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Trans-European transport network (TEN-T) - revised guidelines

Feedback to the European Commission

As a network of cities, regional associations, chambers of commerce and industry and federal states along the Rhine-Danube corridor, the "Main Line for Europe" initiative welcomes the European Commission's review of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the opportunity to contribute to it. On the one hand, Europe needs an efficient rail infrastructure that connects people and businesses across borders and enables environmentally friendly mobility and reliable freight transport. Better connections between the individual regions of Europe as well as to the TEN-T itself play an important role in securing the quality of life and prosperity in Europe. On the other hand, we believe that the TEN-T network will be one of the most important pillars in the implementation of the Green Deal, especially in reducing CO2 emissions in the transport sector by 90% by 2050.

However, to enable coordinated, well-timed intra-European rail transport with train connections during the day and at night, significantly more cross-border lines need to be upgraded in terms of performance and line speed. Only in this way can cross-border high-speed trains replace intra-European short-haul services in the long term. But the necessary capacities often have to be created first. We therefore welcome the prioritisation of those measures that contribute to the elimination of bottlenecks and create additional capacities or secure existing capacities in the long term, both in passenger and freight transport.

The TEN-T revision focuses strongly on cities and urban nodes as well as urban traffic. However, it is ignored that it is not necessarily the urban nodes (stations) that are bottlenecks, but the feeder lines in the surrounding areas, which are highly utilised and the actual bottlenecks due to the mixed traffic of long-distance, regional, local and suburban rail traffic. Without additional capacities on the feeder lines with a disentanglement of fast and slow traffic, it will hardly be possible to come up with future-oriented timetable concepts with sufficient frequency densification.

However, as far as the resilience of the network is concerned, we see a need to catch up in some places: On the sections of the "Main Line for Europe" between Paris and Budapest, especially in the area of the Rhine Valley railway, the infrastructure is very vulnerable due to the lack of redundant lines. Disruptions in the network could cause losses of billions for the European economy. The present Commission proposal does not sufficiently improve the current situation.



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Above all, the following expansion projects are missing:

- Expansion of the Gaeubahn Stuttgart - Zurich as an important feeder route to the 'Main line for Europe' (Rhine-Danube-Corridor) is missing.
- In the annexes, only Kornwestheim is shown as a road-rail terminal in the Stuttgart region; the trimodal transshipment centre Stuttgart-Hafen is missing.
- The delays in the Munich-Mühldorf-Freilassing expansion project caused by a new German acceleration law and ministerial decree are unacceptable. Effects on the entire surrounding TEN-T are to be expected.

To eliminate bottlenecks like this, reactivating inactive railway lines can be an important step. Therefore, funds must be made available to investigate the potential of such lines and subsequently also reactivate them, especially if they can close important gaps in the rail network or take over feeder functions to important parts of the network.

The revision addresses an acceleration of planning. However, there are no statements on how this is to be achieved. Perhaps it would already help if new planning and investigation tasks were dispensed with in future, thus avoiding additional delays.

The implementation and introduction of a nationwide ERTMS system by 2040 is also of great importance for the creation of capacities in the rail network, even though we consider the deadline set to be very ambitious.

In the area of night train traffic, we welcome all measures of the European Commission dealing with the improvement of the existing rolling stock (action plan). In particular, the creation of a Europe-wide pool for rolling stock, public guarantees or PSOs for cross-border services can contribute to an improved night train service in Europe.

In addition, we consider the proposal that cities with a nodal function should prepare a SUMP by 2025 to be positive - even if this is only an "optional" provision. In particular, these SUMPs should also deal with the "last mile" and promote the integration of passenger stations and freight terminals into the local transport networks. This can be an important step towards improving the logistics situation in urban centres.



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