



**Statement by  
the “Main Line for Europe“ Initiative  
as a contribution to the Consultation  
on the Future Trans-European Transport Network Policy**

The “Main Line for Europe” Initiative is a community of interest consisting of cities, regions and chambers of industry and commerce along the European rail line “Paris Nancy – Strasbourg – Karlsruhe – Stuttgart – Ulm – Augsburg – München – Mühldorf – Salzburg – Linz – St. Pölten – Wien – Bratislava/Budapest”. The aim of the “Main Line for Europe” Initiative is to achieve the upgrading of the West-East Main Line “Paris – Bratislava/Budapest” to a continuous high-performance rail line for passenger and freight transport, the provision of an attractive transport service and the line’s optimum linkage to local and regional public transport along the entire corridor. The Initiative commits itself to work towards these goals.

## Summary

The “Main Line for Europe“ Initiative

- **welcomes the basic methodology of TEN-T planning and of the objectives thus pursued** such as providing a West-East connection between old and new Member States and **ensuring the continuity of ongoing projects**. The Initiative **doesn't see a need to adjust the routing of PP 17 (Paris-Bratislava) and PP 22 in the Vienna-Budapest section**.
- **suggests to systematically apply the methodology consisting in an “Integrated Planning” of timetable and infrastructure** <sup>1</sup> **when conceiving TEN-T projects** in order to ensure the most efficient use of scarce investment funds for such rails projects and to offer attractive timetables to long-distance passengers even during the phased upgrading of rail lines.
- **stresses the benefits of efficient urban nodes** as intersections between (inter-)national, regional and local traffic flows and the **importance of high-quality feeder and distributor networks in terms of the profitability of investments made into the TEN-T core network**.
- **advocates that the financing of TEN-T cross-border sections and sections close to borders should follow the “benefit principle”,** i.e. each state's contribution will not be determined by the investment to be made on its own territory (territorial principle), but by the cross-border benefit actually expected.
- **suggests to take into consideration the following specific criteria and tools** for the TEN-T co-financing of project-related sections:
  1. **Prioritisation of interface projects in those TEN-T nodes which serve the implementation of several priority projects** and thus have a particular benefit for a larger space and the network (“**Interconnection Bonus**”).
  2. **Projects should only be eligible for TEN-T funds if a “Trans-national Operations Plan”** is presented for the entire priority project and, as regards partial projects, if a “**Timetable Consequences Assessment**” has been made.
- **welcomes the proposal to provide a legal basis for the integration of local and regional authorities into the TEN-T planning processes**.
- **supports the intention to clearly define the Member States' responsibilities in the various project phases** (planning, financing, implementation, evaluation).
- **advocates the extension of mandates for “packages” of smaller infrastructure and operational measures** in coordination with the respective stakeholders at the local and regional level.

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<sup>1</sup> compare study “Main Line for Europe - Trains for Europe”, carried out by SMA und Partner AG, <http://www.magistrale.org/aktuell.php>, presentation TEN-T Committee Brussels, 22.02.2010

- **is in favour of operationalising the tools “Integrated Planning”, “Trans-national Operations Plans” and “Timetable Consequences Assessment” and of providing a legal and organisational basis for these tools.**

## Introduction

The **“Main Line for Europe” Initiative welcomes the comprehensive participation process** that was launched by the EU Commission when publishing the TEN-T Green Paper and that is being pursued by this consultation; the Initiative is pleased to be given once more the opportunity to point out its view.

**The Initiative’s statement is based on its long-term experience as an advocate for the European rail line “Paris-Bratislava/Budapest”.** Presently, the entire “Main Line for Europe” is part of TEN-T priority projects. The Main Line’s section “Paris-Bratislava” is completely covered by TEN-T priority project 17, while the section “Vienna-Budapest” is part of the TEN-T priority project 22.

Furthermore, the TEN-T priority projects 1, 6, 23 and 24 cross the “Main Line for Europe” in the TEN-T nodes Strasbourg, Karlsruhe, Munich, Linz, Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest. **The interconnection of economically strong agglomerations along the Main Line** is in keeping with the Lisbon goals and contributes to social and territorial cohesion. Being centrally located, **the east-west Main Line project is also essential for the European integration process.**

Given **the Initiative’s** experience background, its **suggestions** for the future TEN-T policy, in reference to the questions below, **mainly relate to TEN-T rail projects and to inter-modal issues** in this field.

## Methodology for TEN-T planning

**Are the principles and criteria for designing the core network, as set out above, adequate and practicable? What are their strengths and weaknesses, and what else could be taken into account?**

The “Main Line for Europe” Initiative **welcomes the basic methodology of TEN-T planning**, in particular the planning criteria on which the core network is founded, for example the objective to **improve the west-east connection between old and new Member States** and to **ensure the continuity of ongoing projects**. The Initiative doesn’t see a need to adjust the routing of PP 17 (Paris-Bratislava) and PP 22 in the Vienna-Budapest section.

As to the **general principles**, the Initiative suggests to consider some additional aspects relating to the following issues:

### **1. Interconnectivity and network optimisation:**

In order to take into account the principle of interconnection already when selecting future priority TEN-T projects, **the importance and the impact that this project will have relating to the network** should be a **major factor of choice** (see “Interconnection Bonus”). A first, rough criterion could be the number of interfaces with other TEN-T priority projects (TEN-T nodes). More significant, however, would be the volume of traffic flowing through the TEN-T nodes (the international, national, regional and local flows) and the intended intensity of traffic relations with any crossing priority TEN-T projects.

### **2. Quality of service (passenger and freight traffic):**

The desired **quality of service of TEN-T rail projects should be defined over the long term** (travelling times to be achieved between nodes, frequency of service, etc.) and be a **factor in infrastructure planning**, applying an **“Integrated Planning” approach concerning timetable and infrastructure**. The Initiative outlined this approach in the scope of the study “Main Line for Europe - Trains for Europe”, using as an example PP 17 (Paris-Bratislava).<sup>2</sup> (see also suggestions on TEN-T implementation).

### **3. Minimising investment costs:**

At the European level, too, the **methodology of an “Integrated Planning”** of timetables and infrastructure would **substantially help to use scarce investment funds for rail infrastructure projects in the most efficient way**.

### **4. Functions of urban nodes:**

**Both the quality of the nodes** as interfaces between (inter-)national, regional and local traffic flows **and the quality of regional/local feeder and distributor networks have an impact on** the efficiency of the overall system and, as a result, on **the profitability of the investment made into the TEN-T core network**.

### **5. Way of proceeding when designing the future TEN-T policy:**

Considering the current TEN-T policy revision, the “Main Line for Europe“ Initiative would have preferred that **no decisions on sectorial networks be taken at the present time** as this has been the case on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010 with the European Parliament **deciding to define “rail freight corridors”** in the scope of the “Regulation on the Creation of a European Network for a Competitive Rail Freight”. The predetermination of a TEN-T segment at this stage limits the scope of decision for the configuration of the entire TEN-T core network and, in view of the existing diversity of terms ((freight) traffic corridors, priority TEN projects, etc.), it hampers the effort to improve the TEN-T’s public visibility and readability.

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<sup>2</sup> compare study “Main Line for Europe - Trains for Europe“, carried out by SMA und Partner AG, <http://www.magistrale.org/aktuell.php>, presentation TEN-T Committee Brussels, 22.02.2010

**To what extent do the supplementary infrastructure measures contribute to the objectives of a future-oriented transport system, and are there ways to strengthen their contribution?**

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The **national economic benefits** of rail infrastructure measures can be strengthened (“**enhancing efficiency**”) by **consistently applying the “Integrated Planning” methodology** to the timetable and the infrastructure (see further remarks in the chapter TEN-T implementation).

**What specific role could TEN-T planning in general play in boosting the transport sector's contribution to the "Europe 2020" strategic objectives?**

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Planning the TEN-T in a way which consistently encourages the use of rail and waterways for transportation is an important **contribution towards meeting the “20-20-20 Climate Protection and Energy Goals”**.

Furthermore, an efficient TEN-T core network helps create the **traffic-related basis for sustainable growth** and a **competitive internal EU market**.

**TEN-T implementation**

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Current TEN-T policy is characterised by a striking disproportion between, on the one hand, the aim of establishing an extensive and differentiated TEN-T network and, on the other hand, the financial funds needed for such a network according to estimations and the funds available from EU sources and the Member States. The **leverage effect of TEN-T funds** in terms of stimulating investment in the implementation of the network is therefore quite **limited in the funding period 2007-2013**.

So the “Main Line for Europe” Initiative welcomes the intention to find an adequate balance between the dimension of the network and the funds and tools available for this. However, the different time horizons underlying the planning should be borne in mind: the **financial programming period (2014-2020) is shorter than the planning horizon for the implementation of the TEN-T core network**.

Against this background, the **TEN-T core network should, however, not only be described in its final stage, but in different phases**, including realistic financing schemes that take into consideration the EU’s multi-annual budgeting. The phases comprise a previously defined state of infrastructure and an operations plan adjusted to it. Together, the two components are the result of “Integrated Planning”.

Regarding the **proposals for an assessment and a prioritisation of rail projects with the highest European added value, using fair, transparent and efficient criteria**, the “Main Line for Europe” Initiative recommends:

1. **to work out a “Trans-national Operations Plan” for each selected project** <sup>3</sup> with a view to reduce travelling times, to optimise the connections at junctions and to improve capacities for passenger and freight traffic in order to
  - a) ensure that **the investment made generates the best possible European added value** (enhancing efficiency),
  - b) **define the final stage and the intermediate phases based on the “Trans-National Operations Plan”** and the existing infrastructure (“Integrated Planning”),
  - c) and thus **to achieve an optimisation of the entire network**,and
2. to take into account the following **criteria as prerequisites for the TEN-T co-financing of project-related sections**:
  - a) **integration in a “Trans-national Operations Plan” for the entire project** and any crossing axes that may be affected,
  - b) **introduction of a “Timetable Consequences Assessment” as an assessment tool of “Integrated Planning”** with a view to minimise the risk that part of the huge investment into infrastructure is wasted because it cannot be fully translated into shorter travel times for users,
  - c) **on this basis, EU coordinators could be given extended mandates for “packages” of smaller infrastructure and operational measures** (for example, strengthening inter-modal nodes by establishing freight traffic centres with a rail link, ...).

**In which way can the different sources of EU expenditure be better coordinated and/or combined in order to accelerate the delivery of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?**

**How can an EU funding strategy coordinate and/or combine the different sources of EU and national funding and public and private financing?**

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To improve the coordination of financing sources, the “Main Line for Europe” Initiative makes the following suggestions:

1. **to give up the territorial principle**: up to the present, the Member States have mostly stuck to the territorial principle when financing TEN-T priority projects, this means they are in general only willing to invest in their own territory. When a line is upgraded, however, there is a cross-border benefit to neighbouring Member States. In particular when **cross-border TEN-T sections and sections close to borders are concerned, the national investment to be made should be determined by the benefit actually expected**. TEN-T cross-border investments

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<sup>3</sup> compare study “Main Line for Europe - Trains for Europe”, carried out by SMA und Partner AG, <http://www.magistrale.org/aktuell.php>, presentation TEN-T Committee Brussels, 22.02.2010

based on the principle of benefit could **be actively supported by the EU through special financial incentives.**

- 2. to take into account local and regional support for TEN-T project implementation:** projects supported by local and regional authorities in terms of planning and financing are much more likely to be implemented. Their key role in designing the (TEN-T) nodes enhances the TEN-T projects' performance and profitability.
- 3. to give priority support to TEN-T sections or TEN-T nodes which are part of several TEN-T priority projects:** with a view to actively support the interconnection of TEN-T priority projects and to enhance the European added value which becomes immediately obvious, such projects should get an **"Interconnection Bonus"**, following the current principle of providing privileged support to "cross-border sections" and "bottlenecks".
- 4. to take the quality of regional feeder and distributor networks as a positive criterion for awarding TEN-T funds** as they enhance the nodes' attractiveness and the profitability of investments made in TEN-T priority sections. In this context, not only the existing local and regional networks should be considered, but also projects upgrading these networks as part of TEN-T projects.
- 5. to adjust investment decisions to mobility needs by applying the aforementioned tool of "Trans-national Operations Plans"** to TEN-T priority projects as this would prevent over-dimensioned infrastructure investment and improve the efficiency of scarce investment funds used for the projects.

**Would the setting up of a European funding framework adequately address the implementation gap in the completion of TEN-T projects and policy objectives?**

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## The legal and institutional framework of the TEN-T policy review

### **In which way can the TEN-T policy benefit from the new legal instruments and provisions as set out above?**

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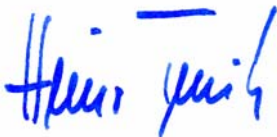
For the reasons set out above, the “Main Line for Europe” Initiative welcomes in particular the following proposals:

- 1. Provision of a legal basis for the integration of local and regional authorities into the TEN-T planning processes.**
- 2. Clear definition of the Member States’ responsibilities in the different project phases** (planning, financing, implementation, evaluation).
- 3. Extension of the scope of the EU coordinators’ mandate**

Furthermore, the “Main Line for Europe” Initiative suggests

- 4. to examine how the instruments “Integrated Planning”, “Trans-national Operations Plan” and “Timetable Consequences Assessment” can be operationalised and provided with a legal and organisational basis at EU level.**

Karlsruhe, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2010



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