

EUROPEAN UNION



Committee of the Regions

COTER-VI/004

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DRAFT OPINION

Implementation of the 2011 white paper on transport

Rapporteur-general: **Spyros Spyridon (EL/EPP)**
Member of Poros Municipal Council

This document is being sent to members in accordance with Article 15(4) of the Rules of Procedure owing to its late inclusion in the plenary session agenda as a result of the special procedure relating to rapporteurs-general.

Deadline for tabling amendments:

Friday 27 March 2015 at 3 p.m. (Brussels time). Amendments must be submitted using the on-line tool for tabling amendments (available through the Members' Portal at <http://cor.europa.eu/members>).

Number of signatures required: **6**

Reference document

Draft opinion of the Committee of the Regions – Implementation of the 2011 white paper on transport

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS¹

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS,

Transport as a basic factor in economic, social and territorial cohesion

1. would emphasise that the mobility of people and goods is a precondition for achieving the fundamental EU objectives of economic, social and territorial cohesion and completion of the single market. Transport contributes to the competitiveness of Europe and its regions and the EU is a global pioneer in this field;
2. notes the proportionately high cost of transport for goods and households: transport accounts for 13.2% of household budgets and up to 15% of the price of products. Transport, meanwhile, is still 96% dependent on oil, which is produced in unstable regions of the world;
3. notes that the period since the publication of the white paper is too short for an in-depth evaluation of the measures taken, and the fact that no intermediate targets were set makes it difficult to evaluate progress made. However, the appointment of the new European Commission and the forthcoming review of implementation of the white paper, coming at a time of rapidly changes in the environment (economic crisis, wider geopolitical developments affecting transport), set the scene for a partial assessment of progress to date;
4. points out that the white paper's ambitious targets are a driving force for progress. The Committee also notes the interdependence between transport policies and policies for the environment, innovation and social policy. It would recommend that these objectives be linked to targets for reducing dependence on oil, and curbing noise and air pollution;
5. recommends that the European Commission give consideration, in the mid-term review and the possible updating of the goals, to new challenges such as geopolitical developments, the shift in transport flows, the emergence of new competitors, and the specific conditions unfolding in each Member State and region. It should also establish intermediate goals for the period beyond 2020;
6. congratulates the European Commission on its foresight in adopting a series of legislative proposals and initiatives, and calls on the European Parliament and the Council to speed up procedures, with particular regard to the packages of measures for rail and road transport and port policy;

The competitiveness of regions is affected by, and determines, the quality of transport

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Please note that, in accordance with Rule 55(2) of the CoR Rules of Procedure, "Committee opinions on proposals for legislative acts [...] shall express a view on the proposal's compliance with the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality".

7. would underscore the role of local and regional government in urban transport planning and their decisive importance when it comes to people's quality of life and regional competitiveness. Local and regional authorities are responsible for network planning and maintenance, parking and accessibility, and for monitoring the implementation of environmental standards. The CoR calls for local and regional authorities to be more actively involved in the decision-making process;
8. notes that there is a direct connection between transport planning in urban centres and urban and spatial planning. The Committee would draw attention once again to its proposal on integrated planning at urban and peri-urban level (including pricing), where the EU's role should remain advisory and not binding;
9. supports the promotion of non-motorised modes of transport (cycling, walking) for short distances, as they offer more ecological, cheaper and often quicker alternatives. Appropriate transport networks and measures to change people's mindsets will help to achieve this;
10. would underline the importance of adequate transport networks for sparsely populated or geographically disadvantaged areas as a basic factor in bringing about territorial cohesion. The Committee would argue that careful planning is needed in order to combine environmental requirements with the those of transport service providers and the need to set reasonable tariffs for users;
11. underlines that attention must to be paid to providing a high standard of transport for vulnerable population groups;
12. highlights the fundamental link between a reliable and flexible transport system and the competitiveness of the tourism industry;
13. notes the role of new technologies in establishing integrated public transport systems, with an emphasis on door-to-door journey planning on a one stop shop basis, and the provision of timely and reliable information. With an implementation deadline of 2020, achievement of objectives such as "intermodal ticketing" will help to reduce transport costs and improve the service provided;
14. welcomes the progress made in the area of passenger rights. The Committee notes however that information on those rights and the rights themselves are fragmented, depending on the mode of transport, and calls for more consistency for the benefit of users;
15. points out that the absence of harmonised standards among Member States distorts competition and potentially diverts traffic, with environmental, communications and administrative consequences;

Working towards an integrated, reliable, clean and safe European transport system

16. notes the uneven development and fragmentation of the transport network between Europe's regions, particularly when it comes to rail and road; a high-quality transport network, alongside flexible financial instruments, is needed to boost competition;
17. is in favour of cost internalisation, which must be designed to take account of specific geographical and demographic conditions and the relative contribution made by each provider: this should lead to the redesign of the specifications for Eurovignettes, so that the cost per kilometre is inversely proportional to the length of the journey taken by users;
18. notes the progress achieved in road transport safety, but also differences in Member States' legislation and standards, regarding the transport of dangerous products for instance. The Committee reiterates its call for a scientific cost internalisation model, especially for road accidents;
19. welcomes the Shift2Rail initiative and the promotion of the Blue Belt project, while drawing attention to the fact that insufficient progress has been made in switching to rail and waterway or maritime transport, despite congestion on the roads and in the skies. Trains and ships can further contribute to achieving the goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and accidents;
20. following on from the recent European Court of Auditors report, calls on the Member States to take measures to eliminate bottlenecks in waterway transport (relating to bridges, locks and river width, etc.), coordinate their action, bring infrastructure projects to completion and implement maintenance plans;
21. notes the absence of any reference to integrated maritime or inland waterway and air transport, or to the development of seaplanes, and calls for their inclusion in transport planning;
22. supports the Single European Sky initiative, and calls on the European Commission to present a transparent slot allocation system in order to improve airport use, in the interests of competition. The Committee notes the delays observed during take-off and landing, which are a factor in higher costs, and calls for an examination of the possible environmental impact of increased flight altitudes, on account of pollutant emissions in the troposphere;
23. calls for coordinated action with a view to strengthening multimodal transport, above all by creating the necessary links to nodal points (such as airports and ports), and highlights the need for coordination at Member States' borders;
24. warmly welcomes the progress made with regard to the search for alternative sources and methods of financing major transport projects, which require long-term planning and financing;
25. stresses that technological and legislative developments throughout the transport sector will require new skills on the part of users. The Committee would invite the Member States and the European Commission to take account of the need for continuous training measures and consider their cost at the design and planning stage so that they can be fully implemented;

26. highlights the rapid changes in working conditions in the transport sector and calls on the European Commission and the Member States to harmonise standards, with a view to improving conditions and discouraging unfair competition;
27. stresses that cleaner transport calls for parallel measures to promote travel by public transport, and research into cleaner fuels and more efficient engines;

Europe should export its successful transport model

28. reiterates its support for the European Union's efforts internationally to export its transport models through active participation in international forums;
29. the quality and safety of Europe's transport networks, which are based on high standards, are an example to third countries and at the same time contribute to European public safety and quality of life. The export of European standards and the opening up of international markets meanwhile strengthens the competitiveness of European industry;
30. notes that the transport sector is extremely complex, encompassing areas such as infrastructure, information technologies, research and innovation, vehicle specifications and user behaviour, to name just a few. The CoR calls on the Member States and the EU institutions to pay due attention to coordinating these different areas successfully so as to achieve optimum results.

Brussels,

II. PROCEDURE

Title	Implementation of the 2011 white paper on transport
Reference(s)	n/a
Legal basis	Article 307(3) TFEU and Rule 41(c) of the CoR Rules of Procedure
Procedural basis	Rule 43 of the CoR Rules of Procedure
Date of Council / EP referral / Date of Commission letter	11 February 2015
Date of Bureau/President's decision	9 March 2015
Commission responsible	Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget (COTER)
Rapporteur	Spyros Spyridon (EL/EPP) Member of Poros Municipal Council
Analysis	9 March 2015
Discussed in commission	n/a
Date adopted by commission	n/a
Result of the vote in commission (majority, unanimity)	n/a
Date adopted in plenary	Scheduled for 16-17 April 2015
Previous Committee opinions	Opinion on the White Paper – Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area (CdR 101/2011 fin) ²
Date of subsidiarity monitoring consultation	n/a

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OJ C 259, 2.9.2011, pp. 6-12.