

### **INFORMATION NOTE BY CARLO SECCHI, ATLANTIC CORRIDOR COORDINATOR**

On 29 June 2015, the EU Transport Commissioner MS Bulc announced the outcome of so far the biggest CEF Call for Proposals launched in 2014. Given that the available amount was oversubscribed three times, strong focus and prioritisation was necessary to distribute the available €13,1 billion to the key transport projects with high EU added value such as cross-border sections and major missing links.

The Atlantic Corridor, for which I have been appointed as coordinator, has received a fundamental boost through it, ensuring a strong complementarity with naturally funded-projects, and providing support to cross-border sections on each side. It is noteworthy that the maritime component of the Corridor has also received adequate funding, according to the proposals received.

EU grants have been attributed also to studies needed to develop an important project pipeline for the next calls or for project financing, such as the restructuring of the Port of Lisbon (to ensure a better connection to the corridor and improved logistics along the whole Tagus area), the upgrading of the Aveiro-Salamanca connection, the Grand-Projet de Sud-Ouest between Bordeaux and the Spanish border.

The Commission selection has reaffirmed the priority role of these projects, and of the Atlantic corridor itself for its contribution to a Single European Transport area.. The proposed project will contribute to the main priorities for funding the main bottlenecks and major cross-border missing links and priorities of the TEN-T and the CEF. They are of fundamental European importance.

25 projects located on the Atlantic corridor have been proposed for funding by the European Commission with a global grant of around 950 million€, complemented by others branching Core Network sections to the Corridor (e.g.: Douro river navigability).

The Cohesion envelope of the call, which is available for Portugal (around 500 million€) has not been used yet, but the preparation of projects for the submission in the next call has started. I am expecting these funds to be fully allocated in the next call to the Corridor.

All the cross-border sections have need supported:

- the upgrading (including ERTMS) of the German rail section between the French border and Mannheim
- the Evora-Spanish border missing link between Madrid and Lisbon
- on the Aveiro-Salamanca, studies on the upgrading of the Portuguese section and electrification (to the same standard as in Portugal)- of the Spanish section
- the Y Basque and its connection to France, where the existing line is being upgraded and the new one ("GPSO") designed.

In addition, on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, Spain and Portugal signed a declaration to set a working group to jointly develop the interoperable rail network in the Iberian Peninsula, thus reinforcing the programming framework of these projects.

Maritime is a key component of the Corridor, and it has been endowed supporting the Inland / maritime accessibility of the Core Ports of Le Havre, Rouen, Bordeaux, Lisbon, and developing Bilbao and Leixões.

These projects, complemented by national sections currently developed (e.g.: Tours-Bordeaux), will substantially develop the corridor from now to 2020, leading every year to improved operations. Our primary goal will be to ensure their swift implementation and to rip the advantages they can deliver.