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**TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK:
REPORT ON PROGRESS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 14
ESSEN PROJECTS, 1998**

(Presented by the Commission)

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Luxembourg Council of 20-21 November 1997 emphasised the importance of the Trans-European Networks (TEN) as one of the major ways of supporting growth in the EU, and an essential complement of the single market. The networks have an important role in a medium term employment strategy because efficient transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructure is vital for EU competitiveness, and thus for long-term growth and sustainable jobs.
2. In particular as far as transport networks are concerned, the Luxembourg Council asked that a timetable and financial plan be completed for each of the fourteen specific projects contained in Annex III of the Community guidelines for the development of the transport TEN¹. This would underline the political commitment to their implementation, and demonstrate that financing can be found. Member States have now identified timetables and projected investment costs for the priority projects. This report provides an overall assessment.

II. OVERVIEW

3. The 14 priority projects, endorsed by the Essen European Council of 9 and 10 December 1994, are only part of the TEN transport networks. It has been estimated that the total cost of the TENs priority projects is around 110 BECU, compared to the cost for the total network of more than 400 BECU until 2010. The Commission will produce a Communication on the state of implementation of the network as a whole in the autumn, in accordance with the requirements of the TENs Transport Guidelines. The current report focuses on the specific remit of the Luxembourg Jobs Council, and the state of play on the 14 projects gives an indication of broader prospects.
4. Each of the projects has its own particular features, and it is difficult to make general statements. Taken overall, however, there has been significant progress: three of the projects are close to completion, all are under construction or at an advanced state of preparation and most are likely to be completed by around 2005.
5. Compared to forecasts made at the time of the Christophersen Group (1994), there has been slippage on some projects due to a combination of:

¹ Decision N. 1692/96 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 July 1996 on Community guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network. OJ N° L 228, 9.9.1996

-the intrinsic complexity of the projects, which means that some of the time-scales proposed were unrealistic, given the technical, legislative and administrative hurdles and the need to give full consideration to the environmental implications;

-constraints on the availability of public finance at a time of rigorous budgetary consolidation. This has been reflected in overall public spending on infrastructure in recent years, and has also posed problems for some of the priority projects.

6. Given these constraints, the fact that most of the projects are now firmly on track, with only limited slippage, is a significant achievement, as is the recent passing of some major milestones such as the first completely high-speed link between European capitals (Brussels to Paris) inaugurated in December 1997.
7. EU level finance has made a major contribution to the priority projects. This is particularly the case for the projects in areas eligible for Structural and Cohesion Fund spending, contributing to achievements such as the Belfast to Dublin rail link, the motorway network in Greece and the high-speed train south. The TEN Transport Budget, with more modest amounts available (around 1.8 BECU 1995-99) has nonetheless had a considerable impact in helping to launch major projects such as the Øresund fixed link and the Belgian high-speed train. The EIB is the major source of loan funding for TENs projects, advancing 1.4 BECU to the 14 priority projects in 1997 alone, while the EIF committed exposure towards the priority projects has reached around 350 MECU.

III. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

8. The annex provides a brief assessment of progress on each of the 14 projects in three broad categories:

- 1) **Projects near completion**

- Cork, Dublin, Belfast, Larne conventional rail link (project 9)
- Malpensa Airport (project 10)
- Øresund fixed link (project 11).

- 2) **Projects due for completion by around 2005 for which financing is largely in place**

- Paris-Brussels-Köln-Amsterdam-London (PBKAL) high-speed train link (project 2)
- high-speed train South (project 3)
- high-speed train East (project 4)
- Betuwe combined transport rail line (project 5)
- Greek motorways, (project 7)
- West Coast Main Line (project 14)

3) Projects for which the time-scales run significantly beyond 2005 or where time-scale and financing remain uncertain for important sections of the projects

- high-speed train North-South (the Brenner) (project 1)
- high-speed train Lyon-Trieste (project 6)
- Multimodal link Portugal/Spain with the rest of Europe (project 8)
- Nordic triangle multimodal corridor (project 12)
- Ireland-UK-Benelux road link (project 13)

9. The special nature of the Multimodal link Portugal/Spain with the rest of Europe and Nordic Triangle projects, which are multimodal corridors with a large number of components, make it very difficult to establish firm overall timetables and financing plans.

10. The main issues which will require careful monitoring include:

- the two major Alpine tunnels, the Brenner and Lyon-Torino which will be vital for the development of a sustainable Alpine transport policy, and for which firm decisions on timing and finance have yet to be made. Given the complexity of these projects, momentum needs to be maintained and indeed increased in order to prepare the necessary decisions on time;
- the financing of the CTRL (UK sections of the PBKAL between the Channel tunnel and London) is in difficulty, and it is essential to ensure a solution that results in completion close to the original time-scale;
- despite major additional efforts by the French Government, there remains a financial gap on TGV Est; a request for additional Community funds is likely, to fill, at least partially, the gap;
- though much of the TGV Sud (Mediterranean branch) will be completed in good time, the Perpignan to Montpellier section, which is vital in linking Spain to the rest of the network, may be delayed.

IV. ENCOURAGING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

11. The Council has previously recommended that public private partnerships (PPPs) should be examined as a means of securing better value for money in infrastructure projects, as well as of bringing in complementary finance, fresh ideas and methods. The Commission has actively pursued this proposal. In 1996, Commissioner Kinnoek set up a High Level Group to consider how PPPs might accelerate the development of TEN-T projects. This Group, whose report was presented to the Council, concluded inter alia that there needed to be firm political commitment to project implementation, that greater use should be made of existing financial instruments, and that the creation of new instruments, particularly to provide equity or quasi-equity finance, should be considered.

12. In this respect consideration is being given to the creation of risk-capital funds, financed in part from the Community budget, the aim of which would be to provide a catalyst to encourage the large private sector institutions such as pension funds to invest in TENs projects. It could significantly increase the amount of long term private sector finance available to infrastructure projects. The Commission launched a study of the proposal last October, and is now considering the study conclusions. One clear conclusion is that for this sort of financial instrument to develop, the market needs to have confidence that there will be a sufficiently large portfolio of TENs projects in which to invest.
13. The Commission encourages the creation of dedicated companies for the ownership, construction or financing of some railway projects in order to facilitate the participation of the private sector in the investment effort and to improve project quality. In this context the Commission hopes to see the rapid adoption of the European Company Statute.

V. FORWARD PERSPECTIVE

14. The timetables submitted by the Member States suggest that there will be a very substantial increase in expenditure on the 14 priority projects during the period 2000-2006, with many of the larger projects moving into the full construction phase. Though these forecasts must be viewed with some caution at this stage, since further decisions are needed in a number of cases, this could result in investment at close to double the level seen in 1995-1999.
15. While this period will see a continuing commitment to budgetary rigour, the progress in fiscal consolidation made so far opens up the prospect that it will be possible to find room for higher levels of infrastructure spending within tightly controlled overall national budgets. Indeed, a key aim of budget consolidation is to make room for productive investment of this sort. At the same time the low level of interest rates that may be expected with EMU should facilitate investments. This is particularly true for projects like TENs that require very large and long-term capital investments.
16. The role of the Community and the EIB will continue to be important. As recognised also by the Commission communication on Agenda 2000, TENs are a key factor for the reinforcement of the Single Market, and the Community budget will continue to play a crucial role in getting projects off the ground and maintaining momentum. In a number of cases the Community contribution will be a determining factor in the financial viability of the project. The estimates of financial needs which the Commission put forward with the proposal to revise the TEN Financial Regulation² (a figure of 5 BECU for the period 2000-2006) reflects the forecast increase in activity, and the need to continue to recognise the strong Trans-European element in the projects concerned. The proposal includes the idea of an indicative multiannual programme adapted to the nature of large

² COM(1998) 172 final

infrastructure transport investments. The Commission also intends to continue its efforts to make Community support as effective as possible by concentrating funds on key projects. The EIB's increasing willingness to develop its loan instruments so that they are better suited to the time-scale and risk profile of individual projects will play an important role, not least in the development of financing packages for public-private partnerships. The EIF also has an important role to play in this respect. A major effort is also needed to prepare for the extension of the TENs to the accession countries, for which ISPA will be the main instrument for EU grant funding from 2000.

17. Achieving implementation of the TEN network will require a combination of public and private finance in partnership. Concrete steps need to be taken on a case by case basis as a matter of urgency to agree the parameters and the mechanisms for the implementation of these PPPs. If this is done, this can achieve more rapid project implementation and better value-for-money. Firm commitment is needed from Member States if the private sector is to invest in development of suitable financial instruments and approaches. The Commission will continue to work with the EIB and EIF to ensure effective EU support for PPPs particularly on the priority projects.

PRIORITY PROJECTS PROGRESS

1) Projects near completion

The **Cork-Dublin-Belfast-Larne-Stranraer rail link** was supported largely through the Cohesion and European Regional Development Funds. Most of the work on the line (with the exception of some track improvements near Belfast) was completed in 1997 and an improved service begun in October 1997. There remains to be completed the spur from Belfast to Londonderry: the costs of this work are presently being reassessed, but it is expected to be completed around 2000.

Malpensa Airport's new facility will be completed in 2000. The first phase of works is virtually completed and the new airport should be opened this year. It is a project that has been carried out as a PPP: the financial package comprises self-financing by SEA (the concessionaire of Malpensa/Linate airports), State grants, loans from the EIB, a guarantee from EIF and support from the TENs budget. As for the land accesses, the new rail link to the city centre will be opened for services only in 1999 whilst the new road access should be completed just in time for the inauguration of the new terminal.

The **Öresund Fixed Link (16 km)**, including its access routes, provides a combined road and rail link between Denmark and Sweden, uniting a region of 2.3 million people. It is expected to be completed by the year 2001. Three public companies are responsible for different sections of the project. The major proportion of the funds have been raised on international capital markets and from the EIB. The Swedish and Danish Governments have guaranteed the loans for the project.

2) Projects due for completion by around 2005 for which financing is largely in place

The **Paris-Brussels-Köln-Amsterdam-London (PBKAL) High Speed Train link** was agreed to by Ministers from France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK in 1989. The Paris-Channel Tunnel and Paris-Brussels sections, together with the Channel Tunnel itself, are complete; construction work has begun on the London-Channel Tunnel section, and preparatory work is well advanced on the Amsterdam-Brussels and Köln-Brussels sections. In detail:

-in the **UK**, the **Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL)** was offered as a Design, Build, Finance and Operate concession to the private sector in 1995, and awarded in 1996 to London and Continental Railways. However, LCR failed to secure the necessary complementary private sector finance and is now in discussion with potential private sector partners about completion of the project in keeping with the terms of the concession. The projected completion date for the whole project is now uncertain. The EIB and the EIF are participating in the financing of this project.

-in **Belgium**, the section of the link between the French border and Brussels was completed and opened in December 1997. On the Brussels-Dutch border and Brussels-German border sections works have started, although the sub-sections Antwerp-Dutch border and Liège-German border are scheduled for completion only by mid-2005. The Belgian Government established the "TGV Financière" in 1996 to fund all the HST projects in Belgium.

-in the **Netherlands**, the route of the Amsterdam-Belgian border link was adopted in 1996. The Government is planning to involve the private sector in all parts of the project: it has commissioned a study, now underway, to identify the optimal way of doing so. This PPP should help meet approximately 20% of the project's estimated cost; the estimated completion date is 2005.

-in **Germany**, the project is being developed in two parts: Aachen-Köln and Köln-Frankfurt. Construction work has begun on both sections; Köln-Frankfurt should be completed by 2000, whereas the entire section is due to be completed by 2007. The cost will be borne mostly by central Government funds.

The **HST South** consists of two parts: the Mediterranean branch (Madrid-Barcelona-Perpignan-Montpellier) and the Atlantic branch (Madrid-Vitoria-Dax). Work is more advanced on the Mediterranean branch, of which the Spanish part is expected to be completed by 2004, under the cover of Gestor de Infraestructuras Ferroviarias (GIF) a dedicated company created in 1997, owner of the new infrastructure. The branch is expected to receive substantial support from the Cohesion Fund. The international section (Barcelona-Perpignan) is expected to be completed by 2005. As far as the Perpignan-Montpellier section is concerned there is no final timetable. On the Spanish part of the Atlantic branch the phase of public enquiry has started for the section Madrid-Valladolid and is about to start for the so called Y Basque (Vitoria- Bilbao-San Sebastián), preliminary studies are on-going on the section Valladolid-Vitoria. EIB financing is also likely to be requested for this project.

The **HST East** is now under construction on the German section (upgrading line). There has been a major step forward with the French Government announcement in February that the final study phase has been launched on the French territory. Works on the first phase of the French section (Vaires-Vandières) should start in 1999 in view of its completion in 2005. This first phase will ensure the connection with both German and Luxembourg networks. There remains a potential financial gap and a request for additional Community funds is likely.

The **Greek Motorways** are on the north-south (PATHE) and east-west (Via Egnatia) axes through Thessaloniki. Work is well underway on both, and completion is scheduled for around 2004. Both projects have received, and will receive, substantial support from both the Cohesion and the European Regional Development Funds (ERDF), as well as loans from the EIB and support from the TENs budget. The Greek Government has also involved the private sector, establishing three PPPs for separate sections of the PATHE (Rio-Antirion bridge, Athens Ring Road and Maliakos fixed

link); the intention is to identify further suitable sections for PPPs on both PATHE and Via Egnatia.

The **West Coast Main Line** is another HST link in the UK, which will link the PBKAL to Scotland and the Irish rail link. The project is being developed as a PPP, with Railtrack (the private sector owner of the existing infrastructure) developing the route in partnership with Virgin Rail, the passenger service franchisee, and the public sector. Work has already begun on signalling and track improvements; the whole project should be completed by 2005. EIB and EIF finance has been requested for this project.

The **Betuwe Line** is unique: it is an almost totally new-built, conventional railway line, principally for freight traffic. Its purpose is to provide a rail option for the large volume of freight traffic presently moving by road between Rotterdam and Germany and the rest of Europe. The Dutch Government now proposes to take the project forward as a PPP, the public sector taking the project through to construction and the private sector then being invited to tender for it as an operating concession. The project should be completed by 2005.

3) Projects for which the time-scales run significantly beyond 2005 or where time-scale and financing remain uncertain for important sections of the projects

The **HST North-South** runs from Berlin via Leipzig, Nürnberg, München, Innsbruck, and the proposed Brenner tunnel to Fortezza and Verona. Construction work is well underway on certain sub-sections in Germany; completion of the entire German section is expected by 2007. Progress has also been made with the Brenner tunnel preparatory phase; several railway companies intend to establish a European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), to oversee the development and design of the base tunnel. Upgrading of the existing Fortezza-Verona line is underway and should be completed by 2001. Whilst the financing for the Berlin-Nürnberg sections is largely assured, that for the remaining sections, particularly the Brenner tunnel, is uncertain. EIB financing has already been approved and utilised for the initial stages of this project in Italy and the INN Valley in Austria.

The **HST Lyon-Torino-Trieste** runs from Lyon to Trieste via Torino, Milano, Verona and Venezia. In Italy construction work has started in some key nodes. Major works should also begin by 1999 on some important Italian sub-sections. On the French section, the procedure to secure the DUP (Déclaration d'Utilité Publique) should be launched in 2000; works could then start on this section. On the international section a series of geological studies should be completed in 2000. The state-owned Italian railway company, FS, has a wholly-owned subsidiary TAV (Treno Alta Velocità) which is responsible for the development of the HST networks in Italy. For the Italian sections FS will provide 40% of the estimated costs; the remainder will be sought from financial institutions and the TEN budget.

The **Nordic Triangle** is a sequence of transport corridors, extending from southern Sweden to the Norwegian border and Stockholm, across to Turku, Helsinki and the Russian border. Work is underway throughout the corridors (including safety studies in the maritime section).

The **Multimodal link Portugal/Spain with the rest of Europe** consists of three main corridors, radiating from Lisbon to Seville, La Coruña and Irún. The project's aim is to provide alternative rail transport for the Iberian road freight traffic to the rest of the European Union. Some construction work has begun, but most sections are still at the feasibility study stage. Since the project is at a relatively early stage of development – it was identified finally only in 1996 – the Portuguese authorities have not yet established a definitive list of projects. However, the Portuguese authorities envisage the possibility of private sector involvement in the new-build road sections, and are requesting EIB finance.

The **Ireland-UK-Benelux road link** comprises a number of roads of varying standards, which were proposed for developing as necessary to the appropriate standard, depending on traffic density. In the Republic of Ireland, the project has received considerable support from the Cohesion Fund, and substantial progress in up-grading the corridor is taking place. In Northern Ireland the recently announced new Investment Fund will help finance the project. However, for the remaining part, the UK's national roads programme is presently the subject of a strategic review, and it is not possible to say at this stage when the project will be completed.

ESSEN 14 priority projects: overview of the investments; financing from the EU, the EIB and the EIF

| Project | Length (Km) | Total invest. (MECU) | Investment pre-98 (MECU) | Inv. forecast 98-99 (MECU) | Inv. forecast 2000+ (MECU) | TEN-support pre-98 (MECU) commitments | Cohesion fund pre-98 (MECU) commitments | ERDF pre-98 (MECU) | EIB loans signed (MECU) | EIF Committed exposure (MECU) |
|---|-------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. HST/CT North-South(a) | 958 | 15102 | 2505 | 1325 | 11245 | 152,23 | | | 350 | |
| 2. HST PBKAL | 1176 | 17232 | 3728 | 4118 | 9386 | 392,45 | | | 1047 | 153,4 |
| 3. HST South | 1601 | 14072 | 240 | 1375 | 11757 | 19,6 | 300 | 0 | | |
| 4. HST East | 551 | 4777 | 59 | 170 | 3086 | 66,9 | | | | |
| 5. Betuwe line | 160 | 4094 | 360 | 870 | 2864 | 39 | | | | |
| 6. HST/CT Lyon-Trieste | 734 | 18260 | 368 | 943 | 16949 | 94,9 | | | | |
| 7. Greek Motorways | 1580 | 9242 | 2175 | 2351 | 4716 | 75 | 406,6 | 860 | 806 | 127 |
| 8. Multimodal link Portugal-Spain-Central Europe (b) | | 6200 | (b) | (b) | (b) | (b) | (b) | (b) | (b) | |
| 9. Conventional rail link Cork-Dublin-Belfast-Larne-Stranraer | 502 | 357 | 328 | 29 | | 0 | 53,9 | 55 | 4,2 | |
| 10. Malpensa airport | n/a | 1047 | 473 | 406 | 168 | 7,8 | | | 208 | 77,6 |
| 11. Öresund fixed link | 52,5 | 4158 | 2505 | 1377 | 276 | 88 | | | 801 | |
| 12. Nordic Triangle | 1800 | 10070 | | 1260 | 3320 | 57 | | | 969 | |
| 13. Ireland-UK-Benelux road link | 1530 | 3629 | 679 | 370 | 2580 | 7,4 | 153,1 | 70 (c) | 26,6 | |
| 14. West Coast Main Line | 850 | 3000 | 287 | 532 | 2180 | 24,8 | | | | |
| Total(d) | | 111240 | 13707 | 15126 | 68527 | 1025,08 | 913,6 | 985 | 4211,8 | 358 |

Notes:

a) The cost of upgrading the accesses to the base tunnel to four tracks (a further 7 Bn ECU) is not included, the timetable for this will be established later.

b) Indicative total investment; project identified only in 1996, exact definition still in progress.

c) The programme approach used by ERDF means that full information is not available

d) Due to pending decisions and project definition in progress total investment (col.2) is not equal to the sum of investment in pre-98, 98-99 and 2000+.

Annex B: summary of progress

| PROJECT | LENGTH (km) | COST (MECU) | AUTHORISATIONS/ TECHNICAL SITUATION | FINANCING | STAGE | COMMENTS |
|---|-------------|-------------|--|--|--|---|
| 1) High Speed train/combined transport North-South | 958 | 15102 | Building permissions progressively awarded for sections; technical studies to be launched for Brenner base tunnel | Partly secured; some difficulties remain | Berlin-Leipzig: work well under way; Leipzig-Nürnberg: work started on sections, Brenner Tunnel still at study stage | Member States concerned intend to establish an EEIG for Brenner base tunnel to carry out the design |
| 2) Paris -Brussels-Köln/Frankfurt- Amsterdam-London (PBKAL) | 1176 | 17 232 | Some delays; now all sections on track | Largely secured; some difficulties remain. PPP possible for NL section | Construction work well under way on Belgian and German sections; started on Dutch section | Some delays, but most non-financial problems resolved. Brussels-Paris HSL completed |
| 3) High Speed Train South | 1 601 | 14 072 | Procedures completed for some sections; technical studies launched for others | Partly secured; some difficulties remain | Construction work under way on 2 sub-projects of Madrid-Barcelona section. | International section at study stage through an EEIG |
| 4) HST Paris eastern France-south-western Germany (TGV Est) | 551 | 4777 | Permissions available for D part. Political decision taken to build a 1 st phase between Vaires-Vandières for F part. | Largely secured; some difficulties remain with French part | Final technical studies launched on French part, works should start in 1999 on the section Vaires-Vandières, upgrading works started on German section | High political priority |
| 5) Betuwe Line | 160 | 4094 | All political and administrative decisions have been taken. | Public sector will finance the construction, private sector involvement in exploitation foreseen | Construction already started on Port-line. For the A-15 line final planning procedures are near completion. Construction is planned to start mid 1998. | Very early stage of construction, after delays. The project is planned to be finished in year 2005. |
| 6) High Speed Train / Combined Transport - Lyon-Turin-Trieste | 734 | 18 260 | Déclaration d'Utilité Publique launched for Lyon-Montmélián section; administrative Authorisation procedures launched for Torino-Venezia | Partly secured; some difficulties remain | Works started in some key nodes in Italy, technical studies on-going on international section | Franco-Italian summit on 3 October 1997 launched three year study programme for international section |
| 7) Greek Motorways | 1580 | 9242 | Work on-going on several sections; building perm. awarded, technical studies and tendering procedures under way for others | Three PPP-schemes on PATHE | Initial work under way for three PPP-schemes on PATHE, and some others | Substantial support from ERDF and Cohesion Fund |
| 8) Multimodal link Portugal-Spain - Europe | | 6212 | Procedures completed for certain sub-projects; technical studies under way for others | Subst. support from ERDF and Cohesion F. expected; some difficulties remain | Work on sections of Linha do Norte, Beira Baixa (rail) and Lisboa-Valladolid (road) under way; studies on further projects | Large range of separate sub-projects, of which several still at study stage |
| 9) Conventional rail link Cork-Dublin-Belfast-Lame-Stranraer | 502 | 357 | All completed | No difficulties | Cork-Dublin-Belfast section completed; remainder to be completed by 2000 | Largely completed thanks to ERDF and Cohesion Fund support |
| 10) Malpensa Airport | | 1 047 | On track | Financing in place | Construction work well under way, to be completed by 2000 | To be opened in 1998 (first phase) |
| 11) Öresund Fixed road/rail Link | 52.5 | 4158 | On track | Financing in place | Construction work on most of project | On time, completion by 2000 |
| 12) Nordic Triangle Multimodal corridor | 1 800 | 10 070 | Building permissions being awarded for one section; technical studies under way for others | Partly secured; some difficulties remain | Work under way on E 18 and E 6 roads and main rail axes in Finland and Sweden | Large range of separate sub-projects |
| 13) Ireland-UK-Benelux road link | 1530 | 3 629 | Studies on various sections under way | Uncertainties remain | Construction work nearing completion in Ireland, uncertainty for some of the UK sections | UK's national roads programme subject of a strategic review |
| 14) West Coast Main Line | 850 | 3000 | Studies under way | Financing secured, PPP | Construction work started to modernise line | Partnership between private infrastructure and service companies, with public subsidy |

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