

PAN-EUROPEAN CORRIDORS

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This paper focuses on the analysis of the new geopolitical situation — and a new situation for the transport sector— created when 10 more member states were admitted to the European Union in May 2004. This historic enlargement eastwards and southwards was continued as Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in January 2007. Not only does the newly enlarged EU-27 have more member states, but it also has new frontiers and new neighbours. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the EU and its neighbours. Its aim is to promote peace, stability, security, growth, development and prosperity in the neighbouring countries as well as modernisation of the economy and society.

Keywords: Europe, development, growth, network, trade economy.

Introduction

Twelve bilateral ENP action plans have far been agreed with Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, Israel, Lebanon and Egypt. The action plans support the implementation of national plans and reform programmes in the political, economic, social and institutional fields. The EU and Russia have decided to strengthen ties in a different framework by building cooperation in four so-called 'common spaces': a common economic space; a common space of freedom, security and justice; a space of cooperation in the field of external security; and a space of research and education, including cultural aspects.

Transport is a key element in the EU's cooperation with neighbouring countries and its efforts to promote the conditions for sustainable economic growth, trade and cultural exchange. Transport is also one of the areas where the EU works to facilitate the spread of its own internal market principles and rules abroad. Under enlargement policy, candidate countries have to align themselves with EU legislation on transport in the interests of a well-functioning internal market, while ENP aims to ensure that legislation, standards and technical specifications of main trade partners are compatible with those of the EU. In the transport sector the action plans concentrate on measures designed to improve the safety, security and efficiency of transport operations as well as the development of an efficient transport network.

Closer cooperation in transport fosters economic development and trade. This in turn can contribute to wider aims: transport can have an important enabling role in strengthening regional cooperation and integration across borders.

Helsinki Corridors

Brief History

Several Conferences on Pan-European Transportation were organized at beginnings of 1990's as a consequence of the openness of Eastern block. Their objective was the identification of the needs for transportation infrastructure development within Eastern Europe. The concept of Pan-European transport policy and corridors was born during the preparatory work for the First Pan-European Transport Conference organized by the European Union (Commission, Parliament) and the European Conference of the Ministries of Transport (ECMT) in 1991 in Prague. The purpose was to speed up the development of transport routes throughout Europe and to further contribute

to smoother economic exchanges. With the enlargement process becoming a priority in Europe, the corridor concept started gaining ground. The Corridors were defined in their actual form by the 3rd Pan-European Transport Conference in Helsinki, 1997.

Nine Pan-European transport corridors were defined at the second Pan-European transport Conference in Crete, March 1994, as routes in Central and Eastern Europe that required major investment over the next ten to fifteen years. But, on third Conference, hosted by Helsinki in 1997, a tenth corridor was added, as a result of the lobby done by Baltic countries for a better connection between Western Europe and Balkans. This corridor was proposed after the end of hostilities between the states of the former Yugoslavia. Therefore, these corridors are sometimes referred to as the "Crete corridors" or "Helsinki corridors", regardless of their geographical locations.

Description of Pan-European Corridors and Areas

Each corridor has a road and railroad component, except Corridor VII, which is represented by the Danube segment downstream from Vienna. The corridors create a network which extends from West (Nuremberg) to East (Nizhny Novgorod) and from North (Helsinki) to South (Thessaloniki).

CORRIDOR I

Corridor I is the VIA BALTICA road and the RAIL BALTICA railroad plus the ferry line Helsinki-Tallin.

Countries: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia

Length: approximate 1710 km of rail and 1630 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road, ferry

Links with other corridors: Corridor IX: Kaunas (Lithuania); There is also an additional appendix Riga - Kaliningrad.

CORRIDOR II

Connects Berlin (Germany), via Warszawa (Poland), Minsk (Belarus) and Moscow (Russia) with Nizhny Novgorod (Russia). The extension of Corridor II from Moscow to Nizhny Novgorod was decided at the Helsinki Conference, in 1997. The extension gives the Corridor access to the Trans-Siberian rail trunk line and to the inland waterways in the Russian Federation.

Countries: Germany, Poland, Belarus, Russia

Length: approximate 2300 km of rail and 2200 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road.

CORRIDOR III

The Pan-European Transport Corridor III is a multimodal east-west transport link running from Berlin and Dresden via Wroclaw, Katowice, Krakow and L'viv to Kiev; thus linking important industrial areas in Germany, Poland and the Ukraine.

Countries: Germany, Poland, Ukraine

Length: 1650 km of rail and 1700 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road.

CORRIDOR IV

Major parts of this corridor run through countries which are new EU members or candidates to join the EU. The corridor can thus be seen as the backbone of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) extended eastwards and southwards.

Corridor IV provides the link running from Dresden/Nuremberg (Germany), via Praga (Czech Republic) Vienna (Austria) / Bratislava (Slovakia), Budapest (Hungary) and to Romania.

Countries: Germany, Czech Republic, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey

Length: 4379 km of rail and 3640 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road, ports

Branches:

In Romania the Corridor splits into two branches: The Northern branch, running from Arad (Romania) via Bucuresti (Romania) to Constanta (Black Sea) and The Southern branch running from Arad (Romania) via Craiova (Romania) to Sofia (Bulgaria)

Another two branches are from Sofia (Bulgaria), to Thessaloniki (Greece) and to Istanbul (Turkey).

CORRIDOR V

The Pan-European Transport Corridor V connects Central Europe to the Mediterranean, following trade routes from the times of the Roman Empire.

Corridor V provides the link running from Venice and Trieste (Italy) via Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Budapest (Hungary) with Lviv (Ukraine).

Countries: Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina

Length: approximate 3270 km of rail and 2850 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road, ports

Branches: Branch A: from the Bratislava (Slovakia) to Uzgorod (Ukraine); Branch B: from Budapest (Hungary) to Rijeka (Croatia); Branch C: from Budapest (Hungary) via Sarajevo (Bosnia-Herzegovina) to the port of Ploce (Croatia).

CORRIDOR VI

It begins in the Baltic port of Gdansk, and continues through Poland towards the industrial area surrounding Katowice. It then crosses the Slovak Republic border, finishing nearly 70 km further on, in the Slovakian town of Žilina. Because of its cross-connections with Corridor V, this route establishes important links from the Baltic, via Poland, towards both eastern and western Europe. A western branch of Corridor VI links Katowice to Brno.

Countries: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia

Length: 1800 km of rail and 1880 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road, ports

Branches: Branch A: from the Grudziadz (Poland) to Poznan (Poland), only by road; Branch B: from Czestochowa (Poland) to Brno (Czech Republic), by road and from Bielsko Biala (Poland) to Breklak (Czech Republic), by rail.

CORRIDOR VII (The Danube)

Corridor VII is the Danube. The Danube is the second largest river in Europe.

Countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Moldavia, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Slovakia, the Ukraine

Direction: from Western to Eastern Europe through the Rhine, the Main and the Rhine-Main-Danube canal. Danube provides part of the link between the North Sea and the Black Sea;

Length: 2415 km; Transport mode: inland waterway and crosses: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, FR Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and the Ukraine. Corridor VII also refers to the relevant port infrastructures (44 sea and river ports) and to the Black Sea-Danube Canal.

Links with other corridors (major inland ports):

with Corridor IV: Budapest (Hungary); Medgidia (Romania)

with Corridor V: Bratislava (Slovak Republic); Budapest; Dunaujvaros, Mohacs (Hungary);

with Corridor IX: Oltenita, Giurgiu (Romania); Russe (Bulgaria);

with Corridor X: Budapest; Belgrade, Novi Sad (FR Yugoslavia);

In addition, there is the seaport of Constanta, lying at the mouth of the Danube - Black Sea Canal.

CORRIDOR VIII

This corridor links the Adriatic-Ionian region with the Balkan region and the Black Sea. Transport infrastructure in South-East Europe is traditionally weak. Politically, the area has suffered from the collapse of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the wars during the last two decades as a consequence thereof. After the international intervention in this area, Corridor VIII will bring further stabilisation by supporting industrial and commercial co-operation.

Countries: Greece, FYR Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Albania, Italy

Length: 1270 km of rail and 960 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road, ports.

CORRIDOR IX

The corridor is divided into three sections:

- The Northern Section consists of the road/rail transport route between Helsinki-St.Petersburg-Moscow.

- The Middle Section consists of the road/rail transport route running from Moscow and from St. Petersburg to Odessa including the branches from Kaliningrad and Klaipeda.

- The Southern Section consists of the road/rail transport route between Odessa and Alexandroupolis.

Countries: Finland, Russia, Belarus, the Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania

Length: 6500 km of rail and 5820 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road, ports.

CORRIDOR X

Corridor X is the newest amongst the pan-European transport corridors. It was the Helsinki Conference deciding to include this corridor in the Balkan area into the network. This corridor had been a major transport corridor before the Yugoslav wars, especially for transit between Western Europe, Greece and Turkey, infrastructure is rather well developed, but needs modernisation and reconstruction where damage has been done during the war.

Countries: Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Greece

Length: 2529 km of rail and 2300 km of road; Transport modes: multimodal: rail, road

Links with other corridors: Corridor IV, in Sofia; the two go in parallel till Istanbul

Branches: Four, to Graz, Budapest, Sofia and Florina

In certain areas, particularly those adjacent or linked to marine basins, it has been revealed that the corridor concept does not adequately meet needs. The more extensive approach of *pan-European transport areas (PETras)*, which reflects the complex structure of the transport requirements in these regions, was therefore defined.

The areas concerned are:

- *Barents Euro-Artic Area*: Multimodal transport area covering the northern provinces of Sweden, Finland and Norway as well as the Oblasts Murmansk and Arkhangelsk and the Republics of Karelia and Komi of the Russian Federation.

- *Black Sea Transport Area*: Littoral countries of the Black Sea (Turkey, Georgia, Russia, the Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria) as well as Greece and Moldova (observer status for Armenia and Azerbaijan)

- *Adriatic-Ionian Sea Transport Area*: Littoral countries of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Greece, Italy Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro)

- *Mediterranean Transport Area (MEDA countries)*: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey.

Evolution towards Transnational Axes

These corridors and areas are distinct from the Trans-European transport networks (TEN-T), which include all major established routes in the European Union. In order establish a single,

multimodal network that integrates land, sea and air transport networks throughout the Community, the European policymakers decided to establish the Trans-European transport network, allowing goods and people to circulate quickly and easily among Member States and assuring international connections.

However, the Union's enlargement had significantly altered the situation by accelerating traffic flows and increasing the need for better cross-border network coordination. These fundamental changes make it necessary to combine together the Trans-European Networks of the 15 EU countries with the Pan-European corridors and set up a unitary pan-European transport network of the 27 EU countries coordinated on at European level and based on the establishment of well chartered European axes that rise above purely national interests.

In a report published in June 2003, the High Level Group on Trans-European Networks (van Miert Group) gave a useful insight into the criteria which could be used to define these European axes: land and maritime links expected to have great significance in terms of inter-country trade, links which address the accessibility needs of peripheral regions, and links with proportionally high volumes of long distance traffic.

In addition to the presented criteria, ERF believed European axes must be evaluated according to their capacity to offer *anchorage with neighbouring countries*, particularly in the Balkan Region and Mediterranean Basin which share clear socio-economic interests with the European Union.

These proposals have materialized into the 5 new Transnational Axes:

- *Motorways of the Seas*: to link the Baltic, Barents, Atlantic (including Outermost Regions of Canary Islands, Azores and Madeira), Mediterranean, Black and the Caspian Sea areas as well as the littoral countries within the sea areas and with an extension through the Suez Canal towards the Red Sea;

- *Northern axis*: to connect the northern EU with Norway to the north and with Belarus and Russia to the east. A connection to the Barents region linking Norway through Sweden and Finland with Russia is also foreseen;

- *Central axis*: to link the centre of the EU to Ukraine and the Black Sea and through an inland waterway connection to the Caspian Sea. A direct connection from Ukraine to the Trans-Siberian railway and a link from the Don/Volga inland waterway to the Baltic Sea are also included;

- *South Eastern axis*: to link the EU with the Balkans and Turkey and further with the Southern Caucasus and the Caspian Sea as well as with the Middle East up to Egypt and the Red Sea;

- *South Western axis*: to connect the south-western EU with Switzerland and Morocco, including the trans-Maghrebin link connecting Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia and its extension to Egypt.

Whilst most of the Pan-European Corridors I, IV, V, VI and VII are now in the territory of the EU and thus part of a priority project of the trans-European transport networks, the remaining Corridors are covered by the proposed five axes as follows:

- The four Pan-European Areas (Barents, Black, Ionian and Mediterranean Seas) are incorporated into the Motorways of the Seas as far as maritime connections are concerned.

- Northern axis incorporates the PEC II and the northern part of PEC IX. It also includes a land connection to the Pan-European Area of Barents linking Norway through Sweden and Finland with Russia.

- Central axis includes the PEC III and a branch of PECs V and IX.

- South Eastern axis merges and extends the PECs IV and X, incorporates PECs VII and VIII as well as a branch of PEC V. The axis is further extended to the Middle East and it joins with TRACECA in Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

- South Western axis includes a land connection in the Pan-European Area of the Mediterranean.

Therefore, the Pan-European Corridors and Areas were designed to prepare on a step by step basis, the newest and future European Union member states transportation infrastructure to correspond to the organization, quality and development level of western EU member states

transportation infrastructure and policies in order to achieve a common standard within the European Union countries and neighbouring countries across continent.

Conclusions

Construction of the corridors will have positive impacts on CEE's economies in transition. But without vigilance from the countries of the region, this development can occur in a way that is harmful to the environment and, according to one study, harmful to the economies of certain areas. For example, in order to intensify navigation on the Danube, the EU is seeking to remove 'bottlenecks' on the river and ensure a minimum depth of 2.5m at all times of the year. Deepening of the river, regulation of water flows, cutting off side-arms and reinforcement of riverbanks would have a permanent negative impact on the rich biodiversity along the Danube. The 'bottlenecks' destined for elimination are the river's last free-flowing sections and most precious stretches. This project on the joint Romanian-Bulgarian section *would seriously affect valuable ecosystems on islands and natural river banks*, designated as protected areas under the Natura 2000 network in both countries.

While the Sixth Environmental Action Programme of the European Commission warns of possible negative impacts from the corridors, other officials may see protection of the environment as an issue of secondary importance. A press release from a May 29-30 meeting of the European Conference of the Ministers of Transport (ECMT) lists the need to protect the environment as being related to one of the "hurdles" that must be overcome in the implementation of transport policies in CEE. This attitude seems to be mirrored by many national transport officials, who are eager for new road construction.

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