

Summary of the doctoral thesis

Via Carpatia in the transport policy of the European Union

Each country, region or commune must take care of the development and maintenance of appropriate transport systems, which on many levels is conducive to their socio-economic development. In 2006, a multilateral project of the Via Carpatia road was created, a route running along the north-south axis through Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. The will to build it was expressed in the "Łańcut Declaration" by the ministers of transport of the interested parties. By joining it, it is to ultimately connect the Baltic and Aegean Seas. In this way, it is part of the process of increasing the territorial cohesion of the European Union, but on the north-south axis along its eastern borders. It is also intended to contribute to the socio-economic development of Central Europe, in particular the least economically developed eastern regions of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. The aim of the study is to analyze the implementation of the postulates contained in the Declaration regarding the strengthening of cooperation between the interested countries, including the inclusion of the Via Carpatia to the development plans of the European Union's transport policy by recognizing it as part of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T).

In order to achieve this goal, a research process had to be carried out. It consisted of the following stages:

1. Analysis of the transport policy of the European Union in order to indicate its current assumptions, objectives and main areas of operation.
2. Analysis of the place of transport networks in the transport policy of the European Union and its objectives, principles and priorities.
3. Analysis of the conditions conducive to the creation of the Via Carpatia route.
4. Analysis of the scope of incorporating the Via Carpatia project into the TEN-T network and EU transport policy.

The above stages correspond to the structure of the presented doctoral thesis. The first chapter is devoted to the analysis of the transport policy of the European Union, taking into accounts its origins, changes and the current state. The introductory element of this chapter is to present the links between transport policy and socio-economic development to show its importance for the functioning of states and their groupings.. The culmination of the chapter is an indication of its contemporary conditions, as well as goals, priorities and forms of influence.

The second chapter is devoted to the analysis of one of the elements of the transport policy of

the European Union, which is the construction of the trans-European transport network. Principles and priorities of its development as well as tools for its financing are presented. In order to illustrate these conditions, transport routes recognized as priority by Member States have also been indicated and therefore connected to the core network, thus having the shortest planned implementation time and subject to special supervision by specialized Community bodies. The third chapter presents the conditions that seems to be the most important for the creation of transport corridors, and in relation to the subject of the work, influenced the creation and implementation of the Via Carpatia road project. They were presented on three levels: local, regional and Eurasian. At he local level, attention was paid primarily to the importance of the project for the socio-economic development of the eastern, less developed regions of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary. At the regional level, its importance for the development of international cooperation between Central European countries and regions was indicated. At the Eurasian level, the potential importance of the Via Carpatia for the development of transport and long-distance trade using roads and railways, including primarily trade with China, was shown. The fourth chapter focuses on presenting the cooperation of countries that led to the actual implementation of the road and the actual status of its implementation as at 31 December 2021. Attention was paid to the two most important institutional forms of this cooperation, i.e. the Three Seas Initiative and the European Union and the process taking place within them, which resulted in the actual inclusion of Via Carpatia in the plans to build trans-European transport networks. At the end, the current state of implementation of the communication route in question and the planned time frame for the completion of subsequent stages of its expansion were presented.

The research carried out made it possible to achieve the research goal and to conclude that the countries interested in the Via Carpatia road construction project cooperated for its implementation, and the route in question was included in the trans-European transport network and thus became part of the transport policy of the European Union. However, two issues must be noted. Firstly, the scale of cooperation between the interested countries has been growing very slowly over the first decade since the proposal was presented. There was a sharp acceleration in the middle of the last decade and corresponded to the increased sense of threat from Russia after its aggression against Ukraine in 2014. Secondly, that the road is not a separate core network corridor but part of the comprehensive network. Only in fragments did it become part of the core network with a deadline for completion by 2030. This happened where its course coincides with the course of the previously designated trans-European corridors.

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