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Prishtina as Part of Main Transport Corridors. The Role of Route 6 And Route 7 for the City

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Abstract

In the region of South-Eastern Europe in the last decade major investments have been done in the field of road transport among other investments, which contributed in the rise of quality for the citizens. These investments of course, influence required standards by the European Union. Kosova, as part of this region, is doing its part to be closer to meeting the standards. After the war (1999) Kosova has made significant investments in road infrastructure in rise of the quality through widening in different sections, financed by international organizations. Kosova has a good geographic position in the Balkan Peninsula through which two international roads pass. Route 6 of East Europe, which starts at Corridor VIII in Skopje, goes through Ferizaj, Prishtina and then separates into two directions: one towards Mitrovica and the other through Peja. Southeast Europe, Route 7 starts in Dures and passes through Morine border and through Prizren, Suhareka, Prishtina, Merdane border, then passes in Serbia and connects with Corridor X.

Apart from these two routes that have an international character, Kosova with neighboring countries is connected with national, regional and local roads. Kosova and Albania are linked via three roads, two national roads and a regional road. Kosova connects with Montenegro through two roads, one of them is regional (Vitomerice-Rozhaje). With Serbia it connects through six national roads and with Macedonia it is connected through two national roads, one with destination Skopje and the other with destination Tetovo.

Kosova until now has very well dispersed the national and regional road network. The plans of Ministry of Infrastructure until 2025 are defined by the Multimodal Transport Strategy. In this strategy the road projects have come out as a result of the traffic which is surveyed in the road network of Kosova. Route 6 and Route 7 has a big importance for Kosova and especially for Prishtina. Route 6 passes near Prishtina and connects it with Ferizaj and Peja, then it connects Kosova with Corridor VIII in Skopje.

Route 7 connects it with Prizren and Podujeva, this road is very important because it links many parts of Albania and Kosova with national Corridor X in Nish of Serbia. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the importance of the Route 6 and Route 7 for Prishtina as a new European capital and the public transport and mobility integration to avoid the issues in the city.

Furthermore, it is necessary to create a full meaning of the position of Prishtina in relation with Corridor X and Corridor VIII as part of them in indirect way, but very important for both. Particularly at the end of the paper will be mentioned why the achievement of the quality of these main arteries for Kosova and Prishtina should be started from the lowest level to be integrated in the international network.

Introduction

Transport and its integrated system is part of the economic and social activities that human society generates, and in this way it is necessary to provide fast and quality services. The Balkan Peninsula has an important geostrategic position, it represents important crossroads for connecting European countries with Africa, Asia etc. Appropriate geographical position gives the Balkan countries the advantage of transit of goods not only with European countries, but also with the World countries.

Pan-European transport corridors and transport areas were created by three Pan-European Transport conferences, in Prague 1991, in Crete 14-16 March 1994, and in Helsinki 1997 (Alb-Shkenca, 2012).

The Pan-European transport strategy in Southeast Europe consists of Pan-European Corridors (PECs) and Areas (PETRAs) for European territories outside the EU were defined at the Pan-European Transport Conferences of Crete (1994) and Helsinki (1997). The Crete Corridors running the region of SEE (including Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia) are Corridors IV, V, VII (Danube), VIII and IX. (M.Miltiadou, C.Taxiltaris, G. Mintsis, S.Basbas, 2012).

Later, at the Helsinki Conference, PECX and four PETRAs were defined. The Prague Declaration on All Europe Transport Policy (1st Pan-European Transport Conference, 1991), foresaw the indication of the most important transport routes linking the European countries and regions to be considered for improvement and modernization, while more decisively, in Crete (2nd Pan-European Transport Conference, 1994), it was declared that a starting point for future work on coherent infrastructure corridors for the various transport modes. Furthermore, the overall objective of the Helsinki Declaration (3rd Pan-European Transport Conference, 1997)

was to promote sustainable, efficient transportsystems – taking into account technical and interoperability aspects in order to facilitate movements at border crossings, which meet the economic, social, environmental and safety needs of European citizens, help to reduce regional disparities and enable European business to be competitive in the world markets (M.Miltiadou, C.Taxiltaris, G. Mintsis, S.Basbas, 2012).

The development of globalization and the advancement of Information and Communication Technology, as well as communication improvement networks have contributed to major changes in transport, facilitating communication and access.

In the focus of this last one, to improve mobility, Kosova today has a road network, consisting of 630 km of main roads, which has been largely rebuilt in recent years, with the addition of some completely new roads. In this regard, mention building of a highway linking Albania and Serbia directly through Kosova, becoming an important gateway to the corridor linking the Adriatic with Western Europe. (Ministria e Puneve te Jashtme, Republika e Kosoves, 2018). Finding more environmentally friendly alternatives to public transport like in European cities and in Kosova (Prishtina), expands the focus of improving the infrastructure system, so important for the country.

Objectives

The focus of this study is the importance of "Route 6" and "Route 7" for Kosova. To give an answer to this hypothesis, the first objective is the full meaning of Prishtina's position regarding Corridor X and Corridor VIII (where Route 6 and Route 7 are respectively part of them). In addition, this first objective aims to help the next response to the second objective which is related to the importance of achieving European



Fig1 / South East Europe Core Network
Source / SEETO

standards for these main areas for Kosovo and Prishtina starting from the lowest level to integrate into the international network mobility and accessibility.

Methodology

For the realization of this writing, an alternate methodology has been pursued between the theoretical research and the practical approach and field visits.

The methodology firstly refers mainly to the literature review, which has helped to examine the theoretical view of the key concepts addressed, such as transport corridors, geographic position, accessibility, etc.

Secondly, the reports and documents written before, thus understanding the analysis done in this regard. Also, are included practical methods by conducting visits to better familiarize the country's situation and to create realistic impressions.

Analysis Transport in Southeast Europe

The development of the South East European Transport Network (SEETO) is a regional transport organization established by the Memorandum of Understanding on the Development of the Regional Transport Network, signed

on 11 June 2004 by the Governments of South East Europe. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and UNMIK on behalf of Kosovo (SEETO, 2012).

The central road and rail network consists of corridors and roads. Corridors are defined and are trans-European, Corridors are: V, VII, VIII, IX, X, which offer international links with the European Union. Roads, seven of which are road network and six are railroads, complements the central network to connect the capitals within the region and neighboring countries. The goal is the free movement of people, goods and services, thus enabling the development of regional economies (Alb-Shkenca, 2012).

In view of developed EU countries, other European countries (central and eastern Europe) and the Balkans, economic development requires the introduction and development of transport at a higher rate. Developed and modern transport has the advantages of speed, availability, accessibility, reliability, security, stability, transparency and its orientation towards the users by offering people one of the most important services (Alb-Shkenca, 2012). Transport development is one of the advantages of a country, thus



Fig2 / The map of the two main roads in the SEE Region
 Source / ROUTE 6: HIGHWAY PRISHTINA – SKOPIE. Graphic edition by author.

making it possible to engage in the international network of mobility between different countries (Balkan, European and world).

Kosova, its connection with its neighbors and Europe
 Improving transport in South East Europe and its connection with Western Europe has been considered as a very important project for the economic development of this region (the Balkans in general) but also for its integration into the European common market. To achieve these goals, the European Union (EU) together with South Eastern Europe (SEE) countries established in 2004 the South East European Transport Organization

(SEETO) in order to coordinate strategies and transport development projects in these countries. In particular, Kosova, initially represented by UNMIK, has become a member of this organization and has been part of its plans since that time.

Kosova Government (KG) in recent years has focused the majority of capital investments on the construction of two major roads (motorways), specifically on constructing the "Route 7" (Merdare-Morina) and the "Route 6" (Prishtina- Hani i Elezit) (A. Zogaj, L.Abdixhiku, A. Hashani, V. Vokri, 2015).

The construction of these two roads, in addition to linking Kosova /Prishtina with Albania/Tirana and Macedonia/



Fig3 / The map of the two main roads (route 6 and route 7) which connect Prishtina with Tirana and Skopje. Source / ROUTE 6: HIGHWAY PRISHTINA – SKOPJE. Graphic edition by author.

Skopje respectively, in fact includes Kosova as part of the main transport networks in South East Europe. While the Route 7 (Prishtina - Morinë) has been built and is fully functional, Street 6 (Prishtina - Hani i Elezit) is contracted in 2014 and is expected to be completed in the end of 2018, but remains part of Macedonia (Alb-Shkenca, 2012).

Route 6 and 7 connect roads and important corridors in the Balkans, connecting Pan-European corridors and corridors with centers and sea ports in the Balkan region, in the Adriatic Sea with the port of Durres and Shëngjin in Albania, as well as with the Black Sea in Bulgaria with the port of Varna.

Route 7 connects Kosova and its neighbor's countries like Albania and Montenegro, with Corridor X, while Route 6 connects Kosova, Serbia, etc. with Corridor VIII. Because of the socio-economic importance that these two

major capital projects have, they have become a major topic of discussion in Kosova society not only for the role that they will play in the transport of goods and people, but also for high costs to funding that constitutes an important discussion for citizens (A. Zogaj, L.Abdixhiku, A. Hashani, V. Vokrri, 2015).

Kosova Government (KG) in line with the SEETO plans set as its infrastructure priority in 2005/2006 the construction of two main roads that connect Prishtina with main regional centers, such as Tirana and Skopje, which at the same time also link the main centers inside Kosova. One of the projects is "Route 6", which includes Prishtina - Hani i Elezit (to border with Macedonia) road segment, 65 kilometers in length, and the other one is "Route 7", which includes Morina-Prishtina-Merdare road segment, 118 kilometers in length.



Fig4 / Geographic map of Kosova.
Source / Kosova -article. Graphic edition by author.

Route 6, consists of two very important parts. The first, the northern part, which connects with "Route 7", located in the north of Lipjan and continues to Kaçanik, at a distance of about 40 km. Second, the southern part, which continues from Kaçanik, through Hani i Elezit, to the border with Macedonia. This part is foreseen to have a distance of 15.5 km (A. Zogaj, L.Abdixhiku, A. Hashani, V. Vokri, 2015).

Route 6 is considered to be of particular regional importance. As it can be seen from Figure 3 (below), this road connects Prishtina with Skopje, but on the other hand it is also one of the high priority roads in the plans of SEETO. Route 6, among others, is also roadway with Corridor VIII in Skopje, which is thought and expected to connect Prishtina with Montenegro in the future, respectively with Route 4 (Podgorica - Belgrade), (A. Zogaj, L.Abdixhiku, A. Hashani, V. Vokri,

2015).

On the other side, Route 7, or the "Ibrahim Rugova" highway has been one of the most important priorities of the Government of Kosova, which is also fully in line with the European Union (EU) and SEETO plans, and as such was contracted and completed within the deadline. Route 6 and Route 7 have had an investment of 1.5 billion Euro (830 million Euros route 7 and 660 million Euros Route 6). The route 7 project ended before route 6. Works on "Route 7" started in 2010 and their inauguration was completed in November 2013, while in July 2014 construction of "Road 6" began and is expected to be completed by the end of 2018 (Riinvest, 2011).

The project as a whole was financed by the public budget, despite the fact that the public opinion consistently recommends the Government to use other forms of funding (Riinvest, 2011).



Fig5 / Route 7 in Kosova .
Source / <https://www.bechtel.com/projects/Kosova-motorway/>



Fig6 / Route 6 in Kosova .
Source / <https://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=713858&page=88>

Financing these two major projects has been one of the main problems of the Kosova Government.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also come forward with continuous remarks about the form of financing, in addition to the local public opinion. The IMF report for Kosova (2012), among other things, points out that "Route 7" has made "great pressure" on the Kosova Budget and this pressure would be released only with deeper budget deficits and cuts in other expenditures capital (education, health, and local infrastructure).

Investments made in these two projects have had relatively high costs for the country by comparing Kosova's budget with those of European countries.

According to Doll and Essen (2008), who have published a major study on the construction of highways (and their costs) in European countries, comparing eight European countries, Austria is the country with the highest cost in road construction. The report shows that the cost of constructing highways in Austria is about 13 million EUR per kilometer, on average.

The next most expensive country in the construction of highways comes from Hungary, with over EUR 11 million per kilometer. Meantime, on the other hand, in Denmark, the average cost of construction of the highway is only about EUR 6 million per kilometer.

Top Croatia and Slovenia are listed at a cost of about 7 million EUR per kilometer, while in Germany the average cost of building highways is about 8 million EUR per kilometer. If Kosova were to be included in this list, it would rank second, after Austria, with over EUR 11 million per kilometer of roads built.

Of course, these construction costs vary depending on the terrain conditions as they land or rise depending on the difficulty and often in the case of Germany or Austria in the mountainous terrain it has a figure of 26 million EUR / km.

Routes role in the capital and suggestions

According to the World Bank (2010), only two of the nine parts of "Route 7", those close to the capital (Prishtina) may be economically feasible.

This is because in 2014 there were about 290,000 motor vehicles registered in Kosova, where only one in six Kosova people is the owner of a motor vehicle, which is one of the lowest ratios in Europe (Alb-Shkenca, 2012).

As these investments have had a greater impact on Prishtina's capital city, despite the costs that the government has to pay, we can conclude that Prishtina should make use of this strong point to strengthen its role as a new capital with the aspiration to be part of the European Union. But besides this, it needs to analyze its position in relation to these access points in order to improve the public and private transport services, to preserve its values and to avoid the problems caused by these movement fluxes that come in these two the main "artery" of the city.

Therefore, this is the reason to walk in line with the European programs for the transport sector launched and with the statement made by the European Union for Mobility and Transport, which announced the year 2018 as the year of multimodality, in terms of bringing a sustainable and integrated transport system within the European members. In this context, the promotion of 'active mobility' as an integrated tool with other modes was stressed, in particular in urban and smart cities.

As a result of these changes with the desire for development, Prishtina as the center of Kosova has attracted many citizens to live there and this has led to population growth and expansion of the settlement. These changes in demography require increasing the provision of services and facilities in mobility, among others.

Based on this, the public transport in the municipality of Prishtina, should be redesigned to be more efficient and friendly with the environment. This would help Prishtina itself to improve the quality of air by reducing pollution from transport, but also by creating the accessibility and feasibility on "movement" through the public transport.

To represent a city close to the standards of Europe, the city should consider the realization of the connection of 3 inner city centres (polycentric system) through pedestrian path (human scale). Different parts of the city could be pedestrian in different times of the day.

Application of a new public transport network system, which will include the satellite settlements around Prishtina (Gërmija, New Prishtina, Obiliq, Graçanice, Fushe Kosova). The bus line can be conceived in two forms like, in linear form and ring form. Station of bus transport of course are important for the mobility functioning. In this case, to be more environmentally friendly bus may be powered by electricity (in city centers) and in diesel (in rural environments).

Another alternative for public transport like in European cities is the construction of Tram line base on the model of urban public transport (light rail), from Gërmija to Administrative Area (with are neighbourhoods of Prishtina).

Light Rail transport is an environmentally sustainable way of transport and now it is considered even more environmentally friendly. This new transport route may be considered as a bypass for the regional scale, which avoids the traffic accumulation in the city centres and sometimes gives new direction of connection between satellite settlements.

So if, policy maker of the city takes in consideration these alternatives to contribute to the good of their city they

may include the tram line and stations, road lane, taxi/bus lane and sidewalks. This would increase the efficiency, variety, facilities and transport opportunities and would bring Prishtina closer to the model of European cities. A very positive case that can be followed is that of the city of Vienna, which combines several types of transport and then through the main roads becomes part of the international network in corridors 4 and 7 (Danube corridor).

Hereby, as the national roads for Kosova, such as Route 6 and Route 7, besides the positive values that bring to the city of Prishtina, it is necessary to understand that they need to be integrated with transport at city level to avoid problems such as traffic, pollution of the air, health problems and damage to the environment.

With a very positive view, we must combine and integrate the two levels together to bring a positive value to this sector so it is important that connects people and countries.

The integration of environmental ways of transport in the city with the national and international network will bring potential and sensitive improvements to the Prishtina and at the same time will increase its standard in providing this service. Thus, by achieving these improvements, Prishtina and Kosova are close to the standards of European cities.

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