



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 13.6.2012
C(2012) 3724 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for their Opinion on the Proposal for a Regulation on Union Guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) {COM(2011) 650 final}.

With this proposal, the Commission's intention is to move from TEN-T which has essentially been a funding programme, with projects supported by EU instruments, to a genuinely European transport infrastructure policy. The TEN-T Guidelines are therefore much more than a legal basis for funding. They provide a policy framework where European infrastructure serves the establishment of the Single European transport area. The Guidelines also set out a regulatory framework with standards ensuring efficiency and interoperability. The Connecting Europe Facility, an ambitious infrastructure fund for the TEN-T, will support the efforts made by the Member States and stakeholders involved in developing and using this European infrastructure. The action envisaged by this proposal is specifically limited to the European dimension of transport infrastructure networks.

Concerning the governance structures, the corridor approach has been designed by the Commission as an implementing tool. The Commission agrees that it should not lead to excessive administrative burden and that it should leave certain flexibility on a case by case basis. The Commission is naturally interested in discussing further simplification efforts that would preserve the effectiveness of the instrument, such as the changes introduced by the General Approach adopted by the Council on 22 March 2012.

As far as the specifications are concerned, standards are being defined in order to ensure a high degree of interoperability and remove technical barriers. Some amendments in this regard have already been included by the Council in its General Approach on 22 March 2012.

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I hope that this explanation addresses the concerns raised in your Opinion and look forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Houses of the Oireachtas on these important issues.

Yours faithfully,



Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ
Vice-President