

Towards a Better Integrated Trans-European Transport Network at the Service of the Common Transport Policy

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Background of the respondent	
Country of residence	Belgium
Region: Please write down the name of your region (using as base the NUTS 1 or NUTS 2 classification system as relevant, for details see http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:039:0001:0037:EN:PDF)	Brussels
TEN-T components/major infrastructure most involved with (you can choose more than one)	High-Speed Rail Conventional Rail Co-modal
Name:	HANS CIETERS
Name of your organisation	NMBS/SNCB
Type of involvement in the TEN-T/major transport infrastructure matters	Commercial transport service provider User for business purposes

Green Paper Questionnaire	
Q01.- Should the Commission's assessment of TEN-T development to date cover any other factors?	Yes. Part of the mitigated success of the current TEN-T programme (and, more widely, transport policy in general) is linked to Commission's focus to its two traditional main fields of expertise, i.e.: 1. Provide the legislative framework; 2. Assess projects to allocated EU funds and following up implementation. As a result, member states did not get much incentives to mobilise themselves at political and project management level. In the future, we may advise the Commission to move its expertise areas (at least partly) away from legislative and project funding towards project initiation and project management support. 1. Project initiation requires Commission's involvement at its highest level (i.e. at President, Commissioner and Director General level), as it is here necessary to be able to politically mobilise national governments (at head of state level or ministerial level) to collaborate on cross-border projects. 2. Project management support should then be provided at the other levels of Commission's hierarchy, meaning that other civil servant profiles are required to
Q02.- Should the comprehensive network be maintained or abandoned, and what advantages and disadvantages would either approach involve? Could the respective disadvantages be overcome, and if so by what means?	YES – the comprehensive network should be maintained

<p>Please justify your choice by answering the sub-questions of Q02 as comprehensive as possible</p>	<p>A concept like the “comprehensive network” concept is good but not sufficient; political and financial support is also required. On the other hand, a few European policies and legislation now refer to the TEN-T network, which may make its dismantlement problematic. In any case, it is advisable that it is given the possibility to extend flexibly during any seven-year budgetary period, as to include sections which are part of projects otherwise eligible under any major European funding programmes (Ten-T, Cohesion, Marco Polo, Research, etc.). In other words, if a project deemed worthy of EU research budget support contains sections that are not in TEN-T, these are automatically included in TEN-T, or at least funding cannot be denied to them on the basis of not being part of TEN-T. In the concept of a flexible network, future TEN-projects should be determined on the basis of traffic demands, market needs and business cases (bottom-up approach). TEN-T funding should be transferred more strongly to projects of common interest, such as projects generating a major</p>
<p>Please allocate the advantages as described above to the following categories:</p>	<p>Reference basis for structural policy objectives Basis for a broad range of transport policy objectives (Help: rail interoperability, road safety etc.)</p>
<p>Please allocate the disadvantages, as described above, to the following categories:</p>	
<p>Q03.- Would a priority network approach be better than the current priority projects' approach? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of either approach, and how should it be developed?</p>	<p>YES – The priority network approach would be better than a priority projects approach</p>
<p>Please justify your choice by answering the sub-questions of Q03 as comprehensive as possible</p>	<p>The idea to link existing priority projects is relevant. This can however hardly be organised via regulation. Identifying missing links is the easiest part. More delicate will be the exercise consisting in mobilise member states to cover the missing links. Here the approach suggested in response to question 1 is definitely the one to apply: 1. High level political mobilisation of Member States by the Commission; 2. Provision of expertise for project initiation and design; 3. And, as needed, project management support and cross-border coordination. Also, the ERTMS corridors could be the backbone of the future core network, provided that it is extended to more European countries, taking into account market requirements. NOTE: CER warns against the possible introduction of heavier and longer road vehicles mentioned by the Commission on this section. Such introduction will lead to reverse modal shift from inland waterways, short sea shipping and rail back to road. This cannot be in line with the objective of sustainability promoted by the Green Paper.</p>
<p>Please allocate the arguments described above to the following categories:
 - Advantages of priority network approach (compared to priority projects approach)</p>	<p>Possibility for coverage of all modes Enhanced possibilities for “environmental optimisation”</p>
<p>Disadvantages of priority network approach (compared to priority projects approach)</p>	

Elements that should be taken into account in the development of a priority network approach (planning method)	<p>Traffic flows</p> <p>Interoperability and infrastructure standards</p> <p>Environmental protection / climate change</p> <p>Due coverage of all transport modes</p> <p>Implementation capacities</p> <p>Inter-modal connections</p> <p>Harmonized cost-benefit analysis</p> <p>Links to third countries</p>
Q04.- Would the flexible approach to identifying projects of common interest, as proposed with the "conceptual pillar", be appropriate for a policy that, traditionally, largely rests on Member States' individual infrastructure investment decisions? What further advantages and disadvantages could it have, and how could it best be reflected in planning at Community level?	YES - a flexible approach would be appropriate
Please justify your choice by answering the sub-questions of Q04 as comprehensive as possible	Yes. The concept of "conceptual pillar" allows to orientate Member States' decision of investments towards high European value-added projects and take into consideration some crucial criteria for the European transport policy. However this flexibility should not encourage the implementation of less environmentally friendly or less energy efficient transport modes.
Please allocate the advantages, as described above, to the following categories:	Allows for flexibility where necessary to facilitate the development of commercially viable services
Please allocate the disadvantages, as described above, to the following categories:	
How could the "conceptual pillar" be best reflected in planning at Community level?	Other
Q05.- How can future challenges in the sectors of waterborne and air transport (especially ports, inland waterways and airports) as well as of freight logistics be best taken into account within the overall concept of the future TEN-T development? Do different requirements for freight and passenger transport require different treatment in the TEN-T policy? What further aspects relating to different transport sectors / common transport policy issues should be given attention?	<p>As far as freight logistics is concerned, CER fully supports the concept of Green Corridor mentioned in the Green Paper. In today's fight against climate change, focus needs to be given to efficient co-modal transport chains, where transport mode is chosen according to its sustainability and environmental impact. In that sense, financial priority (TEN-T, Cohesion/Regional programmes, Research programmes, Marco Polo, any European fund in general) should be given to the environmentally less damaging transport modes. As an example, we recommend the European Commission to allow the financing of road projects only when these projects are part of a wider multimodal project, where a more sustainable transport mode (rail, inland waterways or short sea shipping) is taking care of the long-distance part and where the road sub-project is limited to the feeder / local distribution part. One further aspect that CER strongly recommends to address in future TEN-T planning is the difference in construction life cycle between road and rail projects. Construction cycles for road projects on average extend 2 to 3 years</p>

<p>Q06. - How can Intelligent Transport Systems in all modes, as a part of the TEN-T, enhance the functioning of the transport system? How can investment in Galileo and EGNOS be translated into efficiency gains and optimum balancing of transport demand? How can ITS contribute to the development of a multi-modal TEN-T? How can existing opportunities within the framework of TEN-T funding be strengthened in order to best support the implementation of the ERTMS European deployment plan during the next period of the financial perspectives?</p>	<p>The implementation of ITS can bring real benefits by increasing significantly the safety and facilitating the introduction of innovative charging systems for selected infrastructure sections and urban congestion areas. It should be deployed in all transport modes. ITS should not be limited to ERTMS, but also take into account the research projects on other intelligent transport systems, as for instance, the tracing of wagons, optimisation of traffic systems, etc. Interoperability of railway transport should aim towards competitive international transport. The economic consequences (costs and benefits) of interoperability for rail need to be properly considered. Interoperability must be a real competitive advantage for rail, not a burden. The objective should be the implementation of what is technically possible, and it should be economically efficient. As underlined in the Green Paper the priority network should be fully interoperable. It is important to concentrate European funds on projects aiming at full interoperability. SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CRISIS: Neverthe</p>
<p>Q07. - Do shifting borderlines between infrastructure and vehicles or between infrastructure provision and the way it is used call for the concept of an (infrastructure) project of common interest to be widened? If so, how should this concept be defined?</p>	<p>YES – the current concept of the infrastructure project of common interest should be widened.</p>
<p>Please justify your choice, and describe how such a widened concept should be defined.</p>	<p>For example, ERTMS equipment implies track side investments, but foremost puts a heavy financial burden as regards the on-board equipment of rolling-stock. It is estimated that ERTMS equipment consists in 70% for on-board equipment and 30% for track side equipment. Thus, it is absolutely essential to ensure that, provided that technical questions are solved, the cost-benefit analysis does not threaten the viability of the transport operator. As a consequence, the investments of the railways undertaking in ERTMS on-board equipment should be able to benefit from TEN-T and national funds in order to facilitate the implementation of the European single market.</p>
<p>Q08. - Would a core network (bringing together a priority network approach as referred to in Q3 and a conceptual pillar as referred to in Q4) be "feasible" at Community level, and what would be its advantages and disadvantages? What methods should be applied for its conception?</p>	<p>YES – a core network approach would be feasible.</p>

Please justify your choice by answering the sub-questions of Q08 as comprehensive as possible	<p>Yes, of course. This concept of a "core network" made of a "geographical pillar" ("priority network") and a "conceptual pillar" opens up the door for a more bottom-up approach to the development of the TEN-T network. CER supports the idea of enabling the TEN-T network to be flexibly expanded on a regular basis in the course of the seven-year budgetary period, adapting to changing market circumstances: if a good-quality infrastructure project emerges during the 7-year period, including parts that are not in TEN-T, these parts should be allowed to be included in the TEN-T in the course of the 7-year budgetary period in order to be able to avail of EU-funding. However, there should be a stable "core network" set up as basis for future works. ERTMS corridors could be the backbone of such a core network, provided it is extended to more European countries, taking into account market requirements. The challenge here will be to initiate such good-quality infrastructure projects. For this: 1. A new grid of project assessment criteria should be developed taking into account, envir</p>
To which categories would you allocate the main advantages?	<p>Capturing benefits of a network Establishing a strong basis for concentration of Community support (financial and non-financial)</p>
To which categories would you allocate possible disadvantages?	Other
What basis could be used for its conception?	<p>Best practice from national methods (please specify above) Expert groups Other (please specify above)</p>
Which are the three aspects that need to be given highest priority in the core network development method?	<p>Climate change and other environmental objectives Common transport policy needs Financing capacities</p>
Q09.01- How can the financial needs of TEN-T as a whole - in the short, medium and long term - be established?	<p>Some recommendations could be: - creating the valid financial architecture contributing to the economic viability of rail; - multi annual contracts; - participation from the public sector to the financing of infrastructure projects, which can not be self financed; - PPP can be a tool; however, when the risk of a project is high, PPPs raise the overall price of the project. In addition, the evolution toward a harmonisation of the track access charge systems is highly desirable. The structuring and the multiannual contracting of the track access charges are indeed a condition sine qua non to mobilise private funds. All the more, this multiannual visibility (on the level of track access charge and on the quality of the infrastructure) and its coherence with the initial tack access charge hypothesis are necessary for the railway undertakings to acquire the desirable rolling stock.</p>
Q09.02.- What form of financing - public or private, Community or national - best suits what aspects of TEN-T development?	

Q10.01- What assistance can be given to Member States to help them fund and deliver projects under their responsibility?	In order to complete the priority projects the Community and Member States funding should be increased (the 2008 TEN-T progress report estimate in more than 120 billion of euro the investment to be financed in the next financial perspectives) and the level of EU co-financing should be raised. An important source of financing for the TEN-T should be found encouraging the Member States to apply the Eurovignette Directive and earmarking the revenues, thus applying the "internalisation of external costs" concept. Moreover, the introduction of a European scoreboard to record year by year the state of implementation of the Priority Projects and the funds committed and disbursed by Member States and EU on each project is advisable.
Q10.02.- Should private sector involvement in infrastructure delivery be further encouraged? If so, how?	Public Private Partnerships should play a substantial role in the financing of Trans-European Transport Networks, innovation and research and development. CER shares the view that Public Private Partnerships provide innovative financial engineering opportunities, which could mobilise funding for key rail infrastructure projects. In order to reach this goal, building transparent partnerships with private contractors is of the utmost importance for rail companies. Confronted with limited availability of public resources for rail infrastructure, some CER members, mainly from Central and Eastern European EU countries, are currently preparing business cases for PPP's in rail infrastructure - for example in Poland, Romania, and the Czech Republic. However, it must be underlined that the success of PPP projects is linked to the long term visibility and guarantee given over return on investments. Such visibility can be given either by state guarantee or through a business case based on a mandatory user charging system for all modes. The progressive implementation of the "use
Q11.01- What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing Community financial instruments used for TEN-T? (TEN-T budget, Cohesion Fund, ERDF, EIB loans)?	
Q11.02.- Is there a need for new financial instruments (including "innovative" instruments)?	YES
Please explain	YES: National "sustainable transport funds" funded by revenue from the internalization of external costs of transport, and used to promote the development of sustainable transport modes.
Q12.01.- How could existing non-financial instruments be improved?	
Q12.02.- Which new non-financial instruments should be introduced, for what reason?	
Please classify your proposal above:	Corridor coordination Sharing of best practices Benchmarking Other
Q13.- Which of the options for developing the TEN-T is the most suitable, and for what reason?	Option C: Dual layer: comprehensive network and "core network"
Please justify	Like explained above

Q14.- Would you like to make any further comment or proposal?

Reflexions on the future of transport policy in a broader context - TEN-T policies may contribute to the promotion of the well-being of all European citizens. - The current financial crisis should be used as an opportunity to make a change towards a more sustainable society, less energy dependent. - TEN-T Policy should promote energy-efficient modes; the use of environmentally friendly modes of transport needs to be promoted for both freight and passengers. - More realistic transport prices (applying the "user/polluter pays principle") is an essential tool to achieve this objective. Recommendations for the future of TEN-T policy - The necessary infrastructure funds should be made available; European and national priorities should be aligned on the basis of traffic flows and market needs. - EU budget dedicated to TEN-T should be at the dimension of EU ambitions, calling for an increase of the budget and of co-financing rates. - Funds should be concentrated in projects giving a "European value", i.e. aiming at suppressing bottlenecks and increasing interoperability