

Connecting Europe Facility 2014-2020: withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the report by Karima DELLI (Greens/EFA, FR) on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 with regard to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the Union.

Since the United Kingdom has notified its intention to withdraw from the EU, Union legislation should in principle cease to apply to the United Kingdom from 30 March 2019. If there are no transitional provisions in a withdrawal agreement, the United Kingdom will no longer be a member of the North Sea - Mediterranean corridor from the date of withdrawal.

The European Commission is therefore proposing to review the route of the North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor in order to avoid splitting it into two distinct parts, which would have the effect of cutting Ireland off from the mainland.

The committee recommended that the position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading in the framework of the ordinary legislative procedure should amend the Commission proposal as follows.

Ensuring connectivity between Ireland and mainland Europe

In order to take account of the exceptional circumstances arising from the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union, Members stressed the need to provide for connectivity between Ireland and mainland Europe by modifying the route and composition of the TEN-T corridors with a view to incorporating the maritime links between Irish and continental ports in the core and comprehensive networks.

North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor

In order to avoid the North Sea – Mediterranean Core Network Corridor being separated into two distinct and unconnected parts and to ensure connectivity of Ireland with mainland Europe, Members considered it essential to create direct links with the territories and ports closest to Ireland on the existing corridor.

They also considered it vital to ensure that Ireland and Northern Ireland (in accordance with the Good Friday / Belfast agreement of 1998) are connected to the other Member States participating in the North Sea-Mediterranean corridor.

Members suggested that the proposed regulation should amend Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 and modify the route of sections of the North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor by adding new maritime links between, on the one hand, Dublin and Cork, the Irish ports of the central network, and, on the other hand, the ports of the North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor located in France, Belgium and the Netherlands (Le Havre / Calais / Dunkirk - Zeebrugge / Terneuzen - Gent - Antwerp / Rotterdam).

Atlantic Corridor

In a Europe of 27, in which France, Belgium and the Netherlands are geographically the closest Member States to Ireland, Members considered that the Atlantic Corridor should be realigned to connect Ireland to it and take account of existing and future flows. Accordingly, they proposed incorporating Ireland into the Atlantic Corridor and, where appropriate, incorporating new French ports into the core network, taking into account existing flows.

The Commission and the Member States should speed up the procedure for revising Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council^{1a} so as to adapt the network maps to the changes in the flow of goods after the United Kingdom leaves the Union.

Infrastructure

Members proposed mobilising the funds remaining in the Connecting Europe Facility for the period 2019-2020 to adapt core network ports to the new flows between Ireland and the EU27, as well as to the new constraints associated with cross-Channel traffic.

In addition, the programmes of the transport component of the Connecting Europe Facility should make provision for calls for proposals to finance the development of new or existing transport infrastructure, to provide maritime links between Irish and continental ports in the core and comprehensive networks and adjustments to those links in the event of the re-establishment of an external border with the United Kingdom.

Emergency fund

The Commission should establish financial support complementing the CEF in the form of an emergency fund for adjustment to the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the Union. The aim of that fund shall be to offset the negative impact of the United Kingdom's withdrawal by helping transport stakeholders and local authorities establish in advance new maritime freight routes and make it easier for goods and persons to cross the border between the Union and the United Kingdom.