

THE ROLE OF SECONDARY AND TERTIARY NODES OF THE TRANS-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT SYSTEM FOR REGIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract: Dynamic changes in the security environment, determine the need for a redefinition of national interests set out in strategy documents for the national security of the Republic of Bulgaria. Along with vital interests, in recent years it is no less important for national security, to ensure regional security. In this context, politicians dealing with regional security issues are also emerging. One of them is the development of regional cooperation in the Danube region and the promotion of the active role of our country for peace and security in the region through participation in the implementation of economic programs and infrastructure projects of regional and European importance in the context of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. On this basis our scientific quests focus on the possibilities of cross-border cooperation between our country and the Republic of Romania, whose territories are crossed by 3 pan-European transport corridors - 4, 7 and 9. Hence, the purpose of our research is the place and role of the secondary and tertiary nodes of the trans-European regional security transport system by including us in Cross Border Cooperation Program "Romania-Bulgaria 2014-2020" (INTERREG) [1-10]. The environment of international, regional and national security is characterized by ever-increasing dynamism and unpredictability. This determines the need for developing a wider understanding of national security by bringing citizens' security, public and economic aspects to the fore without underestimating the dimensions related to defense, foreign policy, intelligence, security of public order and protection of legality. In this context, the new challenges of our country's security policy are outlined and graded in order to be responsive to the challenges of the security environment. As one of these priorities is the sustainable development of the Danube region, as a factor of regional cooperation, the promotion of the active role of the Republic of Bulgaria in ... support of peace and security in the region and for the realization of economic programs and infrastructural projects of regional and European importance in the context of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region . One of these forms of cooperation is the cross-border cooperation between our country and the Republic of Romania in the field of transport infrastructure. And if the pan-European transport corridors are more often discussed in the public space, the impression is that the problems of the construction of secondary and tertiary transport nodes as part of the trans-European transport system remain in the shadow. That provokes our scientific quests in this direction, which also determines the purpose of our research in the present publication.

Keywords: security and defence, regional security, transport infrastructure, cross-border cooperation.

1. INTRODUCTION

The environment of international, regional and national security is characterised by ever-increasing dynamism and unpredictability. This determines the need for developing “a wider understanding of national security by bringing citizens' security, public and economic aspects to the fore without underestimating the dimensions related to defence, foreign policy, intelligence, security of public order and protection of legality.” [4] In this context, the new challenges of our country's security policy are outlined and graded in order to be responsive to the challenges of the security environment. As one of these priorities is the sustainable development of the Danube region, as a factor of regional cooperation, the promotion of “the active role of the Republic of Bulgaria in ... support of peace and security in the region and for the realisation of economic programmes and infrastructural projects of regional and European importance in the context of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region ”[4]. One of these forms of cooperation is the cross-border cooperation between our country and the Republic of Romania in the field of transport infrastructure. And if the pan-European transport corridors are more often discussed in the public space, the impression is that the problems of the construction of secondary and tertiary transport nodes as part of the trans-European transport system remain in the shadow. That provokes our scientific quests in this direction, which also determines the purpose of our research in the present publication. [5-10]

2. THE CONSTRUCTION OF SECONDARY AND TERTIARY TRANSPORT NODES AS A FACTOR OF REGIONAL SECURITY

The baseline for our research is the Updated National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 (INTERREG). [1,2] Our research is limited to the secondary and tertiary road network on the territory of Veliko Tarnovo municipality and district. The reason for this is the fact that the cross-border territory of Bulgaria and Romania is crossed by 3 pan-European transport corridors - 4, 7 and 9.

On the territory of Veliko Tarnovo Municipality and Veliko Tarnovo Region is the intersection of SIC 8 and 9. Moreover, on this territory the two corridors connect and interact with another major and comprehensive TEN-T infrastructure, such as the airport and railway terminals. The huge traffic from Veliko Tarnovo is heading north to Danube Bridge 1 in the direction of Rousse – Giurgiu, passing through the town of Veliko Tarnovo. Parallel to this, significant HGV traffic from Veliko Tarnovo goes to the third SIC 4, which connects the cross-border region of Bulgaria and Romania along Danube Bridge 2 in Vidin – Calafat. At these three SICs and their intersections with state roads and other urban infrastructure, a number of neuralgic spots appear to have insufficient capacity. This leads to congestion, which affects the increase in travel time, vehicle operating costs of transport vehicles, accidents and damage to the environment. Accordingly, the challenge for municipal authorities is to seek opportunities to improve the conductivity of SICs 4, 7 and 9 in the cross-border area of Bulgaria and Romania. In response, the discomfort of neuralgic spots on the SICs and their intersections with state roads and other urban infrastructure should be overcome, which is possible through project participation of the municipality in cross-border cooperation. The implementation of the project aims to improve the traffic conditions, safety and conductivity between the secondary and the tertiary node and the core TEN-T infrastructure in the area of crossing. In support of this, there is the forthcoming modernisation of 13.454 km of local and regional roads of cross-border significance which directly connect secondary and tertiary nodes in the two countries on the Danube to the main TEN-T infrastructure.

At the same time, efforts are being made to coordinate the mechanisms to overcome new joint challenges arising from the operation of the TEN-T core infrastructure in Pan-European Corridors 4, 8 and 9. This effort is related to the organisation of activities to raise awareness on the safety and security of citizens in the intensive sections of the road traffic. And all this should happen with the involvement and support of the local population.

All this contributes to improving road traffic from the centre of Bulgaria to Romania by modernising 13.454 km of road infrastructure linking secondary and tertiary nodes to the core and the whole TEN-T infrastructure. Improved roads can serve millions of vehicles, of which about 65% are heavy trucks heading to Danube Bridge 1 or 2.

Improving the situation of the neuralgic areas of the European Corridors PAN, 4, 7 and 9 and providing timely information on accidents and congestion caused by trucks on both bridges (Danube 1 and 2) contributes to increasing the capacity of road infrastructure, decreasing travel time and operating costs of vehicles and, last but not least, limiting accidents and environmental damage in the secondary and tertiary nodes in the cross-border region.

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The participation of the Republic of Bulgaria, in particular of the Municipality of Veliko Tarnovo, in the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 [1, 2] is in response to the call for “better connected secondary and tertiary nodes to the TEN-T core and the comprehensive network through joint measures for cross-border cooperation” and in line with the Spatial Development Concept of the Municipality of Veliko Tarnovo for the period 2014-2020. [3] This participation in the programme should contribute to:

- ✓ reconstruction and modernisation of 13.454 km of roads, of which 12.944 km on the territory of our country and 0.514 km on the territory of Romania;
- ✓ establishment of joint mechanisms (traffic safety measures, route guidance and safety awareness campaign) facilitating the linking of secondary, respectively tertiary nodes, to the main TEN-T infrastructure to improve accessibility and transport conditions;
- ✓ the expected financial indicator is EUR 7,981,265.26, which represents approximately 16% of the total output indicator to be achieved by the programme implementation.

Thus, with the achievement of the above-mentioned expected results, the improvement of the connectivity of the secondary nodes (Veliko Tarnovo) and tertiary nodes (Calafat and Lom) from the cross-border area (CBA) to the main and comprehensive TEN-T infrastructure of Pan-European Corridors 4, 8 and 9. For this contributes the applicability of the Danube-oriented approach to modernising the envisaged infrastructure. Such an approach cannot be overcome only by the joint efforts of the Bulgarian or Romanian stakeholders. It is also necessary to apply the cross-border approach to overcome the historical obstacles to the transport systems of Bulgaria and Romania. And this means the presence of a local authority body that is legally authorised to take care of municipal property, local taxation and administration, urban and rural development, public education and health, utilities, conservation and

sustainable use of cultural and historical heritage and natural resources. In this relation, the Municipality of Veliko Tarnovo carries out a number of activities related to the Road Act and to the management of the municipal road network. In parallel, the Municipality is responsible for the management and maintenance of the municipal roads and streets in the urbanised territory and the construction, repair and maintenance of the municipal roads (responsibility of the municipality delegated by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works).

4. CONCLUSION

Without going into detail, due to the limited volume of this publication, in our opinion, the inclusion of Veliko Tarnovo Municipality in the Romania-Bulgaria Cross-Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020 (INTERREG) [1-10] is in favour of improving accessibility by linking secondary nodes (Veliko Tarnovo) and tertiary nodes (Calafat and Lom) from the cross-border area (CBA) to the main and comprehensive TEN-T infrastructure of Pan-European Corridors 4, 7 and 9. The modernized roads will improve the road links with the other major roads of the road networks in Bulgaria and Romania and the main TEN-T transport network.

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It will also reduce travel time to the treated road sections, the number of accidents, the noise and pollution in cities and villages. This will improve the general living conditions of the citizens of Veliko Turnovo municipality and Veliko Tarnovo region (also of Calafat and Rujintsi), who will gain more opportunities for easy, fast and safe travel in the target regions for business, tourism and other common activities.

The implementation of the BC-TENT project ensures better access to the services of public transport, as well as better connections between secondary nodes (Veliko Tarnovo) and tertiary nodes (Calafat and Lom) to the main TEN-T infrastructure. The benefit to the local population is also the reduction of travel time, the overcoming of air pollution and noise in the settlements, the increase of safety and security of traffic. All this in the context of the resilience of the Danube Region as part of regional and national security on the basis of a comprehensive approach to security, national interests and instruments for their realisation and protection under the conditions of a dynamically changing security environment.

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