



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 29 September 2011

14712/11

**TRANS 249
MAR 119
AVIATION 217
MI 449
RELEX 962
ECOFIN 629**

REPORT

from: General Secretariat
to: Council

No. prev. doc.: 14269/11 TRANS 240 MAR 112 AVIATION 209 MI 430 RELEX 909
ECOFIN 586

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"
– Adoption of Council conclusions

Introduction

1. On 7 July 2011, the Council received a Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council "The EU and its neighbouring regions: A renewed approach to transport cooperation" aiming at setting out a renewed policy framework for promoting better transport connections in the EU's neighbourhood through improved transport infrastructure and closer market integration.

2. With a view to reaching the above objective, the Communication outlines more than twenty short and long term measures in all transport modes: road, rail, aviation, maritime and inland navigation. In line with the White Paper "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area" (doc. 8333/11), cooperation with the neighbouring regions should focus on removing the barriers to transport and on operating a transport system with high safety, security, social and environmental standards, as regards both infrastructure and market integration aspects. In this context, the EU should apply a higher level of differentiation in the transport sector depending on each country's ambition and readiness to integrate more closely with the EU.

Work carried out by the Council preparatory bodies

3. The Working Party on Transport Intermodal Questions and Networks examined the above Communication and the draft Council conclusions presented by the Presidency at a number of meetings in July and September 2011.
4. The Permanent Representative Committee examined the draft conclusions at its meeting on 28 September 2011 and was able to endorse them.

Next steps

5. The Council is hereby invited to examine and adopt the conclusions annexed to this report at its session on 6 October 2011.

**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 improved transport infrastructure and through closer market integration ensuring smooth travel for passengers and the efficient transport of goods, taking into account the specific geographical situation of Member States;
4. 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 equivalent to those of the EU in areas such as safety, security, environment and social matters;

5. RECOGNISES the importance of working together with neighbouring regions across all transport modes, including multimodal operations, to improve their safety, security, environmental and social performance and WELCOMES actions towards third countries aiming at extending the European Common Aviation Area, further removing barriers in maritime movement in and around Europe as well as aiming at non-discriminatory access to ports, increasing the interoperability of railways systems, facilitating transport of passengers and goods by streamlining border crossing, administrative and customs procedures for all transport modes;
6. 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, including motorways of the sea and access to multimodal nodes, that connect the Trans-European Transport Network with the infrastructure of neighbouring countries as well as those projects that improve regional networks and NOTES the need to take into account the forthcoming revision of the TEN-T guidelines in this context;
7. UNDERLINES the importance of using the existing financial resources for helping neighbouring countries to make reforms that are necessary for achieving better transport connections with the EU, such as the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF) that can leverage funding from international financial institutions for the priority transport infrastructure projects, without prejudice to discussions on the next Multiannual Financial Framework;
8. HIGHLIGHTS the existing regional transport cooperation between the EU and its neighbours in the Western Balkans and ENCOURAGES the strengthening of this cooperation providing for the involvement of Member States aiming at further development of transport connections between the EU and that region on a well-balanced basis;

9. ENCOURAGES the EU to continue its cooperation in the Euromed transport framework under the auspices of the Union for the Mediterranean, with the aim of promoting concrete priority projects already identified within the Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network and LOOKS FORWARD to a second Conference of the Transport Ministers of the Euro-Mediterranean region;
10. RECOGNISES the need for a more structured cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries within an efficient and transparent framework and therefore 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;
11. RECOGNISES the importance of other forms of regional cooperation, as well as cooperation with or within international fora and regional strategies, that contribute to improving transport relations between the EU and its Member States and all neighbouring regions;
12. INVITES the Commission to report to the Council on the progress made within these transport cooperation frameworks.
