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Sent: mardi 3 janvier 2006 13:02

To: TREN TENT EXTENSION; Bernd STEINACHER; Jürgen LUDWIG; METREX Secretariat; Jim PARKE; Francesc CARBONELL LLOVERA; Pablo Calvo; Tim PAGE

Subject: Response to the TEN-T review from METREX

Dear colleagues,

METREX is the Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas that was founded in Glasgow in 1996 at the Metropolitan Regions Conference, supported by the then DG XVI (Regional Policy) of the European Commission. Its twin purposes are the exchange of knowledge and understanding on metropolitan spatial planning and development issues between practitioners (politicians, officials and their advisers) and the contribution of the metropolitan dimension to European planning affairs. There are at present 42 Member metropolitan areas, represented by 53 individual authorities, in the Network. It is now almost fully representative of Europe's varied nations, regions and metropolitan areas (see www.eurometrex.org).

METREX has promoted the PolyMETREXplus project, through Interreg III C, to support the wider European frameworks of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP), the Third Cohesion Report and the Lisbon/Gothenburg Strategies. PolyMETREXplus is led by the Generalitat de Catalunya, through the Institut d'Estudis Territorials (IET), involves 19 partners (including METREX), runs from 2004 – 2007 and has a budget of €1.85m. The project seeks to enable metropolitan areas to become as collectively strong as possible through the development of effective polycentric relationships between them.

ESPON, the European Spatial Observatory Network (through Project 121 on Transport Services and Networks), has considered the reviewed the TEN-T Programme and suggested 9 additional strategic corridor connections to support the better urban balance sought by the ESDP and the concept of a polycentric Europe. The ESPON suggestions fall into three main categories. Firstly, further connections within the Iberian peninsula and northwards to the GIZ and the UK. Secondly, connections through the Balkan states to Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. Thirdly, connections from the GIZ to the Baltic area through Denmark and Sweden and to Poland through Berlin.

The TEN-T review and the ESPON suggestions all fit well with the Framework for a Polycentric Metropolitan Europe being developed through PolyMETREXplus. METREX therefore supports the proposed ESPON additions to the programme. However, there is one key strategic connection that remains to be recognised and incorporated into the reviewed TEN-T/ESPON priorities.

There is a need for multi-modal connections north of the Pyrenees to link the upgraded Bilboa/Bordeaux corridor, the proposed new Pyrenees tunnel to link Zaragoza with Toulouse and the upgraded Barcelona, Marseille, Lyon corridor. Such connections would allow the Iberian peninsula, southern France, the upper Rhine area and northern Italy to be more effectively connected. The connections required are Bordeaux to Lyon and Bordeaux to Toulouse and Marseille. Without such links it will not be possible to make the most of the proposed Lyon to Torino trans Alps connection and to facilitate eastwards connections from the Iberian peninsula.

I hope that the TEN-T review will be able to have regard to this suggestion.

Yours truly,

Roger Read,
Secretary General,
METREX.