

Working paper
From the SEETO "Core" Network¹ to the full integration of the Western Balkan
infrastructure network into the TEN-T.

The following paper is intended to provide some elements for a thorough discussion, at the occasion of the next SEETO SC, on the future place of the Western Balkans network into the revised TEN-T.

Significant progress has now been made on the definition of the future TEN-T and the external dimension of the TEN-T has clearly been emphasised by the Member States as a key priority. The Commission's view on this issue is the following:

The future TEN-T should be linked – in a more strategic way – with key infrastructure in third countries. This should imply action at three levels:

- the integration of networks of candidate countries into the TEN-T, taking on the results of bilateral negotiations and preparing for the new planning methodology;
- the connection between the TEN-T and networks in third countries, in particular countries in the European Neighbourhood with whom the EU is engaged in a regular infrastructure dialogue covering also the identification of priority projects along the main axes and;
- an appropriate coordination of infrastructure development going beyond mere connections at common State borders.

The SEETO approach is already combining these three objectives and the level of definition of the "SEETO Core Network" is similar to the one use for the "TEN-T Comprehensive network".

The Western Balkans (WB) have a strategic position in the European transport system. They represent a natural transit corridor that ensures the continuity of different parts of the TEN-T network and to connect Central European Countries to Black Sea and beyond to Turkey. Due to the enlargement process and the current high differential in labour costs between the EU average and the WB, these latter will certainly increase their attractiveness in the near future for potential high value investments in industry (manufacturing industry – car construction etc...).

In a globalized world, accessibility and cost-efficient transport system make often the difference when multinational companies have to decide where to invest. To avoid putting in jeopardy such potential economic growth, WB will also require a well functioning, well connected and interoperable transport networks.

As the Union is currently setting the political – technical and financial framework for transport infrastructure for the next 15 to 20 years (**up to 2030**), it is of crucial importance that the **SEETO Network** is fully part of the networks that will be drawn from the revision of the TEN-T guidelines.

¹ For a better understanding, and to avoid any possible confusion with the "TEN-T Core network", the denomination of the "SEETO Core Network" in this paper will simply be "**SEETO Network**".

In this context, DG MOVE would like to share with SEETO SC some ideas on how to tackle this important issue. It is proposed that :

1 – **SEETO Network** is included in the "**TEN-T comprehensive**" maps;

2 – **SEETO Network** appears as "indicative" in all TEN-T maps, as provisions of TEN-T guidelines cannot apply non-EU MS.

Furthermore, DG MOVE is currently developing the concept of "**TEN-T Core**" network (see document attached - definition not yet finalized) which will be a sub-set of the TEN-T comprehensive and will represent a "prescriptive" network for which MS will have to take specific commitments (in particular to guarantee that the infrastructure is completed in due time).

Obviously, as for the **TEN-T comprehensive**, **TEN-T Core's** provisions only apply to EU MS.

DG MOVE would like to launch an open discussion at the next SEETO SC to assess the conditions on which – on the basis of the criteria defined in the new TEN-T guidelines (but without the same obligations) - a "**CORE SEETO Network**" can be identified, in particular to ensure the connections with the "TEN-T Core network".

Enclosures : 1 – CORE network methodology.