

Connecting Europe Express (CEE)

The CEE is a joint initiative of the European Commission and the CER (European Community of Rail), to celebrate the 2021 European Year of Rail and to replace the TEN-T Days in covid times to meet and debate with stakeholders (see details at www.connectingeuropeexpress.eu). The CEE departed on 2 September from Lisbon, after a conference on high-speed rail in which Prof. Secchi was a speaker. He onboarded the CEE with stops in Covilha, Vilar Formoso, Medina del Campo, Madrid, Hendaye and Bordeaux. On the train, he met and discussed with various stakeholders, including Portuguese Minister of Infrastructure Pedro Nuno. He also took part in exchanges of flags at different stops, handing over the EU flag and receiving flags of cities and regions in return. In Hendaye, he made a speech in which he referred to the symbolic dimension of the Irun-Hendaye cross-border connection and the need to upgrade and increase the speed of the existing line between Bordeaux and Hendaye before end 2030. He also spoke at the welcome ceremony of the CEE in Madrid, together with Spanish Secretary of State Isabel Pardo de Vera and high representatives of ADIF and RENFE. In Bordeaux, he met with President of the Region of Nouvelle Aquitaine Alain Rousset, President of Bordeaux Agglomération Alain Anziani as well as President of Port of Bordeaux Jean-Frédéric Laurent. He also met in Lisbon with Portuguese Secretary of State for rail&road transport Jorge Delgado and with Secretary of State for maritime&air transport Hugo Mendes. He will ride on the CEE again on 7 October, from Strasbourg to Paris where a closure ceremony will be held.



Military Mobility

The Multi-Annual Financial Framework for 2021-2027 was adopted in June and confirmed the budget for CEF2 at €25.8bn, of which a €1.5bn envelope for military mobility.

Dual uses were defined in a Commission Implementing Decision published on 10 August (see https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2021/1328/oj).

The projects which the Member States will submit under the military part of the CEF calls will be evaluated in a similar way as normal CEF projects, but there will be an additional assessment of their military dimension by the European Union Military Staff (EUMS), who is the source of military expertise within the European External Action Service (EEAS).

MFF 2021-2027 and CEF2 calls

The MFF for 2021-2027 was adopted in June with a budget for CEF2 of €25.8bn, split €13bn general, €11.3bn cohesion and €1.5bn military mobility.

The CEF2 2021 calls were published on 16 September (<https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/calls-proposals/2021-cef-transport-call-proposals-en>). The deadline for the submission of project proposals is **19 January 2022**. The budget allocation for these 2021 calls is €5175mi for general and cohesion grants, €1575mi for grants under the Alternative Fuels (blending) Infrastructure Facility and €330mi for military mobility.

Reminder: the climate proofing for infrastructure guidance adopted on 29 June is published at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2021:373:TOC>

Streamlining Directive

The famous Streamlining Directive was finally adopted on 7 July. It can be accessed in all EU languages at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1187/oj>.

It aims to accelerate the permit-granting procedure of TEN-T projects on the Corridors of which the total budget exceeds €300mi., and of projects on the pre-identified sections of the core network. Member States may decide to extend the scope on their territory.

While the Commission initially proposed a Regulation - which would have been directly applicable - and with more stringent obligations, it is already a good step forward!

Corridor Forum 23 November

After our last videoconference on 23 March, our next meeting of the Corridor Forum meeting will be on 23 November. Unfortunately, it will still be an online meeting ☹️ We should have the next meeting on 23 March 2022 in person in Brussels.

If some of you would like to come to Brussels on 23 November in person, please email me at isabelle.maes@ec.europa.eu and I will look into the possibility of a dual format, with some participants in person in a meeting room at DG MOVE and others online.

Corridor Studies

Corridor Studies have progressed very well with a new update including an update of the project list. The work will now focus on the preparation of the 5th Corridor Work Plan, for 2022-2023, which is due to be proposed to the Member States at Ministry level in December, before finalisation beginning of 2022. The studies evidence that the completion of the Atlantic Corridor is progressing well, with full compliance expected by end 2030 for road, inland waterways and maritime. For rail, a few misses are expected regarding electrification and track gauge, while for some projects the 2030 deadline is becoming challenging.

Revision of the TEN-T Regulation

The TEN-T Regulation was reviewed in 2020. On that basis, a revision process was started and the European Commission will propose a revised Regulation to Council and European Parliament on 14 December.

The revision involves a rather important change of the level of ambition of the Regulation, with strengthened technical standards. The proposal from the Commission will also involve the inclusion of a much larger number of urban nodes, some changes to the core and comprehensive networks and even changes to Corridors.

The process has included a consultation, as well as an impact assessment study and bilateral discussions with the Member States. Many direct contributions from stakeholders have also been received, including in the form of letters to Commissioner Valean.

More details to come.

CEF1 Reflow Call #2

On 15 July, the CEF Committee approved the selection of proposals to be co-funded under the CEF1 2020 call (Reflow 2), addressing studies on the Corridors in preparation of works. Compared to the official selection (see https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/publications/2020-cef-transport-map-call_en), some additional cohesion projects could get co-financed under the general envelope.

Selected projects on the Atlantic Corridor include studies related to: the Spanish ports of Bilbao, Huelva, Sevilla and Algeciras, the rail nodes of Toulouse and of Paris-St-Lazare and in Portugal the port of Leixoes, the rail section Poceirao-Bombel on the Lisboa-Madrid line and the new rail line Porto-Lisboa. Congratulations to the Member States and stakeholders involved!

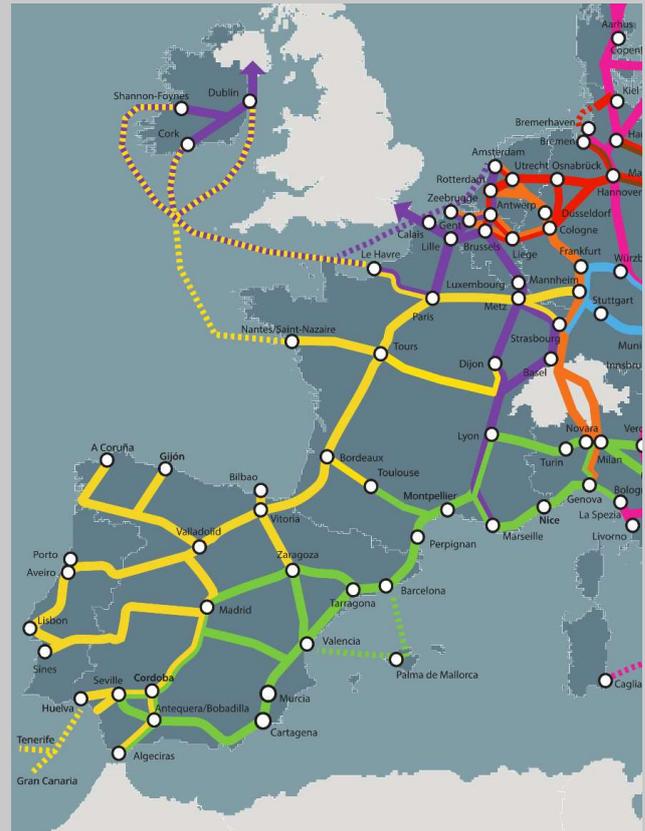
CINEA is preparing the grant agreements, which should all be signed with the beneficiaries by end 2021.

State of the Union address

Like every year in September, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen made her State of the Union speech on 15 September, looking back at the last achievements and forward at the challenges ahead. You can read it here in various EU languages: www.ec.europa.eu/soteu2021.

New Corridor's map

Now that the CEF2 Regulation has finally been adopted, the extensions to the Atlantic Corridor are also finally confirmed. Here is the new map and once again a short recap of the extensions :



1. New maritime links to the ports in the Canary Islands from the port of Huelva
2. New maritime links to the Irish ports (Dublin, Cork, Shannon Foyes) from the ports of Nantes-St-Nazaire and Le Havre
3. New rail/road branches in France: from Tours to Nantes-St-Nazaire, from Tours to Dijon and from Bordeaux to Toulouse
4. New rail/road branches in Spain: from Valladolid through Galicia to A Coruna and Gijon, and from Vitoria to Zaragoza
5. Inclusion of the Douro and Guadalquivir rivers