

TRANSPORT SITUATION IN ROMANIA IN 2006

1. Traffic trends

At present, Romania is experiencing a permanent evolution of the traffic, with a linear variation during 2006, at a higher total volume than the one recorded at the last census made in 2005.

For 2007 and the following years, the integration of the national transport network into the European and international network is foreseen, with the balanced development of the local and regional economy, improvement of the passengers comfort and the increase of their safety, better efficiency of the freight transport and increase the mobility of population at the same time.

Within this context, the following are taken into consideration:

- modernization and development of the road and railway transport structure on the TEN-T network, mainly on the Pan-European transport corridors IV and IX that cross Romania;
- rehabilitation, modernization and development of the infrastructure on the Danube, navigable canals and port infrastructure on the European corridor VII
- increase of the airport capacity and of air-transport safety
- development and modernization of transport means and installations in view of improving the quality of services, security of traffic, safety and quality of the environment and ensuring the interoperability of the transport system;
- removal of the traces left by the natural calamities upon the transport infrastructure;

Contribution of these activities shall be materialized through the following:

- increase of accessibility, fulfilment of the transport demand by developing an efficient transport network comparable with the European;
- increase of the traffic safety and of the transport security
- maximum positive effect upon the environment and the minimum impact of the transport on a global and local level;
- diversification and improvement of the quality of direct and connected services.

2. Obstacles to the development of transport

In spite of all the investments aimed at rehabilitating the infrastructure, it has not yet been developed sufficiently so that it could fulfil the requirements of a growing economy and to level of European standards. It is necessary that Romania should develop its transport infrastructure so that it ensures the base of the economic development. But this must be accomplished in conformity with the environmental sustainability requirements and aiming to an adequate protection of the country's natural and economic assets.

Also, it is necessary that balance should be ensured between the development of the main road and rail axes in Romania (corresponding to the Pan-European corridors IV and IX) with increased accessibility to the national routes and services, within the framework of limited available funds.

In road transport

- o "the fleet" of vehicles has increased from 1,000,000 in 1999 to 5,000,000 vehicles in 2006;
- o there is a large number of roads with a high traffic level (YDA of over 20,000 vehicles/24 hours), roads whose capacity are frequently exceeded. On these roads there are frequent traffic jams, especially during rush hours;

- the necessity of building new highways. With this aim several projects financed by the Romanian government or by other international financial institutions are being unfolded, under the inconvenient of high costs;
- county and local roads are degraded, a limited number of such roads being rehabilitated due to lack of finance;
- in spite of the fact that the traffic management has recorded a positive growth, and is being updated in accordance to the European norms, on certain important national roads there are still deficiencies that are frequently observed by transport users.

In railway transport

The lack of proper financing of the infrastructure maintenance led to degradation of its technical conditions, with negative impact on the quality of transport services and safety. In order to maintain the safety standard of rail transport, it was necessary to introduce speed limits and to lower the class of certain lines, on which traffic is carried at lower speeds.

On 31 December 2005 there were 429 speed limits for a total length of 621 km. Out of these, 97 were covered by the time slots and 330 were not.

Out of the last 330 speed limit restrictions, 186 were due to the improper status of the tracks and track equipments and 52 were due to the improper status of the works. During that period of time there were 1.147 dangerous points, on a total length of 565 km.

Programs of necessary works and deadlines were established in order to remove both speed restrictions and dangerous points. Capacity to finalize these programs, relies on the availability of the necessary financial resources.

In inland navigation

- At present, the main problem in development of maritime transport is the fact that the minimum recommended depth of 2,5 for navigation is not ensured. This recommendation is made by the Danube Commission.
- On the Romanian sector of the Danube, between km 863 (Iron Gates II) – km 175 (Braila) in certain areas, due to the variable flow regime, drift and accumulation of alluviums, the existence of a great number of secondary arms and during the low water periods, important navigation bottlenecks occur due to the low depths of 1-1.5 m, which are much lower than the recommended minimal depth of 2.5 m. Such phenomena occur in periods of 60 to 150 days/year.

3. Best practices in transport and infrastructure regulation

In road transport

Concerning road safety, measures have been taken with the aim to improve the situation in the areas where there are bottlenecks, that is:

- identifying the areas with a high traffic flow;
- increasing the efficiency and safety in the transport sector;
- noticing the effects on environment in case of ongoing projects, with the aim to prevent irreversible effects on the environment;
- drawing up projects for removing the causes that contribute to accident occurrence (diminishing visibility, imperfect delimitation of the crossings, lack of clear signalling);

- o in order to reduce the number of the old cars from the car parks and also to reduce the negative effect of these cars on the environment, a financial convenience has been set, that is to replace the old cars with a value ticket representing a part of the new car cost.

As a results in the legislation frame, it can be stressed that the harmonization of an important part from the national legal frame with the European one has been carried, by adopting some new laws in order to transpose the European Directives or by modifying the existing laws.

In the field of transport infrastructure, in 2006 a new sector from the Pan – European Corridor no. IV – Fetesti – Cernavoda, with a total length of 17,58 km has been completed.

Another achievement is represented by the works on Transilvania Motorway, Cluj-Napoca – Zalău- Bors sector (Hungarian border), on the sectors Campia Turzii – Gilau and Suplacu de Barcau – Bor. On other sectors the design contract is ongoing.

Romania made some studies to underline the differences between the social and economic development in the eastern part of the country and the linear development from the rest of the country.

A solution offered by Romania was the construction of the Budapest - Odessa Corridor (Budapesta-Nyiregyhaza- Csengersima/ Petea-Baia Mare-Borsa-Suceava-Iasi-Sculeni-Chisinau-Perfomaise/Kucurham-Odesa), 1065 km long. Both Hungarian and Romanian parties had expressed the support for the motorway project on the route Petea – Satu Mare – Baia Mare and the design works are presently progressing. This solution will enhance economic development, creating a link between Austria – Hungary – Romania – Moldavia - Ukraine.

This express road is a link to M3 motorway from Hungary, part of the Pan-European corridor no V, and it will represent the third high-speed connection between Romania and Hungary, the first two connection being already planned to be realized on the routes Szeged-Nagylak/Nadlac-Arad and the axis Debrecen-Biharkesztes/Bors- Cluj-Napoca

During 2006, on the national road no. 6, a secondary part of the Corridor IV, rehabilitation works have been realized and, at the end of this year, two sectors will be finalized: Craiova – Filiasi and Ciochiuta – Drobeta Turnu Severin. The purpose of these works was to realize a better connection of the National Roads with the European Roads.

For avoiding congestion, there have been developed projects for realizing city bypasses in the cities where an increased volume of traffic flow has been registered. Thus, at present, 27 bypasses have been financed by the state budget and other 7 bypasses by co - financing between the state budget and other international financing institutions. Their role is to take over the traffic flow excess.

In railway transport

One fifth of the total length of the railway network lays on sections of the Pan-European Corridors numbers IV and IX which cross Romania. On these sections, more than half of the total traffic is carried, and investments are focused on them. The aim is to upgrade the lines for a speed of 160 km/h.

On the Romanian part of Corridor IV: Curtici-Arad-Alba Iulia-Brasov-Bucharest-Constanta, which has 1.362 km, the necessary investments are about 3 billion Euro.

- on the section Bucharest-Campina works were finalized.

- for the sections Curtici-Arad-Deva-Simeria, Simeria-Coslariu, Coslariu-Sighisoara-Brasov and Brasov-Campina, feasibility studies were elaborated and international financing is sought in order to realize the works.
- sections Bucharest North-Bucharest Baneasa and Fetesti-Constanta works are performed on the basis of a loan received from JBIC – Japan Bank for International Cooperation.
- for the section Bucharest Baneasa–Fetesti works are realized through a financing provided by EU ISPA program.

On the Romanian part of Corridor IX, 595 km long, the modernization works realized or in the process of execution are:

- modernization of Giurgiu North station, financed by PHARE funds;
- rehabilitation of Girugiu-Russe bridge, financed by PHARE funds and realized together with the Bulgarian part;
- feasibility studies for sections Bucharest-Videle, Videle-Girugiu, Ploiesti-Buzau, Buzau-Focsani, Focsani-Bacau and Bacau-Pascani realized during 2003 and 2004 or in course of execution.

Estimated investment needs for the modernization of Corridor IX is 1,183 billion Euro.

Other investment programs in progress are:

- modernization of the electronic interlocking systems in 18 stations with an investment of 105 million Euro. The investment programme has the year 2010 as deadline;
- modernization of five railway stations: Craiova, Timisoara, Cluj Napoca, Iasi and Constanta, financed by EBRD, with a value of 24 million Euro Institution. The deadline of the execution is the 4th quarter of 2007.
- rehabilitation of 15 railway stations, financed by Credit Suisse First Boston, London with a value of 60 million USD. The deadline of the execution is 2007.

In inland navigation

Inland navigation – infrastructure developments on “E” networks:

- The implementation of the Vessel Traffic Management System on the Danube will increase safety of navigation and align inland navigation transport in Romania with European trends and will comply with the Directive 2005/44/EC.
- Improvement of navigation on Danube in the section from 863 (Iron Gate) – 375 km (Calarasi);
- Improvement of navigation conditions between Calarasi – Braila;
- Improvement of navigation conditions on the Maritime Danube;
- Bank protection on Sulina Channel, topographic and hydro-graphic survey and signalling system on the Danube;
- Stabilization of high slopes along Danube – Black Sea Canals;