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EUROPEAN TRAFFIC CONNECTIONS AND CROATIA

ABSTRACT

The overall traffic connections within Europe are particularly important from the economic point of view of every European country. Therefore, the development of traffic and traffic infrastructure in the European Union are considered with special attention. The main aim of traffic development in the European Union is full possible freedom of movement both from the technical and organisational aspect, with continuous improvement in traffic safety and environmental protection.

Traffic development and connections are one of the essential development factors of every modern country. Every country tends to organise traffic system in the way that suits her best. The same holds for the European Union as well. The leading bodies in the European Union agree that the EU traffic system needs to be set upon such fundamentals that it can follow further development of the community. EU connects 15 member countries into a single community, and it also plans soon to expand onto new members.

The aims set by the Maastricht Agreement have been realised by announcing the traffic guidelines on infrastructure projects that should be realised. In the Commission's proposal to the Council and the Parliament in 1994, on the development of Trans-European traffic networks, a very efficient plan was presented of connecting national traffic networks into a single Trans-European network, to be realised until 2010.

Overall economic and political connections of the European Union and the countries in transition are becoming stronger every day. Several countries in transition are already preparing for joining the European Union. This brings to the fore the need for better traffic connections of EU and the countries in transition.

In some sections the adopted Crete corridors pass also through Croatia. Moreover, Croatia is located on the main European traffic routes from the North to the South, and from the East to the West.

KEY WORDS

traffic, European traffic connections, European traffic corridors, economy, Croatia

INTRODUCTION

Overall traffic connections within Europe are particularly important from the economic point of view of every European country. Therefore, the development of traffic and traffic infrastructure in the European Union are considered with great attention.[1] The development of the European free market, established by the integrated group of European countries gathered under the name of the European Union, has developed within the limits of integration adequate freedom of movement of people, capital, goods and services. For this purpose the necessary legislative regulations and infrastructure had to be insured so that the traffic of people, goods and capital could proceed without difficulties on the whole territory of the Union, by sea, land and air. Modern traffic development is characterised by its strength, and traffic services are continuously growing. New environmental trends impose, for example, founding of new enterprises outside residential areas, which in turn requires the construction of such traffic infrastructure that will be able to transport the employees from their place of living to their working places. More frequently small quantities of cargo are transported, the standard of living is increasing, more new vehicles are being purchased, and more journeys are undertaken for tourist reasons. Contacts among people are becoming more frequent, particularly business and private ones. There are more and more international contacts, and the interdependence of national economic systems is increasing.

The fact that traffic connections are particularly important for further development of the European Union is shown by the data that the traffic department employs about seven million employees, and regarding income these allow for 6% of EU GNP. The EU traffic department is developing two traffic policies: the traffic and Trans-European traffic networks. By integrating and combining them the efforts are made to fully meet the traffic requirements of the European Union and the modern European society.

1. THE EU TRAFFIC DEVELOPMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the traffic development in the European Union is full possible freedom of movement considered from the technical and organisational aspect, with constant improvement of traffic safety and environmental protection. These factors

are insured along with high financial investments, by drafting and harmonisation of the overall European traffic legislative system, harmonisation of the national legislation, investments in traffic research, overall technical and technological development of member countries and signing of various types of traffic agreements with non-member countries.

At times prior to the modern European integration processes, each country developed its traffic policy independently, and considering its own interests, co-operated with other neighbouring countries. The legal regulations protected exclusively the national market and developed the domestic traffic. International traffic was left to bilateral or multilateral contracts and agreements. Each country preferred in national traffic its own carriers, built commercial ships, gave incentives to air carriers, built railway infrastructure.

In a united Europe, such behaviour is far from efficient. On the one hand, such behaviour prevents the development of unity, especially further development of a common market, and this is too expensive and inefficient. Therefore, the tendency of a united Europe is directed towards freedom of movement and freedom of traffic in general. Besides overall stimulation of entrepreneurial freedom, interference from the government into economic life is accepted only in the field of public interests which includes: monitoring the costs of traffic infrastructure, traffic safety, free international navigation, social security of the employees, traffic network planning and environmental protection.

The extent to which traffic policy attracted attention by the high authorities of the European Community, is proved by the Roman Agreement in 1957 which considered traffic as part of common policy, and traffic is one of the topics at every conference. Regarding monitoring of traffic activities, a Board for Infrastructure was founded as early as 1978, and until the end of the 80s common traffic policy was developed with great intensity. The Maastricht Agreement, which established the common traffic market, came into force by the end of 1993. For example, the XII section of the Agreement regulated legally the formation of the Trans-European network for energy transmission, development of traffic and telecommunications. The interests in this text are focused on the issue of Trans-European traffic network development, particularly of the international traffic connections and corridors that connect Europe from the East to the West and from the North to the South.

2. TRAFFIC ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE

Strong economic development of the European Union is emphasising more frequently the issue of the capability of traffic infrastructure to accept all the traffic currently being developed or that is yet to be developed in the near future. Current traffic already exceeds the traffic capabilities of the central parts of the European Union and the problems in traffic are growing. Problems mainly occur in road traffic, and a little less in air traffic.

Proof for such claims can be found in relentless statistical data, that clearly show that, for example, in 15 member countries in 1993, 71% of cargo and 80% of passengers mainly in private cars used EU roads, compared to 1970 when 49% cargo and 75% passengers used the roads.

There is a growing number of vehicles using the roads, and they cause traffic congestion and difficulties in the transport of goods and passengers, polluting the environment along with other accompanying phenomena. The worst is yet to be expected since forecasts, namely, for the year 2010 indicate doubling of traffic which is bound to have negative impact on all the other economic parameters.

Therefore, it may be heard more often that the future development of traffic system should already be planned in the direction so as to insure the quality of living along with normal development of traffic and overall traffic infrastructure.

Normal flow of traffic and the quality of living standard can be insured only by allowing competition on the traffic market, by higher infrastructure investments, by using modern traffic technologies and through environmental protection.

Common traffic policy should enable better connections and co-operation within individual member countries, and especially the international traffic co-operation within the European Union, which means better co-operation of traffic companies, institutions and others engaged in traffic. At the same time, common traffic policy is expected to cause stronger competition among various types of transport and among carriers. Forecasts based on realistic opinions and assumptions focus traffic in the future on railway, combined transport and water transport. Roads should not be used for distant transport.

Combined transport would gain great importance, since it uses the comparative advantages of several types of transport. For example, railway would transport great amounts of cargo over long distances, and roads would be used for local traffic. Passengers would use aircraft for distant travelling and to arrive to the destination fast trains would be used. In this way combined transport flexibly uses water flows, roads, aircraft and railway, and causes less pollution to the environment.

Modern world considers the issues of environmental protection with great attention. This is particularly evident in traffic, where every increase in traffic

causes great damage to the environment. Being aware of this phenomenon, the European Union considers every decision on building an infrastructure facility from the aspect of its environmental impact. Therefore, the European Union has formed the Research Framework Programmes for research and development of traffic in its region. For example, the Fifth Framework Programme is active from 1998 to 2002.[2] In this way the established systems are used to avoid traffic congestion in big cities and on the main roads, having influence on better planning and traffic flows. Besides, various systems for combined traffic are being improved that allow easier exchange of traffic modes and faster arrival to destinations.

All this could not be realised without investments into traffic and traffic infrastructure. Thus, it has been estimated that an amount of about 34 billion Euros is planned for traffic investments by the year 2010. The amount of financing depends on the use of certain types of services, realising the users charging system.[3] Common standards have been agreed upon, under the title ISO 9000 that provide instructions for efficient relation to various fields of life and work. Objective compliance with the agreed technical standards enables member countries to improve the flow and management of various information, especially traffic, as well as traffic safety, thus contributing directly to the increase in productivity, competition and further employment.

3. NEED TO BUILD TRANS-EUROPEAN TRAFFIC NETWORK IN EUROPE

The traffic development and connections are one of the essential factors of progress of any modern country. Every country tends to organise its traffic system in a way which suits her best. The same idea is present in the European Union as well. The leading authorities of the European Union agree that the traffic system in EU should be set on such foundations as to be able to follow further development of the community. EU has gathered 15 member countries into one union, and it is planning to expand by new member countries soon. Each of these 15 countries had been building its own traffic system for centuries and these systems are often, considering negative relations through history, inadequately connected and organised. Therefore, the task of traffic and other authorities within the Union has to deal with interconnections of the already established networks, eliminating weak points, traffic bottlenecks, opening new, missing connections, and harmonisation with new technical standards for better connections. New integrated traffic networks are intensively constructed in the EU, connecting the integration into a new, well interconnected traffic system. The operative objective of the connections implies:

- to open the possibilities for the enterprises within the EU to use modern traffic networks in achieving best possible traffic services and thus realising better competitive prices,
- to enable passengers and tourists who use traffic services to select fast and particularly safe traffic routes,
- to minimise the bottlenecks as well as ecological pollution, redirecting the traffic overload to other traffic routes and other traffic means,
- to connect in the best possible way the central EU parts with the marginal regions, taking constant care of connecting Western, Central and Eastern Europe.

4. EUROPEAN TRAFFIC NETWORKS ACCORDING TO THE MAASTRICHT AGREEMENT

The objectives set by the Maastricht Agreement have been realised by publishing the traffic guidelines on infrastructure projects that should be implemented. In the Commission's proposal to the Council and the Parliament in 1994 on the development of Trans-European traffic networks, a very efficient plan was presented, of connecting national traffic networks into a single Trans-European network, to be realised until 2010.[4] A team of experts has presented the need to construct 70,000 km of railway lines, out of these at least 22,000 new and restored lines for high-speed trains, 15,000 km of new roads, out of which at least 50% in the marginal regions of the union, complete the construction of 58,000 km of network, which has been mainly already constructed, build corridors for combined transport, various terminals, establish a network of 267 airports, and a network that will connect the river and sea port systems.

The transition phase towards establishing the Trans-European traffic network has been entrusted to the Christophers' Commission. Until now, the Commission has made a list of necessary projects that are needed most for further construction of the required traffic infrastructure in the EU. The following effects would be achieved by the construction of the necessary infrastructure:

- connections would be established which are as yet missing, bottlenecks in traffic would be eliminated, and the construction of the main traffic routes would be completed,
- access to the central traffic networks would be made possible, especially from the EU marginal regions,

- further development and construction and use of management systems, especially of traffic network control.

At the meeting on the island of Corfu 34 priority infrastructure projects were adopted as well as five traffic management projects, with especially noted 10-15 projects whose implementation would directly influence the production rate, competitiveness and employment in the Union. In selecting the projects, special attention was paid to the size of the project, efficiency, possibility of attracting private investments, and the necessary time for realisation. Finally, at the meeting in Essen in 1994 the Council selected 14 projects that are of common interest for the EU.

1. High-speed train / combined traffic North-South (Berlin, Nürnberg, München, Verona).
2. High-speed train PBKAL (Paris, Brussels, Cologne, Amsterdam, London).
3. High-speed train South (Madrid, Barcelona, Perpignan, Montpellier and Madrid, Vitoria, Dax).
4. High-speed train East (Paris, France, Germany and branch Metz, Luxembourg)
5. Conventional railway connection / combined traffic: Betuwe link (Rotterdam, Dutch-German border).
6. High-speed train / combined transport, France, Italy (Lyon, Torino, Milan, Venice, Trieste).
7. Greek highways.
8. Lisbon – Valladolid highways.
9. Conventional railway connection: Cork, Dublin, Belfast, Larne, Stranraer.
10. Airport Malpensa Northern Italy.
11. Railway / road connection between Denmark and Sweden.
12. Nordic Triangle.
13. Road Ireland, Great Britain, Benelux.
14. Connecting the west coast of Great Britain by a high-speed train.[5]

The mere look at the selected projects shows the guidelines of the current policy towards the traffic in EU / 80% of overall investments in the traffic infrastructure refers to railway traffic, 9% to road and railway connections, whereas only 10% should be spent on the construction of roads.

5. NEEDS AND BENEFITS OF REALISING THE TRANS-EUROPEAN TRAFFIC NETWORK PROJECTS

The selected projects should be very efficient, and moreover, substantial financial means should be insured for their realisation. Therefore, their implementation should be insured and governments of the member countries should be stimulated to co-ordinate their joint activities in that direction as well as to harmonise the traffic priorities.

In this sense, the Commission presented in mid-1998 a report about the previous implementation of the adopted projects regarding development of the Trans-European traffic networks. In 1994 in Essen the priority projects were selected, divided according to realisation phases in three groups: projects in their final phase of completion, projects underway and those for which financial means had not been insured yet. It was concluded that projects No. 9, 10 and 11 were about to be completed, whereas projects Nos. 2,3,4,5,7 and 14 were underway and with the intention of being completed by the end of 2005. The rest of the projects were postponed so as to be realised after the year 2005 since the means for realisation have not been insured yet.

The realisation of the selected projects is the responsibility of the interested member countries, whereas EU professional authorities suggest the necessary measures, designs, try to help financially, and solve the problems administratively. They also need to participate in solving other problems, which usually accompany such projects.

Benefits achieved by the realisation of the approved traffic projects are multiple and can be divided into: economic, traffic safety, minor traffic congestion and cleaner environment, greater choice of transport modes and routes.

Economic benefits realised by the projects can be direct or indirect. It should be noted that indirect benefits are far greater and cannot be considered at this moment, nor can they be determined economically.

Organisation, construction and exploitation of the Trans-European traffic network have a direct influence on new workplaces and employment of people of various professional skills. And it is precisely the unemployment which represents one of the most severe European problems. Direct benefits are realised by production companies, since they are provided with a faster and simpler way to obtaining raw materials, energy and various other necessities, and the transport of their products is made easier. Construction companies, who participate in the construction of traffic capacities have special advantages, as well as companies and institutions that control the traffic, after the network is opened to commercial use.

Greater traffic safety is very important, since modern traffic involves many participants, many types of vehicles, and uses various traffic management systems. Safety of traffic and in traffic is particularly important, since, according to statistical data for 1994, about 47,000 traffic participants get killed annually on the roads of EU countries, and 1.7 million people get injured. The financial cost of accidents amounts to 50 billion Euros. The use of new technical means and

technologies in traffic, the number of fatalities should be significantly reduced. The projects are being developed that would provide motorists with timely information on weather and traffic conditions on the roads, and electronic devices would direct motorists to less busy routes. At the same time road assistance, technical and ambulance would arrive within a much shorter period of time.

Lower traffic congestion is especially important for motorists who participate in the Trans-European traffic and for the transport of perishable goods. Traffic congestion has great impact on air and environmental pollution. The economic damages due to pollution in the major traffic networks amount to about 2% of GNP in the EU member countries. The professional EU authorities emphasise that the mere construction of new traffic routes or individual roads cannot solve the traffic problems on a long-term basis. This issue can only be solved by using new traffic management technologies – telematic systems, then by redirecting the traffic to other transport modes and by introduction of the new "user pays" project system. The current traffic system has not succeeded in any greater reduction of traffic noise and gas pollution on the roads. Modern noise and vehicle pollution are excessive. Great role in this should be played by the motor vehicle industry that should manufacture cheaper, less noisy and environmentally friendly vehicles. According to the forecasts of those responsible in the Union, by the year 2010 the automobiles will release into the atmosphere about 50% less exhaust gases than in 1990.[6]

Wider selection of transport modes and routes is important regarding the amount of time spent travelling and the travelling speed. For example, measurements have proved that the travelling time from London to Paris or from London to Brussels by train takes half the time it takes by a passenger car, and it is more comfortable than travelling by air. With the aim of reducing the load on road network and air traffic, travelling by train is proposed for intercity connections.

6. METHODS OF FINANCING TRANS-EUROPEAN TRAFFIC NETWORKS

The Commission made an estimate that for the financing of the European Trans-European traffic network about 220 billion Euros should be insured by the end of 1999, and further 400 billion Euros by 2010. For the construction cost only of priority projects 91 billion Euros need to be provided, and out of this sum 34 billion Euros by the end of 1999 only.[7] According to the plan of raising the necessary financial means, these can be raised out of public i.e. government funds and private investments, and even combined funding sources, public-private, may be used.

Financial sources for the construction obtained from the European Union are divided according to their structure into four groups of funds: EU budget, structural funds, EIB funds and EIF funds.

The EU budget. The budget funds allocated by the EU for the construction of the Trans-European traffic network amount to 1.8 billion Euros for the period from 1995 to 1999. The funds can be used until the end of 1999 for completing the feasibility studies, as guarantee for loans and various subsidies. The investments by other interested investors of additional investments have been approved. Donations are approved only provided that they justify one of the social rules. For example, budget played a very important role in the construction of the Oresund Fast Link and in the construction of the Belgian high-speed railway line.

The Commission allocated further amount of 472 million Euros for 1998 to the Trans-European traffic routes. The highest amount up to now was allocated to the construction of railway routes: 61.82% and for traffic management projects: 15.67% and for roads: 12.52%.[8]

The structural funds form the financial means of the European Regional Development Fund – ERDF, intended for the least developed member countries. According to the decision they can use 15 billion Euros for the development of their traffic infrastructure by the end of 1999, of Cohesion fund which planned 8 billion Euros for Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland, and Inerrega fund. These funds were used to finance the railway connection Belfast – Dublin, motorway in Greece and the construction of the high-speed railway line towards the South of Europe.

The European Investment Bank – EIB, is a financial institution, which has its headquarters in Luxembourg. It invests the credit capital mainly in big infrastructure projects of the member countries. In this sense their participation in all the major facilities of the Trans-European traffic network is implied. It should be noted that almost half of the Essen 14 projects, were financed from EIB funds.

The European Investment Fund – EIF, was founded in 1994 with capital share of 2 billion Euros. Thirty percent of the fund is owned by private financial investors. The fund is meant for financing of major projects and has participated in the preparation of many projects.

Funds for the construction of the Trans-European traffic network are extremely high and all the mentioned institutions cannot cover the costs. Nor can single governments cover all the required costs from their national funds, since they would create large public deficit, which would put further operation of the monetary union to a severe test. The Commission

has presented that out of the needed 220 billion Euros, necessary by the end of 1999, the member countries will raise only about 90 billion Euros. Therefore, the Commission prolonged the construction of capital Trans-European traffic facilities until the year 2010, with the aim of trying to raise funds from private investors.

However, private investors do not easily consent to this kind of investments. Their conditions for investing their capital are rather high. They are primarily interested in investment profit and they find all the other characteristics of presented projects less important. On the other hand, the valid criteria of the European Union primarily focus on the economic benefit for the member countries whose territory is crossed by the Trans-European traffic network. The motto of the leading EU employees is well known, "the project has to be socially useful and in the interest of the citizens", whereas profitability is of secondary importance and the project does not necessarily have to bring financial profit. Regarding their structure the Trans-European projects are such that the capital return rates are rather low, 3-8%, duration of construction rather long, 6-7 and more years, direct earnings and other revenues are difficult to determine, and the future level of traffic utilisation rather questionable.

Therefore, in order to attract private investors, the leading EU authorities are trying to insure minimal deadlines for the return of the invested capital, faster construction and satisfactory profits for the invested capital. The member countries are stimulated to raise as early as possible the private capital for the Trans-European projects, and it would be best to begin already during the planning phase of the project. The safety of capital investments need to be realised through reliable forecasts of further traffic development and by insuring the planning of a minimal level of traffic flows.

The leading authorities emphasise risk, as a tie that should attract private investors. The partnership between the private and government capital would provide a way in which private capital would control the public sector, i.e. state capital, to a greater extent. In this way the private capital would also take on the financial risk, the design and construction of the network as well as the risk of the traffic level. At the same time, public sector would take on the political risk, harmonisation and modification of legal regulations and planning of the traffic network.

The new transport charging system according to the "user pays" project should provide the investors with the possibility of increasing the income from the constructed infrastructure, thus providing them with additional motivation for further investments. The representatives of the authorised EU bodies estimate that the implementation of the project and its regulations could result in savings in traffic system of about 30-80 billion Euros per year of usage.

Financing of traffic projects in the transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe has become a need after the breakdown of the real-socialist political system and the desire of the newly liberated countries to catch up economically and politically with the West. The underdeveloped and poorly constructed, and even more poorly maintained traffic infrastructure in the transition countries makes fast economic development of these countries impossible. Therefore, they have to invest much more in the traffic infrastructure than the developed countries of the West.

Financing of traffic infrastructure projects in the transition countries should be insured from the state budget, by incurring debts on the domestic market, taxes charged from the users, other public funds, and private investments. Large funds for these purposes are allocated from the development projects PHARE and TACIS, international financial institutions, the World Bank, the European Bank for Research and Development – EBRD, the European Investment Bank and various other foreign private investors and donators.

The transition countries themselves are trying to attract foreign private capital in various ways. However, the interest of private capital depends primarily on the condition of economic safety in a certain transition country, and on the legal safety of capital investments. Transition countries are interested in investments, first of all in road and railway traffic system. Railway traffic system in transition countries is much more developed than road traffic, whereas railway network is much denser than in EU, and the only thing it needs is modernisation and regular maintenance. Further co-operation with private capital should be oriented to providing railway services, and accompanying facilities, such as construction of hotels, petrol stations and various shops along the traffic corridors, as well as port terminals. Private capital can be attracted also by separating the ownership of rail system and providing certain services along the traffic route. At the same time, new financing methods should be considered, as for example leasing of railway equipment and cars.

7. POSSIBLE EXPANSION OF THE TRANS-EUROPEAN TRAFFIC CORRIDORS TO CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Overall economic and political connections of the European Union and the transition countries are getting stronger every day. Several transition countries are already preparing to join the European Union.

Therefore, the need for better traffic connections of the EU and the transition countries is being emphasised. All the transition countries have expressed the need to join the European Union and other European integrations, and they are also signatories of various agreements regarding co-operation with the European Union. EU is also, in the majority of cases, the main trading partner of the transition countries. Therefore, the expansion of the traffic network towards transition countries would cause tremendous economic growth and would increase employment rates in the transition countries, directly contributing to faster joining of the EU.

All the organisation preparations and discussions about the Trans-European traffic network are carried out within the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE), then, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and the European Conference of Civil Aviation. The Second Pan-European Conference of Ministers of Transport started the discussion about the development of priority corridors of the Trans-European traffic network in Central and Eastern Europe, i.e. in the transition countries. The meeting was attended by the Ministers of Transport of the member countries and the representatives from the transition countries, representatives from international financial institutions, leading European and international private banks and transport companies. The conclusions from the Conference may be summarised in several statements:

- traffic policy must be related to market-economic system and free competition on the equally free and open national market,
- to make it possible for all the interested countries to have multimodal access, which allows solving of many traffic congestion problems, creates traffic safety and protects the environment,
- traffic regulations should be harmonised and traffic safety standards upgraded, and social, power supply and ecological standards should be raised to the highest possible level.

These statements match to a great extent the adopted European traffic standards, which is far from surprising since the developed European traffic networks need to be connected with the poorer traffic system of the transition countries and therefore everything related to interconnections needs to be co-ordinated.

8. TRAFFIC CORRIDORS AGREED UPON AT THE CRETE CONFERENCE

The Crete Conference considered the problems of the Trans-European traffic networks, with special attention to traffic corridors. Nine most important infrastructure projects were agreed upon at the Conference, whose construction should solve the most important European traffic bottlenecks. The collective name for the agreed traffic routes is the "Crete Corridors". The criteria for selecting the projects had to meet two important conditions. The first condition was to meet the requirements of traffic connections between the European Union and the third countries, and the second one had to provide the possibility of connecting the traffic networks of the third countries with the European Union.

Traffic corridors have to simplify greatly the travelling on the international traffic routes, which represent about 10% of the overall international traffic in Europe. The construction of corridors should harmonise European traffic networks and establish traffic balance between various transport modes. The selection of the projects should justify the economic criteria and financial profitability. The investments should bring invested capital return rates of about 10%, which would be justified financial investment on a worldwide basis. The following projects of railway and road routes were selected at the Conference:

- Tallinn, Riga, Warsaw,
- Berlin, Warsaw, Minsk, Moscow
- Berlin/Dresden, Wroclaw, Lvov, Kiev
- Berlin/Nürnberg, Prague, Budapest, Constanta/Solun/Istanbul
- Venice, Trieste, Ljubljana, Budapest, Bratislava, Uzgorod, Lvov, Kiev
- Gdansk, Warsaw, Zyllina
- Danube – river route
- Drac, Tirana, Skopje, Sophia, Varna
- Helsinki, Kiev/Moscow, Odessa/Kisnev/Bucharest/Plovdiv

Since several transition countries of the former Eastern Europe are in the phase of preparing to join the European Union, the Commission gave the initiative for founding of a Committee that monitors the development of the selected countries in acquiring the necessary requirements. The TINA Committee (Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment) evaluates the level of construction and the quality of the existing traffic infrastructure in the candidate countries. The Committee is also monitoring and co-ordinating the development and financing of the overall traffic network in all the eleven transition candidate countries, and assists them in their integration into the traffic system of the European Union, with the aim of faster integration into the EU economic system. For example, 26 representatives from transition countries and the European Union participated at one such meeting in Vienna. At this Conference, the traffic corridors were defined in the Eastern part of Europe with a total of 18,030 km of roads, 20,290 km of railway

lines, 38 airports, 13 maritime and 49 river ports. All this traffic structure should be constructed by the end of 2015, whereas about 90 billion Euros or about 1.5% of the GNP of individual member countries will have to be insured for this venture.[9]

9. CROATIA IN EUROPEAN TRAFFIC ROUTES

Some sections of the adopted Crete Corridors pass also through Croatia. Croatia is located at the main European traffic corridors from the North to the South, and from the East to the West. Besides, Croatia is a Central European, Mediterranean and Danube country, so that all the European air, water, road and railway traffic routes have to come into contact with Croatia in some way.[10] The current Croatian traffic potential consists of the traffic geographical position and the up to now built traffic infrastructure. Due to the known political and historical reasons, the traffic infrastructure in Croatia is not at the adequate level and a lot of efforts need to be invested, as well as financial means to at least catch up a little with its western neighbours. Therefore, today, in the whole of Croatia the most important traffic infrastructure is being built, with the aim of faster access to the European integrations. Croatia is also a transit country and the primary consideration of the government is to modernise the existing traffic infrastructure, but also to construct the new, modern one. The existing projects for the construction of infrastructure traffic facilities are included in the priority list for joining the European integrations. Out of the nine selected Crete traffic corridors, two pass directly through Croatia. The first corridor forms the road and railway traffic route under the project title Venice, Trieste, Ljubljana, Budapest, Bratislava, Uzgorod, Lvov and Kiev. This is the corridor number 5, and the other one is project number 7, and it forms the Danube waterway, passing with one its section along the Croatian part of the Danube.

The traffic route Rijeka, Zagreb, Budapest, connecting route from Croatia to corridor V, was adopted in 1997. In this way Croatia has been isolated from the major European traffic routes, although it is located in a traffic-interesting region, and this is the result of inadequate authoritarian regime of the then political leaders. Therefore, the Croatian traffic problems were not considered at the Crete Conference, causing great damage to Croatia.

The needs of the Croatian traffic policy were presented at the CEMT Conference. CEMT is an interstate organisation, founded by OECD in 1953. Croatia joined its membership in 1992. The meetings of the Ministries from the CEMT member countries take place once a year and discuss all the traffic problems that occur within the organisation.

This situation was somewhat changed at the Third Pan-European Conference of the Ministers of Transport in Helsinki in 1997, where the traffic corridors were modified and new routes adopted, and the new 10th corridor was to be adopted. The following new traffic routes were adopted at that Conference:

- the fifth Crete Corridor was expanded by a new one, of great importance for Croatia, Rijeka, Zagreb, Budapest,
- the newly introduced 10th corridor should connect Salzburg, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Belgrade, Niš, Skopje, Veles, Solun, and the new branch from Graz, Maribor, Zagreb.
- the second branch from the 10th corridor would lead from Budapest, Novi Sad, Belgrade. The third branch starts from Niš, Sophia, Istanbul, and the fourth branch goes from Veles, Bitola, Florin via Egnati.
- towards Croatia also the 7th river Danube corridor is moving, connecting the rivers Sava, Drava and Danube.

Croatia herself is investing great efforts in building her own national routes, with emphasis on motorways and railway traffic routes, that would extend the European Trans-European traffic corridors. The priority traffic route is the motorway Zagreb – Split, with the determined construction period of three years.

The Traffic System Strategy of the Republic of Croatia has also been developed, and in all its significant guidelines, it has determined further traffic development in the country, and it was completed by the end of 1999. Connecting of the Trans-European traffic network and the traffic network of the Republic of Croatia is a way of Croatia joining the western integrations, especially the European Union.

CONCLUSION

For the traffic activities, continental, international, national and regional, certain specific features are characteristic and among them the most important place belongs to the connections of nations and peoples. These connections are reflected in a special way and are subjected to a number of factors. The most important characteristics result from the fact that traffic routes and facilities are being constructed for long-term use. Usually, large financial means are at stake. Besides, there is great influence of building such facilities on the ecological and physical arrangement of the environment, resulting in many positive and negative effects. Therefore, there is great need for high level of interstate agreements, harmonisation and mutual respect. The quality of carried out works

on the traffic facilities is of extreme importance, and it needs to be considered with special care.

By presenting the real possibilities of the organisation operative procedure of certain traffic routes and adequate facilities along these traffic routes, it must attract potential investors by high quality, and as necessary also the potential customers of the constructed traffoc facilities, who would participate in the construction and exploitation by their financial means.

The newly built traffic routes should connect successfully all the European regions and open the possibilities of economic co-operation with other continents, especially Asia.

Croatia can find its place among the adopted Crete traffic corridors, as well as the method of abandoning the current negative development trend and isolation. Through traffic connections with Europe, and then with the whole world, the possibilities for further economic co-operation are almost unlimited and further successful or unsuccessful development of Croatia depends only on the capabilities of the Croatian people.

SAŽETAK

EUROPSKO PROMETNO POVEZIVANJE I HRVATSKA

Svekoliko prometno povezivanje unutar Europe posebice je važno sa gospodarskog stajališta svake europske zemlje. Glede toga, razvitku prometa i prometne infrastrukture u Europskoj uniji polaže se izuzetna pozornost. Glavna svrha razvoja prometa u Europskoj uniji jest potpuna moguća sloboda kretanja gledano s tehničkog i organizacijskog aspekta, uz stalno povećanje sigurnosti u prometu i zaštitu ljudske okoline.

Prometni razvoj i povezanost jedan je od bitnih čimbenika napretka svake suvremene zemlje. Svaka zemlja nastoji organizirati prometni sustav na za nju najpovoljniji način. Na isti način promišlja se i u Europskoj uniji. Vodeći organi Europske unije slažu se u tome da prometni sustav u EU treba biti postavljen na takve temelje, da može pratiti daljnji razvoj zajednice. EU povezuje 15 zemalja članica u jednu zajednicu, a uskoro planira i proširenje novim članicama.

Ostvarivanje ciljeva, koji su postavljeni Ugovorom iz Maastrichta, realizirani su objavljivanjem prometnih smjernica o infrastrukturnim projektima, koji bi se trebali ostvariti. U prijedlogu Komisije, Vijeću i Parlamentu iz 1994. godine o djelovanju na razvoju transeuropskih prometnih mreža, prezentiran je vrlo učinkovit plan, povezivanje nacionalnih prometnih mreža u jedinstvenu transeuropsku putnu mrežu s rokom do 2010. godine.

Svekoliko gospodarsko i političko povezivanje Europske unije i tranzicijskih zemalja svaki dan je sve jače. Nekoliko tranzicijskih zemalja već se i priprema za pristup Europskoj uniji. Glede toga u prvi plan izbija i potreba, što boljeg prometnog povezivanja EU i tranzicijskih zemalja.

Usvojeni kretski koridori nekim svojim dijelovima prolaze i kroz Hrvatsku. Hrvatska je uz to smještena na glavnim europskim prometnim pravcima od sjevera prema jugu, te od istoka prema zapadu.

NOTES

1. Traffic has a wider meaning than the term transport. In literature, traffic means both international traffic and communications. The term traffic is used when talking about traffic generally. For other relations in traffic, the term transport is used.
2. Currently, the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities is active, 1998-2002
3. This principle acts in such a way that every user covers the costs for which he is responsible himself, at the place or nearest possible to the place of their origin.
4. COM (94) 106 final, Brussels, 7 April 1994. Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision and Community guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network.
5. The Trans-European Transport Network, Transforming a Patchwork into a Network, EC, Brussels, Luxembourg 1995 p.16.
6. The Trans-European Transport Network, Transforming a Patchwork into a Network, EC Brussels, Luxembourg, 1995 p.14.
7. The Trans-European Transport Network, Brussels, 1994. p.9.
8. Com(98)356 Final,3 June 1998.
9. http:/europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg07/press/ip98565 en.htm
10. Andrijanić, I.: Vanjska trgovina, Kako poslovati s inozemstvom, Mikrorad, Zagreb 1998

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[2] 1998-2002 -*Fifth Framework Programme of the European Community for Research, Technological Development and Demonstration Activities*, Paris 1999.

[3] COM (94) 106 final, Brussels, 7 April 1994. *Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Decision and Community Guidelines for the Development of the Trans-European transport Network.*

[4] *The Trans-European Transport Network, Transforming a Patchwork into a Network*, EC, Brussels, Luxembourg, 1995

[5] *The Trans-European Transport Network*, Brussels, 1994.

[6] Com(98)356 final, 3 June 1998.

[7] http:/europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg07/press/ip98565 en.htm

[8] *Ekonomist, Europa u brojkama 1998*, Data press, Zagreb 1998.