



27.03.2024

NOTICE TO MEMBERS

Subject: Petition No 0130/2021 by B.Q. (Irish), on behalf of the Western Rail Trail Greenway association, on the Western Rail Corridor

1. Summary of petition

The petitioner calls on the European Parliament and on the Commission to reject any request to list the closed railway from Athenry to Claremorris and Claremorris to Sligo (known in Ireland as the Western Rail Corridor) to be listed for TEN-T status. According to the petitioner, it is not a strategic rail corridor and should hence not become a TEN-T project. 26,000 people in Ireland have requested this route be converted to greenway to boost tourism in the West of Ireland.

2. Admissibility

Declared admissible on 28 May 2021. Information requested from Commission under Rule 227(6).

3. Commission reply, received on 5 November 2021

As part of the process of preparation of the revision of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Regulation¹, the Commission is in close contact with Member States as regards possible modifications of the TEN-T network. According to Article 172 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, guidelines and projects of common interest which relate to the territory of a Member State shall require the approval of the Member State concerned.

The possible inclusion of the so-called Irish Western Arc has been addressed during discussions with the Irish authorities. According to the latest information at the Commission's disposal, the

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network, OJ L 348 of 20.12.2013, p.1.

Irish authorities have launched an encompassing study on rail in Ireland, including the prospect of developing the Western Arc railways. Pending the results of this study, it is not intended to include the Athenry - Claremorris and Claremorris – Sligo railways in the Commission proposal revising the TEN-T Regulation, which is planned to be adopted in December 2021.

In recent years, the Commission has received requests from Irish citizens to include Western Arc railways into the TEN-T network. The Commission takes good note of the opposition of 26 000 citizens to this inclusion. Those positions will be duly be taken into account in the Commission's assessment.

Conclusion

Pending the study to be carried out by the Irish authorities, the Commission does not take a stance on the potential inclusion of the Athenry - Claremorris and Claremorris – Sligo railways into the TEN-T network.

4. Commission reply, received on 27 March 2024

As part of the process of preparation of the revision of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) Regulation, the Commission was in close contact with Member States as regards possible modifications of the TEN-T network, including Ireland. According to Article 172 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, guidelines and projects of common interest which relate to the territory of a Member State shall require the approval of the Member State concerned.

A provisional political agreement on a revised Regulation for the development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) was reached on 18 December 2023. By request of Irish Government institutions, the maps annexed to the TEN-T Regulation and defining the TEN-T network, were updated and the railway section of Athenry – Claremorris was included in the respective maps. Such request of Ireland was based upon the conclusions of the Draft Report for Strategic Environmental Assessment Consultation of the All-Island Strategic Rail Review. Moreover, the inclusion of the railway section Athenry – Claremorris is in full compliance with TEN-T methodology.

The railway section Claremorris – Sligo was however not included into the TEN-T network as it had not been requested by Ireland.

Conclusion

Finally, only the railway section of Athenry – Claremorris will be included in the TEN-T maps. The railway section Claremorris – Sligo won't be included in the TEN-T network.