



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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REPORT

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: delegations

No. Cion prop.: 12635/11 TRANS 212 MAR 98 AVIATION 184 MI 354 RELEX 760
ECOFIN 507

Subject: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European
Parliament "The EU and its neighbouring regions: A renewed approach to
transport cooperation"
– Draft Council conclusions

Following the meeting of the Working Party on Transport Intermodal Questions and Networks on 19 July 2011, delegations will find attached a draft of Council conclusions presented by the Presidency on the above-mentioned subject.

**Draft Council conclusions on the
Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament
"The EU and its neighbouring regions: A renewed approach to transport cooperation"**

The COUNCIL:

1. WELCOMES the Commission Communication "The EU and its neighbouring regions: A renewed approach to transport cooperation" putting forward actions to strengthen transport cooperation with neighbouring regions covered by both the Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policies;
2. RECALLS its conclusions on the enlargement strategy, adopted on 14 December 2010, as well as the ones on the EU's new approach to the European Neighbourhood Policy, adopted on 20 June 2011, and EMPHASISES the importance of better transport connections in achieving deeper economic integration and closer political association with the neighbouring regions;
3. CONSIDERS that better transport connections can be achieved through closer market integration and improved transport infrastructure ensuring smooth travel for people and the efficient transport of goods;
4. WELCOMES the plan put forward in the Commission Communication related to the different transport modes aimed at closer market integration and better infrastructure connections;
5. RECOGNISES the importance of working together with neighbouring regions across all transport modes to improve their safety, security, environmental and social performance and WELCOMES actions aiming at extending the European Common Aviation Area, the "Blue Belt" area in maritime transport, increasing the interoperability of railways systems, facilitating transport of goods and people by streamlining border crossing and administrative procedures for rail, road transport and inland navigation;

6. UNDERLINES that closer integration between the transport markets of the EU and its neighbours depends on each country's will and readiness to do so, and is conditional on neighbouring countries' progress in applying standards that are similar to those of the EU in areas such as safety, security, environment and social matters;
7. STRESSES that improved transport infrastructure connections can be achieved through the implementation of strategic transport infrastructure networks and priority projects of common interest for the EU and the neighbouring countries, that connect the Trans-European Transport Network with the infrastructure of neighbouring countries as well as those projects that improve regional connections;
8. UNDERLINES the importance of using the existing financial resources for helping neighbouring countries to make reforms that are necessary for achieving closer market integration and better transport connections with the EU, such as the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) that can leverage funding from international financial institutions for the priority infrastructure projects;
9. While RECOGNISING the international and cross-border nature of transport, CONSIDERS that better transport connections between the EU and its neighbours can be best promoted in a multilateral framework that brings together the EU Member States and the neighbouring countries;
10. NOTES the existing well-established regional transport cooperation between the EU and its neighbours in the Western Balkans and ENCOURAGES further development of transport links between the EU and that region;
11. ENCOURAGES the EU to continue its cooperation in the Euromed transport framework bringing together the various parties involved, including the Union for the Mediterranean, with the aim of ensuring efficient traffic flows;

12. RECOGNISES the need for a more structured cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries and LOOKS FORWARD to the establishment of an Eastern Partnership Transport Panel and its launch at the Eastern Partnership Ministerial Conference scheduled for 24-25 October 2011 in Krakow;

13. INVITES the Commission to take forward the actions set out in the Commission Communication in order to achieve the above objectives.
