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TECHNICAL NOTE FROM THE CPMR GENERAL SECRETARIAT

ACCESSIBILITY CAMPAIGN - PROGRESS REPORT AND OUTLOOK -

At its General Assembly in 2014, the CPMR launched an Accessibility Campaign. This initiative raised the profile of the actions carried out by the Conference and its Geographical Commissions to ensure that the transport infrastructure and integrated maritime transport policies include, as far as possible, **a priority for the criteria of accessibility**. Accessibility is at the core of the principle of territorial cohesion.

The legal bases of the EU in this policy area date from December 2013: the new guidelines for the TEN-T and the regulation for the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF). We have now entered the phase in which these texts, adopted by the Parliament and the Council through the co-decision procedure, are being implemented. The European Commission is in charge of the implementation.

The report on activities presented to the General Assembly in Florence details the actions carried out during the past year in the transport policy area. This note provides an update on these activities and puts forward some ideas for future action.

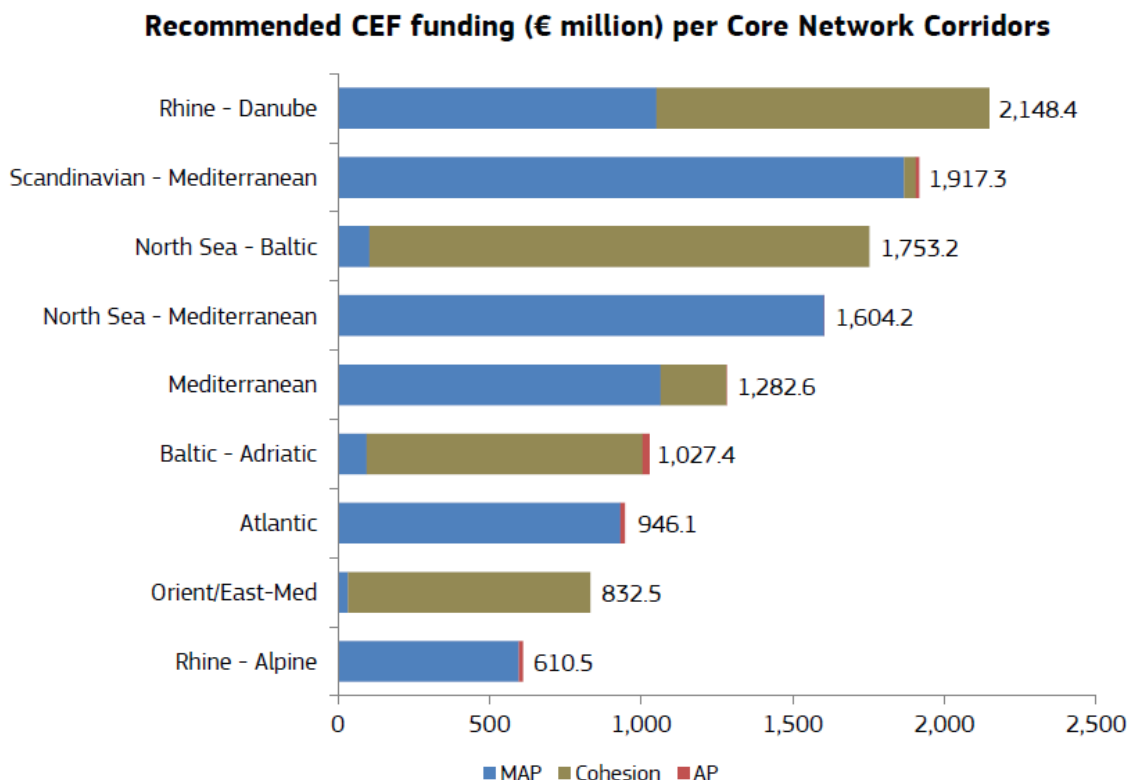
1. WE NEED TO REMAIN MOBILISED ON THE QUESTION OF IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY

1.1 – The results of the first CEF call for proposals confirm concentration on the 9 corridors

On 31 July 2015, the European Commission's list of projects selected under the first call for proposals under the CEF (transport strand) was approved. This involves a total of €13.1 billion of CEF funding. Details of the selected projects can be found at:

https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/inea_cef_brochure_web_superfinal_a.pdf

Out of the €13.1 billion, €12.1 – i.e. more than 90% of the funding – has been allocated to the 9 Core Network Corridors, as shown below:



This concentration on the Core Network Corridors comes as no surprise. It corresponds to the institutions' decision to give priority to the "backbone", and to consider that the "remainder" of the network comes under the responsibility of the Cohesion Policy and national and regional priorities. Even if the Commission were to envisage "correcting" this prioritisation of the Core Network Corridors in the next CEF calls for proposals, such a correction would have only a limited impact. Given the funding made available to the Juncker Plan, the balance of CEF funding that remains available for transport infrastructure up until 2020 (not including cohesion countries) only amounts to approx. € 4 billion. (*: total CEF transport not including cohesion countries: €12.745 billion for 2014-2020, of which €2.8 billion will be mobilised for the Juncker Plan.)

On the grounds of the existing legal bases (EU Treaty and TEN-T guidelines in particular), the CPMR has on numerous occasions contested this approach and underlined the extent to which it "discriminates" against, for example, the islands and the outermost regions. However, CPMR wanted the Regions to be involved in the drafting of the action plans for the corridors that concerned them. The Commission responded positively to this expectation, and the Regions have thus been able to take part in the meetings of the Corridor Forums held in 2014 and 2015. Their participation has been coordinated by the CPMR's Geographical Commissions, which have established and cultivated ties with the corridor coordinators.

On 18 June 2015, the President of the CPMR wrote to Violeta Bulc, Commissioner in charge of transport, asking that a European Coordinator be nominated to complement the activities of the European Coordinators of the 9 Corridors, to ensure that all the EU territories were linked to the corridors. The

Commission replied that it would not be possible to nominate such a coordinator until the revision of the TEN-T guidelines. The Commission considered that *“many of your regions are already integrated in the TEN-T through their ports and direct hinterland either via MoS or via the TEN- Core Network Corridors”* and that *“the maritime peripheral regions are correctly integrated into the TEN-T.”*

The European Commission has also published a study on the cost of non-completion of the TEN-T: (<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/studies/doc/2015-06-fraunhofer-cost-of-non-completion-of-the-ten-t.pdf>). This clearly highlights the economic incidences (GDP and employment), but does not address the “territorial” cost of “non-accessibility”.

1.2 – CEF and TEN-T: outlook for the CPMR

While their “influence” in the Corridor Forums may be limited, the Geographical Commissions and the Regions are invited to continue to take part in their work in order to “defend” their priorities, especially in terms of accessibility. A meeting of the Forums is due to take place in March 2016, at which new studies will be presented, which will be more precise with regard to the indicators considered. They will give rise to a second generation of action plans for the corridors, which will be unveiled at the TEN-T Days in Rotterdam on 20-22 June 2016.

In the longer term, we need to bear in mind the following processes:

- The review of the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020 is due to be completed by the end of 2016. The CEF regulation could be revised at the same time, including two aspects of the CEF which are very important for the CPMR Regions: co-financing rates and the list of priority projects (Annex 1 which defines the sections of the 9 corridors)
- The review of the TEN-T guidelines, due to take place by 31 December 2023 (see Article 54 of the current guidelines); the current definitions of the core network, the comprehensive network, the criteria used and thus the TEN-T maps will be reviewed on this occasion.

Over the past year, the island Regions and the outermost Regions have played an active part in the work of the CPMR in the area of transport policy (contributions made at the Accessibility event in Marseille on 16 April and during meetings of the CPMR Political Bureau). The Islands Commission will organise a meeting on these topics in 2016.

To sum up:

- The concentration of CEF funding on the 9 corridors is confirmed. The Regions will continue to take part in the work of the Forums
- There will not be a European Coordinator for the peripheral regions
- The islands are organising a transport event which will take place in 2016
- TEN-T review in 2023 and CEF review in 2016: how do we get accessibility included?

2 – MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA AND MARITIME TRANSPORT SERVICES: PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE TO ADAPT EU SUPPORT TO SPECIFIC REGIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

2.1 – CPMR carries out a survey of its members

The CPMR has supported the concept of the Motorways of the Sea (MoS) ever since the idea was launched in 2001, and integrated into the TEN-T. The European Commission is invited (Article 21 of the TEN-T guidelines) to *“present a detailed implementation plan for the motorways of the sea based on experiences and developments relating to Union maritime transport as well as the forecast traffic on the motorways of the sea.”* This plan is due to be unveiled during the TEN-T Days in Rotterdam in June 2016.

The CPMR is keen to help the Commission draw up this plan, and to see that the necessary provisions are included to enable the MoS to be implemented in a way which takes account of the specific characteristics of the different European maritime areas. In line with the framework established by the TEN-T guidelines,

there is room for improvement to enable the MoS to become a genuine lever for developing maritime transport:

- Adjustment for the island and outermost regions
- Enable core-periphery connections, but also periphery-periphery connections
- Better enable connections with non-EU ports in shared sea basins
- Improve the way these are integrated into the action plans for the CEF's 9 priority corridors.

In order to provide an input for the debate at the General Assembly in Florence, and for the policy positions to be subsequently communicated to the European Commission and Parliament, CPMR is carrying out a survey of its members ([see the survey](#)) on the above-mentioned points. The results of the survey will be unveiled at the General Assembly in Florence.

2.2 - Widen the debate to include support for maritime transport services

The Marco Polo programme provided support for the MoS up until 2013 by adding a "services" strand in addition to their "infrastructure" strand. The European Commission has abandoned the Marco Polo programme and it has not been replaced by any mechanism which provides support for new maritime services starting up. The only remaining mechanism to support services comes under Article 32 of the TEN-T entitled "sustainable freight transport services". Although it has only a small budget, this does aim to "improve links to the most vulnerable and isolated parts of the Union, in particular outermost, island, remote and mountain regions." However, the implementation of this instrument does not as yet fully achieve the desired aim of the legislators. The 2014 CEF call for proposals selected only five projects under this heading, involving a total amount of funding of €5.9 million. They are mostly rail projects located in the economic centre of Europe.

The Commission also opened a consultation in January 2015 on EU aid for maritime transport. The CPMR responded, as did other stakeholders, pointing to the absence of a European instrument and reiterating its suggestions to:

- promote a European Ecobonus mechanism to encourage shippers to use sustainable modes of transport;
- revive the Eurovignette Directive: charging for the use of polluting modes of transport in order to generate funding that can be made available to sustainable modes.

These proposals were also included in the policy position adopted in June 2015 by the CPMR Political Bureau in response to the Commission's consultation on the Transport White Paper.

To sum up:

- The Motorways of the Sea can be improved without amending the legislative framework, but by adjusting the implementation
- There is a lack of an EU instrument to support maritime transport, since Article 32 of the TEN-T guidelines does not have sufficient funds allocated to it and is not easily accessible to the maritime sector. The Commission is invited to follow up on the proposals it has received on this point in response to its own consultations
- The CPMR will put forward precise proposals on the basis of the results of the survey of its members. These proposals will aim in particular to make the next CEF call for proposals on the MoS and TEN-T Article 32 more "periphery-compatible".