



Guidelines for transport in Europe and neighbouring regions



Extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions

Networks for peace and development

A well functioning transport system connecting the European Union (EU) and the neighbouring countries is essential for sustainable economic growth and the wellbeing of all citizens in this part of the world. Better integration of national networks will foster regional cooperation and integration not only between the EU and its neighbours but also between the neighbouring countries themselves.

The average journey duration of a freight train between Berlin and Moscow takes today some 12 days. It would not need to take more than 3 - 5 days if the transport systems of the EU and its neighbours were compatible and if the rules applying to railway operators were similar.



Connections between the EU and its neighbours are outdated

The trans-European transport network (TEN) policy, revised in 2004, focuses investments on 30 priority transnational axes and projects. At the same time, it concentrates on the integration of the new Member States' networks. The trans-European axes aim to promote competitiveness and cohesion across the enlarged Union by better connecting its regions to the internal market.

The TEN policy does not, however, address transport connections between the EU and the neighbouring countries or other trade partners. These links have been developed through the Pan-European Corridors and Areas since the early 90's during two Ministerial Conferences in Crete in 1994 and in Helsinki in 1997. Following enlargement, the Pan-European Corridors are now mainly within the EU and thus part of the TEN network. The existing transport connections between the EU and its neighbours thus hardly reflect the new geo-political situation. This gives a fresh impetus to review and, in some cases, realign these Corridors.

The policy development process

In order to implement the concept of European Neighbourhood Policy in the transport field and to find ways of better connecting the EU with its neighbours, the European Commission established in 2004 a High Level Group on the *Extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions*, chaired by former Commission Vice-President Loyola de Palacio. The Group submitted its report¹ to the Commission in December 2005.

In addition to the representatives of the EU's 27 Member States, the Group was composed of representatives from: Albania, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Egypt, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya (as observer), Morocco, Moldova, Montenegro, Palestinian Authority, Russia, Serbia, Kosovo (under UNMIK administration in accordance with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244), Switzerland, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine. The European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Bank also participated in the Group's meetings as observers.

A public consultation process, organised throughout the work of this Group, intended to integrate the views and concerns of all stakeholders. Whilst the majority of stakeholders welcomed the Group's recommendations, some concerns were raised as to how environmental and social aspects would be integrated². These have been taken into account in the Commission Communication.

¹ See http://europa.eu.int/comm/ten/transport/external_dimension/index_en.htm.

² The written and oral contributions for both consultations can be downloaded from http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/external_dimension/hlg/index_en.htm.



Five transnational axes to foster trade and regional integration

Funding transport investments is a difficult task worldwide and budgetary constraints will continue to weigh heavily on the public sector's capacity to finance necessary transport investments. It is therefore important to focus efforts on a limited number of priorities and not to spread scarce resources on a vast network without noticeable impact. In line with the recommendations of the High Level Group, the Commission thus proposes to concentrate cooperation on the five major transnational axes.

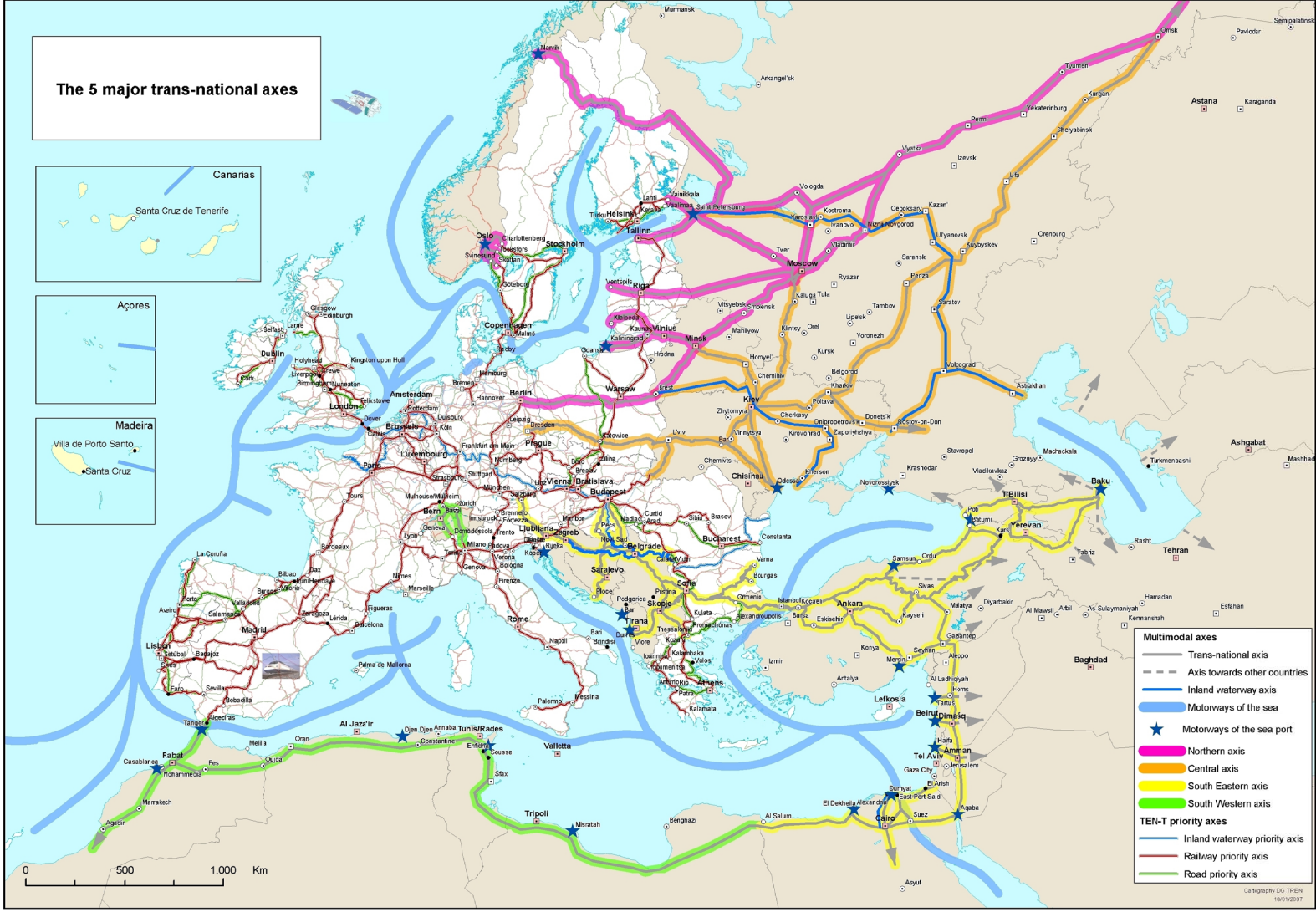
The five major transnational axes (see map on the next page)

- **Motorways of the Seas:** linking the Baltic, Barents, Atlantic (including Outermost Regions), Mediterranean, Black and the Caspian Sea areas as well as the littoral countries within the sea areas and with an extension through the Suez Canal towards the Red Sea.
- **Northern axis:** to connect the northern EU with Norway to the North and with Belarus and Russia and beyond to the East. A connection to the Barents region linking Norway through Sweden and Finland with Russia is also foreseen.
- **Central axis:** to link the centre of the EU to Ukraine and the Black Sea and through an inland waterway connection to the Caspian Sea. Connections towards Central Asia and the Caucasus are also foreseen, as well as a direct connection to the Trans-Siberian railway and a link from the Don/Volga inland waterway to the Baltic Sea.
- **South-Eastern axis:** to link the EU through the Balkans and Turkey to the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea as well as to Egypt and the Red Sea. Access links to the Balkan countries as well as connections towards Russia, Iran and Iraq and the Persian Gulf are also foreseen.
- **South-Western axis:** to connect the south-western EU with Switzerland and Morocco and beyond, including the trans-Maghrebin link connecting Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. An extension of the trans-Maghrebin link to Egypt as well as a connection from Egypt to the South towards other African countries is also foreseen.

These five axes contribute most to promoting international exchanges, trade and traffic. For instance, international traffic volumes in the Mediterranean are estimated to reach up to 170 million tons in 2020 whilst cargo between Russia and Northern Europe exceeds 50 million tons on several land links already today.

The five axes also include some branches in regions where traffic volumes are relatively low due to current political problems. Here the aim is to enable through transport connections the strengthening of regional cooperation and integration in the longer term.





Complementary actions to reduce border delays, to improve safety and security, and to ensure sustainability

The Commission is also proposing a series of measures (called "horizontal measures") aimed at making transport more rapid and effective along the axes. These measures focus on gradually bringing the neighbouring countries' legislation and policies closer to the relevant Community rules (*acquis communautaire*). They concern all transport modes and include, among others:

- ✚ Ensuring technical, legal and administrative interoperability with systems in the EU as regards e.g. railway networks, signalling systems, infrastructure charging schemes.
- ✚ Speeding up border crossing procedures by implementing the relevant international conventions, as already adopted in the EU, by introducing "one-stop" offices through shared facilities, simplification and harmonisation of trade and transport related documentation in line with the EU practice.
- ✚ Implementation of new technologies like traffic management and information systems in all modes (notably ERTMS³ and SESAR⁴), including satellite navigation (Galileo), that are effective and compatible with those implemented across the EU territory.
- ✚ Measures to improve safety and security and working conditions in all transport modes, e.g. through harmonisation of standards and procedures at the highest level of performance.
- ✚ Application of international conventions, social and environmental impact assessment, public procurement procedures etc. in accordance with the EU standards, donors' funding rules and best international practice.

Implementing the measures

The total cost of developing the five axes and the horizontal measures is estimated at **€45 billion**, of which €35 billion should be found by 2020.

Implementation of this ambitious plan requires pooling all relevant sources of funding, from public and private as well as national and international sources.

It also requires a binding framework for coordination. This would ensure strong commitment and joint ownership of the countries involved to implement the necessary measures in a timely and synchronised manner along the axes. In order to speed up the overall process and to meet the expectations of all parties concerned, the Commission has decided to take a two-step approach for the policy implementation:

1. In the first phase, **exploratory talks** will be launched with all the neighbouring countries. These would aim to assess the interest and commitment of the countries to strengthen multilateral coordination frameworks, where these exist, or to put such a framework in place, where these do not exist today. In this phase, eventual interim solutions would also be sought to allow for uninterrupted development of the axes.
2. As a second step, and depending on the outcome of the exploratory talks, the Commission will make **recommendations and/or proposals** on how to implement the policy and coordinate the framework.

³ ERTMS is the European Rail Traffic Management System.

⁴ SESAR is the European air traffic control infrastructure modernisation programme.

