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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: Draft Council conclusions on Special report No 02/2026 by the European Court of Auditors: "EU transport infrastructure: Further delays and some cost increases, but a reinforced governance framework is in place for the future (an update of ECA special report 10/2020)"
- Approval

1. On 19 January 2026, the European Court of Auditors published the above-mentioned special report. It provides an update on the main developments since the publication of ECA's previous special report from 2020 on EU transport infrastructure. The report also reviews the progress made by the Commission in implementing ECA's recommendations.
2. Under the rules laid down in the Council conclusions on improving the examination of special reports¹ drawn up by the Court of Auditors, the Permanent Representatives Committee on 28 January 2026 instructed the Working Party on Transport - Intermodal Questions and Networks to examine the report in accordance with those rules.
3. Consequently, the special report was presented to the Working Party on 2 February, and the first draft of the Council conclusions was examined on 30 March.

¹ ST 7515/00 + COR 1.

4. The Working Party discussed the revised draft² prepared by the Presidency on 20 April. Following some text proposals by delegations at this meeting, a silent procedure was launched on the final draft which was accepted by delegations. The final version of the draft conclusions is set out in the Annex to this note.
 5. In light of the above, the Permanent Representatives Committee is invited to confirm the agreement reached at the Working Party and recommend to the Council to approve the Council conclusions set out in the Annex to this note as an "A" item at one of its forthcoming meetings.
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² ST 7510/1/26 REV 1.

Draft
Council conclusions on
Special Report No 02/2026 by the European Court of Auditors:

"EU transport infrastructure:

Further delays and some cost increases, but a reinforced governance framework is in place for the future (an update of ECA special report 10/2020)"

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:

1. TAKES NOTE of special report No 02/2026 by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) entitled "EU transport infrastructure: Further delays and some cost increases, but a reinforced governance framework is in place for the future (an update of ECA special report 10/2020)".
2. RECALLS the Council conclusions³ of 12 October 2020 on ECA special report No 10/2020 entitled "EU transport infrastructure: more speed needed in megaproject implementation to deliver network effects on time".
3. REMARKS that special report No 02/2026 provides an update on the changes in cost and planned completion date of eight EU co-funded cross-border Transport Flagship Infrastructures (TFIs) on the TEN-T network since 2020, it reviews to what extent the Commission has implemented ECA's recommendations regarding the oversight of the completion of the TFIs and it assesses the potential of the reinforced governance structure in the revised TEN-T Regulation⁴ to address issues identified in special report No 10/2020.

³ ST 11749/20.

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, amending Regulations (EU) 2021/1153 and (EU) No 913/2010 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 (OJ L, 28.6.2024, p. 1).

4. UNDERLINES the importance of TFIs in terms of EU added value by improving connectivity, supporting economic integration and strengthening the internal market and EMPHASISES the significance of cross-border sections, missing links and bottlenecks for the completion of the core TEN-T network.
5. UNDERLINES the good progress achieved towards the completion of the TEN-T core network, of which the audited TFIs are part, thanks to Member States' efforts with the support of the Commission.
6. RECALLS that the timely completion of the TEN-T network, in line with the revised TEN-T Regulation, is essential for the proper functioning of the internal market, the economic, social and territorial cohesion as well as for achieving the Union's climate and sustainability objectives.
7. ACKNOWLEDGES the efforts of Member States and the Commission, to address cross-border issues, inter alia through the 2021 Directive on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the TEN-T network⁵ as well as through the provisions included in the revised TEN-T Regulation and ENCOURAGES efforts to further streamline permitting procedures to avoid administrative bottlenecks.
8. RECALLS the inherently complex nature of cross-border infrastructure projects that require close cooperation between Member States and that many of the audited projects are expected to be completed by 2030 or close to that date.
9. RECALLS other factors that have an impact on the timely delivery of transport infrastructure projects, such as the administrative capacity of project promoters and implementing bodies and WELCOMES the support of the Commission with project governance.

⁵ Directive (EU) 2021/1187 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 on streamlining measures for advancing the realisation of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) (OJ L 258, 20.7.2021, pp. 1–13).

10. EMPHASISES the importance of adequate and predictable financial support for the timely delivery of major infrastructure projects and HIGHLIGHTS the key role of EU funding instruments, in particular the Connecting Europe Facility, as well as the importance of national investments.
 11. TAKES NOTE of the findings of the special report regarding the implementation of the audited projects, and REMARKS that at present it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the reinforced governance provisions in the revised TEN-T Regulation, RECOGNISES, however, that the effective use of the reinforced governance instruments can contribute to early detection of risks and more efficient project delivery.
 12. SHARES large parts of the Commission's observations included in the special report.
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