

THE TRANS-EUROPEAN CORRIDORS
PIECEMEAL EXTENSION OF THE EXISTING ONES, OR THE
DEVELOPMENT OF A PAN-EUROPEAN NETWORK? ¹

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INTRODUCTION

In the series of conferences entitled “Lectures on the Balkans” a very similar idea cropped up in several topics, though it was not particularly emphasized anywhere. Apparently our climatic and military, as well as social and territorial political situation is equally characterised by the desire of having a picture of Hungary that would increasingly approximate countries located further north and west of us, while we could see that we are increasingly sliding towards the south and east on the basis of the trends outlined (or at least we are being classified as belonging there on the Pan-European map). Such a classification may have factual bases, but the attitude that the earlier maps representing Western Europe have not been replaced in Brussels may also contribute to it, and the newly acceding countries are only ‘fixed’ to its edge.

One may experience a similar patchwork at the planning of the transport corridors, and the present paper would essentially discuss this issue.

¹ The paper has been published in Hungarian: Fleischer Tamás (2007) Transzeurópai folyosók: A meglévők hosszabbítgatása, vagy egy összeurópai hálózat kialakítása? pp. 365-379. In: In: Glatz Ferenc (ed.) A Balkán és Magyarország: Váltás a külpolitikai gondolkodásban?. (Magyarország az ezredfordulón. Stratégiai kutatások a Magyar Tudományos Akadémián) Budapest: MTA Társadalomkutató Központ – Európa Intézet

Projecting the two most important lessons concerning the Balkans region one may state that:

1. It is the effect of networks determined elsewhere in an inter-regional context that is becoming dominant on this territory, as contrasted to planning based on the assertion of intra-regional contexts, and
2. Due to making the considerations of the possibility of financing individual projects exclusive it is only the formerly evolved structures and elements of the network that can be strengthened by corrections, and the chance of creating new structures vanes.

The structure of this paper is the following. After having defined the region we are talking about there would be a brief summary of how this area fits into the European territorial policy. Next the build of the European transport networks, structuring the region is presented. Three, four and five-letter acronyms such as TEN, PEN, PETRA, TINA, TIRS, REBIS would indicate that networks are involved here (but we are not going to speak about the AGR, AGC, AGTC, TEM and TER networks also existing in the region). It is a prominent issue of the discussion whether these networks and their methods of design so far applied are suitable to create a uniform European transport network or not.

THE BALKANS AND ITS ENVIRONMENT

It has become an almost compulsory starting point, as every presentation has done, to indicate where the borders of the Balkans can be located from the angle of the given topic. Strictly speaking the entire region constitutes a single peninsula south of the line drawn between Trieste and the estuary of the Dnieper. A narrower delimitation by natural geography indicates only the region south of the basins of the Rivers Sava and Danube as the Balkans; whereas a political classification often considers even the Romanian territories as belonging here. As far as our topic, the transport corridors and the European contacts are concerned, it is fully justified to study as broad an area as possible.

On *Figure 1* taken from tourist use it is also worth pointing out that the recently often heard slogan saying that “we are the gateway to the Balkans” is true with qualifications at the most: we are one of the gateways of the Balkans. Another important land gate of the region is Slovenia from the direction of Western Europe. And there are entrances also from Ukraine, Greece or Turkey, not speaking about the several possibilities of marine approach. Another lesson is offered from this fact: Hungary with its gateway role can primarily target the northern zone of the region. (Bakács et al.)

The point from where the dominant image of the Balkans was outlined significantly changed during the course of history: the Classical Greek perspective was different, and maps of the 18th century show something else, where only Hungary and Turkey could be named in the region.

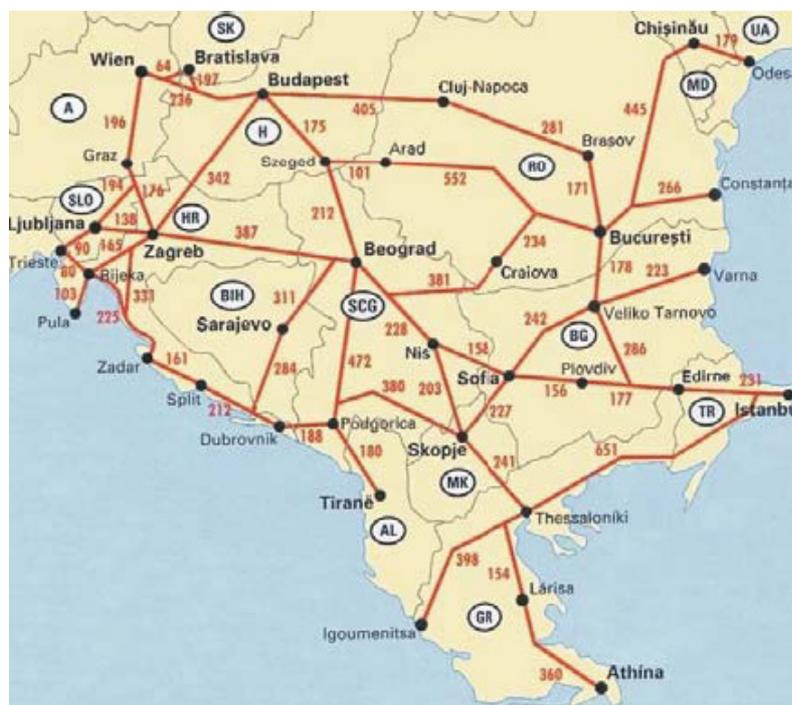


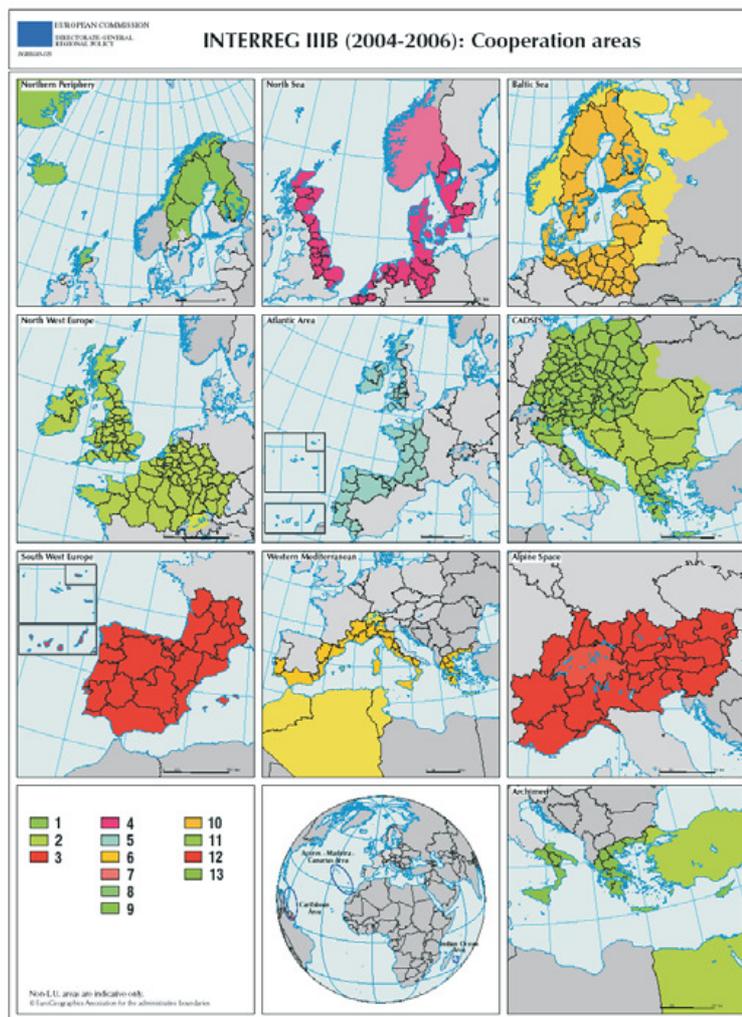
Figure 1. Gateways and Distances in the Balkans Region

Our contemporary image of the Balkans is also inevitably influenced by the perspective currently determining it. The European regional concepts name the south-eastern part of Europe as one of the “Interreg co-operating spaces”. As it is shown by *Figure 2*, the majority of the co-operating spaces are characterised by co-operation that has emerged along a characteristic inland sea or coastline, such as around the Baltic Sea, the North Sea, in the region of the English Channel, at the Atlantic coasts of Europe, or in the western basin of the Mediterranean (*Figure 2*). (Zonneveld et al. 2005) Though there is an example also for co-operation based on the land (such as the region of the Alps), yet it is conspicuous that already the name of the region under survey, the “Central European, Adriatic, Danubian and South-East European Co-operation Space” (CADSES) bears on itself the traces of the residue principle and of being swept together by an external perspective; namely that here a typically non-co-operating space as a unit was delimited out of comfort, due to considerations of economizing, or because of inattention. Therefore the question surely emerges whether it would not be logical here too, similarly to the West European examples, to delimit co-operation spaces separately for the Adriatic, another for the Aegean Sea (or one comprising the eastern basin of the Mediterranean), and an-

other one for the Black Sea? And then there still would remain a zone not covered by the ones listed here, which is linked by the Danube, countries the majority of which have no sea (Bavaria, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Serbia, Romania).

LEGEND

- 1 – Northern rims
- 2 – North-Western Europe
- 3 – South-Western Europe
- 4 – North Sea
- 5 – The Atlantic region
- 6 – Western Mediterranean
- 7 – Caribbean region
- 8 – The Azores, Madeira, Canary Islands region
- 9 – Indian Ocean region
- 10 – The Baltic Sea
- 11 – CADSES (= Central European, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern European Co-operation Space)
- 12 – The Alpine regions
- 13 – Archimed (the Aegean Sea region)



Source: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interreg3/images/pdf/int3b_uk_a4p.pdf.

Figure 2. INTERREG III. B (2004–2006) Regions of Cooperation

If the CADSES space and the Balkans within it are divided into several cooperating spaces, even then it is necessary to have networks of European scale to establish connections among those regions (Figure 3). Before turning to the level of continental transport it is worth referring to an analysis where the Balkans space is viewed from inside and the authors structure it by units.

In the analyses of Papadaskalopoulos and his associates (2005) the core of the space is made of a triangle constituted by Belgrade, Bucharest and Thessaloniki, with the fourth big city, Sofia located in its centre (*Figure 4*). The influence of the core extends to the areas (grey on the map) neighbouring that zone, while part of the countries involved is in a developmental shadow (dark zone). The highly optimistic approach presented assumes the turning of the poles of the space towards one another and the building of a common macro-structure. This is not seen to be justified in the short run, because the capital cities in the space regard the establishment of separate contacts towards the West as their priority. This is pointed out also by the protracted Romanian–Bulgarian disputes on the location of the Danube bridge (Erdósi 2006b.), or the corridors built parallel on both sides of the Serbian–Romanian border (Howkins 2005)



Source: http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interreg3/images/pdf/int3b_uk_a4p.pdf.

Figure 3. CADSES (Central European, Adriatic, Danubian and South-Eastern European) Co-operation Space



Source: Papadaskalopoulos, A.–Karaganis, A.–Christofakis, M.: The spatial impact of EU Pan-European Transport Axes: City Clusters formation in the balkan area Developmental Perspectives. Transport Policy, 2005. Vol. 12. No. 6..

Figure 4. The Balkan Space Structured from Inside

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN CORRIDORS

The guiding principle at the development of the railway networks from the 19th century onwards as well as of the main highway networks was the creation of the internal connecting system of each country as well as access to the sea ports ensuring a significant part of exports and imports as soon as possible. Any other form of the international connections in a big space was only accidental and emerged much later. As a result even in the western part of Europe the creation of a uniform system of

international corridors of continental (or more exactly of Union) scale was the task of the 1980s. (See the slogan of the first Union transport policy of 1992: “a common network for the common market”.)

Though at the time of the introduction of the 1975 numbering, replacing the European road numbering by radiuses with London as their centre and presented in *Figure 5*, nobody spoke about corridors, yet this system, indicating the east-west directions with numbers ending in '0', and the north-south directions with two-digit numbers ending in '5' can be regarded as the point from where thinking in terms of Pan-European corridors emerged a decade later.



Source: Development Programme of the National Public Road Network for the years 1991–2000. Budapest, KHVM, February 1991.

Figure 5. The Main Routes of International Traffic as Renumbered in 1975

The process crystallised into overlapping infrastructural corridors called at that time as Trans-European networks (TEN) by the time of the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. Within it the overlapping systems of energy (TEN-E), telecommunications (TEN-C) and transport (TEN-T) networks of Union scale can be distinguished. At that time the Union meant 12 countries, but they were already thinking in terms of an expected enlargement to include 16 countries in 1995 about the networks. (Ultimately it became the EU–15 because Norway withdrew.) There has been gradually less talk about the networks themselves, and the selected 14 projects came primarily

into the foreground of attention from 1996 onward. With some leap forward it should be noted that the number of selected projects was increased to thirty on 29 April 2004 (one day before the admission of ten newly acceding countries).

Meanwhile the system of Trans-European corridors has been significantly criticised – “it is a process governed by regional interests, the solutions are expensive” (Turro, M.) –, but these voices were suppressed by the noise of lobbying: partly to be admitted among the projects on Union level, and even more to use belonging to a corridor as an argument on national level for the priority of building the different segments of the track, to obtain priority for them within a country, and to the acquisition of Cohesion, or at least national support.

THE EXPANSION OF THE TEN: THE SYSTEM OF THE PAN-EUROPEAN CORRIDORS

By the time the ideas formulated in the 1980s became Union documents in the 1990s, the map of Europe changed. In 1989 the Berlin Wall collapsed, the Iron Curtain disappeared, and it became obvious that one should think in terms of an Europe larger than ever before. The acceptance and approval of the TEN-concepts had been progressing on its Union track, but parallel to it a process of negotiations called Pan-European transport conference was launched in 1991, during the course of which (1991: Prague, 1994: Crete, 1997: Helsinki) delegates of the respective specialist ministries accepted the plans of the so-called “Helsinki corridors”, or “Pan-European corridors” in three steps, in other words, the eastern extension of the TEN.

What does that eastern extension of the TEN mean?

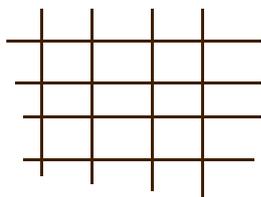


Figure 6. Let’s have the scheme indicate the TEN network of the EU-15

The eastern extension of the TEN would be the network presented in *Figure 7*, for this would be the assertion of all the principles on the basis of which the TEN-network had been created but now in a larger space.

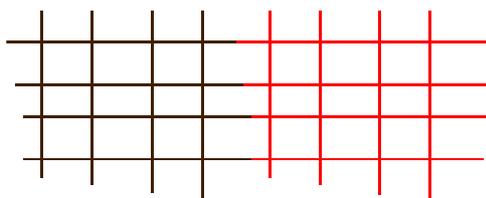


Figure 7. The TEN network of the EU-15

This, however, did not happen during the process. No doubt the improvement of East-West relations seemed to be the most urgent in the West as well as in the East in the euphoria of the 1990s. This effort overshadowed even thinking in perspective.

Instead of the eastern expansion of the TEN-network priority was accorded to the extension of the east-west corridors of the TEN, and with some exaggeration exclusivity (*Figure 8*).

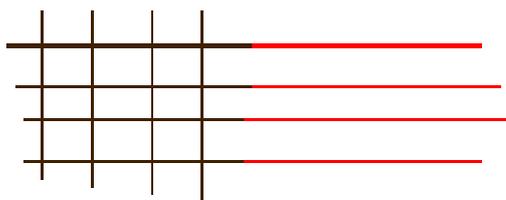


Figure 8. Extension of the East-West Corridors

More exactly the extension of the east-west corridors did not remain so pure as shown by Figure 8, because of the eastern enlargement of Europe, and also because people wanted to go north from Italy within the Union, and to the south from Germany, but it began to resemble rather *Figure 9*, which may already be called a network.

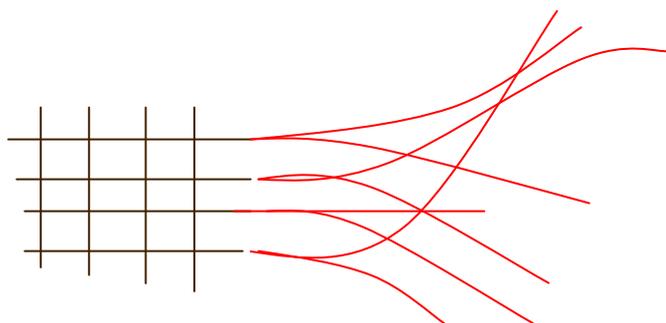
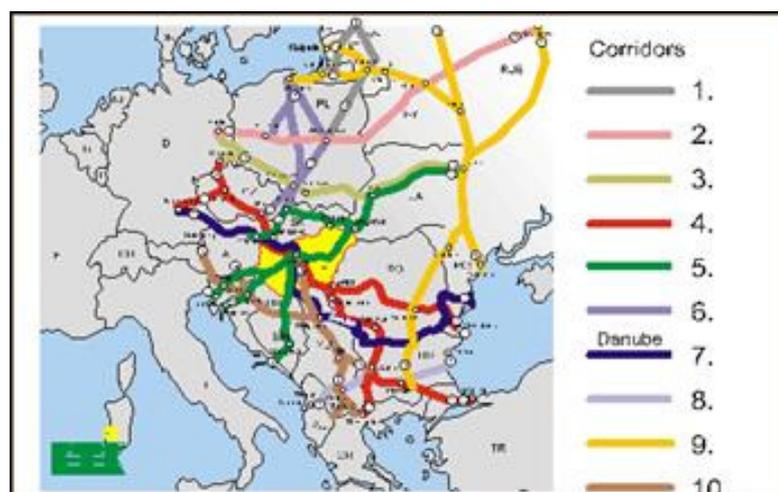


Figure 9.

“Network” out of the Extension of the East-West Corridors

In the actual Pan-European network there are no north-south corridors with the exception of corridor 9 (linking Finland and Greece), there are only ones going east from the Union, then turning to the north or to the south (*Figure 10*). Though from the pieces of the latter ones the north-south connection can be established, visibly it is more accidental than planned. At any rate, whatever has emerged is far away from the basic idea which intended to develop a grill network.²

² It is worth noting that the Union documents have not gone beyond the unilateral effort described here to the most recent times, which is reflected by a description in a White Paper published in 2004. White Paper on Services of General Interest. COM(2004) 374 final. Commission for the



Source KTI – GKM <http://www.gkm.gov.hu/data/8568/Image11.gif>

Figure 10. The Pan-European (PEN; or Helsinki) Corridors

It should be noted because it affects the Balkan space, that four Pan-European transport spaces were also delineated besides the ten corridors in Helsinki under the name PETRA (Pan-European Transport Areas). They are basins of marine navigation. The Black Sea is one of the PETRA areas (BS-PETRA). Its main development priority is the strengthening of the port of Constanța. The region under survey is also involved in another PETRA area, the Adriatic–Ionian one. *This approach strengthens the formerly indicated idea from the side of transport that logically the cooperating areas in regional development could be precisely these basins of marine navigation..*

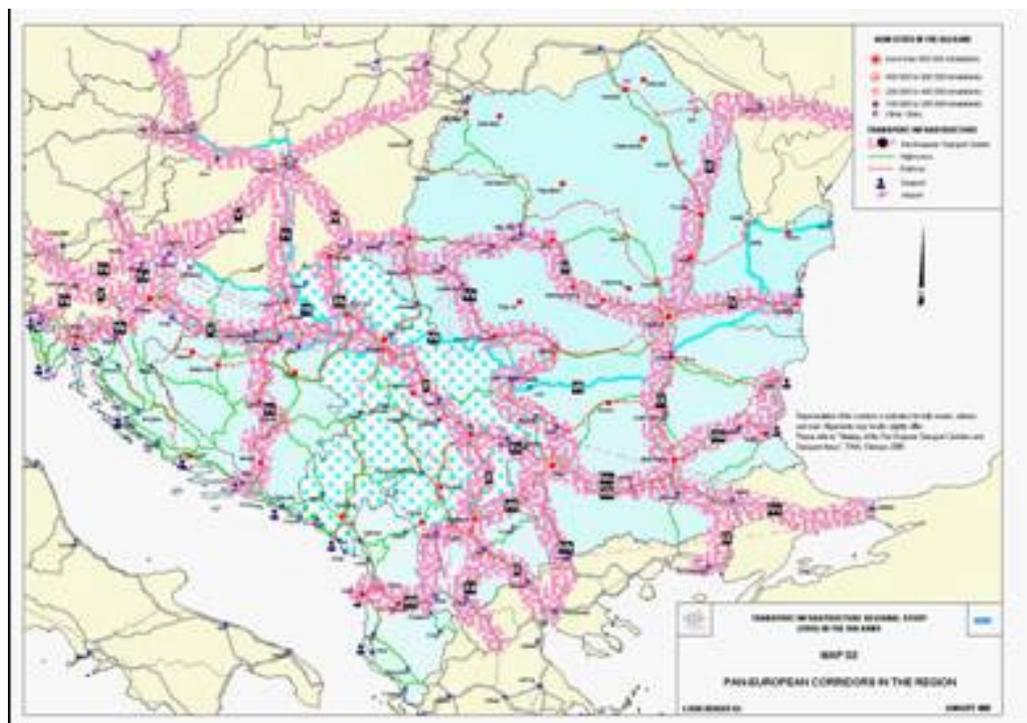
THE EXTENSION OF THE PAN-EUROPEAN CORRIDORS: THE TINA NETWORK

The development of the Pan-European network to be linked to the east-west elements of the TINA resulted in the realisation after the first happiness waned that the Pan-European corridors are by far not able to cover those demands for inter-regional and supra-national transport connections that emerge in the area brought in by enlargement. For instance, not a single Pan-European corridor crosses the east-west borderline between Slovakia and Hungary which is more than six hundred km long east of Bratislava. The so-called TINA process (*Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment*) was launched from 1995 on, still at the time of a series of the Pan-

European Communities, Brussels, 12. 5. 2004. 3. 3. White Paper on Services of General Interest. COM(2004) 374 final. Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 12. 5. 2004. 3. 3. „...the Commission’s policy in the area of Trans-European Networks is improving access to transport, energy and communications networks in the more remote area and will assist in *linking the new Members States with the infrastructure of the Fifteen...*” (Italics mine: T. F.)

THE EXTENSION OF THE TINA NETWORK: THE TIRS

The systems of TEN, as it was seen, and PEN (Pan-European corridors) extending it to the east and TINA supplementing the latter one with density were fixed by 1999. As a next step TIRS (*Transport Infrastructure Study in Balkans*), the process of studying the Balkans infrastructural network began. The study extending initially over seven countries (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia-Montenegro, Macedonia, Romania, and subsequently eight states after the separation of Serbia and Montenegro) was completed by 2002. The documentation states that as far as *Bulgaria and Romania are concerned the basic network is identical with the corridors earlier defined by the TINA process*, and for the other countries the European Investment Bank had made a survey (*Western Balkans Transport Infrastructure Inventory*). The survey named 223 potential projects and categorised them by the possibility of financing. From then onwards it is the order thus obtained which would decide by what chances a project would be taken up in the TIRS process.



Forrás: <http://www.cemt.org/topics/tirs/>

Figure 12. The Pan-European Networks in the TIRS Area

In addition several maps were attached to the TIRS documentation (such as the one on *Figure 12*), which partly records points of assessing the situation (like the exhaustion of the highway capacities), but it also confirms the networks of sub-branches planned for 2015. To this extent the projects are not without moorings but are linked to networks. The network linkages, however, are only indirectly asserted

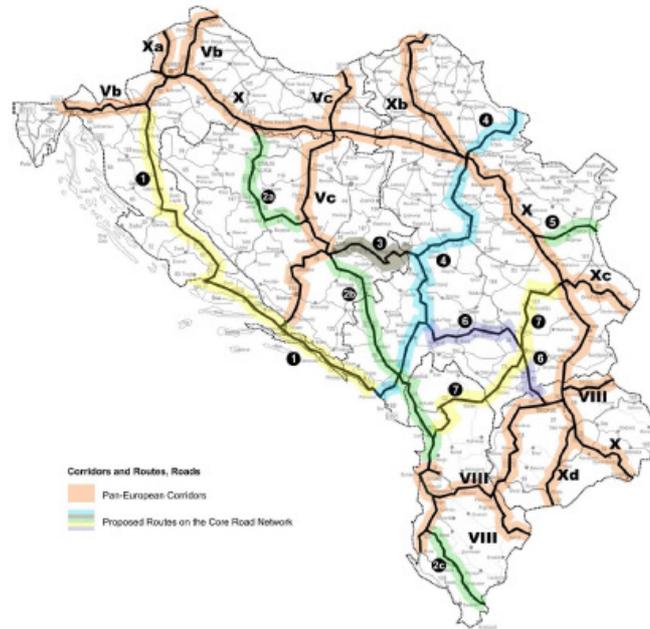
because of the dominance of the financing criteria. This set of considerations for choice is also reflected by the 90-page closing document. (*TIRS 2002*).

A RECONSIDERATION OF THE TIRS PROCESS – REBIS

REBIS (*Regional Balkans Infrastructure Study*) exceptionally does not want to expand but expressly wants to narrow further choices, and it would even make a revision in progress concerning the network of the countries concerned. These are the TIRS countries not covered by the TINA process (namely five countries in 2003: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia-Montenegro, Macedonia). Obviously the project list of the TIRS was made too ample, for the 223 projects (and later on 153) have made even the possibility of arranging them in order of precedence uncertain and unauthentic. The aim of the new process is to look for and select projects and put them into an order of precedence that can be financed on the territory of the countries mentioned above. Altogether twenty projects were selected by the survey (or rather by an assessment project started anew) for which detailed preliminary feasibility studies were also made. This time, however, it was preceded by a rather detailed and profound network survey (which continues to regard the formerly marked Pan-European corridors as fixed ones).

The final document (REBIS 2003) defines the so-called core transport infrastructural network of the space (which in depth approximately corresponds to the Pan-European+TINA networks of the former territories of enlargement), and allocates costs as well to its realisation up to 2015.

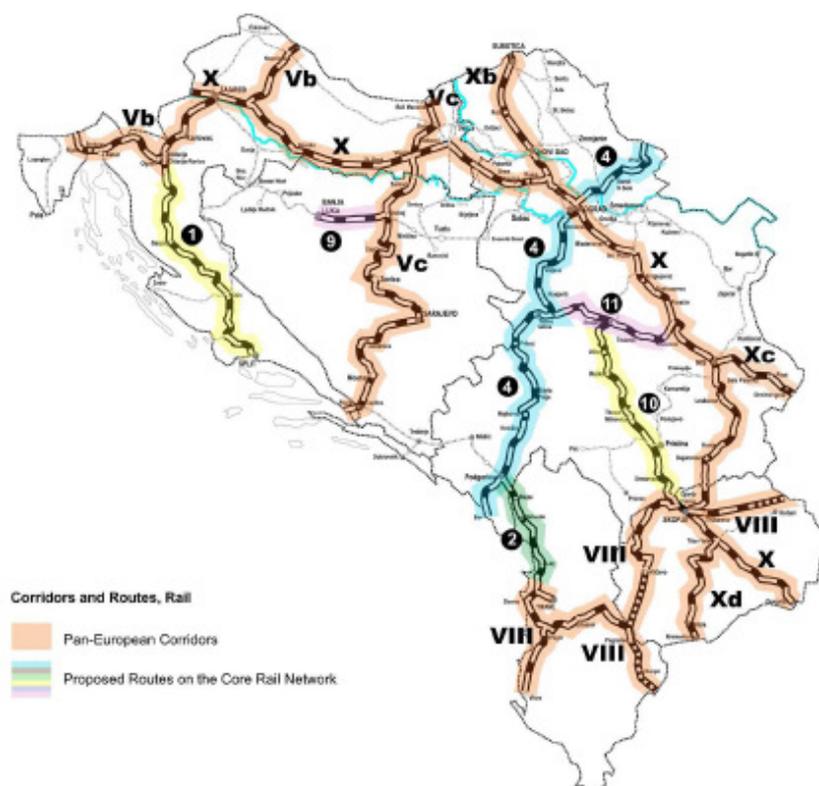
Regional Balkans Infrastructure Study - Transport
Final Report



Forrás REBIS http://www.seerecon.org/infrastructure/sectors/transport/documents/REBIS/Rebis_FR_Final.pdf

Figure 13. The Long-Term Core Highway Network Marked out in the REBIS Process

Figure 13 shows the REBIS space and the core highway network proposed to be built up to 2015. Its cost of building with an acceptable quality is estimated to be 4 thousand million Euros, where private capital involvement may be less expected. The building of an acceptable quality of a similar railway network would cost 12 thousand million Euros even if some of its characteristics are reduced (*Figure 14*). For the short term, up to 2009 the REBIS-study contains the implementation of a 3.8 thousand million Euro programme for the entire transport network.



Source REBIS http://www.seerecon.org/infrastructure/sectors/transport/documents/REBIS/Rebis_FR_Final.pdf

Figure 14. Long-term Core Railway Network Marked within the REBIS Process

CONCLUSIONS

The European Union evolved an overlapping Trans-European network on the basis of the transport network of its 12 (15) countries in the late 1980s, next, in 1992, it was fixed (TEN) in the transport policy and Basic Treaty of the Union. Since that time the entire network has been pushed into the background in the documentations, and there is mostly talk about the building of 14 projects (1996), and 30 (2004) projects after the expansion of the list.

The PEN (Pan-European Network) tried to cover the eastern part of Europe by extending the east-west corridors of the TEN (1994, 1997). The TINA process valid for the territory of the acceding countries of the first major eastern enlargement retained the PEN network, but it made possible the inclusion of secondary corridors and increasing the density of corridors (1995–1999).

The TIRS process involving the seven Balkan countries regarded the PEN and TINA corridors as starting points, and supplemented the latter ones towards five more countries (2002).

The REBIS has once again surveyed the latter five countries and though it did not revise the results of earlier processes, reconsidered each of the elements of the TIRS supplementary networks involving the five countries and made recommendations for the comprehensive transport networks of the REBIS space (2003).

The project-oriented approach dominates in the entire process, including the changes of the TEN-network of the Fifteen from the early 1990s on, and the network is almost exclusively influenced by the financing possibilities of the elemental projects.

The revision of the TEN network missed to consider the actual function and continental structure of an overlapping network in the context of the enlarged Europe. As a consequence advices extending over the spaces of enlargement do not help recognise the need for thinking in the framework of the functional role of the overlapping network. Instead the former structures are preserved (strengthened) that have developed within the national borders, or are further fragmented because of new borders, 11 and there is no way for the emergence of a structure of European scale even in places where the networks are being built now.

As a consequence, and because of the radial piecemeal mending of the TEN-structure initially formed, the developing network further strengthens the dominance of more developed spaces instead of an open grill network that would promote equalisation on European scale.

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