

Public consultation on the Impact Assessment of the TEN-T Regulations

Policy paper from Eastern Norway County Network (ENCN)

Adopted by the Political Committee for Transport and Infrastructure on 19 April 2021

Norway and TEN-T

Norway is connected to TEN-T (Trans European Network-Transport) through the EEA (European Economic Area) agreement and the TEN-T regulations give directions regarding the quality of the Norwegian infrastructure part of the network. Other regulations connected to the TEN-T network also influence design of infrastructure in Norway. Norway is not a part of the financial instruments to fund TEN-T but allocates money to infrastructure investments via National Transport Plans and annual State Budgets.

The EU and Norway have the same ambitions regarding reduction of CO₂ emissions by 55% in 2030. Transport is a key sector to reach this goal.

At the same time, we need transport solutions that support trade and economic development. EU countries are the most important trade partners of Norway cumulating 70% of Norwegian trade value (2017 figures). The business community in all of Norway is dependent on an efficient and well-functioning transport system.

ENCN strives for high societal return of infrastructure investments in transport focusing on sustainability and reduction of CO₂ emissions. The main challenge in South-East Norway¹ is the need to invest in infrastructure to accommodate growing demand for transport of goods and passengers to/from and within the region – and at the same time reducing the climate footprint. ENCN's main strategy is to put the railway at the core of the future transport system both for freight and passengers within South-East Norway – connecting the main urban areas - and cross-border to Sweden/Denmark and Europe.

Cross-border corridors of great importance for ENCN are:

- Oslo – Gothenburg – Hamburg – Berlin (ScanMed corridor)
- Oslo – Stockholm
- The Jutland corridor connecting South-East Norway with the continent via the Norwegian harbours Larvik, Grenland and Kristiansand to Hirtshals/Fredrikshavn in Denmark

Governance and the role of regional authorities

The regions are core actors in regional development. The Norwegian counties are important transport actors as developers, buyers, and builders of infrastructure for transport as well as

¹ City of Oslo and the counties Innlandet, Viken and Vestfold and Telemark

providers of public transport. The TEN-T revision should strengthen accessibility of all regions in EU/EEA countries in its network design.

ENCN insists that the implementation of smart and sustainable green mobility must be set in a mix of bottom-up and top-down approach, involving all levels of government and relevant stakeholders. The TEN-T regulations should reflect this approach to be able to foster the fundamental change indicated in the new Sustainable and Smart mobility strategy.

ENCN calls for a more inclusive governance of the Core Network Corridors - allowing for a more systematic involvement in corridor forums of regions, ports and transport hubs not located directly on the corridors.

Regions as key actors for smart and green mobility

Inter-regional and cross-border cooperation are closely linked to transport and green corridors. ENCN underlines the major importance of an up-to-date physical cross border infrastructure - especially railway lines, and multimodal terminals – to facilitate a green shift for freight and passengers transport from road and air to rail and sea. In addition, ENCN sees the need to facilitate a large-scale roll out of light and heavy low-emission vehicles & technologies, with cross border harmonisation of technological specifications and density of charging systems and filling stations for alternative fuels. The active engagement of regional and local authorities and private partners can help speeding up the transformation processes.

Policy recommendations

1. Sustainable development goals (SDG) as basis

European institutions have indicated a vision to mainstream the SDGs in all policy fields. When revising the TEN-T regulations this should be made visible - considering the SDG's demand for a broader focus to sustainable development than just climate change and CO₂ emissions. The TEN-T policy should be ambitious in terms of contributing to the goals of the European Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The counties in South-East Norway base all policy and development strategies and actions on the SDGs and have identified clear goals regarding greener and more resilient infrastructure investments, innovative solutions to green transport and mobility, reduction of CO₂ emissions, sustainable urban development, digitalisation, and more flexible and efficient solutions for public transport.

The revised TEN-T regulations must also reflect the objective in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy to make transport and mobility “affordable and accessible in all regions and for all passengers”. There is a need for minor adjustments to the TEN-T network design to further strengthen accessibility for all regions.

Railway infrastructure is key to decarbonising transport. Rail also contributes to mitigating air and noise pollution – especially in the cities. Rail is a high-capacity, resource-efficient transport mode with investments lasting long (contributing to the SDG on consumption and production and to a circular economy).

A modal shift to more sustainable transport modes requires a strengthened focus on facilitating multimodal transport chains with seamless connections both long-haul, and last mile.

In addition, the TEN-T policy should aim at ensuring synergies and benefits from investments in transport infrastructure, and investments in energy and digital infrastructure.

2. Sustainable urban mobility and the importance of urban nodes

Urban nodes are important functional areas where long distance, regional and local traffic is interconnected. They provide access from and to the TEN-T network, for both freight and passengers, including first and last mile connections. ENCN sees the high interdependence between long-distance and urban transport as they are using the same infrastructure, and points to the fact that capacity and bottlenecks in the urban nodes hamper the transport flows and create high environmental costs. ENCN therefore calls for better interconnection between the core network and the comprehensive network.

The TEN-T regulations should pay attention to the interface between urban areas and the TEN-T network, in terms of mitigating congestion, and other environmental costs. ENCN underlines that to ensure good quality of life in cities and to make them more accessible, clean, and competitive, a shift towards sustainable modes of transport is necessary. In addition, ENCN stresses the need for investments in green corridors between the smaller and medium cities and the main urban nodes – i.e., City of Oslo, and between nodes in Norway and Sweden/Denmark/Europe. Infrastructure for rail within the InterCity network is for ENCN the main infrastructure project for Norway to reach our climate goals and commitments to the Paris Agreement.

ENCN points to the fact that digitalisation has the potential of enabling more efficient use of transport resources and can be a catalysator for achieving multimodality for persons and freight and trigger a move away from reliance on private cars in urban areas.

3. Key cross-border corridors – need for adjustments of the TEN-T

The connection between Oslo and Gothenburg constitutes the northern part of the Scandinavian Mediterranean Transport corridor (ScanMed) - a core corridor in the TEN-T Network. ENCN wants to emphasise the importance of the Oslo - Gothenburg connection and encourages the EU to have a dialog with Norwegian/Swedish authorities with the aim to speed up investments and remove bottlenecks on the railway.

In addition, ENCN emphasise the importance of including the northern leg of the Nordic Triangle between Oslo and Stockholm into the ScanMed corridor and all individual elements of the project part of the core network– connecting the two urban nodes. Efficient use of existing infrastructure is one of the cornerstones of the TEN-T objectives. By shifting flows between Oslo and Stockholm from air to rail transport, the upgrading will significantly reduce travel times and have a positive climate impact as well as improving economic development and labour markets along the route. ENCN also underlines the importance of freight transport via rail to Sweden and on to Europe – including the link Oslo - Narvik - and stresses the need to upgrade the infrastructure.

The Jutland corridor connects the western, southern, and south-eastern part of Norway with the European continent via the harbours Larvik, Grenland and Kristiansand. This is an important route to the continent for some of the major industrial regions in Norway and a natural gateway for imports to South-Norway. The roads and railways in Denmark to the ferry ports in Hirtshals and Fredrikshavn are part of the TEN-T core network (Scan Med). The ENCN urges Norwegian and Danish authorities as well as the EU to acknowledge the potential for multimodal transport in the Jutland corridor and give the connection due priority in terms of upgrades and removal of missing links on rail and sea. The maritime links between Hirtshals/Fredrikshavn and Larvik, Grenland/Langesund and Kristiansand should be included in the TEN-T maps.

To secure a resilient transport system for freight and passengers in the future, ENCN sees a clear need and advantage to further develop all three main corridors between South-East Norway and the rest of Europe. Investments in upgrading and removal of bottle necks as well as in green and smart solutions in these corridors will have a clear European added value for the inhabitants, the economy and for the climate.

Cross-border transport promoting multimodality is a key to ensure connectivity as well as a green transformation and sustainable functioning of the economy. TEN-T policy should promote a shift from road to rail and sea, as well as increased reliance on public transport systems.

4. Motorways of the Sea (MoS) and the role of ports to be highlighted

ENCN believes that the revised TEN-T regulations should more efficiently facilitate modal shift towards maritime transport. Integrating the concept of short sea shipping into the TEN-T can better facilitate the shift of freight from road to sea, contributing to more sustainable transport modes. This includes to apply more flexible eligibility criteria reflecting the role of ports as green hubs for the regional economy. This would also entail that ports are considered as cross border infrastructure and that the definition of cross border links includes maritime sections.

ENCN also believes that Motorways of the Sea (MoS) must be better integrated in the TEN-T network. To strengthen the visibility and political support to MoS, the ENCEN encourages the European Commission to include maritime links to the TEN-T maps. The revised TEN-T policy should include a European Coordinator for MoS.

Eastern Norway County Network (ENCN) is a cooperation body between the City of Oslo and the three counties (regions) in the south-eastern part of Norway: Viken, Innlandet, Vestfold og Telemark. The purpose of the cooperation is to contribute to the development of Eastern Norway as a sustainable and competitive region in Europe, with balanced development throughout the region. Eastern Norway is the national centre of gravity in terms of both population and commerce, and the Norwegian hub for road, rail, air, and sea transport.