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**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	TEN-T Days (20-22 June 2016) - Declaration on the development of the external dimension of the TEN-T

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Delegations will find attached a revised text on the above-mentioned subject, as adopted by the Ministers on 21 June 2016.

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

**Developing the external dimension of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T)**

**TEN-T Days 2016**

Rotterdam

**21 June 2016**

Having regard to:

- a) The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and in particular articles 170-172 thereof,
- b) Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 166/2010/EU, OJ L348, 20.12.2013,
- c) Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010, OJ L348, 20.12.2013.
- d) The Communication from the Commission of 6 April 2016 on Stronger and Smarter Information Systems for Borders and Security, COM(2016) 205 final.

**Connecting to the neighbouring countries of Europe, a key priority**

- e) The new TEN-T Regulation foresees cooperation with neighbouring countries with a view to connecting the TEN-T network to their infrastructure networks. A particular focus is on border crossing points, to ensure seamless traffic flow, border checks, border surveillance and border control procedures. Such connections should enhance economic growth and competitiveness.

- f) Connecting the TEN-T network with infrastructure networks of neighbouring countries will also enhance strong and reliable management of the movement of persons across EU external borders. Developing such connections at border crossing points will help deploy efficient and interoperable information systems such as the Entry-Exit system to provide border guards, police officers and other authorities with relevant information on persons crossing borders.
- g) Neighbouring countries are countries that fall within the scope of the European Neighbourhood Policy including the Strategic Partnership, the Enlargement Policy, and the European Economic Area or the European Free Trade Association.
- h) Indicative maps of the neighbouring countries may be included, based on high-level agreements.
- i) Beyond the neighbouring countries, the TEN-T Regulation foresees cooperation with third countries, to connect also with the neighbours of the neighbours, with a particular focus on guaranteeing interoperable and intermodal networks that extend beyond the borders of the Union and facilitate the transport flows between the Union and these countries.
- j) The TEN-T Regulation includes indicative maps for the neighbouring countries of the EEA/EFTA, of the Western Balkans, of Turkey, of the Northern Dimension region and of the Eastern Partnership.
- k) The TEN-T Regulation includes indicative core network maps for the Western Balkans.
- l) These indicative maps are a clear expression of the wish to cooperate between the Union and the neighbouring countries, as well as between the neighbouring countries themselves on defining and organising the cross-border points that shall allow smooth and efficient connections between the networks.
- m) The indicative maps are a clear expression of the wish to concentrate efforts for investing in key projects which contribute to the realisation of an interoperable and intermodal network.

**Considering the above, Ministers:**

- (1) AFFIRM the importance of defining indicative maps for the neighbouring countries of the Union with a view to connecting the TEN-T network with the infrastructure networks of the countries concerned, allowing to define safe and secure border crossing points, leading to interoperable and intermodal networks contributing to sustainable growth and jobs in the Union and its neighbours;
- (2) CONFIRM having reached a high-level agreement on the indicative maps establishing a core network for Turkey.
- (3) CONFIRM having reached in principle a high-level agreement on the indicative maps establishing a core network for the Eastern Partnership countries, with the exception of the maps of the core road network in Armenia and Georgia which will be completed no later than 15 September 2016;
- (4) WELCOME the progress made on the technical work on the indicative maps establishing a mutually agreed comprehensive network for the Mediterranean region with a view of their finalisation no later than 15 September 2016;
- (5) AFFIRM that the indicative maps will allow for the development of a corridor approach as a crucial instrument to ensure coordinated investment and efficient cooperation along strategic axes;
- (6) RECOGNISE the importance of better project preparation and alignment of the programming documents to foster the implementation of the various funding mechanisms as well as innovative financial instruments;
- (7) UNDERLINE the significant need for funding and financing coordination to cover, in the most efficient way, the network investment needs that have been identified;

- (8) INVITE the Commission and the neighbouring countries to identify mature projects that can be implemented within the next programming period and to ensure reinforced governance with a view to ensuring safe secure and efficient cross-border operations, smart management of border crossings and the removal of infrastructure and non-infrastructure bottlenecks along the transport corridors.
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