

POSITION PAPER

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE UNDER NEXT GENERATION EU

EUPAVE warmly welcomes the NextGenerationEU funds and the whole financial package aimed at the post COVID recovery in the EU.

We take the opportunity to be consulted offered by the Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Indeed, this Regulation compels Member States to carry out a consultation process to regional and local authorities, as well as relevant stakeholders, when preparing their recovery and resilience plans.

EUPAVE would like to ask national governments and EU institutions **to consider the role that transport infrastructure, in particular roads, can play for a prompt recovery based on the European Green Deal and carbon neutrality by 2050.** When designing national recovery and resilience plans and during the implementation of projects at a later stage, national governments and the European Commission are invited to take into consideration the following proposals:

1. Firstly, for national and regional authorities, this is a **unique opportunity to renovate and modernise aging infrastructures.** For instance, under NextGenerationEU flagships, particularly Recharge and Refuel, they should defend sustainable, accessible and smart transport infrastructures, including **cyclist paths, freight corridors (e.g. dedicated truck lanes), parking areas, tramways and bus lanes.**

2. Secondly, the relevant authorities, including the Court of Auditors, could offer guidance to define the criteria of 'most economic advantageous tender (MEAT)' as the key for a true sustainable public procurement. **Hence, we strongly advocate for the inclusion of life-cycle criteria in the procurement**

process to grant contracts for recovery projects in the field of transport infrastructures. Furthermore, we recommend the use of design-build-maintain (DBM) tendering procedures for transport infrastructure. Indeed, DBM is a way to fight risk aversion and atavism in road infrastructure and pavement design, and stimulate competition. Finally, EUPAVE proposes to extend the life-cycle criteria for tenders under future TEN-T and European Regional Fund and Cohesion Fund for the current Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.

3. Third, **EUPAVE is committed with innovation at the service of sustainability and would eagerly share its know-how and experience with national and EU authorities** during the recovery period. Firstly, innovative concrete paving infrastructure reduce CO₂ emissions from road transport due to their higher rigidity and albedo effect. Secondly, fully made with local raw materials, concrete pavements offer a long service life and are 100% recyclable and further contribute to a more ecological water cycle management. Last, concrete roads show better resilience to climate change and extreme meteorological events.

We are fully convinced that, although being a largely under-utilized solution on the European continent, concrete pavement is spreading in many regions in the world where it is given the possibility to compete and is the **game changer that the Green Deal and NextGenerationEU roads deserve.**

In conclusion, and during the evaluation process after the deadline of 30 April to submit the draft plans, we call the European Commission **to ensure that the national recovery and resilience plans include ambitious and strategic actions on road infrastructure while radically opening-up competition to materials and solutions whose properties are the most aligned with these goals.**

EUPAVE and its members are committed to take part in the consultation process and to offer their knowledge with the aim of providing a more sustainable growth to European society as a whole, and a safer and more resilient road transport for European citizens.



Tram lane (Tramway T3) © CIMBéton



Tram lane (Tramway T2, Lyon) © CIMBéton



Cycle path © Eric Schelstraete for FEBELCEM