

# BUSINESSEUROPE VIEWS ON A FUTURE EU TRANSPORT BUDGET

*A transport budget fit for Europe's future transport needs*

Transport is the backbone of the internal market and a pillar of growth and social cohesion: the transport sector contributes around 5% to EU GDP and employs more than 10 million people.<sup>1</sup> An EU-wide high-performance network for all transport modes, enabling efficient cross-border freight and passenger transport, is essential for the competitiveness, productivity and growth of the entire EU industry, as well as for decarbonisation and environmental sustainability of the sector. In a new geopolitical context, resilient and reliable international transport flows and connectivity become key elements for the EU's security.

As transport infrastructure in many parts of Europe is insufficient, the EU and Member States must guarantee adequate funding to ensure that infrastructure networks are **interconnected, expanded, modernised, maintained and created to be fit for Europe's future transport needs**: network completion and creation, capacity increase, digitalisation, climate resilience, zero- and low-emission mobility, as well as safety and accessibility for all transport users.

**The current funding at EU and national level is significantly falling short of the investment needs**: while the 2021-2027 budget of the EU's dedicated transport funding instrument - the Connecting Europe Facility for Transport (CEF-T) - amounts to €25.81 billion, the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) requires an estimated €845 billion in investment by 2040, of which €210 billion is needed for main cross-border links<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Eurostat (2024), Key figures on European transport – 2024 edition.

<sup>2</sup> Mario Draghi (2024), Report on the future of European competitiveness.

Staying neutral on specific transport sectors and modes<sup>3</sup>, and in line with BusinessEurope's position on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) for the years 2028-2034<sup>4</sup>, BusinessEurope contributes to the ongoing discussion on the future EU's transport budget with the following recommendations:

## WE RECOMMEND:

- **Extending and increasing CEF under the next MFF** as the EU's dedicated funding programme for transport, prioritising **cross-border connections, missing links and follow-up infrastructure for all transport modes** (road, rail, aviation, maritime) and supporting projects with high EU added value, while respecting the principle of technological neutrality. The timely completion of the TEN-T with respective deadlines of 2030 for the core network, 2040 for the extended core network and 2050 for the comprehensive network remains an absolute priority. CEF-T alone will not solve Europe's major transport investment challenges and needs, but expanding it under the next MFF would be a crucial step towards the realisation of the TEN-T. Funding criteria should acknowledge the different conditions and requirements on transportation in the Member States (e.g. national geography, location within the EU, industry pattern).
- **Prioritising high-value projects that boost regional competitiveness under the EU Cohesion Fund** to support and promote infrastructure projects along the TEN-T across all regions in order to better connect the main transport corridors with the EU periphery, such as island states, island and outermost regions, to close the gap in multimodal and sustainable transport infrastructure deployment between EU regions and to strengthen the accessibility and affordability of transport. Cohesion policy should address the transformation needs of all regions, including those currently performing well but facing future or systemic challenges.
- **Mobilising both private and public (Member State) financing** to further complement EU funding under CEF-T. Securing private investment in major infrastructure has proven challenging, and major transport infrastructure projects are largely dependent on public funding. Incentivising private-sector-driven funding can maximise efficiency and flexibility, e.g. in the delivery of transport infrastructure projects, and could be achieved by reducing administrative procedures, ensuring regulatory consistency and predictability, and promoting targeted public-private partnerships (PPPs).

## THE NEXT EU TRANSPORT BUDGET SHOULD PRIORITISE:

- **Cross-border connections, missing links and follow-up infrastructure for all transport modes**, removing all barriers to intra-EU transport and ensuring an efficient and functioning cross-border EU transport system.
- **Multimodal and intermodal transport and urban nodes**, focusing on the infrastructure, availability and accessibility of multimodal freight and passenger terminals and hubs, including upgrading and optimisation of existing facilities, and infrastructure ensuring technical compatibility between the different modes and across borders.
- **Accessible mobility solutions**, including infrastructure and services for users of all transport modes, and improving seamless mobility to strengthen cohesion and enable access to jobs, training and services.
- **Alternative fuel infrastructure for all transport modes across the EU and along the TEN-T**, in line with the objectives of the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR). The focus

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<sup>3</sup> Please see [BusinessEurope's paper](#) (2024) on priorities for the EU transport sector beyond 2024 for more sector- and mode-specific recommendations.

<sup>4</sup> [BusinessEurope's position](#) on the 7th MFF (2028-2034)

should be on new charging and re-fuelling infrastructure for passenger and freight transport, as well as transforming existing transport infrastructure into multi-energy hubs, offering electric charging and sustainable fuels, including hydrogen, for all transport modes.

- **Decarbonisation of all transport modes**, in line with the principle of technological neutrality, and focusing on the uptake and market penetration of new technologies, aligned with each mode's development cycles, decarbonisation of transport networks and of the current and future fleets.
- **Digitalisation, automated mobility and innovative solutions** by supporting the development, deployment and cross-border coordination of ICT systems and digital infrastructure.
- **Resilient international connections between the EU and third countries**, but also with the EU periphery, European islands and outermost regions, as well as climate resilient transport infrastructure.
- **Preparedness and resilience of the European transport system**, which will need to extend its services beyond the ones it already offers for civilian purposes. These include enabling the swift movement of military convoys for exercises during peace or crisis response, as well as advancing the EU's industrial and defence capabilities and improving the overall resilience of the transport system. A transport system prepared to handle security threats serves as a deterrent to those threats.



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