to ensure the connectivity of countries and regions, including, in particular, underdeveloped, remote, insular and outermost countries and regions, as well as those impacted by the illegal, unjustified Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and/or Brexit; also recognises the need to cease cooperation on transport with Russia and Belarus;
48. Recognises the importance of the TEN-T for improved connectivity with strategic partners in non-EU countries; calls on the Commission to strengthen cross-border connections with partners in Eastern Neighbourhood and European Free Trade Association countries and the United Kingdom; calls, in this regard, for the swift integration of Bulgaria and Romania into the Schengen Area, as this would significantly improve north-south connectivity in Eastern Europe;
49. Recalls the Commission communication of 12 May 2022 on solidarity lanes, which outlines several transport infrastructure challenges facing the EU and its neighbours; highlights the importance of addressing these challenges in order to support global food security and the recovery of the Ukrainian economy; stresses that the communication proposed assessing the extension of the European transport corridors into Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova; calls on the Commission to support Ukraine and its efforts to

strengthen rail connections between Ukraine and the EU with a view to the future integration of the Ukrainian transport facilities into the TEN-T.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	21.3.2023
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 31 -: 0 0: 9
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Magdalena Adamowicz, Andris Ameriks, Erik Bergkvist, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Ciarán Cuffe, Jakop G. Dalunde, Karima Delli, Ismail Ertug, Gheorghe Falcă, Carlo Fidanza, Jens Gieseke, Elsi Katainen, Elena Kountoura, Peter Lundgren, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Tilly Metz, Caroline Nagtegaal, Philippe Olivier, Rovana Plumb, Bergur Løkke Rasmussen, Dominique Riquet, Massimiliano Salini, Vera Tax, Achille Variati, Petar Vitanov, Lucia Vuolo, Kosma Złotowski
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Tom Berendsen, Sara Cerdas, Leila Chaibi, Nicola Danti, Andor Deli, Markus Ferber, Valter Flego, Maria Grapini, Andrey Novakov, Andreas Schieder
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Asim Ademov, Moritz Körner

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

31	+
ECR	Carlo Fidanza, Kosma Zlotowski
PPE	Magdalena Adamowicz, Asim Ademov, Tom Berendsen, Karolin Braunsberger-Reinhold, Gheorghe Falcă, Markus Ferber, Jens Gieseke, Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Andrey Novakov, Massimiliano Salini, Lucia Vuolo
Renew	Nicola Danti, Valter Flego, Elsi Katainen, Moritz Körner, Caroline Nagtegaal, Bergur Løkke Rasmussen, Dominique Riquet
S&D	Andris Ameriks, Erik Bergkvist, Sara Cerdas, Ismail Ertug, Maria Grapini, Rovana Plumb, Andreas Schieder, Vera Tax, Achille Variati, Petar Vitanov

0	-

9	0
ECR	Peter Lundgren
ID	Philippe Olivier
NI	Andor Deli
The Left	Leila Chaibi, Elena Kountoura
Verts/ALE	Ciarán Cuffe, Jakop G. Dalunde, Karima Delli, Tilly Metz

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention