

Commissioner Violeta Bulc
European Commissioner for Mobility and
Transport
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
BELGIUM



By email

AD/BR1044560/MBI

Brussels, 23 February 2018

TEN-T INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR ROAD TRANSPORT

Dear Commissioner Bulc,

In 2013, the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) was established to support EU investments in transport, energy and ICT infrastructure. For the period of 2014-2020, roughly 24.05 billion euro is available for investment in TEN-T Projects. Road transport is included from several perspectives such as road infrastructure, refuelling infrastructure for alternative fuels, secure parking areas for trucks and Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS).

Whereas it is not explicitly laid down in legislation, it is widely known that the vast majority of the current CEF budget is allocated to modes other than road transport. IRU strongly supports the CEF tool, but has repeatedly expressed concern about the lack of funding available for road transport projects but even more, the lack of use of this tool by Member States because of the limited funds available.

IRU notes that according to the objectives of the 2011 EU Transport Policy White Paper, the Commission aims to encourage a modal shift away from the road, especially for freight transport, but nonetheless recognises that road transport will continue to play a key role in the framework of resource-efficient multimodality. It should be added that massive infrastructure investments in other modes of transport have not accelerated this modal shift in any way. IRU notes that investments in road transport projects have proven to yield higher economic returns than other projects.

Therefore, IRU calls for a revision of the current allocation of CEF funds and for a considerable increase of the allocation to road transport projects.

This support would be of great assistance to the road transport industry given the number of challenges it has faced over the past years, which are likely to remain key challenges to overcome in the future. It is worthwhile to mention four.

Firstly, the road transport industry is under growing pressure from society to reduce its environmental footprint. Road freight transport accounts for around 72% and road passenger transport around 90% (10% for buses and coaches) of the EU land transport market which makes the decarbonisation effort needed in road transport enormous. Road transport operators have taken a commitment to decarbonise but they often do not have the required financial capacity to invest upfront in greener and

more expensive vehicles and technologies. This is particularly the case where the availability of technology on the market is low, thereby leading to higher prices. Economies of scale and therefore lower prices, can be achieved by sectoral frontrunners, but for the majority of the road transport sector, who are small and medium-sized enterprises, this is not possible. Making CEF funds available to the road transport industry to invest in greener technology could contribute to accelerating the economies of scale which are required to make technology more affordable. Indeed, they could help considerably to facilitate this enormous effort.

Secondly, for many years now, the European road freight transport industry has been asking for more truck parking areas and particularly those that are secured. The TEN-T legislation requires that there is a minimum number of truck parking areas on the TEN-T Network but Member States are lagging behind with the implementation of this requirement. Newly proposed EU legislation will also require drivers to take certain rest periods away from their vehicle which will in turn increase the need for adequately secured truck parking areas. It should also be noted that losses incurred due to cargo crime amount to 6-7 billion euro per year and that in particular, organised crime continues to target trucks to transport illegal immigrants across the EU. Truck parking areas are frequently used to penetrate vehicles during which drivers are often subject to abuse or even attacks as well. Many Member States do not see the building of truck parking areas and securing them as an infrastructure investment priority. If there were more funds available, undoubtedly, greater allocation of CEF funds for secure truck parking areas could change the current trend.

Thirdly, the digitalisation of the road transport industry is being increasingly prioritised. This involves action at company, customer and also government level. If road transport operators, travellers, road users and customers want to make wide-scale use of EU-wide information technology and ITS applications for their transport, logistics and travel needs, adequate infrastructure and networks will have to be deployed which must be harmonised and interoperable at EU level. Rapid developments in the field of vehicle autonomy will also require the installation of high performance networks to manage road traffic. Such innovation will gain a much wider significance in the coming years than it was given when the first CEF budget was decided upon in 2014. More CEF funding could further facilitate the deployment of ITS in the road transport sector and could also better guarantee an EU-wide interoperable approach between the Member States.

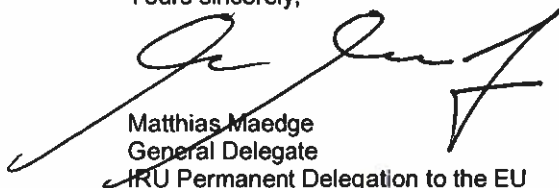
Finally, adequate and properly maintained road infrastructure will continue to guarantee free flowing traffic, reduce congestion, reduce costs to the economy and society and above all to maintain very good levels of road safety and to continue to reduce road injuries and fatalities. Providing more CEF funding to the road transport sector can certainly contribute to improving road safety in the EU.

IRU supports any proposals made that increase the allocation of CEF funds to road transport related projects, especially with regards to decarbonisation, secure truck parking areas and digitalisation. Our industry is committed to further discussing this with you or your competent services to explore how such an increase could still be achieved during the current budget period and could also be planned for the next one.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or if you require any further information.

Looking forward to a positive answer.

Yours sincerely,



Matthias Maedge
General Delegate
IRU Permanent Delegation to the EU