Connecting Europe Facility 2014-2020

2011/0302(COD) - 11/12/2013 - Final act

PURPOSE: to establish the Connecting Europe Facility ("CEF") for the coordination, development and financing of the trans-European networks.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Regulation (EU) n° 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility, amending Regulation (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulations (EC) No 680/2007 and (EC) No 67/2010.

CONTENT: this Regulation establishes the Connecting Europe Facility ("CEF"), which determines the conditions, methods and procedures for providing Union financial assistance to trans-European networks. The aim is to support projects of common interest in the sectors of transport, telecommunications and energy infrastructures and to exploit potential synergies between those sectors.

The aim of the creation of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) is to accelerate investment in the field of trans-European networks and to leverage funding from both the public and the private sectors, while increasing legal certainty and respecting the principle of technological neutrality.

Support for projects of common interest:

1) Transport sector: the CEF shall support projects of common interest, as identified in Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013, that pursue the following objectives:

- removing bottlenecks, enhancing rail interoperability, bridging missing links and, in particular, improving cross-border sections;
- ensuring sustainable and efficient transport systems in the long run, with a view to preparing for expected future transport flows, as well as enabling all modes of transport to be decarbonised through transition to innovative low-carbon and energy-efficient transport technologies, while optimising safety;
- optimising the integration and interconnection of transport modes and enhancing the interoperability of transport services, while ensuring the accessibility of transport infrastructures.

Horizontal priorities concern particularly innovative management and services in the following sectors: (i) Single European Sky SESAR system; (ii) telematic applications systems for road, rail, inland waterways and vessels (ITS, ERTMS, RIS and VTMIS); (iii) motorways of the sea.

2) Energy sector: support will be given for projects of common interest pursuing the following objectives:

- increasing competitiveness by promoting the further integration of the internal energy market and the interoperability of electricity and gas networks across borders;
- enhancing Union security of energy supply;
- contributing to sustainable development and protection of the environment, inter alia by the integration of energy from renewable sources into the transmission network, and by the development of smart energy networks and carbon dioxide networks.

The first two annual work programmes should give priority consideration to projects of common interest aimed at ending energy isolation and eliminating energy bottlenecks, so as to move towards completion of the internal energy market. The Regulation also stresses the particular importance of electricity projects, with first electricity highways by 2020.

3) Telecommunications sector: the CEF all actions implementing the projects of common interest and programme support actions identified in a Regulation on guidelines for trans-European networks in the area of telecommunications infrastructure.

Budget: the financial envelope for the CEF for the period 2014 to 2020 is EUR 33 242 259 000 in current prices. This amount is divided as follows:

- transport sector: EUR 26 250 582 000, of which EUR 11 305 500 000 shall be transferred from the Cohesion Fund to be spent in line with this Regulation exclusively in Member States eligible for funding from the Cohesion Fund;
- telecommunications sector: EUR 1 141 602 000;
- energy sector: EUR 5 850 075 000.

Following the mid-term evaluation, the European Parliament and the Council may, upon a proposal by the Commission, transfer appropriations between the transport, telecommunications and energy sectors, with the exception of the amount of EUR 11 305 500 000 transferred from the Cohesion Fund to finance transport sector projects in the Cohesion Fund-eligible Member States.

Financial instruments: in the energy sector, the budget envisaged should, as a priority, be allocated in the form of financial instruments, subject to market uptake.

Projects of common interest in the telecommunications sector should be eligible for Union financial support in the form of grants and procurement for core service platforms, generic services and horizontal actions.

Actions in the field of broadband deployment, including actions generating demand for broadband, should be eligible for Union financial support in the form of financial instruments.

Financial instruments should be used to address specific market needs, for actions that have a clear European added value. They should improve the leverage effect of the Union budget spending and achieve a higher multiplier effect in terms of attracting private sector financing.

The overall contribution from the Union budget to the financial instruments shall not exceed 10 % of the overall financial envelope of the CEF.

Report: no later than 31 December 2017, the Commission shall prepare an evaluation report on the achievement of the objectives of all the measures (at the level of results and impacts), the efficiency of the use of resources and the European added value of the CEF, with a view to deciding on the renewal, modification or suspension of the measures.

ENTRY INTO FORCE : 21.12.2013. The Regulation is applicable from 01.01.2014.

DELEGATED ACTS : the Commission may adopt delegated acts to modify the list of general orientations to be taken into account when setting award criteria. The power to adopt such acts is conferred on the Commission from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2020. The European Parliament or the Council may raise objections with regard to a delegated act within two months of the date of notification (which may be extended by two months). If Parliament or Council raise objections, the delegated act will not enter into force.