Toward an objective criterion for territorial accessibility

The CPMR believes that cohesion is a key objective for the EU. Each European Policy should contribute to enhance it. The CPMR therefore advocates for territorial accessibility to remain a core objective for the Trans-European Transport Network (TENT).

Additionally, the co-legislator introduced the contribution to enhancing territorial accessibility among the elements to consider when selecting the award criteria in the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) 2021-2027 Work Programmes. However, territorial accessibility as a criterion of selection of projects still must be defined for the call for proposals of the CEF.

An imbalance of accessibility between the centre and the periphery of Europe is clearly identified. The indicator of potential accessibility developed by ESPON\(^1\) makes it possible to compare the different NUTS3 regions. However, if such criterion was the unique approach to evaluate the projects it could exclude, for instance, regions that, despite their proximity to the centre of Europe, face a lack of accessibility.

The purpose of this study is to propose and map an indicator of territorial accessibility through the travelling time to the Central network on the whole European Union, considering that bringing the Core Network closer to the Europeans was a key objective when the TEN-T was designed.

1. Legislative context and consultation

The CPMR’s position concerning accessibility vis-à-vis regulation objectives:

Territorial Accessibility must remain a key priority of the Regulation. It is mentioned both as an objective of the TEN-T (Article 4.1.a(i)) and a general priority in the development of the comprehensive network (Article 10.1.a). This principle also governs the spirit of important derogation related to Motorways of the Sea and Ports (Article 20) that contributes to enhance the connectivity of peripheral regions. Although the CPR welcomes these points, it believes that the Regulation should be more ambitious. Territorial accessibility should indeed be an objective of the Core Network too.

A measurable objective on territorial accessibility could be added to the Regulation. It would consist for instance in aiming that no location of the comprehensive network to be further away that a certain travelling time to the nearest point of the Core Network\(^2\).

2. Potential of Accessibility

The potential of accessibility measured by the ESPON study of “Scenarios for accessibility by the sea, road, rail, air and multimodal” shows a clear core-periphery pattern in EU. The highest potential accessibility core of Europe is composed by the regions of Belgium, Luxemburg, South-

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\(^1\) ESPON, Spiekermann & Wegener, Scenarios for accessibility by the sea, road, rail, air and multimodal.

\(^2\) See CPMR response to the consultation launched by European Commission in April 2019.
Netherlands, Western and Centre Germany and North Eastern France. The further away from the centre, the lower is the accessibility potential. Regions of the North of Italy, Slovenia, West of the Czech Republic, and Austria still have an accessibility potential above the EU average while peripheral regions of the European Union have the lower values. Northern regions of Europe from Ireland, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as well as the Outermost Regions and Islands seems to have the most significant lack of accessibility potential. According to the study, the relative changes of potential accessibility between 2014 and 2030 should be the most positive in the regions of the south-eastern Europe while it should not evolve in the regions of South-Western Europe.

3. Time distance Accessibility to the Core network

The study below aims to provides a complementary element to the analysis of the accessibility potential and proposes a definition of territorial accessibility based on a single and comparable measure across EU. The TENT core network of road\(^3\) is considered here as a universal access point to the whole EU network and the freight transport as the most relevant means to measuring it.

A scale of 4 colours shows the travel time for accessing the network from anywhere in the European Union: up to 15 minutes, up to 30 minutes, up to 60 minutes and over 60 minutes.

Methodology

Time distance is calculated driving a heavy goods vehicle (vehicle + load = total weight above 3,500 kg) from each point of the European road network. The distance in time is calculated from reference points every 5 kilometres of the Core network. Isochronous requests are made to the Opensrouteservices of the Heidelberg institute for geoinformation technology according to the OpenStreetMap database. Due to technical issues for some points, the time distance may vary by 2 minutes. The travel time is calculated for each segment by using speed-limits for different waytypes and adjusting them for

\(^3\) Source TENTec for the layers of TEN-T networks, TENTec Interactive Map Viewer (europa.eu)
different grades or surfaces of the road. If multiple values apply for this segment, the lowest value is used.

4. Potential next steps

The study could be further developed in many ways, for instance by adding levels of travel time (2 hours) or by integrating statistical indicators such as the covered area or population concerned per NUTS3 etc...

In addition to the access to the road network mapped here, it would be relevant to map:

- the time distance to the nearest sustainable transport mode such as ports and railway stations
- the time travel by train from the stations of the comprehensive network to the nearest station of the Core network.
European Union

Travel time to the nearest Road of the Core network

up to 15 minutes
up to 30 minutes
up to 60 minutes
over 60 minutes
Atlantic area

Travel time to the nearest Road of the Core network

- up to 15 minutes
- up to 30 minutes
- up to 60 minutes
- over 60 minutes
Baltic Sea area

Travel time to the nearest Road of the Core network

- up to 15 minutes
- up to 30 minutes
- up to 60 minutes
- over 60 minutes
Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea area

Travel time to the nearest Road of the Core network

- up to 15 minutes
- up to 30 minutes
- up to 60 minutes
- over 60 minutes

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North Sea area

Travel time to the nearest Road of the Core network

- up to 15 minutes
- up to 30 minutes
- up to 60 minutes
- over 60 minutes
Western Mediterranean area

Travel time to the nearest Road of the Core network

- up to 15 minutes
- up to 30 minutes
- up to 60 minutes
- over 60 minutes
The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) represents more than 150 regional authorities from 24 countries across Europe and beyond. Organised in Geographical Commissions, the CPMR works to ensure that a balanced territorial development is at the heart of the European Union and its policies.

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