

ROADMAP

Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to share any relevant information that they may have.

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Elements for an EU Strategy on Connecting Europe and Asia
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	EEAS - ASIAPAC
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Joint Communication
INDICATIVE PLANNING	Q3 2018
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	NA

This Roadmap is provided for information purposes only. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the Roadmap, including its timing, are subject to change.

A. Context, problem definition and subsidiarity check

Context

[The Global Strategy on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy](#) proposed to strengthen Europe's relations with a 'connected Asia' and called for the EU to pursue a 'coherent approach' to connectivity. In this context, the EEAS and Commission services have carried out a mapping exercise of Euro-Asian connectivity which describes existing policies, instruments and projects. The main findings have been issued in a Joint Staff Working Document "Euro-Asian Connectivity Mapping Exercise – Main Findings" (SWD(2017) 436) in November 2017.

As a result, the Joint Communication is included in the [Commission Work Programme for 2018](#), stating the intention to propose elements for a strategy on connecting Europe and Asia. The Joint Communication is foreseen to feed into the deliverables for the Asia-Europe Meeting, which will be taking place in the autumn of 2018.

Problem the initiative aims to tackle

For the purposes of this Communication, connectivity is understood to encompass all modes of transport links (land, sea and air) as well as digital and energy links in the Euro-Asian area. These networks imply both the physical networks and the institutional rules and practices which make possible their interoperability. This is why connectivity also extends to customs cooperation and trade facilitation. Finally, connectivity also has a people-to-people dimension, that is, exchange in the fields of education, research, innovation, culture, and tourism.

Global economy depends on these flows, the investment to sustain the physical networks, and the institutional arrangements which make movement over borders possible. Locally and regionally, connectivity drives economic growth and human development. The EU is committed to promoting a concept of connectivity which respects labour, social and environmental standards and follows the principles of sustainability, transparency, market principles, open procurement rules, a level playing field, as well as equal treatment and equal access.

The Asian Development Bank has estimated that Asia faces a need for USD 26 trillion of infrastructure investment until 2030. These needs have been addressed primarily through domestic sources, often complemented by Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) grants and lending. Lately, however, the proliferation of bilateral initiatives has challenged this pattern. While these initiatives could help address the gap, they have also raised concerns about environmental, social, and fiscal sustainability and have at times contributed to state fragility in the Euro-Asian region.

The EU is developing its approach to Euro-Asian connectivity by addressing its governance, with a particular

attention to key principles, including the respect for international standards and good practices, from planning to lending and to the implementation of the projects. Promoting sustainable connectivity and state resilience, spurring economic growth in the Euro-Asian area and helping countries meet Sustainable Development Goals and their COP21 commitments are important elements for this debate, as well as providing economic opportunities for European and Asian businesses alike. The Communication will also cover the creation of regional and cross-border interdependencies which, over time, will create incentives for countries to cooperate and maintain peaceful relations between them.

Basis for EU intervention (legal basis and subsidiarity check)

The multi-faceted nature of Euro-Asian connectivity could lead to initiatives over a large set of policies. These include trade, transport, finance, digital, energy, climate change, education and culture, security, development, as well as other sectoral policies with an external dimension. Some of these will cover exclusive competences, others will refer to shared competence issues. As such, the pooling of resources and political weight justifies action at EU level with regard to international partners. Most of the means through which the measure will be implemented are those of the EU, so the intended results of the measure can only be achieved at that level. The initiative will also contribute to the joined-up approach to EU foreign and security policy set out in the Global Strategy.

B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how

The initiative aims to provide key elements for an EU Strategy on Connecting Europe and Asia.

The initiative seeks to identify and engage with the organisations, institutions and structures, on international, regional or bilateral level, through which the EU can better ensure the respect for the principles guiding its approach to connectivity. These include the observance of labour, social and environmental standards as well as sustainability, transparency, market principles, open procurement rules, a level playing field as well as equal treatment and equal access. Due regard will be given to poverty reduction and enhancing state resilience as well as support to the transition to sustainable sources of energy and transport.

The desired end results are: 1) enhanced governance for Euro-Asian connectivity; 2) better availability and sustainability of finance; 3) strengthened state resilience across the Euro-Asian landscape; 4) faster transition towards sustainable energy and transport; 5) strengthened regional orders; 6) better market access and economic opportunity for European businesses; and 7) increased people-to-people activities.

C. Better regulation

Consultation of citizens and stakeholders

EEAS and Commission services have carried out a mapping exercise during 2017, during which the EU Member States have been consulted. A summary of the results has been issued as a Joint Staff Working Document (SWD(2017) 436) in November 2017.

The EEAS and Commission services will carry out targeted consultations and a series of informal seminars and roundtables with Member States, EU businesses, think tanks, academics, NGOs and other experts. Consultations will take the form of meetings, video- or tele-conferences, focussing on actors with proven experience in research and work on the ground.

Wherever possible, the EU will also participate actively in discussions on connectivity initiated by third parties, whether countries (for instance, China, India, Japan, the United States, and Russia), organisations (ASEM, ASEAN, UN-ECE) or think tanks and businesses. Consultations will also take place in the existing multilateral frameworks, such as the Eastern Partnership.

Consultations will be carried out between February and April 2018.

Evidence base and data collection [max 10 lines]

The Joint Communication will draw the lessons from the mapping exercise on Euro-Asian connectivity, the results of which were issued in a Joint Staff Working Document (SWD(2017) 436) in November 2017. This exercise has involved the EEAS, the services of the Commission, the EU Member States and the EU Delegations working in countries in Europe and Asia. Their contributions have helped to assemble a picture of the various ongoing and planned connectivity projects, with a focus on issues related to the external dimension of Euro-Asian connectivity.

In addition, the fair amount of interest in Euro-Asian connectivity has also led to a number of think tanks, in Europe and elsewhere, to produce reports with analysis of data, combined with policy recommendations, which will also be used to inform the preparation of the initiative. More evidence and data will be gathered during consultations with stakeholders, including think tanks, EU businesses and business associations, and other civil society actors.