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1. General

- **Transport networks** for the EU mean not only (like before) to join essential national networks for the common carriers and to connect them at the borders. They require rather a **conceptual political approach**.
- A TEN-T policy should provide the necessary infrastructure to **ensure the access to the transport networks** and to **support** the economic, social and territorial **cohesion**.
- Beyond the common **objectives of the transport policy** (support of economic, ecologic efficient and reliable transport services) it should **ensure** that:
 - this services are as efficient as possible,
 - they base on an integrated and innovative infrastructure which can keep up with the technical development,
 - good connections to all neighbouring countries are guaranteed,
 - an essential European master plan is going to be linked wisely with the national strategies in the individual member states.
- A **European network concept** where priority projects are well integrated seems to be a good approach. Thereby the **different requirements** of commercial transport and passenger traffic has to be taken into account as well as the key role of the airports and ports in the globalisation of the commercial transport logistics and of the transport on waterways in the EU with important links to great seaports (e.g. highways of the sea) and great industry areas (e.g. in-land water ways).
- According to statements of the Commission **cross-border connections** are thereby of **crucial importance**.

2. Initial position of the border regions as well as future needs and requirements

2.1 Initial position of European border regions regarding future transport developments

- Just like the AEBR Charter, the EU rightly **highlights** the fact that **in border areas the current infrastructure networks still reflect the narrow national principles** (sometimes going back to the 19th century) which influenced their construction, particularly from the military point of view.
- Indeed, **right from its inception (1971)**, the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR) **took a very close interest in issues related to transport policy in the border regions**. Many border areas have suffered from their peripheral location (national, sometimes even European) for decades resulting from missing transport infrastructure. Only the **removal** of economic, social, cultural, traffic and legal **barriers** and with the integration of Europe into a unity in diversity the previous peripheral situation of many **border regions** can be **transformed into a favourable central location** within Europe. **Border regions at the external borders** of the EU can be

released from their isolation through improved connections. Border and cross-border regions will thereby function as **bridges and become touchstones of European Integration**.

- Where transport infrastructures still have to be developed, the physical preconditions for cross-border development orientated on the future are often absent.

2.2 General requirements for a future transport policy

- Compared to the national governments the future role of the Commission has to be defined clearly in the framework of TEN-T.
- A long-term network planning helps to **improve the connection of border- and peripheral regions with the central areas of the EU** so that they can meet the new challenges (climate change, energy supply, need of new infrastructures, connections at the new borders, etc.).
- **Changes of political priorities in a member state** may not cause that investments in an international corridor are hindered or **measures in the neighbouring country** have to be postponed.

2.3 Individual transport sectors

Transport corridors (roads and railways)

- **Road and railways corridors** have to be well integrated in the common network.
- **International transport corridors** for roads and railways must be based on the network users' **needs** (demand-oriented capacities).
- International corridors are requiring **common quality standards** and an **improved interoperability** (especially railways).

Water transport

- As the transport on water has the **largest transport capacities**, an improved use requires:
 - good infrastructural **connection of the ports** to the hinterland,
 - **cooperation** between **ports** (information networks),
 - integration of ports in **logistic transport chains**,
 - **modern river information systems**.
- Maintenance of waterways and elimination of bottlenecks (especially in border areas).
- Improving the **connection with secondary networks**.
- **Highways on the Sea** with highly integrated transport chains.

Aviation

- Airports with an **improved railway connection**.
- More attention for **regional airports** because of their importance for border- and peripheral areas.

3. Special needs and requirements of border and cross-border areas

- **Spatial development, regional and transport policies** have to be considered together and **coordinated** more efficiently than in the past, if border areas are to enjoy sustainable development.
- Regional policies and cross-border strategies / plans have to make **concrete proposals** for the coordination / harmonisation of infrastructural measures and the elimination of border related barriers.
- The **construction and expansion** (through public and/or private financing) of roads, railways, airports, navigable waterways, ferries and harbours is **extremely important for border regions**, including closing of **missing links** between regional / national and Trans-European traffic axes and networks.
- **International transport connections through border and cross-border regions** must link them with national and regional transport networks and centres. Only the **specific regional connection** and utilisation of large infrastructures **removes** border-related **”bottlenecks”**, makes border regions become bridges between national states and neighbouring regions; and contributes simultaneously to the internal development of cross-border areas.
- **International transport connections** should **not** turn the border and cross-border regions into mere **transit areas** (e.g. vulnerable areas). The construction or expansion of traffic infrastructure has to **take into consideration the interests** of the population and the economy of the **affected region**, as well as the environmental requirements and nature protection.
- **Border and cross-border regions** must use joint development programmes and strategies to **prepare themselves in good time for the realisation of major infrastructure projects** crossing their border areas, to exploit any opportunities that arise, and to alleviate any disadvantages. Major projects relating to traffic infrastructure can be realised only with **equal participation** of the border and cross-border regions concerned,
- The **implementation of major transport routes** passing a cross-border area is also a **challenge for the cross-border regions**. This has to:
 - Develop a multimodal, cross-border transport infrastructure including traffic centres
 - Develop cross-border production and marketing activities in the transport sector
 - Improve the regional interconnection of transport operators and related supply services
 - Expand or create cross-border communication networks
- Building cross-border infrastructures will enable people to earn a living and remain there.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Closing cross-border missing links in the future first

- **As a consequence** international / cross-border infrastructure projects have to be **constructed first across the border**:
 - That will cause **pressure on national governments** to close the gaps between the border and the centres
 - That will **maintain the political support of centres / agglomerations** for the total of the infrastructural measure
- Border / cross-border infrastructure could also be pre-financed by private (e.g. Chambers of Commerce representing highly interested enterprises) or regional money from both sides of the border.

4.2 What can be done by the EU in practice?

- To give **priority to border crossing infrastructural measures**
- To implement **political decisions** in the transport sector in favour of border regions
- **Liabile financial concepts** in favour of cross-border infrastructure (not only INTERREG)