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# Press Release

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## **PRESS RELEASE BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

### *Maltese parliamentary delegation participates in Inter-Committee Meeting on Transport Networks at the European Parliament*

On Wednesday 20 June, Toni Bezzina participated in an Inter-Parliamentary Committee Meeting (ICM) organised in Brussels by the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism entitled 'EU Investing in its Transport Networks beyond 2020'.

The aim of the ICM was to provide parliamentarians with the opportunity to share national experiences and to discuss with high-ranking officials from both the EU and national institutions a number of issues such as:

- overcoming the existing barriers to linking transport networks and operations across borders;
- creating a synergy in terms of objectives and projects between Cohesions Policy and TEN-T policy;
- extending the EU's transport networks to its neighbouring countries;
- the digitalisation and decarbonisation of the transport sector;
- the role of the maritime dimension and interoperable networks;
- funding transport infrastructure under the next MFF, and
- how to strengthen the involvement of the private sector through innovative financial instruments.

The ICM was divided into two main sessions: the first was on the state of play and future perspectives regarding transport networks and the second was on the challenges and perspectives for the post-2020 period in the field of transport infrastructure investments.

Commissioner for Budget and Human Resources Günther Oettinger delivered a key note speech at the end of the second session, following which there was a short debate with parliamentarians. Commissioner Oettinger focused his intervention on the budget for the transport sector and the added value that the EU brings in cross-border transport infrastructure. He also emphasised the importance of completing some major trans-border projects in the transport sector in the coming decades. He also argued that the sovereignty of the member states in making decisions on national and regional levels must be upheld because the EU cannot, on its own, execute the much needed regional and local transport projects such as electrifying railways that do not cross borders, to mention one example.

Commissioner Oettinger also reiterated that the European Commission is not proposing any budgetary cuts to the CEF - the Connecting Europe Facility. However, the budget is an inter-institutional process

and the negotiations to reach an agreement on the sums are very difficult. He therefore appealed to parliamentarians to encourage their governments to support the MFF process in Council so that an agreement can be reached as swiftly as possible. This would ultimately benefit European citizens who would continue to benefit from the right to freedom of movement, for instance.