

POSITION PAPER ON THE PAPER OF THE HIGH-LEVEL GROUP KAREL VAN MIERT AND THE REVISION OF THE TRANS- EUROPEAN NETWORKS

1. Priority projects in the TEN-T

The primary objective of the High-Level Group chaired by Karel Van Miert was to identify a new list of priority projects to be carried out in the framework of the Trans-European transport networks. We are pleased to see that a number of projects related to inland navigation and short sea shipping are taken into account. More specifically, we are convinced that the elimination of bottlenecks on the Rhine-Main-Danube (list 1) and the new Seine – Scheldt connection (list 2) will contribute to the further growth of inland navigation. This latter connection is an important missing link for inland navigation between France and Belgium and therefore we regret that it is not included in list 1 (projects to be started before 2010).

2. Motorways of the Sea

The Port of Brussels also welcomes the initiative of the Commission to stimulate short sea shipping via the concept of the Motorways of the Sea and are pleased to see that they are included in list 1. We believe that the Motorways of the Sea have a large potential to take over part of the expected growth in road traffic. However, we would like to stress that this concept should not stop at the sea shore, but that the hinterland connections should also be taken into account. The Port of Brussels is an example of a port, situated along an inland waterway, but capable of receiving sea vessels up to 4.500 tonnes.

3. Identification of the major trans-European axes

The Port of Brussels believes that the identification of the major trans-European axes will make a great contribution towards the functioning of the TEN. We therefore welcome the proposal of the High-Level group towards the Commission to identify these axes and to include them in the future guidelines of the TEN.

In particular the proposal of the High-Level Group that these axes should “include land and maritime links and the **nodes** expected to have great significance in terms of inter Member States trade” is considered as being very valuable. We are convinced that the intermodal nodes will be essential to the functioning of the TEN, as they constitute the links between the (modal) axes.

4. The financing of the Trans-European Transport Network

The Port of Brussels welcomes the proposals made by the High-Level Group to find the appropriate funds for financing the TEN-T. We also believe that a strengthening of public-private partnership and the realisation of a common framework for infrastructure charging (which includes the possibility of cross-financing) might bring part of the solution. Therefore, new and homogeneous regulations by the Commission will be necessary in the near future.