

Connecting Europe Facility: Coreper confirms common understanding with the Parliament on extending the programme

The EU wants to make sure its flagship programme **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)** will continue to **fund key projects in the areas of transport, digital and energy beyond 2020**. Today, the Council's Permanent Representatives Committee confirmed the common understanding reached by the Romanian presidency and the European Parliament on a proposal to launch the second edition of the programme, to run from 2021 to 2027.

The common understanding covers all provisions of the regulation apart from financial and horizontal issues, which are discussed as part of the negotiations on the next multiannual financial framework (MFF), covering the period 2021 to 2027.

In the field of **transport**, the CEF will promote interoperable and multimodal networks for the development and modernisation of railway, road, inland waterway and maritime infrastructure as well as safe and secure mobility. Priority will be given to further development of the trans-European transport networks (TEN-T), focusing on cross-border projects with an EU added value. CEF 2.0 will also ensure that when infrastructure is adapted to improve military mobility within the Union, it is dual-use compatible, meeting both civilian and military needs.

In the **energy** sector, the programme aims to contribute to further integration of the European energy market, improving the interoperability of energy networks across borders and sectors, facilitating decarbonisation, and ensuring security of supply. Funding will also be available for cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy. When defining award criteria, consistency with the EU and national energy and climate plans, including the principle of 'energy efficiency first', will be taken into account. By 2020, the Commission will evaluate the consistency of the regulation on trans-European energy networks (TEN-E) with EU climate and energy targets.

In the area of **digital** connectivity, the scope of the programme is broadened to reflect the fact that the digital transformation of the economy and society at large depends on universal access to reliable and affordable high and very high capacity networks. Digital connectivity is also considered to be a decisive factor in closing economic, social and territorial divides. In order to qualify to receive support from CEF, a project will need to contribute to the digital single market and EU connectivity targets. Priority will be given to projects which generate additional area coverage for households.

The programme emphasises **synergies** between the transport, energy and digital sectors, to enhance the effectiveness of EU action and optimise implementation costs. To achieve this, it provides for the adoption of cross-

sectoral work programmes that would allow intervention in areas such as connected and automated mobility or alternative fuels.

The proposal also aims to **mainstream climate action**, taking into account the EU's long-term decarbonisation commitments such as the Paris Agreement.

Next steps

The Council expects the negotiations with the next European Parliament to start as soon as possible, with a view to their being finalised on the basis of the progress achieved, as reflected in the common understanding.

Negotiations will also need to take into account the overall agreement on the multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027.