

THE CURRENT STATUS OF INTERMODAL NODES AND THEIR CAPACITY IN ORDER TO DEVELOP THE TEN-T NETWORK ON THE ROMANIAN SIDE OF THE ROMANIAN-BULGARIAN CROSS-BORDER REGION

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Abstract

The paper aims to present the ways to create a common mechanism to improve the transport systems between Romania and Bulgaria. The aim of is to have a well-connected region between the two countries. The paper will present the key areas, highlighted by simply analysing the flux of the transport, for construction and modernization the routes between Romania and Bulgaria

Key words: transnational, Romania, Bulgaria, European funds, transport.

INTRODUCTION

More than a third of EU citizens live and work in border regions of Europe. Borders have a direct and indirect impact on their lives.

European territorial cooperation has an important role in removing obstacles and stimulating cross-border cooperation.

Border Cooperation Programme between Romania and Bulgaria for the period 2014-2020 includes seven counties in eight districts in Bulgaria and Romania which are composed largely of municipalities (The Interreg V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme, Application form, 2016).

The structure of the cross-border area Romania-Bulgaria is characterized by 7 counties with strategic character both in the cross-border area and in comparison with the Pan-European corridors.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The eligible area of the programme is located in the north of Bulgaria and in the south of Romania along the border which extends between Serbia and the Black Sea. It consists of seven Romanian counties and eight Bulgarian districts, localised exactly near the national border.

There are three types of infrastructure to cross the border: waterway, road and air.

A major barrier against the cross-border cooperation is the lack of border crossing points (road crossing points). Along the 470 km of Danube River there are two bridges, both by road and by rail and several border crossing points by ferry:

- Vidin - Calafat (road bridge and rail bridge);
- Lom - Rast (ferryboat);
- Oriahovo - Bechet (ferryboat);
- Nicopole/Somovit - Turnu Magurele (ferryboat);



Figure.1. Area of the Border Cooperation Programme between Romania and Bulgaria

- Svishtov - Zimnicea (ferryboat);
- Ruse - Giurgiu (road and rail bridge);
- Tutrakan - Oltenita (ferryboat);
- Silistra - Calarasi (ferryboat).

Land border crossing points are near the Black Sea coast:

- Kardam - Negru Voda;
- Durankulak - Vama Veche, as well as in the south of the Danube, between Silistra and Ostrov.

In the border area two international civil airports are localized:

- Constanta – Mihail Kogalniceanu International Airport, managed and financed from the Romanian budget through the Ministry of Transportation;
- Craiova, International airport, of which management was assigned to Dolj County Council. Currently, there are regulated flights on this airport to many destinations in Europe.

The number related to the movement of passengers and the frequency at the border crossing points show modest levels, as well as less than 61% of the total of passengers crossing the border are or Romanian and Bulgarian origin. (Romanian Ministry of Transport, Statistical data, 2014-2018).

The exceptions are found at Ruse-Giurgiu Bridge and Calafat–Vidin Bridge over the Danube, which are the most used border crossing points, with Romanian, Bulgarian and international traffic.

Despite naming it major artery of European transport, the Danube River has a reduced importance in the economy of transports in the region than would be expected, being used only 10-15% in terms of its transport capacity.

The Rhine/Meuse-Main-Danube interior fluvial transport axis (Priority Axis TEN-T) is a major route of transport of goods which connects Rotterdam Port from the North Sea with the Black Sea (especially Constanta and the Bulgarian ports), as well as the fluvial ports located on the two great waterways.

The total length of the roads in the cooperation area is of 16.511 km including county and communal roads. (Directorate for Driving and Vehicle Registration, Statistics Data, 2014-2018). The total density of public roads is of 22.95 km/100 km², which is so small, compared to the average of EU25 of 110

km/100 km². The density of roads along the Danube is much inferior to the national levels. Many roads have an insufficient capacity, which lead to the congestion and, consequently, to travel times, costs for the functioning of the vehicles, accidents and increased prejudices of the environment.

The density of operational railway lines is of about 46.1 km² to 1000 km² in Romania and 38.9 km² to 1000 km² in Bulgaria, being under the average of the EU countries (65 km²/1000 km²).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

„Central Network Corridors” were introduced to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the central network. These reunite public and private resources and focus the EU support from CEF especially to:

- removing bottlenecks;
- build missing cross-border connections;
- promote modal integration and interoperability.

They also aim at:

- integrating (as on going modal measure, these corridors shall be integrated into the multi-modal TEN-T) rail freight corridors;
- promoting clean fuel and other innovative transport solutions;
- advancing telematics applications for efficient infrastructure use;
- integrating urban areas into the TEN-T;
- enhancing safety.

Nine core network corridors are identified in the annex to the CEF Regulation, which includes a list of projects pre-identified for possible EU funding during the period 2014 - 2020, based on their added value for TEN-T development and their maturity status.

In terms of the networks Central TEN-T and Extended TEN-T, this sub-criterion reflects that the transport policies both from Romania and EU have the role to improve the quality of the most important routes on the Romanian territory.

The main roads have been maintained and rebuilt lately (several National Road Rehabilitation Programs funded by various Banks) and offer adequate access to the main cities in the area. National rehabilitation

programs had a clear impact on the improvement of the road network in the Program area. (Centre for Road Engineering and Computer Science - The National Road Traffic Management Company).

An example is the extension to four lanes of sections of the national road from Bucharest to Giurgiu. Local road infrastructure has been significantly improved between 1999 and 2004. The approach has been focused on the rehabilitation of roads that increased fluency to border crossings, in a coordinated and complementary way across the two sides of the border.

While the vast majority of large settlements are easily accessible from the main roads, many of the small rural settlements are characterized by low accessibility. Also, private road passenger and freight transport services are available only in the main urban areas and not in areas with a pronounced rural character.

Existing roads and public transport services for both passengers and freight are insufficient to generate that "network" of connections necessary for a fully functional cross-border economic activity.

CONCLUSIONS

Despite of the investments made in the last years, bottlenecks – especially for roads and ferryboat – continue to affect the peripheral areas of the cross-border area in terms of access. Infrastructure of cross-border transport and the modalities of communication which need urgent improvements still represent a barrier in the development of economic and social networks and cross-border exchanges.

Both Bulgaria and Romania could benefit from the East-West waterway and in this sense both countries should develop common work orientations on the common part of the Danube and to prepare an adequate structure at national level in this sense.

The rehabilitation projects must be agreed and coordinated by both countries and implemented at the same time.

Once this axis is completed, the travel times between the localities in the cross-border region and the centre, respectively south-eastern Europe, will be much smaller, contributing to the development of tourism and

trade. (University of Craiova, The Ecological Initiative and Sustainable Development Group, Preliminary study on the current stage of intermodal nodes and their capacity to develop the TEN-T network in the Romanian side of the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria, Project INTERREG V-A Romania-Bulgaria Programme „Investigation of opportunities for reducing the TEN-T network use within the cross-border region Romania-Bulgaria through optimization of the freight and passenger transport and the development of a joint mechanism for support of the intermodal connections”, 2016 – 2018).

This strategy should articulate around a thematic approach and more targeted surveillance of each country. The basis of this strategy is the strength of existing coordination tools already in place, namely:

- thematic approach, the main instrument being the Europe 2020 program and its flagship initiatives, which require action both at EU level and at Member State level. The thematic approach reflects the EU dimension, clearly shows the interdependence of the economies of the Member States and allows a greater degree of selectivity in the choice of concrete initiatives supporting the strategy and contributes to the achievement of the main EU and national objectives;
- country reports would help meet the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy by helping Member States to define and implement crisis exit strategies, restore macroeconomic stability, identify bottlenecks at national level, return to economic growth, sustainability and regain the sustainability of public finances.

These reports will not only include fiscal policy but also key macroeconomic issues related to growth and competitiveness (macroeconomic imbalances) and will need to ensure an integrated approach to policy design and implementation, which is essential to supporting the choices they will need to make them Member States, given the constraints to which they are subject in terms of public finances. Particular attention will be paid to the

functioning of the euro area and the interdependence of the Member States.

As members of the European Union for Romania and Bulgaria, solving the problems of subcontracting tends to become a very important one in the context of the current economic crisis and the requirements set out in the Europe 2020 strategy. Thus, more than ever, policies adopted at tertiary level must Allow network optimization across the border region. For policies to be effective, a complex analysis of both key economic development indicators and analyses based on link points with other relevant indicators is needed in areas such as demography, budget execution or inclusion / Social exclusion.

Although Romania enjoys openness to all types of transport: road, river, sea and air, the lack of a transport policy development strategy in recent decades has seen more decline than development.

That is why our country to align itself with the TEN-T initiative must prioritize the development of railway, road, naval, air and intermodal infrastructure.

The Danube, the longest river in the European Union, has a huge potential for economic, cultural and ecological development. Crossing ten countries: Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Moldova and Ukraine, it provides a direct link between the North Sea and the Black Sea through the Rhine-Danube Corridor. At the same time, the area is also a recognized territory for its biodiversity. The development of the Danube region will help to improve interregional, cross-border and transnational cooperation and will create a genuine dialogue platform between states to facilitate the development of projects with national, regional or local impact.

By encouraging sustainable tourism and structuring an integrated vision on the river transport system, the Danube macro-region generates immediate opportunities for riparian local communities.

Local communities should be involved in the rehabilitation of ports, in order to update the tourist potential by increasing the tourist capacity that is insufficient at present (infrastructure, accommodation, services, etc.) and modernization of the transport infrastructure.

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