

Mr Antonio Tajani
Member of the European Commission
European Commission
200, rue de la Loi
1049 Brussels

26 November 2008

Dear Commissioner,

BUSINESSEUROPE believes that the development of the Trans-European Network for transport (TEN-T) is crucial to deepen the internal market and facilitate the catching-up of more isolated regions.

We have on several occasions, most recently during the TEN-T Days conference on 14-15 October 2008, highlighted the importance of speeding up the implementation of the TEN-T projects and the need for a renewed financial commitment from Member States and the EU, focusing on a clear prioritisation of projects and taking into account an enlarged EU.

The lack of public commitment to date at both EU and national level to financing network infrastructure (in particular transport networks) reflects a disregard for the provision and maintenance of infrastructure necessary for network industries to function at a European level. In this context, the systematic downgrading of the importance of infrastructure in European policy-making needs to be reversed.

We agree with the recent findings of the TEN-T Coordinators that the main obstacles severely hampering the effectiveness of TEN-T policy relate to the lack of investments and uncertain engagement at EU and national level, weak planning and technical inconsistency.

In view of the Commission's upcoming publication of a Green Paper on the revision of TEN-T policy, BUSINESSEUROPE would like to offer two ideas for your consideration:

TEN-T policy should adopt a more integrated approach

The network should, for instance, be better linked up with ports given that 90% of EU international trade and 40% of internal trade pass through these. This is currently not the case: out of the 30 EU priority projects, only the Rotterdam-Antwerp-Genoa corridor has adopted a truly integrated approach to ports.

Whilst it would not be financially viable to try to connect all European ports to the inland TEN-T network, we believe that there is a serious need to connect priority ports to the network, minimising extra costs.

Development of a Scoreboard - Progress Report

Budgetary problems have been a major challenge for the implementation of TEN-T policy. Due to the cross-border nature of the TEN-T a prolonged delay in one part of the network leads to negative effects being felt in other parts of the network, which can undermine investments that have been made in other countries.

In this context, BUSINESSEUROPE urges the Commission to set up a European scoreboard to record the funds committed and disbursed by each Member State and the EU on an annual basis on each project. This simple management tool would provide a quick and clear picture of how the various projects are advancing and offer information on the timing of the results.

The report presented to the informal Council meeting in Slovenia in May is a good example that would need to be repeated each year.

Last but not least we welcome the Commission's fresh announcement in its Communication on a European Economic Recovery Plan to accelerate its investments in infrastructure of the TENS-T. We believe that indeed this is needed to enhance Europe's longer-term sustainable growth-potential.

We hope that these suggestions will support the Commission's ongoing work in this area.

Yours sincerely,

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Philippe de Buck", written in a cursive style.

Philippe de Buck