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Press release | 27.06.2013

Agreement on 'Connecting Europe Facility'

Deep tunnels, mountains of debt

Council and Parliament, negotiating in trialogue, this morning reached an agreement on the 'Connecting Europe Facility' (CEF) [1]. This budget line lays down common budgetary rules and procedures for the resources dedicated to the Transeuropean Networks (TEN) over the 2014-2020 financial period. It also defines core network corridors based on priority projects. **Michael Cramer**, Green transport spokesperson in the European Parliament, said:

"The agreement reached today cements an outdated and megalomaniacal vision of European transport policy. The fixation on extremely costly and lengthy megaprojects serves only the construction and banking sector. But despite what the title seems to promise, it will not 'connect Europe'.

Transport ministers have already cut the available budget from €32bn to approximately €23bn. This means that what little funds remain must be spent very carefully!

It makes no difference to our citizens or the environment whether the tunnels at the Brenner, between Lyon and Turino or under the Fehmarn Belt are finished in 30, 40 or 50 years. But these projects use up precious resources that are urgently needed elsewhere to help shift to sustainable mobility.

Transport ministers didn't even shy away from adding illegal projects to the list of priorities. The Czech R52 motorway project is the most flagrant example. The construction of a new motorway between Brno and the Austrian border - in parallel to an existing motorway - has already been stopped twice by national courts specialising in corruption [3]. Furthermore, barely 5000 cars use this route per day and Austria has cancelled the plans on its territory - but this does not bother the Council or Commission!

The European parliament was able to extract only a few valuable concessions from the Council and Commission. The EU will for instance co-finance, by up to 20%, the retro-fitting of noisy rail freight wagons with silent brakes. Moreover, the Commission will be obliged to report on the planned use of CEF money on

an annual basis. And these purchases must comply with a detailed set of criteria, including environmental impact assessments and European added value.

The Greens remain hopeful that the Commission will carry out its role responsibly and give priority to cross-border rail connections that were dismantled during or after the Second World War. Only then can this facility be said to 'connect Europe'."

[1] Commission proposal: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure/connecting_en.htm

[2] Overview of core network corridors (in Annex I): http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0665:FIN:EN:PDF#page=44

[3] Report by the Czech Security Information Service BIS http://www.bis.cz/n/ar2008en.pdf

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Michael Cramer

Member

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