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FEBRUARY 2015

CPMR POLICY POSITION

OPINION FROM THE CPMR POLITICAL BUREAU

(Approved by the CPMR Political Bureau – 27 February 2015, Nantes-Pays de la Loire, France)

CPMR ACCESSIBILITY CAMPAIGN: PRIORITIES AND TIMETABLE

In the [Final Declaration](#) of its September 2014 General Assembly in Umeå, CPMR confirmed that improving the accessibility of its member regions was one of its priorities: **'Improve the accessibility of the maritime regions and harness their potential in global transport flows'**.

In order to bring this subject back to the 'top of the EU's transport agenda', CPMR decided to launch a 'campaign in favour of accessibility' throughout 2015, the high point of which would be a major event organised during the first six months.

This Policy Position is an invitation to the CPMR Political Bureau to discuss the timetable for this campaign and the messages to be delivered to the European Institutions, and also to give a mandate to the General Secretariat to implement this programme and mobilise the necessary resources.

At the time of the Umeå General Assembly last September, the European Commission was planning to publish a mid-term review of the 2011 Transport White Paper in 2015. CPMR's accessibility campaign was planned with this timetable in mind. It planned to draw up proposals which would provide an input to the mid-term review and to the public debate subsequent to its publication. The new European Commission has decided to reduce the number of Communications published in 2015, and at the time of writing this policy position it is not known whether the mid-term review will in fact be prepared. It is still worthwhile for CPMR to draw up proposals, however. They will be useful for the European Commission in its task of implementing the decisions made in 2013 concerning the CEF (Connecting Europe Facility) and the TEN-T (Trans-European Transport Network). They will also provide arguments that can be used by the European Parliament and its TRAN (Transport and Tourism) Committee in the context of its monitoring of the implementation of the CEF and the TEN-T.

1 – WHY IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY SHOULD REMAIN A PRIORITY OBJECTIVE AND CRITERIA, AND ... HOW THIS IS NOT ALWAYS THE CASE

1.1 – An unquestionable legal basis

Articles 90 and 91 of the Treaty state that the common transport policy should encourage territorial cohesion, and Article 174 stipulates that particular attention should be paid to regions which suffer from severe and permanent handicaps.

Article 4 of the TEN-T guidelines translates this objective without any ambiguity:

Article 4

Objectives of the trans-European transport network

The trans-European transport network shall strengthen the social, economic and territorial cohesion of the Union and contribute to the creation of a single European transport area which is efficient and sustainable, increases the benefits for its users and supports inclusive growth. It shall demonstrate European added value by contributing to the objectives laid down in the following four categories:

a) cohesion through:

- i. Accessibility and connectivity of all regions of the Union, including remote, outermost, insular, peripheral and mountainous regions, as well as sparsely populated areas;
- ii. Reduction of infrastructure quality gaps between Member States;
- iii. For both passenger and freight traffic, interconnection between transport infrastructure for, on the one hand, long-distance traffic and, on the other, regional and local traffic;
- iv. A transport infrastructure that reflects the specific situations in different parts of the Union and provides for a balanced coverage of all European regions;

1.2 – There is a link between accessibility and economic performance

Although a number of peripheral, outermost and island territories have managed, in spite of their remoteness, to build success stories, the representatives of the CPMR Regions are well aware of the price their firms and their inhabitants have to pay to access markets and decision-making centres. (*Simply attending CPMR General Assemblies or Political Bureau meetings does not represent the same time and travel cost as it would do if ours were an organisation of central Regions.*)

The correlation between level of development and level of accessibility may not be systematic, and improved accessibility may not always give rise to increased development, but there is unquestionably a relationship between accessibility and the economic development of Regions. Research by ESPON (the European Spatial Planning Observatory Network) shows that, with only a few exceptions, all the Regions with a GDP below 75% of the EU average have a potential accessibility that is lower than the EU average.

Without decisive intervention by the EU, the most difficult-to-access territories thus risk seeing their potential connectivity stagnate, while Europe as a whole will 'on average' have seen an improvement in connectivity. The connectivity gap between the territories could then widen further and ultimately result in a more pronounced loss of attractiveness for those regions which remain the most peripheral and difficult-to-access. Migrations resulting from the attractiveness gap between the territories could also become accentuated in the long term.

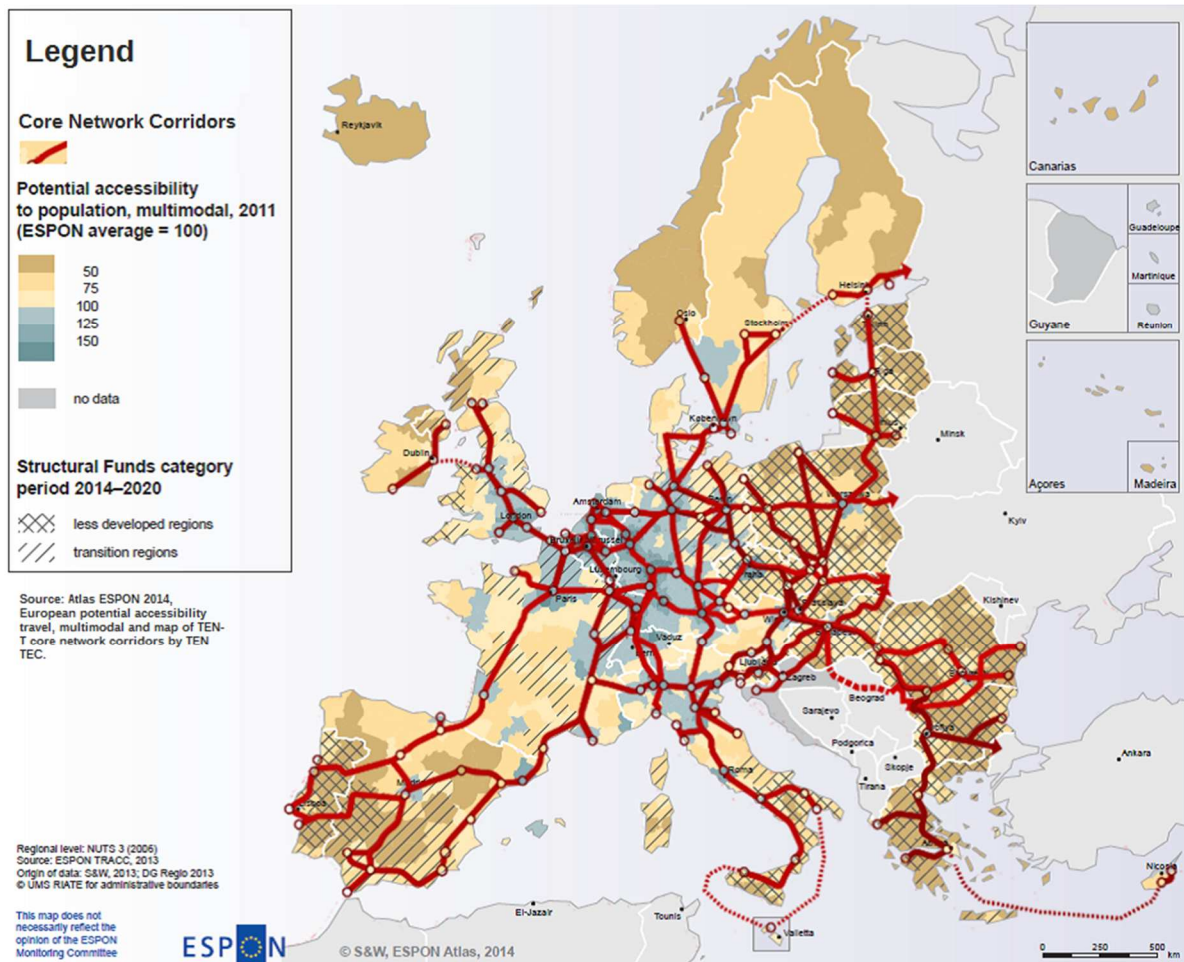
1.3 – Accessibility is insufficiently taken into account in the TEN-T and CEF maps

1.3.1 – Priority corridors and accessibility

The map below clearly shows how the nine priority corridors of the CEF (which will receive the majority of CEF funding) serve – or do not serve – the least accessible areas of the European territory. (*The Core network*

of the TEN-T¹ is not shown in full on this map, which shows only the corridors. This does not, however, alter the observations that follow).

Map: The core network corridors and potential accessibility to the multimodal network in Europe.



Source: Draft Atlas ESPON 2014, European potential accessibility travel, multimodal, and map of the TEN-T Core network Corridors TEN TEC 2014.

1.3.2 - Intensified core-periphery links, a dense central network, but an absence of periphery-to-periphery connections

The map illustrates the emphasis placed on connecting peripheral areas to the central core. Taken individually, the route of each of these corridors connects one or two peripheral areas of Europe to its core. The central network thus formed by the corridors is dense and there are many interconnections between corridors. These diminish as we get nearer to the peripheral areas. This priority network which connects the economic and competitive core of Europe to its peripheries appears however to minimise the connections between the economic centres of activity of the peripheral regions themselves.

Furthermore, while it is true that the extremities of some of the corridors do penetrate peripheral areas, this will not necessarily translate into improved accessibility, in view of the poor quality of secondary networks in these Regions. And yet is it the ‘last mile’ connections, especially those linking to the ports, that guarantee the efficiency of the corridors and a potential gain in terms of accessibility for the European territory as a whole.

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t-guidelines/doc/maps/eu.pdf>
<http://ec.europa.eu/transport/infrastructure/tentec/tentec-portal/main.jsp>

1.3.3 – Inequality of the links between the different seabords and the corridors

As the International Maritime Organization in particular forecasts, the outlook for global maritime sea-borne trade is one of strong growth. For Europe, the prospect of a transatlantic trade agreement is one of the sources of this growth. Connections between the ports and the priority land transport network in Europe is a key element which will enable the ports to benefit from this trend. Neglecting certain coastal areas – as can be seen on the map – could on the contrary have the effect of concentrating this growth in the major North Sea ports. While these ports themselves are not saturated, the access routes to them by land are, on the other hand, increasingly congested.

The setting-up of multimodal corridors should allow all the European ports to increase their volume of trade and as a consequence to develop the connectivity potential of their regions.

1.3.4 – The ‘grey areas’ of the TEN-T

An analysis of the map of the corridors, even if we take account of the whole of the core network as well, reveals a number of ‘grey areas’. These areas should be able to benefit from the growth of the ‘comprehensive’ network of the TEN-T to find themselves appropriately connected to the arteries formed by the corridors. However, completion of the comprehensive network is only planned for 2050 and the outlook for funding is not optimistic.

From an initial analysis, the following can be considered as ‘grey areas’ of the TEN-T. The CPMR Geographical Commissions are invited to amend and complete this list, which is only given as a guide:

- Scotland and the North-Atlantic coast of Ireland
- The peninsulas: the Armorican Peninsula in Brittany and South-West England
- The extreme South-West of the Iberian peninsula
- the Centre of France
- Corsica
- in the southern part of the Baltic, a deficit of coastal connections along the coasts of Poland and the Baltic States
- the West of Sweden, which has no core network leading to Norway. (While Norway is not a member of the EU and is host to neither the core network nor any of the priority corridors, it must nonetheless be considered as a point of access to the more northern ports of Europe’s Atlantic seabord, but also to the Barents Sea.)
- the North and East of Finland also have no core network; they are however areas which have access to the Barents Sea and notably to the Russian ports, more especially Murmansk.
- the non-EU countries of the Balkan peninsula are not part of the core network; this deprives Greece and Croatia of a coastal connection along the Adriatic-Ionian Sea.

1.4 – Integration of accessibility into the implementation and the governance system of the CEF

1.4.1 – In the Forums, the Regions are attentive to the ‘grey areas’ of the corridors

In a letter ([see appendix](#)) sent on 9 January to DG Move (European Commission), CPMR welcomed the participation of the Regions in the third and fourth meetings of the Corridor Forums, held in 2014. It also called for the Regions located just outside the corridors to be included in this exercise, as it continues during 2015. This would make it possible to better address the issue of the ‘grey areas’ and also strengthen the maritime component of the corridors.

CPMR will closely monitor the response to these requests, and the Geographical Commissions are ready to become involved in any follow-up action.

1.4.2 – Future CEF calls for proposals should take account of the priority given to accessibility

The CEF has been allocated a budget of EUR 26.25 billion for 2014-2020 to co-finance TEN-T projects. This funding will be allocated on the basis of annual and multiannual work programmes drawn up in 2014 by the Commission, leading to a series of calls for proposals.

The first call for proposals, published on 11 September 2014 (http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/ten-t-guidelines/project-funding/calls_en.htm,

deadline 26 February 2015), has an allocation of EUR 11.9 billion, which represents 45% of the multiannual envelope. This funding will be concentrated on the nine priority corridors.

Although a more detailed analysis of the full text and appendices of these calls for proposals will provide arguments to back up the claim, it is unlikely that the stated priority focus on the nine corridors will translate into the priority accorded to cohesion being taken seriously into account, even though this is a stated objective of the TEN-T guidelines (see Article 4 mentioned above).

CPMR has carried out a detailed analysis of one of the components of the TEN-T: Article 32, concerning sustainable freight transport services. One of the six priorities determined by the co-legislators (Parliament and Councils) aims to:

'improve links to the most vulnerable and isolated parts of the Union, in particular outermost, island, remote and mountain regions'.

However, no further reference is made to this objective, either in the annual programme for 2014, or in the call for proposals which will put this programme into action. The call for proposals states (appendix 5) that in order to be selected, projects will need to aim at least at two of the following goals:

- achieve a better integration between transport modes;
- make the transport system more balanced between modes;
- improve efficiency of processes within the supply chains;
- address inefficiencies or improvements within single modes of transport solutions.

The next CEF call for proposals should be open between September and December 2016. **One of the aims of the CPMR's accessibility campaign is to ensure - with the support of the European Parliament in particular - that territorial cohesion is really taken into account by making it the number one selection criteria for projects in the CEF 2016 call for proposals.**

1.4.3 - Motorways of the Sea (MoS) which also serve the islands and the peripheries

This demand by CPMR is as old as the invention of the MoS itself, by the Commission in 2001. It was the subject of a working meeting with the European Coordinator in Madeira in 2009. Although the MoS have without doubt allowed progress to be made in certain areas (such as the use of liquefied natural gas by ships), their contribution to reducing peripherality remains to be confirmed. The concept, which at its inception was based on massification and high volumes (the notion of a 'motorway'), needs to be adapted to situations in which there is a lower volume of traffic (to the economic and demographic scale of the islands and peripheral regions) and where there is an imbalance in traffic flows: these Regions import more than they export.

Article 21 of the TEN-T, concerning the MoS, stipulates that *'the European Coordinator for motorways of the sea shall (by March 2016) 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'.*

In this context, and as indicated in point 2.3 (timetable of the accessibility campaign), CPMR plans to organise a special seminar on the territorial aspects of the MoS, in conjunction with the Coordinator (Brian Simpson). This will take place in the Balearic Islands in September. Here again, the aim is to ensure that the MoS strand in the CEF 2016 call for proposals is drawn up in such a way that the MoS can effectively and sustainably support the maritime services that are needed to ensure links between the peripheries themselves as well as connections with the core areas.

1.4.4 - For a better recognition of regions in decision making processes of the implementation of the CEF

Regions are not only points on maps on which the European transport, TEN-T and MoS policy applies.

They should therefore not be excluded from the decision-making processes on the selection of financed projects.

It is particularly unacceptable that projects submitted by Regions in response to CEF calls are blocked by their respective national Ministries of Transport.

2. 2015 -2016: MOBILISATION OF CPMR AND ITS GEOGRAPHICAL COMMISSIONS

2.1 – Continue a trust-based partnership with the Commission and mobilise the Parliament

As 2014 showed, the European Commission (DG Move) is open to dialogue with the Regions and sees CPMR as a highly regarded and representative interlocutor. This relationship, which benefits both partners, will continue in 2015/2016. It will be reflected in our monitoring of the Regions' participation in the Corridor Forums, in liaison with the coordinators and their advisors, and in the participation, to which we look forward, of Commission representatives in the events organised throughout this period.

It will also enable us to have a dialogue on the ways in which the CEF is implemented and in particular on the drafting of calls for proposals.

A CPMR delegation will meet with Commissioner Violeta Bulc and with the Director General, Aguiar Machado.

Although legally speaking it is the Commission that is competent to implement the texts adopted through the co-decision procedure in 2013, the Parliament cannot fail to take an interest in the implementation of a policy which involves such significant amounts of funding and which has such a direct influence on regional competitiveness. CPMR will therefore strengthen its relations with the MEPs elected or re-elected in 2014, and in particular with the members of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism. The Vice-President of this Committee has already taken part in a very useful discussion with the CPMR Transport working group, on 23 January.

2.2 – Coordinated action between CPMR and its Geographical Commissions

The Geographical Commissions accord a high priority to transport issues, and a real synergy has been established between their working groups and their experts and the work of the CPMR General Secretariat. This will also be demonstrated during the forthcoming period, and CPMR invites the Commissions to use the distinctive logo of the accessibility campaign in their 'transport' activities, if they so wish. The CPMR member Regions are also welcome to use the logo.



2.3 – Provisional timetable for the accessibility campaign (to be completed with events organised by the Geographical Commissions)

23 January 2015, Brussels: CPMR Transport Intercommission Working Group. In the presence of the Vice-President of the EP's TRAN Committee, presentations and debates with the representatives of DG Move on the corridors, Article 32 of the TEN-T, the MoS, and the 'Juncker plan' ([See Conclusions and Presentations](#)).

16 April 2015, Marseille (Villa Méditerranée): accessibility event jointly organised by CPMR and Provence-Alpes Côte-d'Azur Region. Three sessions:

- the periphery and the handicaps to accessibility
- maritime transport: a sustainable option that the EU must support
- for a European port network providing balanced services to the hinterlands

End of June 2015, Brussels (to be confirmed): CPMR Transport Intercommissions Working Group

25 September 2015, Palma de Majorca – Balearic Islands (date to be confirmed): Seminar on adapting the MoS to territorial realities, organised in conjunction with the European Coordinator

5-6 November 2015, Florence – CPMR General Assembly: interim report on the accessibility campaign.

Appendix



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Conférence des Régions Périphériques Maritimes d'Europe
Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe

Mr Olivier ONIDI
Director
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200, rue de la Loi
1049 BRUSSELS
BELGIUM

Rennes, 9 January 2015

Ref.: EMA- CRPMCOU150003

Dear Mr Onidi,

I am writing to thank you for following up on our discussions last summer regarding regional participation in the CEF /TEN-T corridor Forums. The representatives of the Regions located along the corridors were indeed invited to take part in the third and fourth meetings of the forums and despite the tight timeframe had the chance to give their views on the third progress report and submit proposed adjustments to the coordinators and to DG Move.

To help the Regions express their views, in some corridors a group of Regions was set up to meet before the forum plenaries, which we feel is a good arrangement. However, simultaneous meetings on several corridors meant that Regions located on these particular corridors were not able to attend all of the meetings.

At this stage in the process, I kindly ask you to consider the following comments and proposals:

Forum Meetings in 2015

The Progress Report of the European Coordinators plans for the forums to meet three times in 2015 in Brussels or along the corridors and to be coupled possibly with conferences aimed at a wider audience. In this regard, I should like to inform you that the CPMR's Geographical Commissions are willing to co-organise at least one meeting of the forums that concern them. These meetings at an outside location could be an opportunity to involve Regions and stakeholders based further away from the corridors, and as such not invited to the 2014 meetings. This would meet the CPMR's expectation to see the "grey areas" of the TEN-T (those lying outside the core network and corridors) taken into account in the TEN-T programming.

On 23 January in Brussels we will be holding the next meeting of the CPMR Transport Working Group bringing together all geographical interests. The representative of DG Move could discuss a shared timetable with the Regions on this occasion.

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Although we do not have a comprehensive view of the subject, it appears that certain "regional corridor groups" could be dissolved in 2015. This would be true of the "North Sea-Med" corridor in particular. The argument put forward by the Commission is that the Regions could go through the Committee of the Regions to promote their proposals. Without wishing to question the role of the Committee of the Regions in promoting a regional perspective on transport policy, this body is not involved in the "territorial details" regarding implementation of the TEN-T. I therefore urge you to carefully consider how the Regions can be ensured adequate representation within the forums.

Next steps of the decision-making process

The draft work plans for the corridors were sent to Member-States before 22 December last, and an approval process has therefore begun. At the 23 January meeting, it would be useful if your representative could specify the timetable of this process to the Regions. Given their formal nature and the iterative and collaborative process by which they were drafted, we believe it would only be natural for the draft work plans to be sent to the Regions concerned for information. I should like to add that these Regions will be led to co-finance certain projects, which if need be justifies their rightful access to this information.

Finally, we would be interested to know the manner in which the corridor work plans will be revised in 2016 and 2018, and how these reviews will be coordinated with the reviews of the TEN-T as a whole.

Consideration of sea links in the corridors

At first glance, it appears that there has been some inconsistency in the way sea links have been taken into account in the forums, from one corridor to another. As you know, the CPMR in partnership with the coordinator of the Motorways of the Sea, Brian Simpson, will be organising a special seminar next autumn. It will focus on the "regional aspects" of the MoS and will address how maritime transport will contribute to the corridors.

I thank you in advance for your attention to our comments and suggestions, and remain,

Yours sincerely,

Eleni MARIANO
Secretary General of the CPMR

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