



POLY 5

POLYCENTRIC PLANNING MODELS FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN TERRITORIES
INTERESTED BY CORRIDOR 5 AND ITS TEN-T RAMIFICATIONS

OPEN LETTER

SEEKING GREATER SUPPORT FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL
IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN MAJOR TRANSPORT
INFRASTRUCTURE

Vienna, 23rd September 2014



Transport and transport infrastructure in Europe are a fundamental part of European cohesion, helping to create a sense of belonging to a single space. The policies of the European parliament and commission are focused on removing the obstacles at the borders between member states to promote the free flow of people and goods. These policies are articulated within the strongly-held commitment to the sustainable development of transport networks, for the benefit of society as a whole and the well-being of all Europeans. To this end, the EU promotes the development of 'multi-modality' and, for the biggest projects, the creation of alternatives to road transport.

The main themes of these policies are: helping to bring about the completion of the internal market; promoting sustainable development; setting up the major European networks; reinforcing security; and developing international cooperation. Ever since the white paper of 2001 (revised in 2006), these policies have focused on the harmonious, coherent development of different modes of transport, in particular through 'co-modality', i.e. the use of whichever mode of transport (land, air or sea) is the most efficient.

The European Union, notably in its last budget of November 2013, reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the construction of the transnational sections of major transport infrastructures. However, this commitment alone does not adequately convey to the populations concerned the importance of these major infrastructures.

A common vision of the European area needs to be built and shared with the European people and the inhabitants of the regions crossed by these major corridors.

This is why it is in the common interests of Europe, the member states and their institutions to develop not only a coordinated transport policy but also a coordinated development policy for the affected regions: it is a question of accompanying these areas in dealing with the sometimes radical changes that major construction projects or major infrastructures can bring about and also of helping them to take advantage of the potential opportunities such projects present. At the end of the day, a comprehensive policy perspective could be one which considers that, over and above the service of transport itself, the major communication infrastructures should be drivers of territorial development regardless of the geographical situation: major cities, urban areas, rural areas, alpine valleys.

The Alpine Space is particularly affected, both directly and indirectly, by these European transport corridors, which provide valuable opportunities for greater accessibility and connectivity to urban hubs. However, large expanses of the alpine area are likely to remain excluded from these benefits, if not also penalised by the environmental and social costs



associated with the infrastructure construction. In particular, alpine regions might suffer from marginalisation because of their distinct social, economic and environmental characteristics. The main challenge is to ensure that as many areas as possible can benefit from the accessibility gained through the transport corridor,

In view of this, six local and regional authorities – the Ljubljana Urban Region, the Province of Gorizia, the Department of Savoie, the Province of Turin, the Veneto Region and the municipality of Šempeter-Vrtojba – decided to develop together specific approaches to deal with the local and regional challenges presented by the implementation of the European Corridor network. They seized the opportunity to develop their ideas in the POLY 5 project, co-financed by the ERDF through the European Union's Alpine Space Programme.

The approach adopted by the partners, which began with an overall study and comparison of the different socio-economic contexts, has resulted in a range of tools aimed at:

- improving the effectiveness of existing institutional procedures for supporting infrastructure implementation;
- proposing specific new legislative and regulatory provisions to support affected areas;
- promoting the exchange of experiences between the different alpine regions regarding their initiatives and policies for implementing major transport infrastructures.

Out of this transnational cooperation the six local and regional authorities together with the other four project partners (Vienna University of Technology, Technical University of Munich, University of Udine and TRANSPADANA) have formulated seven spatially-related policy recommendations which are considered necessary to support their actions in the implementation of local and regional major transport infrastructures:

I. Firmly anchor the project in the local territory

Major transport infrastructures and their construction sites need to be firmly anchored in and accepted by the local communities they impact. The EU is therefore requested to put in place the necessary measures to galvanise municipalities and local authorities into action so that a global procedure for supporting these infrastructure projects can be adopted, developed from and built around the major construction site and the transport infrastructure itself, in order to take full advantage of the potential opportunities.



II. Provide concrete support as much for the local area as for the construction project

The EU is also called upon to provide tangible support to the affected areas on two aspects which call for different responses and means:

- Support for the construction site with procedures and policies targeted to meet the specific needs of the contracting authorities and of local businesses
- Support for the local area with the establishment of a territorial development plan articulated around the major construction site and the transport infrastructure.

Taking into account the different functions that major transport infrastructures perform within regional, national, transnational or European spatial systems, the European transport corridors cannot be considered as uniform, one-size-fits-all infrastructures projects. Rather, the support provided to individual infrastructure projects should be adapted to the needs of the particular spatial systems they serve along the corridor.

Through such local involvement, the EU would have the opportunity to explain the wider context of its policies relating to such major infrastructure projects and to highlight its solidarity with the local areas affected by them.

III. Make available a bi-national exchange platform for each major transnational infrastructure project

In order to avoid obstructions in the implementation of the European networks in the trans-national border sections, it is recommended to develop a specific policy to accompany the two member countries concerned by the construction of the transport infrastructure, to strengthen their bi-national exchanges, encourage the sharing of experience between elected officials and other stakeholders in the two countries and identify areas of cooperation and complementarity in their local projects. This policy could extend or run alongside the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) regulations already in operation.

IV. Establish in advance appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

The setting up of monitoring systems should be encouraged not only at the macro-economic, European level but also at the regional or micro level of the local areas which will host the construction sites and infrastructures. These systems should be put in place before any construction work commences, so that the effects of that work can be evaluated over time, both at the local level and at the European level.



V. Address from the application stage the territorial integration of the project

The territorial integration of a major transport infrastructure included in a European transport corridor is essential to ensure its sustainability at the local level. This specific aspect of the infrastructure project should therefore be considered at a sufficiently early stage. It is a topic that member states should actively address in their application for co-financing from the European Union.

It should be appropriately acknowledged that major transport infrastructures of European importance can also serve national, regional and even local transport flows and that this is beneficial both in terms of efficient use of the infrastructure and of local acceptance of the major transport infrastructure.

VI. Integrate sustainability criteria in project design and construction

The concepts not only of economic and environmental sustainability, but also of social sustainability should be integrated into the decision-making process of a major transport infrastructure. Through the representation and involvement of local communities, it should be possible to identify a project typology able to maximize development opportunities for local territories affected by the presence of a major transport infrastructure. This objective should also be targeted through the adoption by each member state of legislative instruments appropriate to their national framework.

VII. Build a European territorial development strategy around the major infrastructure projects

Given the importance of European corridors and their related transport infrastructure for territorial cohesion at a transnational level, a common regulatory framework should be implemented in order to provide a homogenous background against which to operate. The concept of an integrated European territorial development strategy would enable local and regional decision-makers to refer to the European dimension during national discussions and to have a clear, communicable perspective regarding their level of intervention.

In summary, these proposals meet the challenges of sustainable economic and social development which the European Union needs during these times of crisis. Above and beyond that however, they underline the values and the key concepts which we support and which the European Union, in our view, should share: the values of solidarity and cooperation between regions and the dimension of instilling a European identity.



Polycentric Planning Models for Local Development in Territories interested by Corridor 5 and its TEN-T ramifications



The signatories count on your backing to support their on-going contribution towards the socially, economically and environmentally-balanced implementation of the European corridor network.

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