

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT SERVICES AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE TOURISM SERVICES

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If we compared the economic system with a human being we could say transports are its throbbing blood. Without these services the economic development of the century that just ended would not have been possible. Transport plays an important social role also in meeting the travel and communication needs for most people. The transportation represents also a basic tourism service, without which the journey cannot be made. The services we look at have also a negative side, as they are activities causing significant harm to the environment. One example is tourist transportation, mostly road and air transportation, with a negative impact due both to emissions and to the high level of sound pollution. Thus, in 2005, of the 5839.4 thousand arrivals (foreign travelers coming to Romania), 75.9% have used road transportation and 15.7% air transportation (5.2% – rail transport and 3.2 % – water transport) As for the Romanian citizens' travels abroad, of the 7139.8 departures in 2005, 84.1% used road transportation, 12.3% air transportation, and only 3.1% rail and 0.5% water. In 2006 the number of foreign travelers coming to Romania was 6037 thousand arrivals, and the departures for the Romanian citizens were 8906.

Sustainable development is a concept that can be implemented only by striking a balance between economic and social development and environment protection. Therefore, transportation – of both goods and people – should reach this balance, which can be achieved only through a thorough knowledge of the system, paving the way to identifying viable solutions for mitigating the pollution caused by transport without hurting economic development.

Key words: *air transport, water transport, sustainable development*

Introduction

The transportation is one of the essential services offered by every travel agency. During the last years, this field developed very much, with positive effects to the local understructure and to the tourism activity. All four kinds of transportation – aerial, road, railway, nautical – are used by the tourists, who want to reduce their time of travelling and increase their time spent at the holiday destination, where to visit the highlights and enjoy. Thus, the tourist transportation interfere with the general branch of “*Transportations*”, but it is difficult to define one apart from another. For example, the travel agencies use a lot the regular services of the of the transportation companies, while the individual tourists use often the public transportation. Because of this, there have to be analysed the evolutions of the general transportations, the progresses of this field and their importance for a sustainable development.

The importance of an integrated transport structure was acknowledged as early as the Treaty of Rome (1957), but little progress was made before the mid-eighties. The publication of the White Paper on the completion of the internal market (1985) supplied a number of recommendations on guaranteeing the freedom of service providing and set the guidelines for a common transport policy. The guidelines were approved by the Council of Ministers which also adopted an action plan with the following main objectives: to develop the infrastructure of community interest, to reduce controls and formalities at borders, and to enhance transport safety. The introduction of the common market on January 1, 1993, was a turning point in transport policies. If we only consider the elimination of the borders between the Member

States and other liberalization measures (such as cabotage) we can understand the type of constraints that arose, with particular reference to:

- The social constraints, requiring that the freedom to provide transport services does not result in non-compliance with stricter national legislations. The process of liberalizing transport services had to be accompanied by a harmonization of the social conditions and of the legislation on service providing and recognition of qualifications;
- The economic conditions, requiring that infrastructure investment, particularly in road transportation, should not be operated by beneficiaries who did not contribute to funding that investment work. In railway transportation, measures had to be taken to avoid perpetuating the fragmented organization of this means of transportation.
- The conditions for guaranteeing the routes, so that the introduction of the new competitive factors does not affect continuity in service providing. The measures to liberalize transport were specifically adjusted to each means of transportation (by road, rail, sea, air, and river), taking into account the characteristics of international service providing (transportation between two Member States) and the cabotage (transportation within another member state) At the end of 1992 the White Paper on the Future Development of the Common Transport Policy is adopted, which signals the integrated approach to the various types of transportation based on sustainable mobility. This means transport should be organized so that fuel and energy consumption, transport time, the transport routes and conditions are optimal. The action plan for 1995-2000 focused on improving transport quality by introducing integrated systems based on new technologies, which should take into account the environment protection, the improvement of the operation of the single market by encouraging competition while complying with the social standards, and by developing the external dimension by improving the transport connections with third-party countries and by supporting the community operators on the external markets. The Green Paper on the fiscal policy on transportation (1995) considers taxes to be one of the means for the state to have an impact on this sector. The accelerated development of the new technologies, particularly the information and communication technologies results in the implementation of telematic applications that develop modern information, radio-navigation, and telecommunication services, which are specific for each means of transportation. Moreover, the European Commission advocates a European strategy for a global satellite navigation network, which would allow Europe to control the positioning and navigation services for its entire territory and for all types of transportation. In September 2001 the new White Paper on transportation “European transport policy: time to decide” is developed and published in the Official Journal; its objective is to identify a balance between the economic development and the safety required by society in view of developing a modern and sustainable system. Considering the permanent increase in both the passenger and goods traffic, in the congestion of the road networks, of the environment and transport safety problems, in the White Paper (2001) the Commission proposes a number of objectives which would provide a solution to the listed problems:

- to revitalize by 2010 railway transportation and to promote maritime and river transportation;
- taxation systems for transport which reflect the real costs, including the indirect costs, such as those related to damages of the environment, traffic congestion, or accidents;
- to have more efficient and safer transport systems.

Some of the measures put forward are listed below:

- -to promote the passengers’ rights, through protection measures for the passengers using various means of transportation. These measures should also apply to the public urban passenger transport;
- -to improve road safety (with the objective of halving the number of the deaths caused by accidents by 2010);
- -to prevent bottlenecks by promoting several types of transportation (through the new “Marco Polo” Program);
- -to harmonize taxation of railway fuel;
- -to create new infrastructure markets in the context of trans-European networks;

Air transport is an industry where airplanes are used to carry passengers, goods, and mail. Airline companies provide services on local, regional, national, and international routes.

Air Transport Material Resources

In recent years, the macroeconomic performance of Romania has been favorable despite a worsening international economic environment. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) underwent a strong growth, generated by significant fixed investment and by private consumption, fueled by a strong increase in the loans for the private sector. However, the macroeconomic performance failed to reflect in the development of the material resources for air transport, considered to be one of the most polluting activities.

Table 1. Statistical data on air transport:

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Civilian airplanes registered for passenger transportation (no.)	38	28	29	32	34	33	44
Civilian airplanes registered for passenger transportation (seats)	3630	2866	2494	2436	2617	2353	3168
Airplanes for freight transportation (no.)	4	3	2	1	1	1	-
Airplanes for freight transportation (tons)	380	316	170	80	80	80	-

The size of the supply, just like that of demand, is determined by a number of factors, the most important of them being: technology, cost of service, taxes, price of other products (goods or services), cost of resources, number of suppliers, market prospects, and natural, economic and social conditions. In air transport, the demand-supply rate is permanently imbalanced, periods of excess supply alternating with those of normal demand, as this rate is determined by the fluctuation of both supply and demand. This rate has an impact on both the research methods and the marketing policies of the shipping and transport firm. The marketing policies of the shipping and transport companies are of a significant practical importance because every means of transportation is under the administration of specialized bodies. To accomplish a product, price, distribution, and promotion policy requires a permanent adjustment of the package of shipping and freight transport offers to the demand experienced on the market. The quality price ratio is complemented by the employees' professionalism, the technical evolution and even by the scientific advances. The specifics of the services and in particular of the product determine the conduct of permanent market evolution surveys with the aim of adjusting to it. The specialist staffs provides all customers with information that complements the company image with concrete data on the requested service and also with precise data on the whole range of provided services and service packages.

Moreover, to meet the customer's requirements, many dispatch and transport companies have purchased special software allowing their customers to be in permanent communication, to get information and even to place orders and make payments on-line.

Compared to air transportation, water transportation is considered to have the least impact on the environment.

Water Transport and Environment Protection

The circumstances of the sea transport in Romania reflect mainly the transport needs generated by the economy in the context of the general and sector-based policies, the two surveyed components, namely the transport proper and the port infrastructure, undergoing different evolutions.

Thus, the Romanian sea shipment fleet has diminished continuously since 1990, from a total of 288 ships and 5.614 million tons deadweight¹⁴² to only 19 ships still bearing a Romanian flag in 2005¹⁴³. By the end of that year only 12 ships still bore a Romanian flag, as no less than seven of them had been either sold (four ships) or had had their flag changed to a flag of convenience (three ships).

Under these circumstances the amount freight transported by sea amounted to only 0.157 million tons of the total 513.1 million tons shipped to Romania in 2004, representing an insignificant 0.03%¹⁴⁴. Neither the statistics for 2005 have been more encouraging, of the total transports estimated at 524.5 million tons, only 0.2 million tons (0.04%) were shipped by sea.¹⁴⁵

On the other hand, the port infrastructure has developed significantly, and traffic in the sea ports of Constanta, Midia, and Mangalia in 2005 totaled 46.5 million tons, an increase of 7.6 million tons i.e. by 19.54% compared to 2004¹⁴⁶. The most spectacular increase was registered in the container traffic that exceeded even the most optimistic expectations by reaching a record level of 768,099 T.E.U. / 7.4 million tons, an increase by 98.85% (381,817 T.E.U. / 3.5 million tons) compared to 2004. This increase is due mainly to the inauguration of a new container terminal in mid-2004, with a total capacity of 800,000 T.E.U. The number of operated ships in 2005 also increased by 4.43%, from 5,277 ships in 2004 to 5,511 ships in 2005.

In terms of passenger traffic, in 2005 no fewer than 33,000 passengers were registered in the Constanta Port, an increase by almost 1,000% compared with 2003 when only 3,400 passengers visited the Port.

In November 2005 the new passenger terminal was inaugurated, a modern building specially developed to enhance the tourist dimension of the largest port in the Black Sea, with a maximum capacity of 100,000 passengers per year.

A frequent destination of several river and sea cruise lines, Constanta Port now provides optimal conditions for both ships and passengers, the new location providing benefits aimed at integrating Constanta Port in the world circuit of cruise ships:

- easy, direct access of the ships to the Port entry, not requiring additional maneuvers;
- location close to the historical part of Constanta City;
- existing access roads connecting it with the city and facilitating road transport and walking, without impeding other port activities;
- easy access to the other means of transportation, to the accommodation and leisure areas in the tourist resorts on the Romanian Black Sea shore;
- Other port infrastructure development projects include:
 - a new cereal terminal on pier 3 of the Constanta South – Agigea Port, to take over the cereal traffic, which has been forecasted a constantly ascendant trend until 2010;
 - to develop logistical areas, as a solution for an integrated port development, aiming at creating an extensive transport network, a concentration of the services and companies, and at reducing costs and increasing service quality;
 - to establish an infrastructure for hydrocarbon waste collection, storage and treatment consisting of: incinerators, environmentally-friendly treatment plant, waste water treatment plant and collection ships;

In view of upgrading and developing the number of ships bearing a Romanian flag, the Romanian Law Approving the Government Ordinance No. 116/1998 instituted incentives and provided financial support to ship operators.

Thus, subject to specific terms and conditions, facilities have been granted relative to¹⁴⁷:

- tax exemption for a limited number of years, provided that the profit is reinvested in upgrading existing ships or the purchase of new ones;
- accelerated depreciation;
- duty charge exemption for the purchase of new ships, equipment and spare parts;
- granting of export duty status for fuels, lubricants, and other consumables used by ships in international travels;

- state financial support for the construction of new ships and for upgrading existing ones (75% contribution of the businesses and 25% subvention from the state budget).

The strategy of the current government relative to sea transport aims mainly at the following¹⁴⁸:

- use of the competitive advantage of the Danube (European Corridor VI) in the framework of the integration in the European Union;
- the development and the intensification of the freight transit traffic in the sea ports;
- encouraging the private initiative in creating a sea fleet under Romanian flag, adapted to the needs of the national economy, correlated with flag facilities for the reintroduction of Romania in the international circuit of sea transport.

The policies the Government of Romania is going to promote to accomplish this strategy are:

- to ensure and guarantee the free access to the railroad and road infrastructures in ports with several transport operators and beneficiaries in view of encouraging competition in port service providing;
- to provide incentives the Romanian private ship owners for the development and upgrade of sea ships according to the requirements and the trade potential of Romania's economy in view of European integration;
- to transfer the full right to use the port infrastructure to the port operators;
- to develop the container transit traffic.

The organizational and administrative measures contemplated by the Government of Romania in order to carry out its policies in ship transportation are:

- to improve the system of sea piloting ;
- to switch the Romanian Naval Authority to a budget funding system and to establish a system of charges allowing for the development of the sea traffic at the same time with the increase of safety at sea;
- to place the sea ports in the administration of the local governments provided a unitary tariff policy is established;
- to supply a monitoring and control system for the sea traffic provided by a single state authority;
- to develop and improve the relevant specialized education system ;
- to ensure free competition among the private fleet and port operators by giving them free access to the sea and land infrastructure in sea ports;
- to ensure the sea environment protection by creating the required infrastructure to control and collect the oil waste from ships.

The number of ships bearing the Romanian flag declines both because of the sale of the old ships that are quite costly to operate and because of the excessive taxation by the Romanian state. The facilities and the support the state provides for fleet renewal or upgrade has not yielded the expected effects yet, mainly because of the low capitalization level of the Romanian ship owners.

By contrast, the freight and passenger traffic in the sea ports increases continuously, both because of the recent sustained investments and as a result of the economic growth and of Romania's integration in the European Union.

Conclusions

Sea transport is still the worldwide leader in terms of the volume of freight transported, and no significant changes in the market share of the main means of transportation are envisaged.

The structure of the world fleet has changed significantly, the most notable trends being the significant increase in the number of oil tankers, container ships, and large cruise ships, and a decline of number of general goods transport ships and of the ships for mixed passenger and vehicle transportation.

The world transport market is in its mature stage mainly as a result of the stabilization of the growth rates of the countries in South East Asia and of slight decrease of the economic growth rate in the European countries and in America. Consequently, the level of demand and supply are relatively close, and the transport prices remain at a high level without however affecting the overall competitiveness of sea transport.

The amount of carried freight is high on the West-East route for the basic raw materials (oil, ores) and high on the East-West route for manufactured goods in containers.

Another important trend is that of consolidating the transport capacities by takeovers of competing companies facing difficulties or by entering alliances, pools and consortia, especially for shipping lines, in order to improve efficiency and to maintain low operation costs.

There is also an obvious trend of passing harsher legislation on safety at sea and on environment by restricting port access for the ships that do not comply with the international standards for safe navigation, environment pollution, or living conditions onboard.

Just like the ships, port facilities must also comply with these regulations and, in addition, with the new regulations on port safety, which are bound to lead to reduced efficiency, increased costs for the port operators and consequently increased operation prices.

Domestically, there is a noteworthy trend of developing the port infrastructure to provide the capacity to operate an increasing amount of goods, and of creating the legislative framework allowing for the reconstruction of a modern Romanian sea transport fleet.

To conclude, giving priority to developing sea transport and slowing down the growth rate of air transport activities can only result in a beneficial impact on the environment. If water transport is the least polluting and air transport is the most polluting, for long-distance land transport the best solutions must be found to develop railway transportation and to slow down the growth rate of road transportation. Thus, a sustainable development of transportation in Romania can be achieved.

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