



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Brussels, 18.9.2018
C(2018) 5992 final*

Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Assembleia da República for its Opinion regarding the Joint Communication on Improving Military Mobility in the European Union {JOIN(2017) 41 final}.

As rightly pointed out by the Assembleia da República, the aim of the Joint Communication is to set out a process to make full use of civilian/military synergies to expedite military mobility — both within our borders and with a view to rapidly deploying military operations abroad. It identifies the main issues on which the European Union could act to improve military mobility, including the dual use of Trans-European Transport Network infrastructure and related investment, customs rules, regulatory and procedural issues (e.g. transport of dangerous goods), and cooperation in countering hybrid threats.

The Commission would like to inform the Assembleia da República that the Action Plan on Military Mobility, which was announced in the Joint Communication, was presented by the Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 28 March 2018. Furthermore, on 26 June 2018, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted positive conclusions on the Action Plan and approved the overarching high-level part of the military requirements which are referred to in the Action Plan. The Council will communicate to the Commission the detailed technical performance requirements and the geographical network before the end of September 2018.

On that basis, the Commission confirms that by 2019, its services will identify the parts of the trans-European transport network suitable for military transport, including necessary upgrades of existing infrastructure. For example, strengthening the weight parameters of a bridge located on the Trans-European Transport Network may also facilitate heavy goods vehicles transport patterns. Or, increasing the surface of a multimodal terminal might also serve commercial needs.

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The Commission also draws the Assembleia da República's attention to the fact that its proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-27 includes as part of the Connecting Europe Facility a budget of EUR 6.5 billion for military mobility for the implementation of the civilian-military dual-use transport projects on the Trans-European Transport Network. If that budget is approved, the Commission, on the basis of specific work programmes specifying the applicable requirements as defined in the context of the Action Plan, will as of 2021 prepare calls for proposals based on given criteria aiming to ensure dual uses. Stakeholders will submit related proposals with the agreement of the relevant national authorities. The selection will be approved according to the Connecting Europe Facility's procedures.

The Commission would also like to stress that the Action Plan on Military Mobility and the Connecting Europe Facility Military Mobility component will support Member States in full respect of national decision-making procedures, and that Member States have the final say to define their needs and take decisions on that basis. They are not obliged to submit a proposal for financial support for the realisation or upgrading of dual use transport infrastructure and their classified information will be duly protected.

The Commission takes note of the view that the Communication shows a shift of priorities towards security and defence, leading to a militarisation that would promote war and humanitarian crises. The Commission does not agree with this assessment and recalls that military mobility is a pre-requisite also for conducting missions outside the Union for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. Furthermore, it notes that investments in dual-use Trans-European Transport Networks infrastructure will also benefit civilian purposes, besides facilitating military mobility.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Assembleia da República and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Member of the Commission