

TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK (TEN-T)

This paper is designed to highlight the activities of the European Union's Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the results of the 2003 Report of the High Level Group on the TEN-T. The Report was an innovative step for addressing and coordinating infrastructure issues, as it defined a number of priority transportation infrastructure projects that will be key to developing the social and economic cohesion of the member states of the European Union. The role of the priority-setting approach used by the High Level Group is a major step for assessing potential infrastructure projects and was essential for identifying and involving key players and stakeholders in all aspects of the projects.

Introduction

Initially, cooperation within the EU centred on the economy and trade, but has expanded significantly to include such concerns as social integration, regional development and environmental protection. The EU consists of a number of institutions and bodies that have been designed to work at the supranational level to support and develop the various aspects of the member nations.

The European Economic and Social Committee is a key advisory body within the European Union, and the six sections of the Committee exist to offer specialist advice on a wide range of community spheres and responsibilities. Members representing organised civil society sit on at least two of the committee sections, with strong representation from across the European Union. The following are the six sections:

1. Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT)
2. Economic and Monetary Union and Economic and Social Cohesion (ECO)
3. Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship (SOC)
4. External Relations (REX)
5. The Single Market, Production and Consumption (INT)
6. Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)

Of these sections, the Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN) is a significant contributor of advice on projects related to infrastructure. Within TEN, the Transport group (TEN-T) is concerned with researching and implementing funding for transport infrastructure to support internal and external cohesion among member states of the European Union.

The TEN-T is especially significant for developing the transportation networks between existing member states and acceding countries. The TEN-T section is responsible for ensuring that a true transportation network exists for all countries now and soon to be part of the EU.

TEN-T Priority Projects

In Essen in 1994, the European Council agreed upon a list of 14 priority transport projects with an expected completion date of 2010. This list of priority projects was later included in the Community Guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) that was adopted by the European Parliament and Council in 1996. The Guidelines are key to the implementation of the Transport Network and give direction in identifying projects.

However, the transport network, including many of the Essen projects, was behind schedule due to discrepancies between investments and required financial resources. A first revision of the TEN-T Guidelines was made in 2001 to help alleviate the delays in completing the network. It included the views expressed in the White Paper, *European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide*, within which proposals were made to put the transportation needs of Europeans at the forefront of transportation infrastructure projects by limiting new infrastructure projects in favour of reducing bottlenecks within the Essen projects.

In 2002, the Vice-President of the Commission in charge of Transport and Energy set up a High-Level Group within the Trans-European Transport Network. The Group was composed of one representative from each member state, an observer from each acceding country, and an observer from the European Investment Bank. The mandate of the Group was to identify far-reaching priority projects up to the year 2020.

In the summer of 2003, the High Level Group of the TEN-T produced a report of their meetings. The Report confirms a need to reformulate the Guidelines to better meet the emerging transportation needs of Europeans. Some of the key factors used by the Group to evaluate infrastructure projects included the ability of the project to reduce congestion and bottlenecks, to ensure balance and the sustainable development of the transportation network, and the preservation of competitiveness in the European economy with the addition of 12 new countries. The High Level Group was charged with making recommendations on priority projects based on these needs, and it is expected that the recommendations made by the group will carry significant weight when establishing where funding for transportation infrastructure should be directed. Further, by establishing priority projects the High-Level Group hopes to emphasize the need for the coordination and employment of public and private funding.

The High Level Group produced a number of priority project lists, separated into the following four categories:

- List 0: Priority projects in the process of completion (expected done by 2010)
- List 1: Priority projects to start before 2010
- List 2: Longer-term priority projects
- List 3: Other important projects for territorial cohesion

List 0: Priority Projects in the Process of Completion

This list contains the priority projects defined by the European Council of Essen (1994) and confirmed by the European Council of Dublin (1996). The majority will be completed by 2007; others will have significant portions completed by 2010. The Group suggested that funding continue to pursue the completion of all of these projects.

List 1: Priority Projects to Start Before 2010

This list contains projects with high potential for added European value. These projects aim to build new infrastructures for railways, rivers and roads. This list also includes Galileo, a project designed to launch 30 satellites to provide the EU with an autonomous radionavigation system. There were firm commitments from member parties to begin work on all sections of each project prior to 2010, with a final completion date set for 2020.

List 2: Longer Term Priority Projects

This list combines projects with high European value added that may take longer to complete. Projects include a high-capacity railway crossing of the Pyrenees, Rail Baltica, freight railway line and an inland waterway. Given the importance of the projects, they could have made list 1; however, no guarantees were made from the countries involved in the projects that would ensure a commitment to begin construction before 2010.

List 3: Other Important Projects for Territorial Cohesion

This is not an exhaustive list but contains an initial list of potential priority projects that will help to maintain territorial, social and economic cohesion.

Highlights for Infrastructure Canada

The European Union's development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) has made a promising step forward in bringing together member countries, as well as prospective member countries, through an international network of transportation. By involving key stakeholders, the TEN-T encourages the participation and cooperation of members in identifying priority transport projects, while also gaining a broader perspective on the current state of infrastructure in Europe.

The priority projects identified in the Report of the High-Level Group are the result of a number of key organizational and planning strategies used by the TEN-T. The TEN-T has highlighted the long-term nature of infrastructure provision through the development of Community Guidelines and through the identification of priority projects with long-term timelines. The identification of priority projects is an innovative organizational approach that addresses all aspects of infrastructure provision: assessment of the project against the vision and essential goals to be achieved by the projects, rigorous timelines and funding requirements, and the identification and involvement of key players and stakeholders.

The TEN-T has also emphasized the role of Public-Private Partnerships (P3s) as a means to meet the financial needs to implement the proposed transport projects. The High-Level Group feels it is important to involve the private sector at the planning stages, and has encouraged private participation in all aspects of the TEN-T transport infrastructure projects.

References

Gateway to the European Union. <http://europa.eu.int>

High Level Group on the Trans-European Transport Network. June 2003. *Report*.
http://europa.eu.int/comm/ten/transport/revision/hlg/2003_report_kvm_en.pdf

Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T).
http://europa.eu.int/comm/ten/transport/index_en.htm