

## **Position paper on the future trans-European transport network policy**

**Project response to the Commission working document, COM(2010) 212 final, Brussels,  
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### **Introduction**

TransBaltic is a strategic project co-funded by the Baltic Sea Region Programme 2007-2013. It is partnered by several regional authorities, transport and logistics-related research institutions, transport operators, logistics associations and pan-Baltic organisations, including CMPR Baltic Sea Commission, CMPR North Sea Commission, Baltic Sea States Subregional Cooperation, Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association, Baltic Development Forum and Baltic Ports Organisation.

The overall objective of TransBaltic is to provide regional level incentives for the creation of a comprehensive multimodal transport system in the BSR. This is to be achieved by means of joint transport development measures and jointly implemented business concepts.

TransBaltic closely cooperates with the transport ministries in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The project adds a sustainable regional development dimension to the harmonisation actions set forth in Priority Area 11 and investigates pre-requisites to enhance the gateway function of the Region in serving intercontinental freight flows, in particular to and from Asia.

One of the activity areas in the TransBaltic project is to provide feedback to the Commission concepts within the framework of the transport and cohesion policies and to demonstrate such solutions stemming from those policies that respect the specificity of the Baltic Sea Region and the need for its economic, social and territorial cohesion.

## General statements

The TransBaltic project welcomes with satisfaction the reoriented focus of the TEN-T policy from single modes in separation from one another - to integrity and multimodality. Such an approach, in a macroregional scale (Baltic Sea Region), is at the heart of TransBaltic as seen in its subtitle.

Further, noteworthy is cross-sectoral positioning of the TEN-T network as an agent to help fulfil a wide number of goals. One of the listed goals refers to the ensuring of economic, social and territorial cohesion, as derived from the EU Cohesion Policy.

The European Commission's Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion classifies transport among sector policies that bear a distinct territorial impact. The Territorial Agenda of the European Union claims that mobility and accessibility are key pre-requisites for economic development in all regions of the EU. To meet the requirements for mobility in a polycentric European territory, it is important to secure integrated and sustainable development of multimodal transport systems.

However, any policy dedicated to the shaping of integrated multimodal transport systems, including the TEN-T policy, must be aware of particular territorial cohesion challenges. These have been in particular perceived in a rich territorial diversity of the European Union, which makes it unfeasible to plan and run one-fits-all solutions. Therefore, the new paradigm of the EU Cohesion Policy, so called place-based approach, accentuates a need for policy solutions tailored to the specificity of given territories. These policies need to exploit locally existent development potentials and connect them across the space. An applicable scale of reference for such territorially-bound policies is functional macroregions.

It is hence essential to review the applicability of the proposed TEN-T policy in specific conditions of one such territory, namely the Baltic Sea Region. Further, the new TEN-T planning methodology needs to strike a right balance between the top-down and the bottom-up approaches. The latter should allow for involvement of regional and local stakeholders in the detailed planning and in implementation of policy guidelines.

## TEN-T planning methodology

*Q1: Are the principles and criteria for designing the core network, as set out above, adequate and practicable? What are their strengths and weaknesses, and what else could be taken into account? To what extent do the supplementary infrastructure measures contribute to the objectives of a future-oriented transport system, and are there ways to strengthen their contribution? What specific role could TEN-T planning in general play in boosting the transport sector's contribution to the "Europe 2020" strategic objectives?*

The consultation paper specifies a number of principles and criteria for designing the core network that span from operational through functional features, both within and beyond the very domain of the transport sector. The configuring work is deemed to be based on geographical approach.

However, in the current specification it is difficult to distinguish the principles from the criteria and to build relations between them. To exemplify, the 'multimodality of the network' is listed in both, while the 'environmental and climate change issues' criterion is largely replicated in the 'sustainability' principle later on.

1. In order to make the specification of the principles and criteria workable, it must be rearranged in compliance with clear definitions of those two terms. In that respect, a 'principle' seems a superior term denoting a common rule that should desirably be followed. A 'criterion', in turn, is a concrete denominator by which individual objects can be compared and judged. Thereby, the criteria should result from the principles and allow for measuring the performance of those parts of the TEN-T comprehensive network that apply for the core network status.
2. Understandably, the current consultation proposal contains mere aspects that need to be taken into account while constructing the principles and criteria. Looking at the proposed range, it needs to be supplemented with the following items:
  - **Accessibility** (in the sense - to what extent the proposed link/axis mitigates the distant location of remote/peripheral territories, with weaker transport flows and fewer route and service options, which results in higher transport costs),
  - **Connectivity of the EU neighbouring countries** (how the proposed link/axis spans the high-capacity networks of the EU and the adjacent countries - in concordance with the 2007 Communication from the European Commission on 'Guidelines for transport in Europe and neighbouring region', see also the High Level Group Report from 2005),

- **Impact on the regional growth** (to what extent the proposed link/axis is vital for the sustainable development of the region it crosses)
  - **Greener transport** (to what extent the proposed link/axis contributes to the development of greener transport solutions, in particular rail and maritime transport, see also point 6 below).
3. In the territorial cohesion perspective, the future core network should secure a right balance between traffic demand in central areas of the EU and accessibility of its peripheral areas. Due to visible differences in functions, capacities and volumes of the transport network between the old and the new Members States, the criteria shall be **sensitive to place specificity** - that is to allow for lower performance values in the latter and in sparsely populated areas. In effect, all EU regions should be provided with an appropriate access to the core network. Thus, the planning methodology for the core network shall address missing links in the infrastructure development.
  4. The internal structure of the core network will contain hubs (main and intermediate) consisting of cities, ports, airports and intermodal interface points. The latter should also comprise **dry ports**, understood as a part of a seaports moved some 30-200 km into the hinterland in order to satisfy the customers demand and at the same time to ease operational constraints (e.g. traffic bottlenecks in the main port area). Several container ports around the Baltic Sea encounter problems with the lack of space, queuing times, hampered road access and low share of rail transport mode in cargo supply. For that reason dry ports, located in the proximity to TEN-T links, could offer an additional capacity to the container ports.
  5. The future-oriented transport system should allow for integration of specific initiatives, so far kept separate in the transport policy domain. While dedicated rail freight corridors are already decided for assimilation in the new TEN-T network, the concept of **green corridors** has not been yet adequately absorbed in the policy planning process. With the purpose to optimise transport chains (using inter alia intelligent transport solutions), remove bottlenecks, reduce congestion and environmental pollution, and convey long-haul traffic - integration of the green corridor concept in the TEN-T planning process will boost contribution from the transport sector to the strategic objectives inscribed in the "Europe 2020" document. With an ongoing work on developing selection criteria and key performance indicators (7FP 'Supergreen' project and several BSR Programme projects, like: EWTC II, TransBaltic and Scandria), the green corridor concept can be operationalised.
  6. Consequently, all TEN-T links belonging to the core network shall strive to become green corridors. Whenever relevant (e.g. in case of macroregions with large water basins like the

Baltic Sea), Motorways of the Sea links shall be regarded as integral, **maritime sections of the green corridors**.

7. Although the TEN-T policy should concentrate on major infrastructural challenges, supplementary innovative measures need also to be taken into account. By means of intelligent solutions, they can more efficiently use capacities of infrastructure and in this way to address the policy objective of decarbonisation of transport. Application of those measures shall be governed by a principle of flexibility that is to align to specific mobility needs of different countries and regions.

### TEN-T financing issues

*Q2: In which way can the different sources of EU expenditure be better coordinated and/or combined in order to accelerate the delivery of TEN-T projects and policy objectives? How can an EU funding strategy coordinate and/or combine the different sources of EU and national funding and public and private financing? Would the setting up of a European funding framework adequately address the implementation gap in the completion of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?*

1. TransBaltic project intends to deliver a regional transport action plan, which will address the development of an integrated multimodal transport system in the Baltic Sea Region from the perspective of sustainable regional development and territorial cohesion. The plan will contain investment and optimisation measures for an enhanced transport gateway function and better internal connectivity of this macroregion. The proposals will be submitted to respective stakeholders in search for funding.
2. In that particular context, success of the TransBaltic effort will rely not only on a coordinated policy framework at the EU level but also on availability of a **consistent funding mechanism**, which would create better opportunities for identifying and deploying projects of European value. Such a 'European value' label would, however, require installing an **efficient monitoring system** to trace performance of the policy objectives and meeting of targets by individual projects.
3. In compliance with the place-based approach derived from the territorial cohesion sphere, such mechanism shall be **flexible** and sophisticated enough to accommodate projects reflecting specificity of various parts of the EU territory. One particular idea to be further considered is to

enable some **territorial sub-management** of such a funding mechanism for TEN-T projects, which would better address inconsistencies from the transnational perspective at the level of functional macroregions.

4. Nevertheless, at the current stage of the planning process, it would not be advisable to concentrate financial resources exclusively on strengthening the core network, what will lead in consequence to the deepening of existing disparities in transport accessibility, competitiveness and coherence of the EU territory.

## **TEN-T legislation**

*Q3: In which way can the TEN-T policy benefit from the new legal instruments and provisions as set out above?*

No particular comments at this stage.

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