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COVER NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL establishing the Connecting Europe Facility for the period 2028-2034, amending Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 and repealing Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 [11711/25 - COM(2025)547] - Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions

Delegations will find attached a copy of the above-mentioned opinion.

The opinion is available in all official languages on the [CoR website](#).



European Committee
of the Regions

COTER-VIII/007

171st plenary session, 6-7 May 2026

OPINION

Connecting Europe Facility 2028-2034 Regulation

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR)

- points out that the CEF is of central importance to LRAs, given that the majority of TEN-T and TEN-E projects occur at territorial level; highlights that the role and potential of LRAs to contribute to better outcomes have so far not been fully utilised; therefore calls for their formal recognition and structured involvement in CEF design, implementation, governance, monitoring and evaluation; further calls for the CoR to be granted observer status in relevant committees, in order to ensure that multilevel governance and territorial cohesion are fully reflected;
- calls for award criteria to recognise the European added value of national missing links, especially in large, sparsely populated or geographically constrained EU regions;
- urges the Commission to explicitly recognise EGTCs and cross-border regional groupings as eligible coordinators and partners in CEF-funded actions;
- notes that certain regions face structural disadvantages due to their geographical characteristics, and therefore calls for reinforced inclusion of territorial criteria in CEF award decisions, taking into account remoteness, demographic sparsity, topographical constraints, accessibility constraints and cross-border impacts;
- highlights the need to integrate urban-node relevance into project selection and award criteria, reflecting the concentration of bottlenecks and congestion around metropolitan areas in the TEN-T network, while also taking into account their contribution to regional development and territorial cohesion; this should include, among others, logistics and multimodal platforms, last mile solutions, multimodal access infrastructure and urban freight distribution systems;
- welcomes the substantial increase in funding for military mobility and making it a dedicated CEF priority; welcomes, in the same vein, the Military Mobility Package addressing regulatory, infrastructure and capability barriers to seamless military mobility;
- stresses that dual-use investments in military mobility must deliver civilian co-benefits, particularly for regional connectivity and resilience;
- stresses the need to strengthen the connectivity of strategic international airports and their rail and road connections with the wider TEN-T network, in particular those that function as gateways to the EU and intercontinental connecting hubs, as well as regional airports that are vital for territorial cohesion, accessibility and competitiveness.

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Rapporteur

Juraj Droba (SK/ECR), Chairman of the Bratislava self-governing Region

Reference documents

CQM(2025) 547 final – proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility for the period 2028-2034, amending Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 and repealing Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 [2025/0221 (COD)]

CQM(2025) 847 final – proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a framework of measures to facilitate the transport of military equipment, goods and personnel across the Union

**Opinion of the European Committee of the Regions – Connecting Europe Facility 2028-2034
Regulation**

I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS (COM(2025) 547 final)

**Amendment 1
Recital 3**

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>The Union should facilitate projects in disadvantaged, less connected, rural, insular, coastal, peripheral, congested, outermost or isolated regions so as to enable access to the Trans-European energy and transport networks while bringing benefits to the entire Union in terms of security, competitiveness and social, economic and territorial cohesion. Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council identifies the infrastructure of the trans-European transport network, specifies the requirements to be fulfilled by it and provides for measures for their implementation. That Regulation provides for the completion of the core network of the trans-European transport network by 2030 and the extended core network by 2040 through the creation of new infrastructure as well as the substantial upgrading and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure. This will lead to a high-performing network for passengers and goods transportation.</p>	<p>The Union should facilitate projects in disadvantaged, less connected, <i>cross-border</i>, rural, <i>sparsely populated</i>, insular, coastal, <i>mountainous, peripheral and southern</i> peripheral, congested, outermost, <i>eastern border regions</i> or isolated regions so as to enable access to the Trans-European energy and transport networks while bringing benefits to the entire Union in terms of security, competitiveness and social, economic and territorial cohesion, <i>and reducing the risk of depopulation, thus contributing to the right to stay. To this end, the programme should take into account the higher structural costs and permanent constraints these regions face, as well as the absence of equivalent modal alternatives and structural dependencies on certain transport modes, ensuring that they can access the benefits of the facility.</i> Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council identifies the infrastructure of the trans-European transport network, specifies the requirements to be fulfilled by it and provides for measures for their implementation. That Regulation provides for the completion of the core network of the trans-European transport network by 2030 and the extended core network by 2040 through the creation of new infrastructure as well as the substantial upgrading and rehabilitation of existing infrastructure. This will lead to a high-performing network for passengers and goods transportation.</p>

<i>Reason</i>
The Connecting Europe Facility should take into account the higher structural costs and permanent constraints these regions face, as well as the absence of equivalent modal alternatives and structural dependencies on certain transport modes, ensuring that they can access the benefits of the facility.

Amendment 2
New recital 3a

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>The specific constraints faced by outermost regions warrant special attention, given their structural, social and economic characteristics, as well as their isolation from continental networks. To address those challenges, access to the Programme should be ensured for these regions, including when it comes to energy storage and renewable energy projects, and specific eligibility criteria can be established accordingly. In addition, for the purpose of assessing the cross-border dimension, actions located in the outermost regions should also be considered in the light of their indirect contributions to the objectives of the Programme, including enhancing security of supply, resilience, system integration and decarbonisation.</i>

<i>Reason</i>
To ensure that the specific constraints faced by the outermost regions are properly reflected in the implementation of the Programme.

Amendment 3
Recital 4

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
In order to achieve the objectives laid down in Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, it is necessary to financially support the development cross-border, including ports and their hinterland connections as well as the deployment of alternative fuels, and the elimination of missing links and to ensure, where applicable, that the actions supported by the Programme are consistent with the corridor work plans drawn up in accordance with Article 54 of Regulation	In order to achieve the objectives laid down in Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, it is necessary to financially support the development cross-border, including ports and their hinterland connections as well as the deployment of alternative fuels, and the elimination of missing links <i>and bottlenecks along the corridors, in particular in urban nodes</i> , and to ensure, where applicable, that the actions supported by the Programme are consistent with the corridor

(EU) 2024/1679 and with the overall network development regarding performance and interoperability.	work plans drawn up in accordance with Article 54 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 and with the overall network development regarding performance, multimodality and interoperability.
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Reason	
Corridors cannot be efficient without urban nodes or alternative fuels infrastructure. These aspects have been taken into account in other CEF funding periods. Not to include them here would lead to gaps in multimodal connections.	

Amendment 4

Article 2 – Definitions add a new paragraph (7a)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	'dual-use transport infrastructure' means a transport infrastructure that addresses both civilian and military mobility standards and specifications;

Reason	
The definition of 'dual-use transport infrastructure' should be included.	

Amendment 5

Article 2 – Definitions add a new paragraph (11a)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	'strategic project in sparsely populated regions' means a project being implemented in NUTS 2 regions with population density below 30 inhabitants/ km2 or NUTS 3 regions with population density below 25 inhabitants/km2.

Reason	
It is essential to ensure accessible transport infrastructure for people and businesses in rural regions and sparsely populated areas, making their activity competitive and slowing down the depopulation processes affecting them.	

Amendment 6

Article 2 – Definitions add a new paragraph (12)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	(12) European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) and other recognised cross-border territorial cooperation structures

	<i>shall be considered eligible legal entities for the purposes of this Regulation.</i>
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Reason
To ensure cross-border regional groupings – central to planning, permitting and local implementation and possessing the key knowledge of the territory – have clear eligibility to participate in CEF-funded actions.

Amendment 7

Article 3 – Programme objectives, paragraph 2(a)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>2. The Programme has the following specific objectives:</p> <p>(a) in the transport sector:</p> <p>(i) to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to interconnected, interoperable, decarbonised, smart, safe, sustainable, resilient, secure and multimodal transport networks in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, in particular through:</p> <p>(1) actions relating to the projects of common interest with cross-border dimension implementing the trans-European transport network, including actions on the indicative sections listed in the Annex to this Regulation;</p> <p>(2) actions relating to the projects of common interest with Union dimension relating to the completion of a smart, resilient, decarbonised and sustainable trans-European transport network;</p> <p>(3) actions relating to the projects of common interest with cross-border dimension with third countries implementing the trans-European transport network in accordance with Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679;</p> <p>(ii) to adapt parts of the trans-European transport network for the dual use of the</p>	<p>2. The Programme has the following specific objectives:</p> <p>(a) in the transport sector</p> <p>(i) to contribute to the development of projects of common interest relating to interconnected, interoperable, decarbonised, smart, safe, sustainable, resilient, secure and multimodal transport networks, <i>supported by digital traffic management systems and data interoperability solutions</i>, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2024/1679, in particular through:</p> <p>(1) actions relating to the projects of common interest with cross-border dimension, <i>including national missing links that unlock corridor functionality and the removal of other cross-border bottlenecks</i>, implementing the trans-European transport network, including actions on the indicative sections listed in the Annex to this Regulation;</p> <p>(2) actions relating to the projects of common interest with Union dimension relating to the completion of a smart, resilient, decarbonised and sustainable trans-European transport network;</p> <p>(3) actions relating to the projects of common interest with cross-border dimension with third countries implementing the trans-European transport network in accordance with Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679;</p> <p><i>(4) actions relating to strategic projects in</i></p>

<p>transport infrastructure with a view to improving both civilian and military mobility, focusing on the four EU Priority Military Mobility Corridors identified by Member States in Annex II to the Military Requirements for Military Mobility within and beyond the Union, as approved by the Council on 18 March 2025 and with reference ST 6728/25 ADD1;</p>	<p><i>sparingly populated regions, including actions on the indicative sections listed in the Annex to this Regulation;</i></p> <p>(ii) to adapt <i>and develop</i> parts of the trans-European transport network for the dual use of the transport infrastructure with a view to improving both civilian and military mobility, focusing on the four EU Priority Military Mobility Corridors identified by Member States in Annex II to the Military Requirements for Military Mobility within and beyond the Union, as approved by the Council on 18 March 2025 and with reference ST 6728/25 ADD1, <i>as well as the eastern border regions;</i></p> <p><i>(iii) to support the development and upgrading of urban nodes, including their multimodal access infrastructure and infrastructure for alternative fuels, logistics and multimodal platforms and last mile connections, to ensure the efficient functioning of the TEN-T network;</i></p>
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<i>Reason</i>
<p>The effectiveness and capacity of the TEN-T network increasingly depend not only on physical infrastructure but also on the digital systems that enable traffic management and data exchange across modes and borders.</p> <p>Work on national missing links that unlock corridor functionality are crucial to eliminate bottlenecks, supporting European competitiveness, resilience and cohesion.</p> <p>Improving the transport infrastructure in sparsely populated and rural regions is particularly important to tackle their demographic challenges.</p> <p>Urban nodes and infrastructure for alternative fuels are indispensable for corridor performance and were included in previous CEF periods; their omission creates gaps in multimodal connectivity and risks losing the technical expertise built within CINEA.</p>

Amendment 8

Article 3 – Programme objectives, paragraph 2(b)(i)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>to contribute to the development of projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest as set out in Article 18 of Regulation (EU) 2022/869, with a view to promoting the completion of the Energy Union, the integration of an efficient and competitive internal energy market, and the interoperability of networks across borders and sectors, to facilitating</p>	<p>to contribute to the development of projects of common interest and projects of mutual interest as set out in Article 18 of Regulation (EU) 2022/869 <i>and small-scale projects</i>, with a view to promoting the completion of the Energy Union, the integration of an efficient and competitive internal energy market, and the interoperability of networks across borders and sectors, to facilitating decarbonisation of the</p>

decarbonisation of the <i>economy</i> , to promoting energy efficiency and to ensuring resilience and security of supply;	<i>local and regional economies</i> , to promoting energy efficiency and to ensuring resilience and security of supply, <i>and to facilitate diversification projects in line with the RePowerEU Regulation; the programme shall ensure a geographically balanced deployment of the energy backbone infrastructure, with a view to strengthening security of supply, enhancing energy affordability and improving industrial competitiveness across all regions of the Union, while preventing deindustrialisation in peripheral areas;</i>
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<i>Reason</i>
Clarifies that small-scale, locally anchored energy projects also contribute to Energy Union objectives and are essential for enabling decarbonisation and resilience at regional and local level. In view of the objectives set out in the RePowerEU Regulation and its foreseen negative impacts on energy security and the energy market, particularly in Central European landlocked countries, it is necessary to ensure the availability of EU financial support for hydrocarbon infrastructure that contributes to diversification and the security of supply.

Amendment 9

Article 5 – Additional resources, paragraph (1)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
Member States, Union institutions, bodies and agencies, third countries, international organisations, international financial institutions, or other third parties may make additional financial or non-financial contributions to the Programme, without prejudice to Articles 107 and 108 TFEU. Additional financial contributions shall constitute external assigned revenue within the meaning of Article 21(2), points (a), (d), or (e), or Article 21(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.	Member States, Union institutions, bodies and agencies, <i>local and regional authorities</i> , third countries, international organisations, international financial institutions, or other third parties may make additional financial or non-financial contributions to the Programme, without prejudice to Articles 107 and 108 TFEU. Additional financial contributions shall constitute external assigned revenue within the meaning of Article 21(2), points (a), (d), or (e), or Article 21(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.

<i>Reason</i>
Self-explanatory.

Amendment 10

Article 5 – Additional resources, paragraph (2)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
2. Resources allocated to Member States under shared management may, at their request, be	

<p>made available to the Programme. The Commission shall implement those resources directly or indirectly in accordance with Article 62(1), point (a) or (c) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. They shall be additional to the amount referred to in Article 4(1) of this Regulation. Those resources shall be used for the benefit of the Member State concerned. Where the Commission has not entered into a legal commitment under direct or indirect management for additional amounts thus made available to the Programme, the corresponding uncommitted amounts may, at the request of the Member State concerned, be transferred back to one or more respective source programmes or their successors.</p>	
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<i>Reason</i>
<p>Allowing transfers from shared-management funds to CEF risks weakening cohesion policy, reducing predictability for regions and undermining territorial cohesion. A strict separation preserves MFF's Heading 1 integrity and safeguards regional investment capacity.</p>

Amendment 11

Article 6 – Alternative, combined and cumulative funding, paragraph (2)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
<p>2. Award procedures under the Programme may be conducted jointly under direct or indirect management with Member States, Union institutions, bodies and agencies, third countries, international organisations, international financial institutions, or other third parties ('partners to the joint award procedure'), provided the protection of the financial interests of the Union is ensured. Such procedures shall be subject to a single set of rules and lead to the conclusion of single legal commitments. For that purpose, the partners to the joint award procedure may make resources available to the Programme in accordance with Article 5 of this Regulation, or the partners may be entrusted with the implementation of the award procedure, where applicable in accordance with Article 62(1), point (c), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. In joint award procedures,</p>	<p>2. Award procedures under the Programme may be conducted jointly under direct or indirect management with Member States, Union institutions, bodies and agencies, local and regional authorities, third countries, international organisations, international financial institutions, or other third parties ('partners to the joint award procedure'), provided the protection of the financial interests of the Union is ensured. Such procedures shall be subject to a single set of rules and lead to the conclusion of single legal commitments. For that purpose, the partners to the joint award procedure may make resources available to the Programme in accordance with Article 5 of this Regulation, or the partners may be entrusted with the implementation of the award procedure, where applicable in accordance with Article 62(1), point (c), of Regulation (EU,</p>

representatives of the partners to the joint award procedure may also be members of the evaluation committee referred to in Article 153(3) of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) 2024/2509.	Euratom) 2024/2509. In joint award procedures, representatives of the partners to the joint award procedure may also be members of the evaluation committee referred to in Article 153(3) of Regulation (EU, EURATOM) 2024/2509.
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<i>Reason</i>
Self-explanatory.

Amendment 12

Article 6 – Alternative, combined and cumulative funding, add a new paragraph (3)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>(3) In the case of joint award procedures concerning projects with a significant territorial, regional or local dimension, the relevant local and regional authorities shall be duly consulted and may, where appropriate, participate as partners in the joint award procedure or as observers in the evaluation process. The Commission and the participating partners shall ensure that the principles of multilevel governance and territorial cohesion, as laid down in Article 174 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, are upheld, and that the specific characteristics and constraints of the outermost regions are taken into account, in accordance with Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, throughout the award and implementation stages.</i>

<i>Reason</i>
Ensures that joint award procedures with territorial relevance respect multilevel governance. LRA involvement improves project design, territorial cohesion and legal certainty, while remaining proportionate and compatible with direct EU management.

Amendment 13

Article 6 – Alternative, combined and cumulative funding, add a new paragraph (4)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>(4) Member States may include, where appropriate, the planning of pipeline formation and corridor development within</i>

	<i>their Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI) mechanisms, with a view to creating synergies between the Programme and other Union funding instruments, in particular those under the National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs), and to ensuring a coordinated and efficient use of Union resources.</i>
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<i>Reason</i>
Integrated Territorial Investments provide an appropriate framework for identifying strategic investments in the respective territory and aligning funding instruments through stakeholder-driven, integrated planning. Their use would facilitate synergies between the Connecting Europe Facility and cohesion policy funds and support a more coherent and efficient deployment of Union resources.

Amendment 14

Article 9 – Eligibility, paragraph (2)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
2. In award procedures under direct or indirect management, one or more of the following legal entities may be eligible to provide or to receive Union support: (a) entities established in a Member <i>States</i> ;	2. In award procedures under direct or indirect management, one or more of the following legal entities may be eligible to provide or to receive Union support: (a) entities established in a Member <i>State, including regional and local authorities, European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), public-law bodies managing logistics platforms or multimodal nodes, and cross-border regional cooperation entities</i> ;

<i>Reason</i>
Explicitly recognises LRAs and EGTCs as eligible, addressing structural participation barriers observed in previous CEF cycles.

Amendment 15

Article 9 – Eligibility, paragraph (5)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
5. As regards actions referred to in Article 3(2), point (a), of this Regulation, the assessment of proposals against the award criteria shall, where applicable, ensure that proposed actions are consistent with the corridor work plans and implementing acts referred to in Articles 54 and	5. As regards actions referred to in Article 3(2), point (a), of this Regulation, the assessment of proposals against the award criteria shall, where applicable, ensure that proposed actions are consistent with the corridor work plans and implementing acts referred to in Articles 54 and

55 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 and that they take into account the consultative opinion of the responsible European Coordinator pursuant to Article 52(9) of that Regulation.	55 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 and that they take into account the consultative opinion of the responsible European Coordinator pursuant to Article 52(9) of that Regulation. <i>Award procedures shall also take into account territorial accessibility and characteristics, including remoteness, demographic sparsity, insularity, mountain characteristics and cross-border relevance, the contribution of the project to the connectivity of strategic nodes, hinterland areas and urban nodes, even where such areas are not part of the TEN-T Core extended Network, as well as the specific situation and development needs of the eastern border regions.</i>
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<i>Reason</i>
Operationalises territorial cohesion in project selection and ensures fair competition for geographically disadvantaged regions and takes into account the importance of strategic and urban nodes.

Amendment 16

Article 11 – Cross-border projects in the field of renewable energy, new paragraph (6)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>The Programme shall support capacity-building and technical assistance measures aimed at strengthening the ability of local and regional authorities and other subnational entities to prepare, develop and implement high-quality project proposals eligible under the Connecting Europe Facility.</i>

<i>Reason</i>
Many LRAs lack the administrative and technical capacity required to access CEF funding. Targeted support ensures more balanced territorial participation and improves the quality and maturity of project pipelines across the Union.

Amendment 17

Article 13 – Delegated acts

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
Subject to Article 172, second paragraph, TFEU, the Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 15 of this Regulation to amend the Annex to this Regulation regarding the indicative list of	Subject to Article 172, second paragraph, TFEU, the Commission is empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 15 of this Regulation to amend the Annex to this Regulation regarding the indicative list of

projects.	projects. <i>When amending the Annex, the Commission shall allow specific eligibility arrangements for Member States with structurally limited land borders or severe geographical constraints, permitting nationally significant projects with clear European added value to be regarded as having a cross-border dimension.</i>
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<i>Reason</i>
Ensures fair access for geographically constrained Member States where conventional cross-border criteria exclude vital national TEN-T links.

Amendment 18

Article 12 – Work programme, add a new paragraph (4)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>(4) Work programmes shall be prepared with structured consultation of the relevant local and regional authorities, particularly where infrastructure is located on their territory.</i>

<i>Reason</i>
LRA's are often responsible for permitting, land-use and operational management; structured involvement improves deliverability.

Amendment 19

Article 15 – Committee procedure, add a new paragraph (6)

<i>Text proposed by the Commission</i>	<i>CoR amendment</i>
	<i>(6) The European Committee of the Regions shall participate in the committee's work as an observer, without voting rights.</i>

<i>Reason</i>
Strengthens multilevel governance by ensuring that territorial considerations are systematically reflected during programme implementation, without affecting the committee's decision-making powers.

II. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS (CoR)

1. welcomes the continuation of the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) programme beyond 2027 and underlines its important role in fostering regional development, especially in cross-border

and metropolitan areas, improving the EU's competitiveness, strengthening territorial cohesion, supporting decarbonisation of the energy sector, transition towards sustainable mobility and the functioning of the EU single market;

2. welcomes the substantial increase in the CEF budget, which will contribute to the completion of the TEN-T core and extended core network and help respond to the geopolitical threat posed by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine; calls for the CEF to be implemented in a manner that does not undermine the objectives of economic, social and territorial cohesion as set out in Article 174 TFEU;
3. recalls that the recently published High-Speed Rail and EU Ports Strategy highlight the scale of the investment challenge for European transport infrastructure, confirming that the resources currently available under CEF represent only a fraction of the overall investment needs;
4. points out that, despite being implemented under direct or indirect management, the CEF is of central importance to LRAs, given that the majority of TEN-T and TEN-E projects occur at territorial level; highlights that the role and potential of LRAs to contribute to better outcomes have so far not been fully utilised; therefore calls for their formal recognition and structured involvement in CEF design, implementation, governance, monitoring and evaluation, as their involvement determines whether EU-financed infrastructure achieves territorial coherence and local acceptance; further calls for the CoR to be granted observer status in relevant committees, in order to ensure that multilevel governance and territorial cohesion are fully reflected throughout the CEF implementation;
5. welcomes the strong focus on cross-border infrastructure, noting that 127 NUTS-2 regions share internal borders, while at the same time calling for specific eligibility arrangements for Member States with limited land borders, in order to prevent their regions from being excluded due to geographical constraints or the lack of multimodal alternatives;
6. calls for award criteria to recognise the European added value of national missing links that unlock corridor functionality, especially in large, sparsely populated or geographically constrained EU regions; and calls for mechanisms to ensure effective coordination and delivery of these projects, including linking EU funding to the fulfilment of agreed commitments and implementation timelines;
7. urges the Commission to explicitly recognise EGTCs and cross-border regional groupings as eligible coordinators and partners in CEF-funded actions;
8. stresses the need for transparent multilevel coordination in corridor work plans and pipeline development, ensuring that regional needs are balanced with national priorities, and that priorities reflect long-term territorial strategies and macro-regional frameworks recalling the key role of LRAs in programming and permitting, as well as in the operational management of multimodal nodes, urban access infrastructure and feeder networks; calls, in particular, for project selection and award criteria to better take into account feeder connections linking rural, remote, island and sparsely populated areas to the core and extended core networks;

9. notes that certain regions face structural disadvantages due to their geographical characteristics, and therefore calls for reinforced inclusion of territorial criteria in CEF award decisions, taking into account remoteness, demographic sparsity, topographical constraints, accessibility constraints and cross-border impacts, in order to ensure their equal access to the CEF; notes that the provisions for outermost regions, including eligibility and co-financing rates, have been weakened compared to the current CEF, and calls for ensuring their continued access to the programme, including for energy storage and renewable energy projects, given their isolation from mainland networks; also calls for considering the reintroduction of specific eligibility criteria for outermost regions;
10. urges the Commission to provide targeted technical assistance and support to LRAs with limited administrative capacity, addressing the participation gap; in addition, invites the Commission, when selecting major projects and projects with significant territorial impact, to ensure that an appropriate territorial impact assessment is carried out, including impacts on regional development disparities and cross-border connectivity;
11. strongly regrets that the proposal does not include urban nodes as a specific CEF objective, despite their central role in TEN-T functionality and linking TEN-T corridors with local urban infrastructure. Calls for the explicit reintroduction of urban nodes into the Regulation, ensuring continuity with previous CEF cycles;
12. highlights the need to integrate urban-node relevance into project selection and award criteria, reflecting the concentration of bottlenecks and congestion around metropolitan areas in the TEN-T network, while also taking into account their contribution to regional development and territorial cohesion; this should include, among others, logistics and multimodal platforms, last mile solutions, multimodal access infrastructure and urban freight distribution systems;
13. stresses that ports generate EU added value and play a strategic and cross-border role, and urges that a broad definition of 'cross-border impact' be maintained for port-related investments; calls for the CEF to support the development of the European Maritime Space by focusing on sea basins, helping to create motorways of the sea and short-distance maritime transport services that connect network ports to the rest of the EU;
14. stresses the need to strengthen the connectivity of strategic international airports and their rail and road connections with the wider TEN-T network, in particular those that function as gateways to the EU and intercontinental connecting hubs, as well as regional airports that are vital for territorial cohesion, accessibility and competitiveness;
15. welcomes the substantial increase in funding for military mobility and making it a dedicated CEF priority; welcomes, in the same vein, the Military Mobility Package addressing regulatory, infrastructure and capability barriers to seamless military mobility;
16. notes that the Military Mobility Package envisages multiple sources of financing for dual-use investments in addition to the CEF, and calls for ensuring synergies and complementarity in their implementation, with a view to avoiding both gaps and overlaps;

17. stresses that dual-use investments in military mobility must deliver civilian co-benefits, particularly for regional connectivity and resilience; projects financed under the CEF, in particular in the fields of transport and military mobility, should not lead to the diversion of resources or attention away from less developed, peripheral, island, mountainous and cross-border regions;
18. calls for transparent, structured involvement of LRAs in the planning of dual-use infrastructure like ports, airports, roads and bridges, acknowledging their operational role in permitting and spatial planning;
19. notes that the Military Mobility Regulation operationalises four EU Priority Military Mobility Corridors, but that their precise routing and the underlying 'military requirements' are largely not public; calls for an appropriate balance to be ensured between confidentiality requirements and the need for LRAs to plan infrastructure adaptations, without compromising security considerations;
20. underlines the need to enhance major cross-border energy interconnections, which should be complemented with smaller-scale, territorially balanced, renewable and community-based energy projects, including distribution grids, supporting strategic decentralisation, energy affordability and the resilience of the European energy system;
21. welcomes the intention to improve coordination between CEF and NRPPs but warns that the proposal creates governance and timing risks for LRAs; underlines the importance of ensuring full complementarity between CEF and NRPPs, avoiding displacement of regional transport priorities and preventing overlaps, gaps or competition between instruments;
22. recalls the findings of the European Court of Auditors Special Report 02/2026 on EU transport infrastructure, which highlight significant delays and cost increases affecting major TEN-T projects and indicate that the completion target for the TEN-T core network by 2030 is unlikely to be met; stresses therefore the need to strengthen project planning, governance and coordination mechanisms, including better alignment between EU, national and regional investment planning, in order to ensure the timely and efficient implementation of TEN-T and maximise the effectiveness of CEF support; also calls for strengthening coordination mechanisms between corridor coordinators, national authorities and LRAs to ensure alignment of corridor plans with sustainable mobility plans at the appropriate territorial level and with broader territorial development strategies;
23. underlines the growing importance of digital traffic and data management systems in ensuring the efficiency, interoperability and resilience of transport networks, involving all levels of governance: the EU, Member States, regions and cities.

Brussels, 7 May 2026.

*The President
of the European Committee of the Regions*

Kata TŰTTŐ

*The Secretary-General
of the European Committee of the Regions*

Petr BLÍŽKOVSKÝ

III. PROCEDURE

Title	Connecting Europe Facility 2028-2034 Regulation
Reference(s)	<u>COM(2025) 547 final – proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Connecting Europe Facility for the period 2028-2034, amending Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 and repealing Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 [2025/0221 (COD)]</u> <u>COM(2025) 847 final - proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on establishing a framework of measures to facilitate the transport of military equipment, goods and personnel across the Union</u>
Legal basis	Art. 307 TFEU
Procedural basis	Rule 41(a)
Date of Council/EP referral/Date of Commission letter	23 September 2025
Date of Bureau/President’s decision	
Commission responsible	Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy and EU Budget
Rapporteur	Juraj Droba (SK/ECR), Chairman of the Bratislava self-governing Region
Discussed in commission	1-2 December 2025
Date adopted by commission	5 February 2026
Result of the vote in commission (majority, unanimity)	Majority
Date adopted in plenary	7 May 2026
Previous Committee opinions	
Subsidiarity reference	