

A pan-European corridor

The significance of Pan-European Corridors and the future TEN-T network in the economic development of Hungary

The Pan-European Corridors were developed as a result of the pan-European Conferences of Ministers of Transport. The corridor concept is conducive to the creation of all the necessary components of the envisaged TEN-T network.

The Hungarian priority projects have been supported by the HLG of the EU. Among them the importance of the Danube project received an outstanding and unanimous support.

The current state of transport and environment in the Hungarian section of the Danube Corridor

The modal split in the corridor in the year 2000 shows that inland navigation had a very low participation at 0.1% in the transport of passengers. In the transport of goods (measured in ton km), the participation of inland navigation is 2.6%. This indicates that inland navigation has considerable unexploited potential.

In urban areas situated near main roads, the primary source of noise pollution is road traffic. In some cases the day-time noise level exceeds its limit and so does the noise at night. On some roads in the corridor the number of severe accidents is very high due to the high proportion of heavy vehicles using those roads.

This implies that a better exploitation of the potential of inland navigation, which is a clean and efficient mode of transport, presents a promising solution, especially in the transport of goods.

A brief overview of the state of inland waterways in Hungary

Waterborne foreign trade reached an all-time high in 1998 in Hungary with approximately 5 million tons of goods being sold, which is over 10% of the total volume of exports. In the same year, the volume of trade on the Upper Danube surpassed the volume of trade on the Lower Danube.

The general conditions for the further development of trade on inland waterways in Hungary are determined on the one hand by the process of European integration and, on the other hand, as regards shipping on the Danube, the market conditions on the Danube. As a result of slow adaptation, the participation of inland waterways operators under a Hungarian flag has fallen from 80% to approximately 20% since a decade ago.

Connecting acceding countries situated in the Danube basin to the network of rivers and canals linking the basins of rivers flowing into the Atlantic and the North Sea

Achieving the desired development on the stretch in Hungary will require the participation of the state of Hungary and that of the Community alike. The inefficiency of inland waterway transport is the consequence of a number of unfavourable conditions. Due to the frequent draught limitations, fleet capacity may be utilised up to 60-70% only, whereas the European average is about 80-100%. With a view to improving the conditions of inland waterway transport on the Danube, Hungary submitted a proposal for a priority project for the Improvement of Navigability on the Danube registered under the code HU-3-iw.

Since the early 1960's the control of the Szap-Budapest Danube section has been gaining increasing attention. Several projects have been launched. Later in 1996, a final plan was elaborated based on the preliminary plans and assessments, and it was submitted to the Water Management Authority for approval in the same year. In the first stage of control activities focussed on the Szap-Gönyű section, and the works had been completed by 1997/1998.

As regards the Trans-European Transport Network, the Hungarian authorities continue to give adequate consideration to the objectives and priorities laid down in the Community Guidelines on the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the requirements on the financing thereof.

Inter-linking different modes of transport with a view to better exploiting of their respective advantages

In Hungary, the geographical density of adequately equipped ports working round the clock is only one-third of that of the European average. A simple comparison of the annual loaded trip time per annual service time of Rhine vessels (60-70%) and Danube vessels (approx. 30%) can highlight the differences in terms of infrastructure.

The contribution of the state to development activities is limited to the construction of the so-called basic infrastructure. The adequate integration of a given port with the economy of the surrounding region may also increase private sector interest in investing into further developments.

Environmental impacts of modal-split changes giving preference to inland navigation

The most promising opportunities are ro-ro and container shipping. In line with the forecast, in international shipping, an increase of 104% is expected by 2008, 122% by 2015 and 124% by 2030.

As a consequence of the decreased use of heavy vehicle, air pollution and the severity of road accidents will diminish, and noise levels will also decrease by 2-3 db(A) in the daytime, and by 4-6 db(A) at night. Also, travel times will become increasingly shorter due to the lower level of congestion.

The number of employees shows a steady decrease in the transport of goods by ships. A remarkable expansion in the cruise liner market has reached Hungary, and nowadays French, Dutch, German and Swiss liners from the Rhine frequently call at Budapest.