



**Joint contribution
of the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities-CAAC
and the Atlantic Arc Commission Transport Group-AATG**

**Submission to the consultation process opened by the DG of
Energy and Transport of the European Commission
concerning the Green Paper on the TEN-T
Policy Review - COM (2009) 44 final**

SUMMARY OF BACKGROUND ELEMENTS AND TEN-T POLICY ORIENTATIONS SINCE 2004

The European Commission, in the presence of Antonio Tajani, a vice-president of the Commission as well as European Commissioner for Transport, launched an extensive review of the Trans European Transport Network (TEN-T) in October 2008, which has led to the presentation of the Green Paper on the TEN-T in February 2009.

This review must make possible new political and economic perspectives in order to respond to the challenges raised by climate change, economic growth, and economic and social cohesion, in addition to strengthening Europe's international role. Based on 15 years of TEN-T experience and with a view to these new challenges, the Commission sets targets and proposes options for the future development of the TEN-T.

Until April 30 2009, the Commission is asking a wide range of agents for their opinion on these proposals, before deciding on legislative proposals and other measures to take. The Commission expects to carry out a review of the TEN-T guidelines as one of the major legislative proposals arising from the Green Paper.

Since 2004, the Atlantic Arc has been involved in several projects aimed at achieving two main goals: to improve the North-South road and rail connections in the Atlantic corridor, and to play a part in reducing CO₂ emissions. Of the 30 top-priority projects for the TEN-T, five relate to continental Europe and two are concerned with the United Kingdom and Ireland:

- High-speed rail axis in South Western Europe (Paris-Bordeaux-Lisbon-Madrid-Vitoria)
- Multimodal axis linking Portugal/Spain with the rest of Europe (mainly road, already executed)
- Paris-Madrid Sines/ Algeciras freight railway axis - (third Trans-Pyrenean corridor)
- Interoperability of the Iberian Peninsula high-speed lines
- Motorway of the Sea for Western Europe
- Rail axis linking Cork-Dublin-Belfast-Stranraer (Ireland)
- Main West Coast line in the United Kingdom

Due to the challenges of competitiveness, attraction and social cohesion, the Atlantic Arc cities and regions must be fully connected to the major European transport networks by 2030.

The Atlantic Area, apart from lagging behind capital regions in terms of development, is characterised by its relatively high degree of heterogeneity, especially between the North and South. It is supported by a network of medium-sized cities and is the main Europe seafront.

With this background, the Conference of Atlantic Arc Cities and the Transport Group of the Atlantic Arc Commission within the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe-CPMR, have joined forces to respond to the Commission in relation to the publication of the TEN-T Green Paper. In line with their role in economic growth and strengthening social and territorial cohesion, the cities and regions must play a key role in the definition and development of a new model for trans-European transport networks.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Atlantic agents applaud the publishing of the Green Paper on the revision of the trans-European transport networks. This review is highly important because it relates to a context in which **access to transport has become an essential condition for the development of the regions.**
2. While the Green Paper proposes broad strategic and conceptual guidelines, its review is especially resonant given the current circumstances:
 - **The economic crisis** in Europe demands a response from the European Union through support in major policy areas, of which transport network policies are one.
 - European citizens are questioning the priorities and raison d'être of the European Union. Thus it is timely to **reaffirm the strength of the European project's values** (social, environmental and economic) **and the fundamental involvement that the European Union aspires to have in this field.**
3. **The aim of this joint contribution is to offer, from the Atlantic Area as a whole, a conceptual focus on the major challenges that the review of the TEN-T must respond to.** This position is closely linked to the contribution made to the Green Paper on territorial cohesion and the major principles which the cities and regions of the Atlantic Arc adhere to. With respect to this, the TEN-T review must be a policy that enables the conceptual principles of territorial cohesion to be put into practice. That is:
 - **Solidarity among the different territorial levels with a view to reducing developmental differences** between (both at a domestic and European level) and within regions and cities, in order to favour the balanced and sustainable development of European territory.
 - **Equal access to services** (transport infrastructure, education and culture, health, environmental quality, energy, water, etc.) **for all European citizens regardless of geographic location with the same standards of quality.** A cohesive territory becomes integrated through flows of people, goods, services, information and knowledge that give it a strong ability to adapt to changes and occasional crises that may impact on it. In this context, the criteria of accessibility, understood in a broad sense (transport, IT and communications, services of common interest), become paramount.

4. **The review of the TEN-T is of key strategic importance for the Atlantic Arc and must incorporate European-scale policy goals.** The most optimistic scenarios promoting cohesion over competition forecast that the majority of the Atlantic coast regions will remain excluded from the most economically powerful parts of the EU, whose centre of gravity is tending to shift further east within the European continent. There is therefore a clear risk of marginalisation for this European "Land's End". Connecting the Atlantic Arc is therefore **a challenge** that must be posed, defended and supported at European Union level in the light of the risk of deepening social and economic differences with the rest of Europe.

I. THE TEN-T REVIEW MUST SERVE THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN EUROPEAN PROJECT MORE AMBITIOUS

Mobility of goods and people that respects the principles of sustainable development is a basic factor for growth, attraction and social and economic cohesion. In this sense, the TEN-T review must give rise to policies that make possible organisational strengthening at several levels.

1. The policies of the trans-European transport network have essentially tried to:
 - Provide the infrastructure necessary for the smooth operation of the internal market and to achieve the objectives of the Lisbon strategy,
 - Help to guarantee accessibility and reinforce social and territorial cohesion,
 - Integrate environmental protection in order to promote sustainable development.

Since 1996, the sum of €400 billion has been invested. This investment has helped to carry out a large number of projects of common interest, to interconnect networks nationally and overcome the technological barriers that exist in crossing some national borders.

According to the European Commission, the breadth of the objectives has made it difficult to evaluate the value which has been added at EU level. The Commission considers that now is the moment to ask why the objectives have only been partially achieved, and as well to investigate if the guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network were appropriate.

► **All of this justifies the execution of a fundamental review of the TEN-T, going further than a simple examination and, perhaps, an updating of the broad lines of priority plans and projects.**

2. **The objectives of the new TEN must be adapted to the different EU treaties and objectives.** In this regard, the Trans-European networks contribute to the carrying out of multiple objectives: those of the interior market, the goal of social and economic cohesion to benefit all citizens, support for regional and local economic operators, in particular thanks to EU action aimed at promoting interconnection and interoperability of national networks and access to these networks.
3. Transport is a paramount question due to the Atlantic Area's peripheral situation. Port and airport infrastructures, air and maritime services (Short Sea Shipping) as well as multimodality must be adapted to traffic that is continually evolving. In particular, the Atlantic agents are pleased with the progress made towards establishing an integrated EU maritime policy.

► **The Atlantic Area must be strengthened as a result of the TEN-T review, based on the carrying out of structural projects needed to develop transport and the Atlantic Area itself.**

4. The new TEN-T must support the development of the Atlantic Area and, more generally, of peripheral spaces in their integration with the rest of Europe. Thus, the future European network must allow the cities and regions of the Atlantic Arc to connect to the European transport network in line with four major principles:
 - a. **Respect for the European principle of territorial cohesion** (balanced and lasting development of the territory) as set forth in the Treaty of Lisbon in process of ratification and which affects all EU policies, among them transport policy.
 - b. **Promote infrastructural equity** and improve the connectivity of remote regions, in particular those high dependent from road transport (for passengers and freight). Environmental objectives and priority development of rail and maritime transport must be compatible with the objective to avoid a higher level of peripherality in remote regions.
 - c. **Support for the specific aspects of the Atlantic Arc** (in particular, the role of medium sized cities and regions in territorial development) and the necessary connection of this space with the rest of Europe in order to avoid a marginalisation effect.
 - d. **Launch the concept of policentricity in the Atlantic Area**, for instance: in Irish Sea, English Channel, Bay of Biscay and maritime area of Galicia-Portugal, a set of multimodal, interregional and international links could notably improve economic development and regional competitiveness in the area.

5. A condition for the application of the cardinal principle of free circulation of persons and goods, based on the 1957 Treaty of Rome, the opening of the large transport markets on a Europe-wide scale has the consequence of stimulating development, but also creating **new frontiers** for overall transport use in Europe. Among these, rail transport, based on national technical specifications which are difficult to synchronise quickly and also steeped in national culture, is the mode which faces the most obstacles in integrating a European dimension and in taking full advantage of the opportunity available.
 - ▶ **The emergence of environmental and climatic concerns, in which Europe has decided to take a leading world role through its commitment to respect the Kyoto Protocol, its creation of an ambitious Climate Plan and of a carbon emissions trading market, means that rail transport has been conferred with a new modernity and a top-level strategic role.**

6. **The new TEN-T and its launch policies must be a true tool to improve competitiveness with respect to road transport, developing an alternative network for passengers and freight.** The objectives with regard to climate change must be central in the new TEN-T policies and reflect a true European focus. By means of a process integrating economic aspects and environmental objectives, the future of the TEN-T should be oriented clearly towards the creation of an efficient transport offer, co-modality services for passengers and freight, and support for innovation in accessibility to information.
 - ▶ **A specific proposal for the future plan: reinforce the dynamics of the current TEN-T project in the Atlantic Area proposing its connection to the central European networks (to the Duisburgo-Berlin-Varsovia corridor up to the Belarus frontier, and to the corridor which connects Lyon-Trieste-Divaca/Koper-Divaca-Ljubljana-Budapest up to the Ukraine frontier), and the high-speed connection between London and South Wales and Ireland.**

7. The economic growth of Europe and the creation of employment depend on the competitiveness of the regions and cities, as such, on their ability to establish good transport connections with other parts of the world. Due to its capacity to generate commercial and passenger flows, as well as its support for the development of large infrastructures, **the TEN-T policies play a part in the economic growth of Europe.**

► **Three conditions are fundamental in the EU's intervention:**

- a. The definition of an organised infrastructure network based around a central network and a secondary network
- b. Support for technological innovation as an element that favours the appearance of new services for the population, the development of economic sectors and the interoperability of networks.
- c. Support for the organisation of a "supply chain" at European level based more specifically on the strengthening of maritime-rail **co-modality**.

II. A TEN-T THAT FAVOURS INTERMODALITY AND AN INTEGRATED EUROPEAN TRANSPORT OFFER

1. The advantages of a European network must make it possible to capture and distribute flows in the points of origin and destination respectively. To this end, the TEN-T must facilitate, by means of a "priority" network, the connections with regional networks. In this regard, the activity report by the European coordinator for the South-Western rail axis emphasises that the "optimal functioning of the axis mentioned must be supported by coherent transport policies".

► **The major corridors must be mutually interconnected by logistic platforms as well as being linked to secondary or regional networks in order to maximise the effectiveness of EU intervention.**

2. The maintenance of an overall European network is necessary in order to create a hierarchy and enable the development of national networks. However, the definition of this overall network must not just be limited to existing flows and economic criteria, but must also allow other EU and regional criteria to be taken into account with regard to territorial planning and multiplier effects.

► **In this regard, the new networks must take into account the specific needs of both freight and passenger flows.**

3. The definition of projects of common EU interest must be developed to take into consideration different criteria that are not exclusively macroeconomic. The CAAC and the AATG propose that cities, especially those with a port, an airport or a regional rail station (with international, national and regional rail services), should be considered as "multimodal nodes" and, as such, should be included in the criteria for the identification and development of networks. This implies an expansion of the selection criteria for the territories to receive assistance, which must not be limited only to areas of high density.

► **It should be possible to classify the urban network as a "guiding principle" of the future network.**

4. **Development of the intermodality for the Motorways of the Sea and for the Atlantic ports** organising and developing the coastal trade and **land connections (in particular rail freight)**. Rail freight transport associated with the TEN-T has begun to bear fruit, with forecast growth of 34% between 2005 and 2020.
5. The TEN-T review must allow the introduction of truly co-modal services and structures with the goal of providing solutions that will overcome problems such as congestion or increasing carbon dioxide emissions. Its connection with the Motorways of the Sea deserves more attention in order to favour internal exchanges, as well as to take the fullest advantage of the Atlantic Coast as an entry way into Europe.

► In this regard, two principles must be integrated into the reflections and the definition of the new TEN-T planning scheme with regard to logistics:

- a. Consideration of saturation in the North-South axis of the Atlantic coast, which leads to improving connections from the Atlantic coast towards the East via a network that complements the basic network and existing corridors.
- b. Development of capillarity for freight corridors by supporting the appearance of intermediate logistical poles which allow regional and territorial flows to be grouped together and thus connected with the major rail axes.

III. MEANS AND METHOD

1. A broader space is seen to be necessary for the proposals and the territorial organisation in the process of developing the European TEN-T plan. Although the role of the Member States in the definition of the projects of common interest is clearly recognised, it would also be beneficial for the European Union to recognise the roles of Parliament, the cities and the regions in the next phase of proposal and territorial organisation.

► The CAAC and the AATG consider that the third development option proposed (Comprehensive network and Core network) is the most suitable for the introduction of a new policy associated with the development of trans-European transport networks, as long as this option guarantees:

- a. the definition of homogeneous, balanced and clear criteria and objectives (in the conceptual pillar of Core network) for the identification of projects in the European regions,
- b. the introduction in the future European network of a new project of Community interest linking the Atlantic Coast to the Central Europe,
- c. the improvement of communications at regional level
- d. and the participation of cities and regions in both the planning and the execution of the networks.

2. As well as the political and technical obstacles to competitiveness in the rail sector, - a less reliable and flexible mode than road transport - the current financing of rail investments can be seen to be insufficient to achieve a level of competitiveness comparable with road transport. Loans made to the trans-European transport network in the 2006-2013 period total €8.3 billion, compared to the €21 billion requested.

► Consequently, the Commission must promote better coordination among Member States, but above all, the Commission needs the European Union to define a position that gives greater stimulus to the financing of infrastructure networks. This position requires a prior increase in budget allocation and a redefinition of the tools and methods of financial participation in the European Union.