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## **The Airport Regions Conference contribution to the European Commission review of the TEN-T policy – “Towards a better integrated trans European Transport network at the service of the common transport policy”**

### **Introduction**

The Airport Regions Conference (ARC) is an association of cities and regions across Europe, with international airports situated within or near its territory. We are today more than 30 cities and regions hosting “the big five” airports in Europe along with other major and regional international airports in 19 European Countries.

A common concern in ARC is to balance the economic benefits generated by the airports against their environmental impact, notably the effect on the quality of life of local residents.

The ARC members cooperate at European level to pursue common interests. This means that ARC members discuss and formulate positions and other statements that reflect the views of cities and regions on aviation, regional development and environment. Airport accessibility is one of the key issues for airport regions in Europe.

Cities and regions having an international airport within or close to its territory have a major challenge in providing surface access and public transport to the airports. Airport regions have, over the last decade met an increasing demand for airport accessibility. This expansion is rapidly changing the regional structure of airport accessibility and needs to be addressed in a sustainable way.

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The ARC would like to take this opportunity to share some comments on the TEN-T policy review green paper, issued by the European Commission.

### **General remarks**

The ARC welcomes a TEN- T policy review. A new perspective addressing the European Challenges in the 21 century is most needed. This includes a further integration of the European regions and economies, European competitiveness in the global markets and climate change.

First and foremost a new approach must put the citizens in the front seat, addressing the challenges Europeans citizens face every day as travellers, almost always in urban transport as well as long haul journeys. This is done best with a door to door perspective where passengers and goods are the prime subject served by different and well integrated modes of transport.

Aviation will continue to grow in importance for the reasons mentioned below. Intermodality at airports is then essential. The only place integration with aviation is possible is at the airports and in the airport regions.

If the Commission is ready to tackle the challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the airport regions and the airports must be addressed as key elements in a revised TEN T policy for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **ARC key comments to the TEN-T policy review green paper:**

1. Airport Regions are economic engines in Europe.
  - a. The economies in Europe become more integrated with one and other and regional competitiveness is dependent on a high level of connectivity for both passengers and freight. It has become increasingly important for the regions to meet these needs. International connectivity is becoming a central part in economic development strategies for cities and regions and hence for European competitiveness. It is through the airports in many cities that the regional economies develop. It is through the cities and regions clustering around the major international airports that European competitiveness are built. Well functioning airport regions are vital in a European perspective and a key for European prosperity.
2. Airport Regions bring Europe together.
  - a. With the ongoing integration of European economies mobility is increasing. For the young generation environmental concern goes hand in

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hand with travel for cultural exchange, education and jobs. It is regarded as part of the modern European lifestyle. This will make viable and sustainable connectivity between cities and regions a necessity. It is forecast that the need for additional airport capacity is expected to almost double in Europe. It is important to meet this demand for travel in terms of a sustainable and a better integrated Europe.

3. International connectivity
  - a. Europe is increasingly dependent on a dense network of rapid connections. Fast and reliable connections between the dynamic cities and regions in Europe and other parts of the globe are requisite to promote Europe's ability to compete on the global market and to secure companies' potential to grow and provide good job opportunities in Europe. The airport regions are key areas in a European strategy for global competitiveness.
4. Environmental concern and climate change
  - a. All modes of transport are necessary and all modes of transport are to some extent harmful to the environment. All modes of transport should become cleaner and quieter as outlined in the European Greening transport strategy. It is also important to find the optimal use of the different modes of transport, where they serve best to reduce emissions, greenhouse gases and the impact on climate change. From this perspective it is essential to make integrated transport solutions viable and easy to access. To make the best use of each mode of transport from an environmental perspective co-modality needs to be further developed. As airports become increasingly important in transport policies, airports should be developed to serve all modes of transport as a key modal point for local and regional mobility, national transport systems and European transport networks.
5. Additional airport capacity and substitution of short haul flights.
  - a. It is essential from an economic development perspective in European regions to be able to travel on a one day return trip to major economic, political and R&D centres. It should be possible to make such journeys with the most suitable mode of transport from a traveller perspective and from an environmental perspective. This calls often for a combination of short to medium haul journeys integrated with urban mobility. High Speed Trains, HST, should not only connect city centre to city centre, but also become integrated with airports to be able to make more choices and combinations possible. HST connections to the airports widen the catchment area. It also provides a way to reduce the need for private cars as the prime surface access mode to airports.
6. Seamless journeys or a door to door perspective
  - a. A new TEN-T policy should primarily focus on the passengers and goods rather than different modes of transport. With a new focus, transport policies should address where passengers and goods come from and where

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they go. This is the best way to bring intermodality and interoperability into focus. The different modes of transport then jointly have to tackle how to best provide the seamless journey from door to door in a sustainable way.

- b. The seamless journey from door to door is not new. In the freight industry the Integrators have already developed technical solutions using various modes of transport in providing services from door to door on all continents. They use advanced ICT technologies where goods and commodities are tracked and information about estimated travel time etc is made available. It would be a challenge to adopt it to different passenger categories and passenger transport service providers. TEN-T policies may consider how the integrated freight service technologies may be further developed and refined to promote integrated and interoperable passenger transport for the various traveller market segments.

7. Urban mobility

- a. Urban mobility makes up for more the 90 % of all transport in Europe. Airport accessibility is not always regarded as a part of the urban mobility structure even though European airports together produce on a daily basis approximately the same amount of person kilometres as the greater London area. Urban mobility does not lie within the competence of the EU. It is, however, a key element to providing seamless journeys and must be a part of an integrated pan European transport perspective. Linking urban mobility with international mobility is vital for providing solutions to eliminate the last mile paradox (that is, the ability to travel quickly and at low prices across Europe but where the final leg of the trip is often the most time consuming and expensive of the whole journey). Again the airports must become integrated in a new and innovative way, bringing the airports, airline industry and urban mobility providers close together. With any malfunctioning surface access at airports, the added value of an integrated European transport approach is lost.

8. An intermodal approach should start from the airport regions.

- a. To be able to reach concrete results and improvements in the areas mentioned above, the airport regions and airport are the key stakeholders to address. By starting at the centre, the airport regions, it is possible to tackle many of the mobility challenges the EU has to address in the 21st century:
  - i. Investing in intermodality at airports is to invest in one of the most important elements of the local and regional economies in Europe with a potential to grow, and to release the European companies' potential to compete on the global level.
  - ii. Investing in intermodality at airports makes the cities and regions in airport catchment areas attractive for foreign investments where

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they have easy access to other parts of the world. It supports European competitiveness, as accessibility is crucial to becoming a business partner in the global economy.

- iii. Investing in intermodality at airports supports the increasing mobility between Europe regions and helps in keeping up relations with families and relatives living in the region of origin. This is particularly important from a European integration perspective.
- iv. Investing in intermodality at airports assists with reducing the climate change impacts of surface access to airports, which can account for 50 % of carbon emissions associated with on- airport operations and airports surface access.
- v. Investing in intermodality at airports is a holistic approach to urban mobility and a European transport perspective. It is the starting point for improved intermodality for all modes of transport. Train connections to airports are essential both for improved access locally and for reducing green house gases. With rail connections the catchment area of the airports becomes wider and more accessible in a less environmentally harmful way.
- vi. Investing in intermodality at airports will make seamless journeys possible for passengers and not only freight. Physical integration of different modes of transport with aviation can only be done at airports. Since aviation is a key element in the future of European transport, investment should be made in physical integration at airports as well as in ICT to provide the technical solutions necessary.

These brief comments are based on the discussions held in the ARC Executive Committee in March 2009. We are happy to further explore our views with the Commission at any time.

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