



A competitive and resilient Europe requires a stronger EU transport budget

Europe's transport sector joins forces in an open letter to the EU Member States

Brussels, 24 February 2026

A total of 45 European transport organisations are joining forces and collectively urge national governments to strengthen European funding for transport under the future EU budget -particularly to increase the budget of the future Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) to at least €100 billion.

A robust European transport network is of crucial importance in responding to Europe's strategic objectives. Only with strong and state-of-the-art transport infrastructure at its core, will Europe be able to ramp up its resilience and military preparedness, reinforce its industrial competitiveness and safeguard its supply chain sovereignty. The sector stands ready to deliver but cannot do so without adequate support.

While the ambitions and the investment needs are high, the sector continues to struggle with pressing underfunding and financing gaps. This trend of continued underfunding of the transport sector must be reversed, and the EU Member States must set the bar high.

As such, if Europe is to succeed in its strategic priorities of a strong, resilient and competitive Union, it needs a robust European transport network providing the necessary fundament. This must be reflected in the future EU budget. With another round of discussions on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2028-2034 coming up during the General Affairs Council taking place on 24 February, **all the signatory European transport organisations in an [open letter](#) ask the General Affairs and Finance Ministers to safeguard sufficient EU budget for transport under the future MFF and particularly strengthen the future CEF instrument.** European support to the sector is now more pertinent than ever.

Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General, Waterborne Technology Platform, said: *"Technology Leadership can only be achieved and sustained when RD&I, upscaling and deployment are addressed from an ecosystem perspective and through close interaction among the different actors involved. To remain a global frontrunner, Europe depends on the resilience and performance of a well-functioning, interconnected ecosystem. A competitive value chain heavily depends on a resilient supply chain, and on reliable delivery supported by a well-connected and innovative trans-European network."*

The open letter to the EU Member States, with the full list of signatories, can be found [here](#).

WATERBORNE TP has been set up as an industry-oriented Technology Platform to establish a continuous dialogue between the European waterborne sector and the EU Institutions and Member States (www.waterborne.eu). The members of Waterborne TP represent about 19 EU Member States and four European Countries associated to Horizon Europe.

Enquiries concerning how to join and become more closely involved in the "Zero-Emission Waterborne Transport" partnership or other activities of the Waterborne TP can be sent to: Jaap Gebraad, Secretary General Waterborne TP, jaap.gebraad@waterborne.eu, tel: +32 493 835 626