

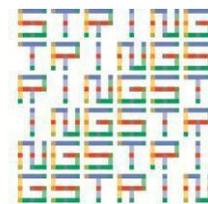
STRING POLITICAL FORUM, 28.05.18  
APPENDIX 5 – STRING CEF statement

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<b>Recommendation</b>	The Political Forum should agree on a statement supporting the European Commission's proposed budget and priorities for the Connecting Europe facility (CEF).
<b>Budget</b>	N/A
<b>Next steps</b>	The Secretariat will publish the statement approved by the Political Forum on the STRING website and disseminate to Finance Ministries in Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Germany, to the European Commission (DG MOVE/Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc), and to other relevant stakeholders.

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## Proposed STRING statement on CEF:

## STRING

The European Commission has published its proposed budget and priorities for the European Union's next Multi-Annual Financial Framework covering the years 2021-2027. The Commission has also published the budget and overall priorities for the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), which supports investment in cross-border infrastructures in the transport, energy and digital sectors.

The proposed CEF budget for transport 2021-2027 is 30,615 million EUR which would mean an increase relative to the current CEF budget. The general transport envelope, which is the relevant envelope for STRING, constitutes 12,830 million EUR and sustains the EU's emphasis on the importance of transport infrastructure.

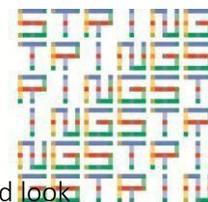
The full programme proposal including detailed investment priorities is due to be published on June 6<sup>th</sup>. STRING is looking forward to contributing to the coming discussions concerning the final design of the Connecting Europe Facility.

In light of the proposed CEF budget framework and overall priorities, STRING:

- **Emphasizes that transport infrastructure is and should remain a key EU priority.** Mobility of goods and people is a central pillar of economic and social cohesion, sustaining business, trade and travel and tourism both within EU and with neighbouring countries. Integrated, up-to-date and sustainable transport networks, not least across borders, are key drivers of economic growth, job creation and ensuring a good quality of life for all citizens.
- **Welcomes the Commission's CEF proposal.** The emphasis on cross-border transport as well as the enhanced support for decarbonisation of the transport sector are timely and highly relevant in order to achieve the overarching goals of developing connected, sustainable, inclusive, safe and secure mobility infrastructure as a way to create inclusive and sustainable growth across Europe. CEF is a central mechanism delivering high EU added value in the transport sector as it finances a multitude of transport projects necessary to complete the TEN-T network.
- **Commends the use of grants** as a primary funding vehicle. While other forms of assistance can sometimes be the right answer, co-financed grants are most often the superior choice in cross-border projects as it secures the financial viability of projects. It is therefore essential that grants continue to be available for cross-border projects, including cross-border light-rail projects.
- **Highly endorses the focus on integrating transport networks in Norway and the EU.** Linking Norway with the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor and recognizing the effects on trade and regional cooperation and development should be highly prioritized and collaboration between Norway and the EU should be intensified.
- **Reaffirms that the Core Network Corridor approach including Urban Nodes is the best way** to achieve the EU's long-term transport policy objectives. In this respect, we extend our thanks to Mr Pat Cox,

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European Coordinator for the TEN-T Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor for his work, and look forward to a continued constructive cooperation.

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