

COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS – DIRECTORATE E – Horizontal Policies and Networks  
DIRECTORATE C – Consultative Work, COTER Commission



Questionnaire on the  
Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing  
the Connecting Europe Facility  
[COM (2011) 665]

Submitted by Dr Ivan ZAGAR (SI/EPP) for consultation

Please complete and return this questionnaire by **15 January 2012**. You may send it by email to the following address: [subsidiarity@cor.europa.eu](mailto:subsidiarity@cor.europa.eu).

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Please answer the following questions:

**Governance and implementation issues**

1. Do you believe that the Connecting Europe Facility will bring added value to EU action in the area of TEN-T (including a leverage effect on sustainable growth and jobs and social, economic and territorial cohesion)? Please explain and provide examples to support your answer.

In the TEN regulation it is pointed out that **cross-border infrastructure** links also belong to the **projects** of common interest which should be prioritised.

The „Connection Europe Facility for transport, energy and ICT“ will be supported if it is linked with the objectives of TEN.

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**Transeuropean transport** axes can only **unfold their full potential** (European, national, and regional) when coincidental **good regional links** are realised. Thereby, **bottlenecks** in transit transport flows and regional transport accessing the transeuropean transport axes will be **avoided** and **border regions** are not getting the function of **transit areas**. In fact, good links to these large-scale axes could **improve** the **accessibility** of a border region (location factor) and the **mobility** (prevention of migration). Also, **trend-setting projects** along these axes could better be realised (transport and logistic centres, logistics projects, cross-border business parks).

But it has to be not only about **transeuropean links**, within the transport network **also regional connections** have to be fostered. Otherwise border areas will become only **transit zones** without profiting the advantages for mobilisation and labour market by improved regional transport connections to the transeuropean networks.

In **creating** transeuropean infrastructure it has turned out to be very **helpful** to realise **border-crossings first** (this causes a pull effect to the national centres, while in the interior the realisation of such infrastructures is slowing down towards the border).

There are many examples for the positive input of transport infrastructure as lever for sustainable growth, employment as well as economic, social and territorial cohesion. This especially applies to cross-border infrastructure like e.g.:

- Motorways across the Dutch-German border ((Amsterdam-Hannover-Berlin or Groningen-Bremen),
- Transport infrastructure between Aquitaine and the Basque country (FR/ES),
- Motorway Vienna-Budapest (AU/HU),
- Oresund bridge (S/DK),
- Motorway Extremadura-Alentejo(ES/PT),
- Motorway Dresden- Prague(DE/CZ),
- Motorway Kärnten-Ljubljana and Trieste (AU/SLO/IT).

Thanks to the initiative of the border regions concerned, in case of these selected examples an exclusive transit-effect could be avoided and the large-scale transport infrastructure is used for well-utilised industrial areas close to the border, logistics clusters, innovation clusters, stimulation of tourism (especially cross-border), and much more.

The effects on employment in these border regions are verifiably positive.

Cross-border transport structure is always enhancing territorial cohesion, as it improves the accessibility/reachability of national peripheral regions on one hand (with positive effects on the mobility of labour force and avoiding migration from rural border areas at the same time), and on the other hand good-quality cross-border connections that are often provide only the basis for intensive cross-border cooperation. Therefore, also sustainable economic and social positive effects arise.

Where transport infrastructure was first realised at the border (construction of the border-crossing point of a motorway (e.g. in the EUREGIO (D/NL)), these effects are exceptionally evident.

2. Please describe how local and regional authorities will be involved in the CEF decision making process in your Member State (including the impact of CEF on your territorial planning and development strategies).

This question cannot be answered by a European regional organisation as it concerns the specific situation in the individual member states.

But the fact is, however, that where sustainable cross-border development strategies are used which refer to the respective national and regional planning with the involvement of all politicians, the infrastructural situation of the border regions is developing faster and better.

### **Cohesion Policy and the CEF**

3. How may coherent compatibility be ensured between projects financed through the Structural and Cohesion Funds and those financed through the CEF? What will be the impact of the CEF on smaller projects?

The AEBR underlines the necessity of targeted interaction of the European funds to achieve the main objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy and supports the proposal to define minimum shares for the European Social Funds (ESF) for each category of regions as the social framework can be considered as an essential location factor in the regional competition.

“Connecting Europe” should only fund measures in the immediate vicinity to the border (e.g. some kilometres up to the first motorway exit or 2-3 kilometres of a railway on mutual side of the border). In doing so, it will be achieved that these new funds can really be used in the whole territory of the EU. The national available funds from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund have to be used for further completing the infrastructure on the national territory.

The effects on small-scale infrastructure projects have already been explained in paragraph 2.

### **Budgetary issues**

4. What is the expected impact of the CEF proposal on your public budget and on the use of other National and EU Funds?

This question cannot be answered by a European regional organisation as it concerns the specific situation in the individual member states.

## Internal Market

5. Can you identify any possible effect on public procurement rules and state aid?

This question cannot be answered by a European regional organisation as it concerns the specific situation in the individual member states.

## Cross-border issues

6. What challenges and opportunities does the CEF present to border regions (including the possible use of the EGTC)?

“Connecting Europe“ offers an unique chance for border regions, particularly if they combine it in a clever way with the measures of the future INTERREG A programmes (see comments on question 1).

An EGTC is an efficient tool for the construction and operation of cross-border infrastructure projects.

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