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Book Review

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Mateu Turró, Going trans-European: Planning and Financing Transport Networks for Europe. Amsterdam and New York: Pergamon/Elsevier Science, 1999. ISBN 0-08-043059-7.

Going trans-European: Planning and Financing Transport Networks for Europe

by Mazhar Ali Awan

The time has come to tackle the most significant remaining barrier facing the European integration—creating a uniform, complete, and modally integrated approach to the transportation network across Europe and beyond. Mateu Turró takes up this challenge in his book *Going trans-European: Planning and Financing Transport Networks for Europe*. Turró attempts to create a framework that the European Community can follow by addressing the inherent and existing characteristics of the European transport networks and ends eight chapters later by stressing the major requirements for establishing a multi-modal trans-European transportation network (TEN).

In the first chapter, “Transport Infrastructure in Europe,” Turró addresses historical patterns in work/nonwork related trips. In using a “positive economic” analysis, he explains how the time allotted for daily travel has remained relatively constant while the distance traveled has increased as technological innovations were introduced. He explains how each mode was established

over time using the last trans-European network established by the Roman Empire. He then discusses how development of the automobile radically changed the way in which travel patterns affected the economic and physical development of various areas. Throughout, Turró employs many maps, graphs, figures, and tables that add to the textual presentation. In closing the first chapter, Turró conveys how the problem of continual expansion in demand and constrained infrastructure makes the need for an adequate Europe-wide response all the more urgent. He stresses the importance of a modally integrated system but does not address the inherent natural comparative advantages of each mode nor the difficulty associated with getting travelers to voluntarily shift modes. Still, Turró makes an important admission in the first chapter regarding the difficulty associated with TENs:

“Transport infrastructure is built by administrations that, even within one country, have different objectives. In general decision-makers rarely look

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beyond the immediate and direct interest of their voters despite the wider or longer-term effects of these decisions. Even if they did, it is unlikely that neighbouring authorities or hierarchically superior administrations would share the same view. The political colour of the relevant decision-maker is, in many cases, the critical factor in their position vis-à-vis a project. The practical implementation of TENs will undoubtedly suffer from fragmented responsibility and from the impossibility of fulfilling the accumulated expectations of all levels of government.” (See page 25.)

Turró acknowledges this problem throughout, but does not forcefully address it.

In the second chapter, “Facing Present and Future Challenges,” Turró presents his vision of how TENs fit into the grand scheme of European integration and how Europe itself is related to other regions and countries. Included are the Central and Eastern European countries and Southern and Eastern Mediterranean countries, as well as the current European Union member nations. As an aside to his work, Turró recognizes that the only contemporary paradigm of the same magnitude was the undertaking of the United States Interstate Highway and Defense System. He continues by addressing the role of demographic and technological changes (Intelligent Transportation Systems) that are occurring. Rightfully, Turró anticipates the importance of energy, environmental, and interoperability challenges and addresses them directly and eloquently. The scope of the writing is wide, contributing sometimes to the scantiness with which some topics are covered. The author glosses over the major point of Federalism versus Statism, and the reader is left wanting. Though Turró addresses this in other parts of his work, it is never thoroughly treated. This would seem to be a major factor inhibiting the develop-

ment and establishment of any one part or the whole of the TENs.

In the third chapter, “The Long March Towards trans-European Networks,” Turró covers the history of the European Union and the development of general policies affecting the transportation sector. He engages in a detailed discourse of the various transportation policies and proposals and their successes and failures. Most importantly, Turró laments the slow development of the Common Transportation Policy and its lack of effectiveness. He also covers the various policy entrepreneurs, market forces, and geographical concerns affecting the Common Transportation Policy. This chapter provides an excellent background and analysis of the hurdles facing policy initiatives to anyone unfamiliar with the political environment of the European Community.

The next three chapters are titled the “TENs Guidelines: a Half-Missed Opportunity,” “Rethinking TENs: Towards an Integrated Planning Framework,” and “Realizing the Multimodal TEN,” respectively. The Guidelines Turró refers to were developed by the European Union and loosely convey the policy for integrating the modal networks. In chapter four, Turró addresses the general (vague) requirements and recommendations of the TENs Guidelines. In particular, he addresses the shortcomings of the TENs Guidelines and suggests how they could have been more direct, detailed, and deterministic in setting policy goals. Turró commits a major portion of chapter four to a discussion on High-Speed Trains (HST) and the vital role that the rail network should play in the TENs for passenger transportation. In the same chapter, the importance of integrated intermodal TENs is covered with respect to the symbiosis that exists between rail freight, shipping ports, inland ports, and the lorries (motor carriers). Turró finishes this chapter by addressing the problems with inequities associated with modal subsidies, nationalistic biases, environmental, and economic con-

cerns. He convincingly covers the difficulties associated with implementing the Guidelines. In chapter five, Turró advances three major objectives in changing and strengthening the Guidelines: multi-modal integration, sustainability, and subsidiary. The multi-modal TENs, argues Turró, should be guided by efficiency, sustainability, and cohesion criteria. Turró proposes a new framework for multi-modal TENs on these grounds that are very thorough. These are all normative propositions that Turró feels should be incorporated into the next version of the Guidelines. Updating of the Guidelines is required every five years, and the next revision is due this year. Chapter six deals with the political context of the framework presented in the previous chapter. It seems that Turró's intent, in these chapters, is to point out the shortcomings and required changes by the European Union. This is an important service. Turró is convincing and thorough in his socioeconomic and political calculus, and his framework effectively and fully addresses the primacy of political institutions and the market with respect to the Guidelines.

In chapter seven, "Financing trans-European Transport Projects," Turró covers the financial history, current status, and future prospects of funding TENs. The most interesting points by Turró are regarding Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), road pricing, and the associated economic problems with respect to governmental roles and responsibilities. In particular, governments must determine how to deal with private sector companies that, after initial losses, begin to make profits in the long run and what to do if a project never becomes profitable. These problems, he posits, weigh heavily in infrastructure projects that have uncertainty associated with the planning parameters. Turró systematically presents the arguments for and against private financing of transport networks with respect to several criteria. The author spends much time developing the private sector's role in the creation of TENs

because the funds do not exist in the public sector to support the various projects deemed integral to creating a trans-European network.

The last chapter, "Going trans-European," brings the previous discussion to a confluence. Turró covers the political and financial challenges facing the implementation of TENs and the associated barriers. He also proposes a European Transportation Infrastructure Agency to coordinate the development and implementation of TENs starting with work towards a High-Speed Train network and slowly expanding its responsibilities over time. This European Transportation Infrastructure Agency would also inherit other parts of the Guidelines such as cohesion and efficiency criteria. He also proposes an expanded role for the European Investment Bank. As the book closes, the reader is explicitly aware of the myriad issues associated with the implementation of TENs and is left wondering how it could possibly happen, given the lack of power that the European Parliament and the European Union possess compared with the member states.

Throughout, I was left hoping for the forceful presentation of a framework under which the TENs policy could be implemented. In addition, I was waiting for a parallel to be drawn with the development of the Interstate Highway and Defense System in the United States, which was clearly a major federal endeavor. It is clear that the funding does not exist for the effective implementation of the TENs on any major scale. On a side note, perhaps Turró's editor was rushed in the final editing phases of the book. This is evident because there are numerous incomplete footnotes in the text (ending in ellipses that the author had intended to finish but did not, stray punctuation, mislabeled and poorly located graphs and tables, numerous free floating figures and tables that are not referred to or explained in the text, boxes without boxes, and multiple misspellings

(beyond the American/European differences). Though only the first two of these points detract from the substance of the book (there were two footnotes that I was particularly interested in but were incomplete, to my dismay) they do not create a major defect, only a professional annoyance. This deficiency aside, Turró has begun a dialogue that is the precursor to a detailed and

serious inquiry by the powers that are in a position to make changes. Going trans-European: Planning and Financing Transport Networks for Europe is a must read for all those responsible for the implementation of TENs policy. Turró has spent considerable time thinking about the various issues facing European integration and their possible solutions, and this is conveyed in his book.

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