

TEN-T: A policy review

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Author: Karl Schmude

(with contributions from the CPMR-BSC Transport Working Group)

0. Background

The Directorate-General for Transport and Energy (DG TREN) of EU Commission has put forward a "Green Paper" on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). Stakeholders from all over Europe are invited to give their comments until 30. April 2009, cf.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/consultations/2009_04_30_ten_t_green_paper_en.htm

The Green Paper calls for a fundamental review of the TEN-T policy, taking into account several flaws of current policies. Thirteen open questions are raised. The Transport Working Group of CPMR-BSC has decided to contribute to this debate, taking into account especially the situation of its member regions and the positions developed so far.

We will be happy to discuss these issues with other stakeholders across Europe and with DG TREN where and when appropriate.

I. Key messages

- (1) CPMR-BSC shares the observation that a fundamental review of TEN-T policy is needed. This also includes a review of current priority projects.
- (2) CPMR-BSC shares the concept that future TEN-T policy has to integrate infrastructure, service and innovation aspects, and that it should be better aligned with the non-infrastructure elements of European Transport Policy.
- (3) CPMR-BSC underlines that future TEN-T policy has to reflect the fundamental political and socio-economic changes of EU, of its neighbours and worldwide after 1989 which have opened threefold challenges in the field of transport:
 - (a) Eastern Germany, Sweden, Finland, Poland, the three Baltic States and several other states in Central and Eastern Europe have become EU members.
 - (b) The eastern EU neighbours Russia, Ukraine and Belarus have undergone a transition to market-oriented economies, and their integration with EU economy is growing.
 - (c) The Baltic Sea Region could become a major gateway for global trade flows between Asia and Europe via the Transsiberian Railway and other east-west oriented corridors.

- (4) CPMR-BSC favours the proposed mix of “comprehensive network”, coherent “priority network” and “conceptual pillar”. However, it proposes a clearer setup as regards the geographical scope, the implementation of policy objectives, the selection of projects and the role of innovation.
- (5) CPMR-BSC proposes that user-oriented pilot projects on the comprehensive network which integrate infrastructure, service and innovative elements should be more strongly supported. One of these concepts is the international “green freight transport corridor”.
- (6) CPMR-BSC underlines the key importance of shortsea shipping and of adequate hinterland connections to the ports. Both have to be further developed under a clear users’ perspective: Taking a ferry must be as easy as taking a bridge. This also implies that high-volume ferry / RoRo connections will be integral part of the TEN-T comprehensive and priority networks.
- (7) CPMR-BSC strongly suggests the selection of projects in the “conceptual pillar” not to be based on a pure cost-benefit analysis alone, which would result in projects only on high-volume links with a high return on investment. Instead, core objectives of European Policy should be reflected in the assessment, which will essentially be a multi-criteria analysis aiming at “European Added Value”.
- (8) CPMR-BSC recognizes the need for road user charges on heavily loaded elements of the TEN-T where appropriate, at the same time urging for public support of rail service and infrastructure, e.g. through long-term service contracts. EU’s role should be threefold:
 - a) Design the legal framework for infrastructure, service and innovation;
 - b) Support projects for international and cross-border transport (= internal market), support projects in peripheral regions (= cohesion objectives + raw materials policy);
 - c) Support pilot solutions on the comprehensive network, implement standardized innovative solutions on the core network.

II. Answers to the questions put forward in the Green Paper

The Green Paper gives an account of TEN-T policy until today, and of major challenges.

Question #1:

Should the Commission's assessment of TEN-T development to date cover any other factors?

In general, the green paper has assessed the TEN-T development correctly.

However, due attention should be paid to the fundamental political changes in Europe and globally which have taken place in the last 20 years, and which have dramatically enlarged the EU common market and augmented transport flows. Just to name a few changes which have particularly affected the Baltic Sea Region:

(1) EU enlargements 1990, 1994, 2004, 2007 and EU integration („Schengen“)

In 1990, both German states were united, adding 18 million inhabitants to EU.

In 1994, the highly developed countries Sweden and Finland accessed the Union (together with Austria), adding a new maritime perspective to EU transport flows – the overwhelming majority of the Swedish and Finnish industry output is transported by short-sea shipping across the Baltic Sea. Both countries have large regions with low population density and long distances, leading to low efficiency of public transport and a special role of regional air transport. Large quantities of raw materials for instance in mining and forestry are leading to large freight flows, benefitting the entire Union. Finally, harsh climatic conditions especially in

the north lead to high investment and maintenance costs (e.g. frost damage, icebreaking) which have been new to EU so far.

In 2004, another 70+ million inhabitants and fast growing economies entered the Union. Four states among the newcomers (PL, LT, LV, EE) have important ports in the Baltic Sea, which further increases the role of the Baltic Sea as a transport route, be it for intra-EU trade, trade with Russia or as the "last mile" for global trade flows.

The accession of RO and BG to the Union in 2007 adds to the already steadily growing transport volumes in North-South direction.

The Schengen border regime which encompasses all EU member states on the Baltic Sea since 2007 has added another impetus to freight and passenger flows. Remarkably enough, "Schengen" is a major reason for the low competitiveness of rail and sea transport against road: Today, trains and ships have to undergo lengthy procedures at borders between Schengen countries whereas trucks may pass without even stopping.

(2) New neighbours, new markets in the east – new challenges for transport

Not only has EU changed fundamentally, but also its neighbours have. Most remarkable is the overwhelming role of Russia, having become a market economy and participating in the global markets: In terms of population, economy and transport volumes, Russia is playing in the same league as the entire EU. Approx. 40% of the sea transport in the Baltic has Russia as origin or destination.

So far, the lion's share of Russian imports over sea is transported via transit ports in FI, EE, LV and LT. Current Russian transport policy, however, is aiming at a shift towards her own ports, and it is in the Russian ports of the Baltic that perhaps the largest port development in Europe is taking place. Just to take an example: The port of Ust-Luga near the Estonian border is being developed from scratch, with a planned capacity of 120 million tons p.a. after completion, and with an entirely new town of approx. 35,000 to house those who are dependent on it.

More attention has to be paid to administrative bottlenecks EU / Russia: Unnecessary delays or costs in freight transport are not only caused by inadequate infrastructure, but by an organisational mismatch ("administrative bottleneck"). This issue is too important to be displaced to specialists' fora – it should get a central place in future EU Transport Policy.

Besides Russia, the integration of other eastern EU neighbours BY, UA and to a certain extent TR into the world markets lead to rising trade and transport flows in the Baltic Sea Region.

Further, the Northern Transport Axis (NTA) has to be integrated with EU Transport Policy. It is of utmost importance for the Baltic Sea Region, and it must be brought together with sea links and land transport axes. The current situation where NTA, Motorways of the Sea and TEN-T axes seem to be different concepts is far from being satisfactory.

(3) New global transport flows

Current global transport flows where the lion's share of containerised cargo is shipped to the already heavily loaded ports in the Antwerp – Hamburg range should be challenged. European transport policies have to take into account the possible gateway function of the Baltic Sea Region for intercontinental container trade and for long-distance land transports from Asia via Transsiberian Railway, TRACECA and other corridors.

(4) Conclusion for the Baltic Sea Region

All in all, there is no region in Europe which has undergone such dramatic changes during the last 20 years as the Baltic Sea Region. EU has considerably enlarged north- and eastwards with all its consequences, it has remarkably augmented its maritime dimension, and the neighbours have changed dramatically. Future transport policies should be aware of this.

As result of the development described, there is a high-capacity ferry / RoRo network in the Southern Baltic which is highly developed and still increasing in North-South direction, and somewhat premature and rapidly expanding in W-E-direction. It should play a vital role for shifting international transport from road to sea, for opening and sustaining new trade possibilities with neighbours and third countries, and for shifting part of the global trade flows.

Concerning the TEN-T policy up to date as point of departure for the Green Paper, CPMR-BSC doubts that all current priority projects are in line with current and future requirements, and whether their "European added value" is as high as requested by the new TEN-T approach. Some of these projects have been conceived decades ago, when the world looked quite different, and with a predominant focus upon costly infrastructure instead of the clever mix of infrastructure, service and innovative elements which is on the agenda now. There might be new demands, better solutions or projects with greater community benefits: All priority projects should be under scrutiny, without taboos.

The Green Paper recalls pros and cons of the current comprehensive TEN-T network.

Question #2:

What further arguments are there for or against maintaining the comprehensive network, and how could the respective disadvantages of each approach be overcome?

Two major arguments can be put forward to maintain the comprehensive network:

- The comprehensive network is the backbone of European transport, covering almost all European regions. With their major transport infrastructure being part of the TEN-T, they may have easier access for private and community funding of this infrastructure (in case that the investment projects defined match the "European added value" mentioned later in the green paper), and therefore for greater credibility of EU transport policy throughout the entire Union.
- Besides maintaining and enhancing the infrastructure, the comprehensive network should be primary target of non-infrastructure EU transport policies: Community policy objectives such as road transport safety, ease of access to terminals and nodes, social and environmental standards, user-friendliness of the network etc., but also pilot projects in transport-related fields such as ITS applications, alternative traction, user charging etc. should not be restricted to a narrow "core network".

To make it short: The comprehensive network will be visible in all regions of the Union, having a high infrastructure and service quality and being testing ground for new solutions.

The Green Paper then elaborates on a possible future "priority network".

Question #3:

Would this kind of priority network approach be better than the current priority projects approach? If not, why not and what are the particular strengths of the latter? If so, what (further) benefits could it bring, and how should it be developed?

The current priority projects are a mix of existing high-quality infrastructure, of infrastructure which has to be enhanced considerably and of infrastructure which has to be built from the scratch. This is clearly visible especially in the longer land-based "projects", such as the priority projects #1 (railway axis Berlin – Palermo) or #22 (railway axis Nürnberg / Dresden - ... - Athens). To name such concepts "projects" is misleading: Already now, it would be more appropriate to speak of "axes", "corridors" or whatever.

The proposed “priority network” approach adds a clear perspective for intermodality and interoperability. It closely resembles the “transnational axes” which have been defined to integrate EU-internal and external networks¹. For these reasons, it is highly welcome.

For the Baltic Sea Region, the CPMR-BSC transport working group has postulated earlier that to take a ferry must be as easy as to use a bridge. This adds a clear user perspective and a service dimension to the TEN-T, which have so far (mistakenly) been regarded as being pure infrastructure. The CPMR-BSC urges an equal treatment of high-volume ferry connections in the future priority network: The priority network axes should be extended over sea where appropriate, and a user-oriented service on these connections should be in EU's policy focus.

The Green Paper describes a “conceptual pillar” for the TEN-T which allows for a selection of business-driven, service-oriented projects aiming at a better use of existing infrastructure and allowing for a certain degree of flexibility.

Question #4:

Would this kind of flexible approach to identifying projects of common interest 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?

The “conceptual pillar” is basically an analytical framework for project assessment. It comes near to a large-scale public tender on EU level where investment projects, but also proposals for new services and innovative solutions on the TEN-T have to be benchmarked for their cost-benefit ratio, for their user-friendliness, for EU policy objectives and for other criteria (“European added value”) in order to receive Community support.

This seems to be a good idea, and it may be close to what was intended by the “Motorways of the Sea” initiative (which had some shortcomings, but this does not play a role here). Main advantage is the flexibility towards future needs and the clear user-oriented link between infrastructure and services. Further, a better use of existing infrastructure may contribute to saving taxpayers' money. And finally, such an approach should not necessarily be restricted to the “priority network” alone, but could be applied also to the “comprehensive network”.

A major drawback is the risk that not automatically the “best” projects, but rather those with the most clever consultants who draft the application may win the competition for EU funding – and that considerable additional paperwork can be expected, as it has been the case with the “Motorways of the Sea” initiative.

A few more open questions are: What happens at land borders to third countries – will transport links e.g. to Russia get the attention they deserve? How can the selection process and the underlying method be made transparent and understandable for everyone (no “black box”), yet at the same time represent the state-of-the-art?

Most critical for CPMR-BSC, however, is the following: Transport links with low interest from providers of infrastructure and service, e.g. because of high running costs, low transport volume and low return-on-investment, may generate not a single project proposal. A transport policy relying too heavily on these narrow investors' interests will lead (again) to a concentration of investment in the European core, grossly conflicting with cohesion objectives. This calls for a clever assessment frame which takes into account not only return-on-investment, but also cohesion and other Community objectives (“European added value”).

¹ Cf. http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/extending_networks/extending_networks_en.htm

The Green Paper recalls the differences between freight and passenger transport, the role of airports, ports and waterborne transport, and the importance of freight logistics.

Question #5:

How can the different aspects outlined above be best taken into account within the overall concept of future TEN-T development? What further aspects should be taken into consideration?

The aspects mentioned call for an integrated approach, materializing in user-oriented concepts. One of these is the “green freight transport corridor” approach which closely links infrastructure, service and innovative elements (e.g. ITS applications).

Although we do not know yet which elements could or should be part of such a corridor, and whether these elements are rather to be financed by the state or by user-charging, the following issues shall be highlighted here:

- As discussed above, the entire comprehensive TEN-T network should be used to enforce EU transport policy objectives which go beyond pure infrastructure. In addition, it should be “testing ground” for innovative solutions with a clear user-perspective.
- The future integrated transport system has to take into account the maritime dimension including hinterland links to the ports: A coherent system of roads, railways, freight terminals and ports, frequent and “greener” ferry and RoRo services and air connections has to be part of the future TEN-T. Particular attention will have to be paid to rail and sea transport, to the efficiency of intermodal hubs and to the clients’ perspective: Taking a ferry must be as easy as to use a bridge.
- User-oriented and stakeholder-driven pilot projects on international routes, e.g. on the “East-West Transport Corridor” via the ports of Karlshamn / Sassnitz and Klaipeda / Baltijsk, on the north-south link “SCANDRIA” via the ports of Gedser / Trelleborg and Rostock / Sassnitz, and on the “Bothnian Corridor” connecting the Northern Transport Axis to the Nordic Triangle in SE and FI will show how these green corridors can work. Such and other pilot projects should be supported and evaluated for a wider audience.
- International green transport corridors may require new institutional arrangements, such as a much closer cooperation of national authorities, or even a transnational corridor management. Although the scope of these arrangements is yet unclear, similar concepts of EU transport policy build upon such an approach – e.g. the “one-stop shop” for freight transport customers, the “intermodal freight integrator”, “eFreight”, the “freight railway network” and the “maritime space without borders”².
- Climate change is an enormous challenge for the transport sector³, and there is no convincing solution in sight which would allow us to perpetuate current freight and passenger transport patterns at no climate impact. Even EU’s 20/20/20 objectives seem to be quite ambitious when applied to the transport sector.
Whichever the future vehicles and propulsion techniques may be – it is a safe guess that the comparison made in the 2002 White Paper between the different transport modes according to their specific energy consumption still will hold true in future: If climate protection is to be taken serious, a shift of modes towards rail and sea and a lower transport intensity of EU economies is what we need.
- Rail freight has considerable environmental advantages, and it is quite cost-efficient on the long haul. Consequently, international freight railway corridors⁴ should be promoted, and

² Freight Transport Logistics Plan, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/2007_logistics_en.htm

³ “Future of Transport” initiative, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/2009_future_of_transport_en.htm

“Greening Transport” package, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/2008_greening_transport_en.htm

⁴ Rail Freight Oriented Network, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/infrastructures/rail_freight_oriented_network_en.htm

CPMR-BSC is ready to discuss this concept in the Baltic Sea Region – especially given the special role of raw resources in the far north for the entire EU. Freight railway corridors which serve major ferry / RoRo ports or which contain a "sea leg" should be given special attention. Concerning rail passenger transport, negative side-effects on these corridors should be prevented.

The Green Paper supports a more active integration of ITS into the TEN-T policy.

Question #6:

How can ITS, 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?

ITS will be an important tool for the development of the future high quality transport system⁵. The development of ITS must be supported, and all relevant information in the transport and traffic sector should be made available for different users. This requires a standardized multimodal information system for both freight and passenger traffic, and it could also entail a new management structure.

It has been demonstrated that one of the major barriers to a wide application of ITS in the transport sector is the fear of individual users and business to lose control of their data, and of public authorities to use the data for other purposes than for enhancing the performance of the transport network. These questions have to be tackled first and foremost.

Equally important is the need for better standardization, or at least for designing interfaces which enable existing systems to communicate with each other.

As proposed, the comprehensive network should be the geographical basis for selection of pilot projects on these issues.

The Green Paper makes a point that some innovations (e.g. "intelligent vehicles") and new propulsion techniques may shift the borderlines between infrastructure and vehicles.

Question #7:

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?

The discussion about "shifting borderlines" is largely semantic.

In the course of transport history, it is a common phenomenon that vehicles and infrastructure are subject to co-evolution and higher integration. However, this does not mean that the borders between both are shifting. Just to name a few examples: One may think of funiculars, rack railways, driver-less metros, maglev systems and podcars, but also of the first generation of automatic railway safety schemes (block check) and the devices which enable a plane to land safely at zero sight without a pilot's interference. In all these cases, the vehicles have special "innovative" equipment on board or are highly specialised, but hardly anyone would regard the vehicles or their equipment as part of the infrastructure.

⁵ ITS Action Plan - http://ec.europa.eu/transport/its/road/action_plan_en.htm
GALILEO - http://ec.europa.eu/transport/galileo/index_en.htm

In addition, it has been a long and tedious process to convince the railway sector and some national governments that railway network ("infrastructure") and operations ("vehicles") can and should be separated, thus opening the rail transport market for competition. In advocating a backward roll, EU-COM will jeopardize the ongoing railway reforms.

We therefore propose not to mix both concepts.

If it seems appropriate to make Community funding available for vehicles or their equipment, it is better to declare this openly. There are good arguments for it.

The Green Paper suggests the (geographical) "priority network" and the "conceptual pillar" described before to be brought together in what is to be called the "core network".

Question #8:

Would this kind of core network be "feasible" at Community level, and what would be its advantages and disadvantages? What methods should be applied for its conception?

The core network is the clear consequence of what has been described and discussed before, and the advantages of that concept prevail.

It is however not easy to make the equation "priority network" + "conceptual pillar" = "core network". The following setup would be much more convincing:

- The comprehensive network is the geographical TEN-T network as it is today, including its nodes (ports etc., terminals etc.) and links across the sea.
On this network, certain principles of EU transport policy (safety etc.), but also of other EU policies ("20/20/20 until 2020" etc.) are promoted.
Proposals for investment and service projects on this comprehensive network will be subject to a selection process under certain criteria ("European added value").
In addition, the comprehensive network will be testing ground for pilot projects and innovative solutions.
- The core network is a coherent high-quality, high-capacity selection from the comprehensive network. This is the real backbone of EU transport.
On this network, certain principles of EU transport policy, but also of other EU policies are enforced with highest priority. This is especially true for everything which has to do with intermodality, interoperability and international transport.
Proposals for investment and service projects on this core network will be subject to a selection process under certain criteria as above, having priority access to EU funding.
In addition, the core network will be primary target for the implementation of standardized innovative solutions directed at more efficient international transport (ERTMS etc.).

The Green Paper recalls the need for establishing a sound financial basis for the comprehensive and the core network.

Question #9:

How can the financial needs of TEN-T as a whole – in the short, medium and long term – be established? What form of financing – public or private, Community or national – best suits what aspects of TEN-T development?

Question #10:

What assistance can be given to Member States to help them fund and deliver projects under their responsibility? Should private sector involvement in infrastructure delivery be further encouraged? If so, how?

It is quite clear that road investment and maintenance has to be supported by user-charging, at least on heavily loaded corridors⁶ and in metropolitan areas. This has proven successful on the motorway network in e.g. France, Italy, Austria and Germany, on selected links in Denmark, Norway and Sweden and in the metropolitan areas of London and Stockholm. Road pricing measures, however, should not increase the cost of production in peripheral regions.

In contrast, rail infrastructure and services will continue to be dependent on public support, since full-cost prices would scare customers off. A policy of supporting railways can be easily justified by their public benefits in terms of safety, efficient use of space, electric traction which allows for a free choice of power generation etc. This support should not take the form of lump sums to be given to inefficient, state-owned giants. Instead, tenders will have to be carried out which lead to a higher quality at lower costs and under competitive conditions, as it has been demonstrated with regional passenger transport in e.g. Sweden and Germany.

All in all, Community action has to be threefold:

- EU designs the legal framework for the entire transport policy, as regards infrastructure, service and innovation, thus providing a clear guidance for future public and private spending. This accounts for e.g. external cost allocation in road transport, higher competition in rail and air transport, competitive elements in the selection of large-scale shortsea shipping projects (Motorways of the Sea), standardisation of ITS applications, role of state aid and public service obligations (PSO) etc. pp.

- Community funding can not play a prominent role on all elements of the network. Highly overloaded corridors in the European core or around larger cities may find their funds anyway, be it from the national purse or from user-generated revenues. Elements of the network inside member states which serve mostly national transport needs will have to be left to the member states.

EU funding should especially be directed at international and cross-border transport (internal market objectives), and towards transport links in peripheral regions (raw material supply and cohesion objectives). CPMR-BSC especially wishes to recall here that the northern part of the Baltic Sea Region is rich in natural resources, thus an investment in the relevant freight transport links is very much in line with the internal market and with EU's raw materials policy⁷.

Selection principles for these investment, service and innovation projects should be clear and convincing. If properly set up, they can be a guidance also for those projects which are conceived and financed by member states themselves, without Community funding.

- As said before, pilot projects and innovative actions in the field of transport, notably with a clear user-perspective, should be tested on selected corridors of the comprehensive network, before they are standardised and enforced on the core network.

The Green Paper presents the various Community financial instruments and proposes a cost-benefit analysis to assess the "European added value".

Question 11:

What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing Community financial instruments, and are new ones needed (including "innovative" instruments)? How could the combined use of funds from various Community resources be streamlined to support TEN-T implementation?

The proposed analysis for all projects to establish "European added value", regardless of the form of Community funding, sounds convincing.

⁶ External costs - http://ec.europa.eu/transport/sustainable/2008_external_costs_en.htm

Tolls etc - http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road/road_charging/tolls_user_charges_vehicles_en.htm

⁷ Raw Materials Initiative - http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/non_energy_extractive_industries/raw_materials.htm

It has however to be clear that this analysis has to take the form of an “extended” cost-benefit assessment, taking into account especially cohesion objectives (as it is the case in peripheral regions) and environmental considerations. In other words: Costs and benefits in the light of Community policy objectives are different from a private investor's view or that of a bank.

The Green Paper recalls the success of non-financial instruments, such as European coordinators, and proposes their wider application.

Question 12:

How could existing non-financial instruments be improved and what new ones might be introduced?

The proposals set forth in the Green Paper seem to be very reasonable, and the vision e.g. of “green corridors” to be treated as a whole is quite attractive. This would entail, as we see it, corridors which include a “sea leg”, in contrast to the current priority projects.

The Green Paper ends with three options for further TEN-T development: (1) Maintaining the current “dual layer” structure with non-connected priority projects, (2) reducing TEN-T to a “single layer” and getting rid of the comprehensive network, and finally (3) designing the ensemble of comprehensive network, priority network and the “conceptual pillar”.

Question 13:

Which of these options is the most suitable, and for what reason?

As discussed above, the third option is to be preferred.

Reasons have been given already, notably in the answers to Q2 (maintain the comprehensive network), Q3 (create coherent “priority network” including high-capacity ferry connections), Q4 (supporting the “conceptual pillar”, however taking into account more than return-on-investment) and Q8 (clear distinction between network, its underlying principles and projects in the fields of infrastructure, service and innovation).

CPMR-BSC likes to reiterate that the “core network” approach must not lead to a situation where the entire political attention and all resources are devoted to prestige projects in the Pentagon (as it has been the case with the “PBKAL” highspeed rail network). Quite on the contrary: Proper transport links have to be provided also for peripheral regions,

- in order to implement the single market,
- to put cohesion objectives into practice,
- and to counteract the trend towards an ever-increasing growth of European metropolises and a gradual fading of the role of smaller and medium-sized towns all over Europe.