

Position of The Region of South Bohemia regarding the Communication of the European Commission

„A sustainable future for transport: Towards an integrated, technology-led and user friendly system“.

History

- The Region of South Bohemia has been participating in public consultations on the European transport policy since 2004; for example in the past we contributed to consultations regarding the TEN-T network extension to the neighbouring regions and countries, to the „mid-term review of the White Paper on transport from 2001“ and to the „Green Paper on TEN-T guidelines revision“;
- In 2006 and 07 the previous Governor of The Region of South Bohemia reported the opinion of the Committee of the Regions to the Communication of the European Commission „Keep Europe Moving“;
- The Region of South Bohemia has been consistently committed to the preparation and establishment of the TEN-T network projects in its territory, invests in the preparatory studies (e.g. a search study of the new railway České Budějovice – Linz) and partially accepts the role of coordinator with regards to the involved subjects (e.g. during the decision on conducting the cross-border stage of the road and railway connection České Budějovice – Linz);
- The Region of South Bohemia has also been involved in long term international projects supporting the construction of the back bone of the Trans-European transport network in Central Europe, such as the „Eurocorridor North-South“, „AB Landbridge“ or „SONORA“;

Basis for the Position

- The Region of South Bohemia has **several important European transport lines** in its territory, such as the E55 road (part of TEN-T) in the axes Copenhagen – Berlin – Prague - Venice and E49 in the axes Karlovy Vary – Plzeň - České Budějovice - Vienna, railway line E55/E551 (part of priority TEN-T project no.22) in the axes Rostock – Berlin – Prague - České Budějovice – Linz, railway Cheb – Plzeň - České Budějovice – Vienna and the link Veselí nad Lužnicí – České Velenice in the axes Prague – Vienna;

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- **One of the highest priorities regarding the development of The Region of South Bohemia** is to achieve its re-connection to a wider geographical context by means of the modern back-bone transport infrastructure. This should help to increase development potential, to use the opportunity of free movement in the environment of the EU single market and to achieve the surmounting the consequences of the Iron Curtain;
- The accomplishment of this vision during the last eight years **has brought us many experiences** with the enforcement and construction of the back-bone transport infrastructure at a European, national and also regional level;
- The Czech Republic (as with other post-communist countries) has a **remarkable investment debt** regarding the density of the motorway network, the use of water routes, regional airports, the equipment for railway transport or specifically interconnection of the national transport network with neighbouring countries;
- **This condition limits** not only the proper development of the territory but also the use of potential regarding free movement and reduces the efficiency of the Trans-European transport as a whole;
- This is the reason why our **expectations for the European transport policy are high**, especially in terms of the support for the completion of the lines with European importance and traffic nodes in the territory of the Czech Republic, or The Region of South Bohemia and in the interconnection of the national network with the networks of the neighbouring countries, partners within the EU;
- This is the reason why our report especially concerns the issues of **the back-bone transport infrastructure development**, namely from the specific point of view of a region of one of the new member states, a border region situated on the former external EU border and before that on the former Iron Curtain.

General notes on the text of the Report

- In this Report we miss a **larger space for the priority issue regarding the completion of the infrastructure** for the Trans-European transport (integrated, multimodal, interoperable, with the common qualitative parameters), and we miss completely the affect of **the specific conditions of the infrastructure in the new member states** that in many regards fall behind the EU15 standards;
- At the same time we refer to the **Position of the Committee of the Regions** „The Mid-term review of the White Paper on European Transport Policy” from 2001 - COTER-IV-004 (hereinafter referred to as ”the CoR Opinion”), its clauses 6.1. and 6.3. and then to the **Statement of the Finnish Presidency** to the Communication „Keep Europe moving” – 13847/06 (hereinafter referred to as “the Presidential Statement”) and its clause 8 and **the Statement of the European Parliament** „Keep Europe moving “ – P6_TA(2007)0345 (hereinafter referred to as “the EP Report”) and its clause C and last but not least the position of The Region of South Bohemia to the Green Paper on the revision of TEN-T - KOM (2009) 44;
- We do not appreciate in the Communication a large number of „should be’s“ and verbs in the passive form. On their position we would appreciate a larger **focus on targets** and concrete **realistic propositions regarding the measures and assignment of the responsibility for their execution**;
- We respect this is a document that should provide an opening to the discussion but the quality of the expected outcomes also depends on its content. This attitude can be supported by the CoR Position (1.6., 1.8., 1.10.) and also by the EP Report (4.), talking about the need of **structuring the European transport policy measures according to their priorities, responsibilities, improving coordination between the policy performance at the community, national and regional level and increase of „the enforcement“ of political objectives** stated at the common level;
- Excessive emphasis on so called „new challenges“ **detracts attention from the unaccomplished original objectives of the European transport policy** especially with regard to infrastructure development and the harmonisation of Trans-European transport that we still understand to be a priority, and we insist on their accomplishment;
- In accordance with the CoR Position (1.10.), we propose for the new version of the White Paper on The European transport policy for the period 2010-2020 the use of the

subtitle „**Time to Act**“, as a strong reference to the subtitle „Time to decide“ entitling the version from 2001;

- In spite of the fact that from the version from 2001 the move towards the real perception of European transport is visible, its authors could have gone even further. The Communication **draws too little from the good work** executed by the **Council, European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions and also „stakeholders“** in the public consultations during the revision of the White Paper from 2001 three years ago;
- As an illustration, in this report we tried to connect our opinions and theses with some statements approved by these bodies in the past.

Some detailed notes to the content of the Communication

Chapter	Paragraph	Note
2	7	We are delighted that the importance of the transport for the economy and employment is again acknowledged. Often referred to ideas in the past about the necessity to divide the connection between the increase of the GDP and the transport seem to be overcome. This Communication is not the first to understand that transport is a part of the economy, as one of its sources and necessary side effects.
	8	We also welcome repetitive acknowledgment that Trans-European transport is the concomitant of Trans-European mobility and consequently a free market. Trans-European transport is actually one of the essential conditions of the free market. The possibility of the Trans-European transport is a sign of European integration. In future, it will be necessary to concentrate more, not only on the issues of taxation and funds, but also the legal issues, including the labour laws.
	9	<p>We agree that the development of the Trans-European transport infrastructure and the possibility of financing its development (especially in the new member states) with the help of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund is the success of the European Community. It is also important to mention the systematic advance of the new countries (e.g. the Czech Republic) from the financial to project approach during the planning and development of the back-bone infrastructure co-financed from Community sources.</p> <p>At the same time we also feel considerable reservations during the implementation of the common transport policy in this area. This is why we would appreciate the issues regarding the development of the back-bone Trans-European Transport Network (especially) in the new member states being given a larger consideration. It doesn't concern only the national interest on the completion of national transport network. By means of the completion of missing stages and removal of bottlenecks (specifically by the cross-border connections) the Trans-European Network as a whole makes gains in efficiency. "The European interest" in this task can be deduced from this reflection and we see in it the foundation for interventions supported by Community sources. More it concerns the complex problems including all stages from the territorial, project management, to the development, the methodical support and political pressure at an EU level. We also consider that the differences in quality of the transport infrastructure development between EU15 and EU10+ are rather large.</p>
	10	The objectives until 2010 were too ambitious, for example as for the reduction of fatal accidents in the road transport by half. In relation to the transport safety, we propose to execute safety audits of the main international communications and solve consequently the elimination of safety defects.
	17	We object to the term "shifting" appearing in the document which was recently connected with the regulated displacement of the goods transport from roads to railways and water and the document thus doesn't work with the generally accepted term „co-modality“ as moreover the market principle considering the cooperation of traffic modes motivated by efficiency/price.
3	27	The influences of weather fluctuation on railway and road transport should be also mentioned, for example the danger for transport networks during floods, windstorms, etc.
	33	In connection with the transport overload in town agglomerations the traffic regulation by means of computerised systems, urban mass transportation, tolls in town centres, traffic issues such as parking etc. should also be mentioned.
4	38	In the newly defined objective of the common transport policy the term "system" may be misguided. In addition the validity of the European transport policy is very vaguely defined. More successful is the definition used in the CoR Opinion (1.3., 1.4. a 1.5.).

		This definition (even if it's long) enables the understanding of the intervention of the European transport policy on two levels: a) primarily at the Community level where the role of the European Union institution is irreplaceable; b) secondary at the lower level (national, regional, local) where the interventions of the EU level should be preferably in the coordinative and methodical position. If this approach during the conception of the concrete measures of the future White Paper is applied, we can hope to obtain more practical and realistic documentation.
	38	In addition, we miss in this definition a mention of the no less important role of the European transport policy for territorial cohesion and the EU area penetrability = the area of the common market. If the Communication talks about the need of the European policy integration on behalf of transport, it also has to respect the relation and contribution of the European transport policy for other agendas, such as the Cohesion Policy (especially the issue of territorial cohesion).
4.2.	44	In this Chapter we miss the issues regarding the completion of TEN-T network defined by the TEN-T guidelines, last time updated by Decision no.884/2004/EC. The Communication seemed to consider only future development and modernization of the existing transport networks, eventually the reaction to „new appeals “. It supposes that the “elementary” level has been already reached everywhere. But this statement is not truthful. See above – our notes about the disproportionate differences between the level of the new member states and EU15.
	45	It's necessary to mention that sufficient integration between individual traffic modes doesn't exist, not only between the states but even within these states.
4.6.	55	We agree that it's necessary to strengthen the connection between the price for using the communication with the real (corporate) costs arising from its use. The price is in this regard the most natural regulator and at the same time income from the payment may be used for back investment into communications. In spite of the previous declaration for a change, the harmonisation between the road and railway transport hasn't been accomplished in this way.
	56	We entirely agree with the necessity to offer alternative transport solutions and that is why we again raise the topic that TEN-T networks should be primarily planned as multimodal (see the principle adopted during the TEN-T network enlargement into the neighbouring countries and regions) with the objective of offering railway infrastructure especially for long-distance goods and mass passenger transport and road infrastructure for short-distance goods and individual passenger transport for middle and short distances. This approach should already be applied during the next TEN-T guideline revision .
	59	We entirely agree with this idea, corresponding to our conception, when we say that the level of the future demand for transport must be taken into consideration during the adoption of the decision at the territorial planning level .
	60	Territorial planning (especially in the border areas) must be coordinated better in the international criterion, especially with the TEN-T networks.
	61	We entirely agree with this opinion in accordance with the idea used in the CoR Position (5.1.) on, the best transport that will never happen. “ We take notice of the importance of tele-working but we shouldn't overestimate its importance because of the kind of alienation it causes, as well as the decomposition of personal contacts, it also brings the psychological barriers. Let's not suppose a crucial impact on transport – a smaller number of travels to work will be balanced by a bigger number of travels while using free time.
	64	We must henceforth talk not only about the extension of the infrastructure, but instead the interest of proper integration of the Trans-European Transport Network and in the interest of balanced coverage of the whole EU territory. We must also consequently and

		necessarily talk about "the development of missing connections and elimination of „bottlenecks“ (specifically at the cross-border regions). In the sense of the CoR Opinion (6.1., 6.2.) we consider "in the interest of the Trans-European transport sustainability as the most urgent task together with the completion of TEN-T Trans-European transport network and the development of the new infrastructure, to improve the conditions for the thorough use of the reserve in the capacity of the present infrastructure." We support „the elimination of the traffic impassability and increase of the availability“ being adopted as one of the priorities of the White Paper 2010-2020.
	67	The Transport Network determined entirely for goods transport is well-founded in several rare cases and practically only concerns the railways. In global terms we consider this, at the moment, as redundant, especially in comparison with the task for completion of the present TEN-T network (see previous notes).
5.1.	65	We fully support the effort for establishment of the common methodology regarding the impact assessment of constructions on the environment but if possible also the common methodology to the preparation procedure as for the line transport constructions of corporate importance (e.g. EIA connection with the territorial management).
5.5.	84	We stress that we have already used in our report to the Green Paper on TEN-T Network revision the topic regarding the development of „the all-European active, open and concretely aimed informational campaign about the contributions of global and proper Trans-European Network “.

Answers on selected questions – contribution to the discussion

(1) Infrastructure

What can the EU do to promote the integration of modal networks as well as their maintenance and upgrade?

- In order to improve accessibility and increase the efficiency of the network, it is necessary to **maintain the development of the transport infrastructure as a priority** of the European transport policy;
- In the interest of the „co-modality“ and more efficient use of the transport infrastructure it is necessary to support **the construction of TEN-T corridors as multimodal**;
- On behalf of the interoperability and efficiency of the Trans-European transport to insist thoroughly on **common minimum parameters** for TEN-T corridors and enforce consistently their fulfilment;
- In the interest of efficiency regarding the use of limited sources, it is necessary to better define terms such as „**projects of European interest**“, „**elimination of the cross-border bottleneck**“ etc.;
- In the interest of **interconnection of national networks** (especially across the former external EU borders) to concentrate on financial participation of the European budget and methodical support from the European Commission, especially aiming at the cross-borders stages;
- In the interest of simplification, the preparation and development of Trans-European transport connections should be completed as corridors with common parameters and especially their cross-border stages **to harmonize the plan and preparation mechanisms of individual member states** (financing, territorial planning, documentation for building permissions, EIA, CBA etc.);
- In the interest of efficiency regarding the European transport policy as a whole, to enforce a **higher rate of obligation** of targets stated at the European level;
- In the interest of reaching the European transport policy objectives to enforce a **higher rate of „the enforcement“** of commonly determined objectives on the side of member states;
- To enforce in the same interest a **higher rate** of the European transport policy **regarding the common budget**;

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- To create conditions for the **use of new financial instruments** (advantageous loans, obligations, PPP);
- To determine rules for well-founded, transparent and fair **payment for using the infrastructure**, and the priority use of the incomes for re-investing into the development infrastructure.

What should be the priorities for investment?

- **Removal of bottlenecks, especially in the cross-borders stages** with regard to the European interest and issues where the role of the EU is irreplaceable;
- **Development of the TEN-T network as multimodal** in order to increase the efficiency of especially Trans-European transport and also the efficiency of the common market;
- **To increase traffic security and to reduce negative impacts** especially on the environment.

(6) Coordinated procedures

Effective action requires coordination between different levels of government: what can the EU do to facilitate this process and avoid inconsistent approaches?

- **To use thoroughly the Institute of European Coordinators** (see the Decision no. 884/2004 EC) regarding especially the enforcement of „corridor access “ and simplification of the preparation of cross-border TEN-T network stages because our experiences show that the appreciation of „the European added value “ of Trans-European corridors on the side of national governments is low and different mechanisms for project preparations complicate the preparation and development of Trans-European corridors as integrated stages of the same standard.

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