Dear Director General

The EU guidelines for 2014-2020, including those on European transport policy, are currently being prepared. As you know, the options contained in the future EC Green Paper will help to determine the financing arrangements for the rail infrastructure of the future Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

With this in mind, I was eager for the Franche-Comté region to contribute to the consultation held by the European Commission from May to September 2010. The LGV Rhin-Rhône is part of TEN-T Priority Project 24 for the Eastern and Southern branches and it is therefore essential that it receives European funding for the phases of the project still to be carried out.

I am forwarding you this contribution for information purposes. It underlines the need to move forward on the existing Priority Projects including the PP 24 and expands on the declaration of the Barcelona Summit of 11 June 2009 attended by representatives of the Rhone-Alpes, Languedoc-Roussillon, Piedmont, Catalonia and Valencia regions.

The Franche-Comté region endorses the European Commission’s proposals to strengthen links between Transport policies and other policies related to climate, the environment and cohesion. The Franche-Comté region stresses the need to increase the amount of funding allocated to TEN-T projects. It also supports the proposal to appoint coordinators with a broad view of large areas enabling, for example, consideration to be given to improvements to existing freight transport infrastructure, particularly in parallel to the Southern branch.

I wish to submit this regional contribution to the definition of the future direction of European Transport policy in preparation for the construction of the three branches of the LGV Rhin-Rhône.
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Yours sincerely,

[signature]

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Contribution of the Franche-Comté Region to the consultation on the future policy of the Trans-European Transport Network

The ongoing discussions on the development of the Trans-European Transport Network are of particular concern to the Franche-Comté region, which is located at the edge of the border between France and Switzerland on the PP 24 North-South European transport axis linking the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France and Spain.

As a result, the France-Comté region has teamed up with regions located within the Mediterranean Arc and along the corridors between Northern and Eastern Europe to contribute to this consultation process, notably through the declaration drawn up at the summit meeting of these regions held in Barcelona, June 2009.

The France-Comté region now wishes to continue this process of reflection by submitting its contribution to the European Commission as part of the second phase of the ongoing consultation on the Green Paper and ahead of the future White Paper on transport. This input is based on preparatory work that was begun by the Commission and emerged from the initial consultation of 2009 as well as from contributions drawn up by groups of experts.

**Franche-Comté endorses TEN-T planning that incorporates Europe 2020 strategy targets, which would be based on the continuation of open Priority Projects, including the Lyon/Genova-Basel-Duisburg-Antwerpen/Rotterdam PP 24**

In this new consultation on the TEN-T Green Paper, the Commission proposes, among other things, to continue discussing the following principles for the future TEN-T policy.

**The TEN-T is intended to support the establishment of an integrated European transport system that will bolster competitiveness and respond to environmental challenges.**

The Commission now proposes to strengthen links between transport policy and other EU policies, particularly those relating to energy, climate, the environment and cohesion, drawing on the Europe 2020 strategy and paving the way for an overall approach to the European multi-modal transport network. Such an approach will include targets for economic competitiveness, social and regional cohesion and sustainable development.

The Franche-Comté region fully supports this commitment to viewing European transport policy as a tool towards a global development project that encourages economic competitiveness and social and regional cohesion as well as offering solutions for lower carbon travel.

**As such, the France-Comté region wishes to emphasise the role of rail transport infrastructure such as the LGV Rhin-Rhône included in the PP 24. The creation of a high-speed line is of major importance for a relatively hemmed-in region such as Franche-Comté, providing it with a genuine instrument of development that will allow it to reposition itself in Europe and to connect to the major intermodal hubs of the Charles de Gaulle, Basel, Zurich, and Lyon Saint Exupéry airports.**
The PP 24 and the LGV Rhin-Rhône will help to create closer economic cooperation between the metropolitan areas of Paris, Lyon, Strasbourg, Basel and Marseille, as well as with Frankfurt, Barcelona, Milan and Turin, in accordance with the Commission’s proposed objectives for the design of the future central European network.

Furthermore, the commissioning of the TGV Rhin-Rhône will reinforce the Rhine-Rhône Metropolis, a network of cities and towns located along the axis of the Eastern branch of the LGV Rhin-Rhône, through the amalgamation of activities and services spread across towns located within 20 or so minutes of each other. The Rhine-Rhône Metropolis represents 2 million inhabitants and 1.1 million jobs within a “limited density area” and was established in order to increase the area’s profile and influence at the European level.

Finally, the construction of the first phase of the new LGV Rhin-Rhône infrastructure, which is part of PP 24, has given rise to global employment and inclusion project. The works have generated 6,000 jobs (4,000 direct and 2,000 indirect positions) and 8% of vacancies have been earmarked for back-to-work jobs, for which specific training and back-to-work support programmes have been established.

A comprehensive network approach supplemented by a priority core network, for freight and passengers networks, as well as the continuation of current projects will help to achieve the goal of an identifiable integrated transport network.

The concept of a intermodal core network based primarily on rail and supplemented by a comprehensive network is an interesting option that will help to improve links between the regions based on a global vision. This project, which includes the concept of nodes incorporating links to major international airports and metropolitan areas, will bring the regions closer together, particularly at the economic level. Indeed, the current planning method which is focused on building “sections” that are not directly interconnected lacks the structuring effect vital to the conduct of long-term strategy.

In terms of the construction of the future core network, the Commission has stated that the planning objective is not to launch another extensive programme, but rather to create an efficient, less carbon-intensive and secure transport system (ensuring continuity for ongoing projects), which may be adapted if necessary and building largely on existing infrastructure.

The Franche-Comté region endorses these principles for the design of the comprehensive network and recalls the need to push forward with existing priority projects. In fact, building on the beginnings of existing achievements and pressing ahead with the projects that have been identified for the 2004-2020 period, will lead to a genuine understanding of desired outcomes.

Innovative projects with the capacity to strengthen competitiveness, such as the ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System) are also currently being introduced and it is
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important to continue implementing these. As such, it should be noted that the PP 24 is also one of the priority axes that has been chosen for the deployment of this project.

Additionally, while the European Commission’s objective is to respond to the integration of new member countries located on an East-West axis, it is also important, in terms of the design of the core network, to reinforce the North-South axes, such as the PP 24’s Lyon/Genova-Basel-Duisburg-Antwerpen/Rotterdam axis linking Northern Europe to countries in Mediterranean basin, including as a gateway North Africa.

The Franche-Comté region would like to highlight the role of priority project 24 and one of the links of that project, the three-branch LGV Rhin-Rhone (Eastern, Western and Southern branches), particularly in terms of connecting Northern and Southern Europe.

Indeed Franche-Comté will become a major hub for European traffic once the first section of the LGV Rhin-Rhône enters service in 2011, particularly on the Frankfurt Barcelona axis. Links with Switzerland Basel and Zurich will be strengthened, as will access to Italy, southern France and the Mediterranean. However, the initial effects ushered in by the Eastern branch of the LGV Rhin-Rhône will need to be sustained, particularly through the high-speed line’s Southern branch, which will bring further improvements and help to create a new dynamic between these European hubs.

Franche-Comté has also noted that the Commission has allowed for the possibility of creating separate corridors for freight and passengers. Both types of traffic create different types of impediments to the optimal use of the networks. The option of creating specific passenger and freight corridors must be confirmed to help address the specific needs and constraints of each of the areas located along the different traffic axes.

The tools used to execute the TEN-T project will have to change, particularly funding and indicators.

In terms of finance, it is important to note that EU funding for the TEN-T is currently insufficient for the scale of the project, even when cohesion and regional development funds are brought into play. The Commission advocates the use of Structural and Cohesion Funds, and for PPPs to be called on for the most profitable projects, including those intended as alternatives on economically viable and saturated routes. The Commission also recommends the establishment of security funds, in addition to European Investment Bank loans, to encourage private sector involvement in financing these projects.

A higher level of TEN-T funding is needed for the implementation of the future programme, including the continuation of projects already underway. Moreover, since the bulk of TEN-T funding is currently provided by Member States and local authorities, the goal of requiring a common definition of priorities for the TEN-T and national and regional projects will lead to faster completion.

The Franche-Comté region endorses this policy of coordinated decision-making and similar priorities across various levels of policy-making.
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Furthermore, the future governance of the projects must be more closely involved in the financial aspects. European representatives must be involved right from the project development stage, not just when funding arrangements are being considered. This should facilitate implementation.

The proposal to appoint coordinators for each priority project and to assign them responsibility over large areas giving them an overview of the relevant territories is an interesting one. Improvements in existing freight traffic infrastructure must be taken into account in the development of projects, such as the Southern branch of the LGV Rhin-Rhône which is part of PP 24, particularly for the issue of mixed traffic.

The Commission has underscored the link between employment and the construction of major projects and states that this dimension should be incorporated into the overall approach. It is worth pointing out here that the construction of the LGV Rhin-Rhône has indeed played an economic role through the creation of a large number of jobs.

The incorporation of positive externalities has been examined by a group of experts and is in line with the Commission’s recommendations on Sustainable Development. By way of information, a carbon footprint assessment has been done on the first phase of the LGV Rhin-Rhône – one of the first to be performed on infrastructure of this type. It shows that the line is expected to be carbon neutral around 12 years after entering service. This type of indicator could be one element to be taken into account in the selection of EC-supported projects and would be consistent with the objective of mainstreaming carbon reduction.

The Franche-Comté region therefore notes that the pursuit of the policy of rail infrastructure development is a key element in the development and social cohesion of the local areas.
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Carbon footprint assessment for the LGV Rhin-Rhône

The first overall “Carbon Footprint Assessment” (Bilan Carbone, a registered trademark) for the LGV Rhin-Rhône confirms that the new high-speed lines are helping to meet targets

For the first time, greenhouse gas emissions from the design and construction phases were screened using emission factors proposed by the Agency for the Environment and Energy Management (ADEME) or developed specifically with its assistance. The design and construction of new infrastructure were included in the screening as well as two new stations (Besançon - Franche-Comté TGV and Belfort - Montbéliard TGV), 30 additional TGV trainsets and maintenance facilities. These results were then supplemented by estimates of greenhouse gas emissions during the first 30 years of commercial operation of the new line, from the planned opening in December 2011.

Results from these initial analyses established that 1.9 million tonne-equivalents of CO₂ (teCO₂) will be emitted during this first cycle of 30 years, 53% from traction energy and 42% from initial construction works. Subtracting the greenhouse gas emissions avoided each year during the same period by the diversion of road and air traffic to the new rail services (an average of 1.2 million passengers per year), the study shows that the carbon footprint of the project will be eliminated from its 12th year of operation. Therefore, LGV operation makes the whole project “carbon positive” from 2024 with an increasing “carbon return” every year thereafter. Before this point, it should be noted that from 2012, almost 1.5 million new passengers each year will use the train to visit the areas served and thus support their economic development. The competitiveness of high-speed rail transport is confirmed by its first overall “Carbon Footprint Assessment” that highlights its environmental benefits over the long term.

After the results had been presented, RFF and SNCF announced at Besançon their intention to develop upon the work started during the Carbon Footprint Assessment for LGV Rhin-Rhône. In the coming months they plan to release a methodological guide for implementation of Carbon Footprint Assessments for any rail project, including the upgrading of existing lines. The aim is to provide the state and communities with a decision-making tool, namely the “Carbon Footprint Assessment Estimates” for preliminary studies of new projects. Representatives from both institutions have, however, pointed out that the decision to implement these projects should not be limited to carbon footprint assessments, but must also take into account socioeconomic, technical and other environmental aspects such as preservation of biodiversity.

This autumn, Carbon Footprint Assessments for civil engineering works and construction of new stations and maintenance workshops will be prepared and explained for the purpose of improving “carbon footprint awareness” of these works and to propose alternatives. Finally, during commissioning of the line in December 2011, the Carbon Footprint Assessment for the operation and maintenance phase will be updated with actual date. In addition, RFF and SNCF want to include the Carbon Footprint Assessment in the environmental and socioeconomic assessment of the LGV Rhin-Rhône Eastern branch provided for under the Inland Transport Guidance Law (Loi Orientation de Transport Intérieur – LOTI) to provide a sustainable development approach.

Source: RFF
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To find out more: visit www.bilan-carbone-lavrr.fr