

## **DG MOVE contribution to the EAP TRANSPORT COOPERATION**

### **Scene setter.**

Transport is one of the priorities for the regional economic cooperation with the neighbouring countries. In particular, the TEN-T Regulation adopted in 2013 provides the basis for cooperation with neighbouring countries to connect to their infrastructure networks.

Common Area Aviation agreements have been signed with Georgia (2010) and the Republic of Moldova (2012). A further step was made in 2014 with the signature of ambitious Association Agreements with Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova covering the different transport modes.

The EaP Foreign Affairs Ministerial in May 2016 confirmed the shared view by both EU Member States and EaP Partner countries that the EaP needs to focus on delivering tangible results to citizens.

Since then, the European Commission and the European External Action Service have developed a joint working document "Eastern Partnership – focusing on key priorities and deliverables". The document identified 20 key deliverables for 2020, intended to contribute to the joint work of EU Member States and EaP Partner countries and step up actions in four key priority areas, among which "connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change" is a key priority for DG MOVE.

In this context, commissioner Bulc met recently, 23 March, with Eastern Partnership countries at the Sofia regional transport investment conference. Beyond Commissioner Bulc stressed the importance of the extension of the core TEN-T network to Eastern Partnership countries. Commissioner Bulc stressed the need for a more tailored use of the financing available through different instruments (CEF – Neighbourhood Instrument Facility) and in the future through the European Fund for Sustainable Development in order to satisfy the infrastructure needs of these countries.

By 2030, the basic needs for new transport infrastructure amount to roughly EUR 60 billion– and for upgrading / maintenance to more than EUR 25 billion. Currently our financing capacity – loans excluded – does not exceed EUR 100 million a year.

There is clearly a problem of balance between the needs and the available financing means.

To this end, Commissioner Bulc insisted on the need to put more efforts on the identification of projects - including small actions - and ensure that appropriate financial mechanisms are in place to attract also private funds and finance these priorities.

She made very clear that our priority, was on decarbonisation, inclusiveness, green and innovative solutions and missing links, as well as on regulatory reform.

Together with DG NEAR and with the support of the IFIs (EIB – EBRD and World Bank) we now promote quick-win projects which could have an immediate positive effect on EaP countries, increasing their connectivity and making them more attractive for potential foreign investors.

However, beyond new infrastructure, EaP countries need a stable legal framework and to continue their efforts in the implementation of the necessary reforms to make the transport and logistic system more efficient.

These conclusions are an important contribution in view of the 21 September EaP Transport Ministerial meeting, which will take place in a smaller format (Presidency trio, EaP and 2 Commissioners). It will nevertheless be instrumental in ensuring the success of the 24 November 2017 Brussels EaP Summit and beyond.

### **EaP transport panel.**

One of the main outcomes of the 12th EaP transport panel which took place in March 2017 is represented by the agreement reached with the World Bank to provide Technical Assistance to the Panel in key cooperation areas.

The European commission asked the World Bank to support technically the panel. The main components will be:

- Data collection and identifying information and solution gaps in EaP infrastructure connectivity;
- Update and maintain the EaP web based project database;
- Upgrade and update the study and model of the EaP transport network;
- Support project prioritization by using the developed prioritization tool;
- Update country fiches;
- Monitoring of implementation of soft measures in the transport sector;
- Support to working groups on road safety

The agreement is expected to be effective for 2 years. In addition to an office in Brussels, a field presence will be ensured in EaP countries.

In this context, an extensive discussion on "road safety" – considered as a key priority in the transport sector for the EaP partners took place. Different working groups will be established to tackle these issues – a first meeting is expected to take place before the summer break.

On financing, information was given to the participants about the future European Investment Plan (EIP). Its adoption is expected by summer 2017 and could help supporting some key projects in the region. This aspect will certainly be at the core of the discussions which will take place at the occasion of the forthcoming EaP Transport Ministerial (21/09/17).

Alain Baron (91527)