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EU transport infrastructure

MEPs vote to prolong patchwork approach to EU transport networks

Proposals on EU funds for cross border transport infrastructure projects from 2014-20 (Connecting Europe Facility), as well as defining the criteria for the selection of these projects, were today voted on by MEPs on the transport and energy committees (1). The Greens expressed regret at the outcome of the transport vote, with transport spokesperson **Michael Cramer** stating:

"Today's vote would prolong the patchwork approach to European transport networks, leading to EU funding for projects that have little or no EU added value. The free-riding on EU money for national projects will continue, as cross-border sections are still neglected.

"Under the provisions adopted today, excessively expensive projects, which stand little chance of being realised, would get the go-ahead. This is a completely wrong-headed approach at a time of economic crisis. To this end, we regret the failure of MEPs to support amendments on co-financing aimed at ensuring only sustainable and financially realistic projects would get support.

"It was a hard-fought battle to convince the transport committee to back plans to ensure noise reduction at source, even though this would ultimately save money. It is nonetheless regrettable that the committee defined a stringent cap for this expenditure, whereas no such ceiling is defined for mega-projects.

"For inland waterways, the worst has been avoided. The committee refrained from obliging member states to dig out free-flowing rivers, which would be a catastrophe for the environment."

"One silver lining, however, is a provision to ensure all transport infrastructure projects - like bridges and tunnels - take account of cyclists needs from the outset."

(1) A joint meeting of the transport and energy committees voted on the proposed Connecting Europe Facility (which includes transport and energy infrastructure). While welcoming some of the energy aspects of the proposal, the Greens voted against the CEF, because of the provisions on transport. The transport committee also voted on criteria for infrastructure projects.

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Michael Cramer

Member

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