

JOINT RESOLUTION
of the European Economic and Social Committee's
Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society (TEN)
and the Italian Economic and Labour Council (CNEL)'s
Commission V on large-scale infrastructure projects and networks
issued at the end of the 47th Section meeting held on 4 September 2003 in Rome

Meeting jointly in Rome on 4 September 2003, the European Economic and Social Committee's Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society and the Italian Economic and Labour Council (CNEL)'s Commission V on Large-scale infrastructure projects and networks,

HAVING REGARD TO Title XV of the Treaty of Rome on "Trans-European networks",

HAVING REGARD TO the conclusions of the 1994 Essen European Council, which identified a list of priority projects to develop trans-European transport networks,

HAVING REGARD TO the White Paper on *European transport policy for 2010: time to decide*, presented by the European Commission on 12 September 2001, which develops the 1997 Helsinki Declaration on pan-European transport policy,

HAVING REGARD TO the report of the high-level group chaired by **Mr Van Miert** of 30 June 2003,

HAVING REGARD TO the Italian presidency's work programme,

HAVING REGARD TO the Italian presidency's strategy to develop European infrastructure,

HAVING REGARD TO the conclusions of the informal meeting of transport ministers from the European Union and the 13 applicant countries held in Naples on 4 and 5 July 2003 ("Naples Charter"),

WHEREAS EU enlargement offers a unique opportunity to construct a future European Union beyond physical, social, economic and linguistic barriers,

WHEREAS trans-European networks are crucial for these changes,

WHEREAS the development of trans-European transport networks is essential for economic and social cohesion in the new Europe,

WHEREAS guaranteeing coherent and sustainable development of European mobility to permit the balanced growth of the continent's economic and social fabric is a priority,

WHEREAS the development of trans-European transport networks is fundamental to the expansion of a new model of European development based on the principles in the draft European Constitution submitted to the Thessaloniki European Council of 15 June 2003,

UNDERLINE THAT:

Europe needs to be equipped with a transport infrastructure network in the medium term which is adapted to the changed geopolitical conditions, developed in a sustainable way and incorporates the various modes of transport, reducing the current infrastructure congestion.

Decisions made in the transport sector should evidently take account of social and environmental concerns as well as structural and commercial problems.

Efforts must focus on eliminating bottlenecks from the network (such as routes across the Alps or the Pyrenees) – which are generally due to the lack of a link between land and maritime transport - by developing existing structures, promoting alternative transport modes such as rail, short sea shipping and inland waterway transport, and creating intermodal links.

Dialogue and coordination are needed to encourage the development of transport based on the pan-European corridors. The rational extension of these, particularly towards southern and eastern Europe, will permit balanced economic growth in these areas. At the same time it will prevent transport spiralling out of control in view of the increasing removal of customs barriers and the forecasts for economic growth. The development of these networks will facilitate the integration of the new Member States and improve the situation in neighbouring countries. Both the EU's new and old neighbours should take part in this project, which concerns the whole European continent and beyond.

The modification of the trans-European transport networks requires an intermodal approach, paying particular attention to maritime transport (for instance, motorways of the sea) and rail transport, where more consideration should be given to goods transport requirements.

The expansion of pan-European corridors in southern and eastern Europe is a pre-condition for the development of transport in the whole Mediterranean region, which will gain a new economic, social and strategic role following EU enlargement, as highlighted by the "Naples Charter". Corridors V (Barcelona – Lyon – Turin – Milan – Venice – Trieste - Ljubljana - Budapest - L'vov – Kiev), VIII (Bari/Brindisi – Durrës/Vlonë – Skopje – Sofia – Varna) and X (Salzburg – Ljubljana – Zagreb – Belgrade – Nis – Skopje – Sofia – Thessaloniki – Istanbul) must therefore be developed as a priority, but without jeopardising other urgent objectives such as those relating to corridors IV and VII. To increase the efficiency of the transport network an Adriatic corridor should be created to link corridors V and VIII. The North–South link is also crucial, through the completion of the rail lines: Berlin – Verona – Milan/Naples through the Brenner tunnel and Lyon/Genoa – Basle – Duisburg – Rotterdam/Antwerp.

Whilst the needs of the acceding countries should also be taken into account, it is vital to give maximum consideration to the development of depressed areas in current Member States. Areas such as southern Italy, northernmost Spain and Portugal and the Greek islands require particular attention.

A considerable economic effort will be required to complete the trans-European transport projects to achieve the above objectives. It is hoped that States concerned will quickly provide the requisite national funds so that Community resources and private capital can also be brought in.

A mechanism or body should be set up to assist the authorities involved in the work, coordinate Community and national infrastructure financing, and guarantee public resources and the systematic involvement of private backers for priority projects. Given the significant cost of the large-scale projects, financing should be increased by establishing a special Community fund to implement trans-European transport networks.

The work carried out by the transport corridor steering committees, which can act as a catalyst for initiatives, is also particularly valuable for European transport policy. These activities deserve further promotion and support.
