



## **Council conclusions on transport cooperation with the EU's neighbouring regions**

*3116th TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS and ENERGY Council meeting*

*Luxembourg, 6 October 2011*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

" The COUNCIL:

1. WELCOMES the Commission Communication "The EU and its neighbouring regions: A renewed approach to transport cooperation" putting forward actions to strengthen transport cooperation with neighbouring regions covered by both the Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policies;
2. RECALLS its conclusions on the enlargement strategy, adopted on 14 December 2010, as well as the ones on the EU's new approach to the European Neighbourhood Policy, adopted on 20 June 2011, and EMPHASISES the importance of better transport connections in achieving deeper economic integration and closer political association with the neighbouring regions;
3. CONSIDERS that better transport connections can be achieved through improved transport infrastructure and through closer market integration ensuring smooth travel for passengers and the efficient transport of goods, taking into account the specific geographical situation of Member States;
4. UNDERLINES that closer integration between the transport markets of the EU and its neighbours depends on each country's will and readiness to do so, and is conditional on neighbouring countries' progress in applying standards that are equivalent to those of the EU in areas such as safety, security, environment and social matters;

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5. RECOGNISES the importance of working together with neighbouring regions across all transport modes, including multimodal operations, to improve their safety, security, environmental and social performance and WELCOMES actions towards third countries aiming at extending the European Common Aviation Area, further removing barriers in maritime movement in and around Europe as well as aiming at non-discriminatory access to ports, increasing the interoperability of railways systems, facilitating transport of passengers and goods by streamlining border crossing, administrative and customs procedures for all transport modes;
6. STRESSES that improved transport infrastructure connections can be achieved through the implementation of strategic transport infrastructure networks and priority projects of common interest for the EU and the neighbouring countries, including motorways of the sea and access to multimodal nodes, that connect the Trans-European Transport Network with the infrastructure of neighbouring countries as well as those projects that improve regional networks and NOTES the need to take into account the forthcoming revision of the TEN-T guidelines in this context;
7. UNDERLINES the importance of using the existing financial resources for helping neighbouring countries to make reforms that are necessary for achieving better transport connections with the EU, such as the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) that can leverage funding from international financial institutions for the priority transport infrastructure projects, without prejudice to discussions on the next Multiannual Financial Framework;
8. HIGHLIGHTS the existing regional transport cooperation between the EU and its neighbours in the Western Balkans and ENCOURAGES the strengthening of this cooperation providing for the involvement of Member States aiming at further development of transport connections between the EU and that region on a well-balanced basis;
9. ENCOURAGES the EU to continue its cooperation in the Euromed transport framework under the auspices of the Union for the Mediterranean, with the aim of promoting concrete priority projects already identified within the Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network and LOOKS FORWARD to a second Conference of the Transport Ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean region;
10. RECOGNISES the need for a more structured cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries within an efficient and transparent framework and therefore LOOKS FORWARD to the establishment of an Eastern Partnership Transport Panel and its launch at the Eastern Partnership Ministerial Conference scheduled for 24-25 October 2011 in Krakow;
11. RECOGNISES the importance of other forms of regional cooperation, as well as cooperation with or within international fora and regional strategies, that contribute to improving transport relations between the EU and its Member States and all neighbouring regions;
12. INVITES the Commission to report to the Council on the progress made within these transport cooperation frameworks."