

**CPMR
CRPM**

REVIEW OF THE CEF: PROPOSED METHOD AND SCHEDULE FOR CPMR

The European Parliament and Council Regulation of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32013R1316&from=EN>) will be reviewed for the next programming period. The European Commission has started to work on this review, and is due to publish a draft “CEF II” by summer 2017.

This Regulation is extremely important for the CPMR Regions, since it establishes the eligibility rules (core vs. comprehensive network) and the co-funding rates for the different types of eligible projects and the percentage breakdown of budgetary resources between the objectives. It also defines the nine priority core network corridors and the other priority sections of the core network.

This note is a first step in the process by which the CPMR aims to arrive at a position to be adopted by its Political Bureau at its meeting on 10 March 2017 in Malta. It concerns the content of the amendments to be made to the current CEF Regulation, and proposes a draft schedule for action to be taken on this subject before summer 2017.

As a reminder, the TEN-T guidelines will not be reviewed until 2023 at the soonest. These define in particular the components of the core network and the comprehensive network, but not those of the priority corridors, which come under the CEF and will therefore be reviewed in 2020.

1 – Thematic content of the CEF Regulation: where to strengthen “territorial cohesion” and “accessibility”?

11 – General objectives – Article 3

Context: given that the CEF is the financial instrument of the TEN-T, its Regulation should reflect the objectives of the TEN-T and therefore its Article 4, below:

Article 4 TEN-T

Objectives of the trans-European transport network

(...) 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;

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;

However, the cohesion objective is not mentioned anywhere in Article 3 of the CEF.

Amendment to Article 3: an explicit reference to territorial cohesion, to accessibility and to the coverage of all European regions, based on Article 4 TEN-T.

12 – Specific sectoral objectives – Article 4

Context: three objectives are identified for transport. Accessibility is not one of them. (NB. Annex I, Part IV of the CEF specifies the distribution of the budget between the three objectives. This annex therefore needs to be amended accordingly: see point 18 of this note.)

Amendment to Article 4: add an additional objective, improvement of accessibility, in particular for remote, outermost, insular and peripheral regions. The achievement of this objective is assessed on the basis of ... (**here CPMR would need to propose a criterion relating to accessibility – most likely with reference to the work of ESPON**).

13 – Eligibility and conditions for financial assistance – Article 7

Context: point 2(b) of this article sets a ceiling of 5% of the financial envelope for transport for actions implementing the comprehensive network. Given that peripheral projects are strongly represented in this comprehensive network, CPMR needs to put forward a counter-proposal.

Amendment to Article 7: the ceiling for grants for the comprehensive network should be:

- Deleted?
- Replaced by a minimum?

- Increased to 10%, 20%, 50%???
- **This point needs to be debated by CPMR.**

14 – Funding rates for the ports – Article 10 (2) (b) (iii)

Context: the funding rate for works in ports is set at 20%. In comparison, the rate for cross-border rail projects is 40%. Considering that ports are by their very nature cross-border infrastructures, they should be aligned with this 40% rate.

Amendment to Article 10, paragraph (2), point (b) (iii): the ceiling for grants for works in ports is set at 40%. **Such a proposal needs to be debated by CPMR. Since it would apply to all ports – in the core and the comprehensive networks – it would benefit peripheral ports and central ports in the same way. The latter have much greater financial capacity, and easier access to the Juncker Plan or other financial instruments. CPMR could propose that this ceiling of 40% only applies to “peripheral” ports. It would then be necessary to have a precise definition of this criterion.**

15 – Motorways of the Sea (MoS) – Article 10 (2) (c) (v)

Context: the Regulation specifies a single rate of 30%. CPMR and the Islands Commission have adopted positions asking for this rate to be modulated on the basis of territorial criteria. The Detailed Implementation Plan for the MoS, published by the Commission in June 2016, moreover envisages the possibility of a preferential rate for the outermost regions. In this context, CPMR could propose a higher rate of 50% for the outermost regions and the islands.

In addition, some Regions which are neither outermost regions nor islands are characterised by other geographical handicaps (freeze-up in winter, etc.). How can these be taken into account?

Amendment to Article 10, paragraph (2), point (c) (v): financial assistance for actions to support the development of motorways of the sea is increased to 50% for the outermost regions, the islands and ...?? **This point needs to be debated by CPMR.**

16 - Annex I – Part I-2. Core network corridors

This part of Annex I is very important for the Regions, since it defines the routes and the “pre-identified sections, including projects” of the nine priority corridors of the core network. Proposals for amendments to these corridors need to emerge from the work of the Geographical Commissions, supported by their respective “transport” working groups. CPMR’s latest positions highlight a series of principles which should be taken into account for this exercise, among which:

- Connections between the corridors and transport networks in non-EU countries, both neighbouring and distant (Southern Mediterranean, Silk Road, etc.)
- Services to ports
- Connections with the islands and the outermost regions

17 - Annex I – Part I-3. Other sections on the core network

53 projects are listed in this part of Annex I. The CEF review provides an opportunity to update this list. Here again, proposals for amendments need to emerge from the work of the Geographical Commissions.

18 - Annex I, Part IV – Indicative percentages for specific transport objectives

Summary of this part of the Annex

The resources are distributed between the specific objectives as follows:

- a) removing bottlenecks, enhancing rail interoperability, bridging missing links and, in particular, improving cross-border sections: 80%*
- b) ensuring sustainable and efficient transport systems in the long term: 5%*
- c) optimising the integration and interconnection of transport modes and enhancing interoperability of transport services: 15%*

Context: this text is the translation into budgetary terms of Article 4 (“specific objectives”), mentioned earlier. Accessibility is therefore not mentioned, since it is not one of the selected specific objectives.

Amendment to Annex I, Part IV

An amendment proposed by CPMR could consist of the addition of a point (d), to be defined, dealing with accessibility, and a proposal to allocate a percentage, to be defined – 20%, 30%? – to this new objective. **This point needs to be debated by CPMR.**

2 – Proposed action plan & indicative schedule for CPMR

- ✓ By 15 January 2017: contributions from CPMR Transport Working Group members on the CEF review, general principles.
- ✓ End January: meeting of the CPMR Transport Working Group – to draft a detailed plan for a policy position and a schedule for finalising this position – Mutualisation of the work of Geographical Commissions on corridors’ design.
- ✓ 10 March in Malta: the CPMR Political Bureau to debate the draft policy position on the review of the CEF / General principles.
- ✓ CPMR will also, in March, produce a detailed position on the Detailed Implementation Plan for the MoS. This is part of a different line of action, since it deals with improving the implementation of the MoS between now and 2020, whereas as the review of the CEF deals with the post-2020 period.
- ✓ June 2017: Stavanger – Political Bureau’s debate on the geographical pillar of the CEF Regulation (corridors – other sections of the Core Network).