



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 11.5.2022
C(2022) 3209 final*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senát for its Opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 and Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) 1315/2013 {COM(2021) 812 final}.

The legislative proposal for a revised trans-European transport network (TEN-T) Regulation forms part of a broader package of ambitious measures designed to decarbonise transport, to make mobility greener and more efficient and hence to provide an important contribution to the achievement of the European Green Deal and the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy objectives. To this aim, the revised TEN-T Regulation significantly steps up efforts in building a sustainable, seamless and resilient trans-European transport network at highest quality standards through a network that is gradually developed in three steps: a core network by 2030, an extended core network by 2040 and a comprehensive network by 2050. The objective is to ensure reliable connectivity throughout the European Union without physical gaps, bottlenecks or missing links, and at the same time to promote green mobility to reduce the impact of transport on environment and climate change. The TEN-T policy thus remains a key policy to enable Europe to grow together, to strengthen the economic, social and territorial cohesion of our Union and to facilitate the well-functioning of our internal market.

The Commission welcomes the Senát's general support for the aims of the proposal and is pleased that it shares the view that action at the European Union level is required to develop a performing high-speed rail network across Europe. The Commission however also notes the Senát's doubts relating to the high infrastructure requirements introduced especially for the rail infrastructure, notably the 160 km/h line speed requirement and the 740 m train length requirement. The Commission is pleased to have this opportunity

*Miloš VYSTRČIL
President of the Senát
Valdštejnské náměstí 17/4
CZ – 118 01 PRAGUE 1*

to provide a number of clarifications regarding its proposal and hopes that these will allay the Senát's concerns.

Indeed, two main visions guided the Commission in setting these ambitious railway infrastructure standards:

- 1. Firstly, the Commission aimed to boost the rail passenger sector in Europe by providing a sound and viable alternative for passengers to take the train instead of, for example, the plane, especially for domestic flights below 500 km as set out as one of the objectives in our Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy. To this aim, the Commission introduced the 160 km/h line speed requirement for the core and extended core network by 2040 as to create good conditions for a promotion of rail passenger transport. This requirement on all core and extended core network lines shall also well integrate with the existing and planned high-speed rail connections in Europe.*
- 2. Secondly, the Commission aimed to ensure a fully interoperable rail freight network as to boost the rail freight sector. Extending existing standards such as the core rail freight parameters (22.5t axle load, 740 m train length) from the core network to the entire TEN-T has been considered as essential since freight trains do not remain on the core network only, but also use secondary and diversionary lines on the rest of the network. It is thus important for interoperability reasons that the entire network is fit for purpose. This was also a clear call made by the rail market sector during the open public consultation.*

The Commission also takes note of the Senát's concerns with regard to the provisions that aim at the creation of a single entity for the construction and management of cross-border infrastructure projects of common interests, the new provisions for urban nodes and generally the concern that certain obligations would lead to an increased administrative burden for both the public and private sectors. Discussions between the Commission and the co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council, concerning the proposal are currently underway and the above points are specifically addressed there. In particular, a better definition of the purpose and framework for the creation of single entities for cross-border projects is being discussed. Similarly, the concerns to lighten the administrative burdens on authorities are also addressed, and so is the issue of updating and checking the maps annexed to the legislative proposal.

The Commission remains hopeful that further good progress will be made during the upcoming Czech Presidency, with a view to the adoption of this legislative proposal in the course of 2023, and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Czech Senate in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Adina-Ioana Vălean
Member of the Commission*