

Topic : Modernization & maintenance of infrastructure

Brief description and main aims:

The EU has one of the densest transport infrastructure networks in the world. Nevertheless, Europe's transport network is far from complete and a large part of it is now ageing and coming under increasing pressure due to a rise in traffic. The maintenance deficit has led to the deterioration of transport infrastructure as demonstrated by the collapse or frequent closure of bridges or as observed in the poor state of some road surfaces.

The TEN-T Regulation is a core instrument at EU level for influencing Member States' infrastructure policies. Recognising the necessity of modernizing the EU's transport system, the European Commission adopted new transport proposals in December 2021, among which the revision of the guidelines for the trans-European transport network. TEN-T revision aims at addressing the missing links in the TEN-T network and upgrading it.

Why FIEC is dealing with this topic:

The continuous maintenance of existing infrastructure is necessary to ensure the uniform quality of Europe's transport network. In addition to increasing the safety of users, a well maintained and modern transport network comes with various environmental benefits, by contributing to a more circular economy (thereby reducing raw material consumption and generation of waste) and by reducing CO₂ emissions.

FIEC has put a particular focus on the TEN-T revision. Key provisions from our perspective are those that refer to the maintenance of the network's infrastructure and the deployment of innovative infrastructure. Thanks to FIEC's intense lobbying over the past years, the Commission aims at strengthening the approach with the regards to the quality of the TEN-T infrastructure and its maintenance, including the structural stability of critical assets such as bridges and tunnels.

As essential connecting points in Europe's transport network, the malfunction of bridges attracts particular attention. For this reason, FIEC has decided to set up a new working group, called ECO WG "Structural Maintenance", that will mainly focus on problems related to the lack of maintenance of bridges and promote initiatives to tackle this issue.

Actions and key dates:

- 01/2021** – Successful lobbying on the European Parliament's own-initiative report
- 03/05/2021** – Contribution to European Commission's public consultation on revision of TEN-T guidelines
- 14/12/2021** – Proposal for the revision of the TEN-T Regulation
- 21/02/2022** – [FIEC position paper](#) on the Commission's proposal for the revised TEN-T
- 20/04/2022** – FIEC sets up a new ECO Working Group on "Structural maintenance" (bridges)
- 03/06/2022** – FIEC chairs "Bridge Maintenance & Safety in Europe" Conference in Brussels
- 28/06/2022** – Participation in panel discussion in Connecting Europe Days 2022