

Regional accessibility and sustainable development

Mobility and transportation system

In the cross border region exists an unbalanced situation in regard to transport accessibility. Good accessibility only exists around the economic and population centres. The peripheral regions are weakly connected to the centres and to each other. This relates to the road and even more to the railway system of this border region. Analysing the situation of the transport system in the border region needs a very differentiated perception and approach. The consequences of the two different economic and political systems and the associated particular national orientations regarding regional development strategy remain vital elements.

On the Czech side the orientation and construction of transport infrastructure has been focused on the Praha-Brno-Bratislava axis, so that the South Moravian region (*okres Brno-město*) belongs to the best situated regions in the Czech Republic (CR). The City of Brno is the second most important intersection in the CR. On the other hand the building-up of north-south connections had been relatively neglected. The negative consequences are evident until today.

The situation was very similar for the Austrian regions. Motorways do still not connect major parts on the Austrian side, which results in a peripheral status of many areas and makes the economic and labour market centres of the region difficult to reach. Only *Wien*, *Linz* and *Krems* and those cities and municipalities along the East-West connection have a high capacity in road and railway infrastructure.

But it is not only the national, international and supraregional connections that are lacking, the cross border interregional infrastructure is insufficient as well. Thus, the newly developed cross border cooperation and the intensifying economic relations shift the geographical focus on both sides of the border towards emphasis on supraregional transport corridors and the improvement of the interregional and cross border transport system. As a consequence new orientation activities like building up new highways (D3 in CR, A5 in AT), the extension of the existing and new regional border crossings, the improvement and optimisation of the existing regional road network are planned or realised in line with the national and regional strategic development documents.

Public transport is a major area of concern in cross border transport systems. Even if private transport is steadily increasing a sustainable regional development is closely associated with the development of the public transport system and first of all the railway system. The starting position for the border region can be described in a similar way as the situation for the road network, whereas the cross border connections are less favourable than within the road system. In the last 20 years especially in the regional cross border relations the supply was expanded by and by, so that there are more than less adequate connections between the most important locations in the region. The main challenges for the rail transport system are:

- To modernise the equipment (e.g. vehicles), the service and the technical systems to accelerate the traffic, to increase the attractiveness for passengers and to preserve the environment

- To accelerate the traffic by electrification, increasing the efficiency of the controlling and management systems
- To level up the safety
- To build up the infrastructure of the rail/bus/private car transition sequences (P+R, lay-by parking)
- The development of multimodal and logistic centres

International accessibility can also be described by the integration of the region in the European/international air transport systems. In terms of international categorisation there is one international airport in the region, Vienna International Airport. Brno and Linz are airports of regional importance. For some western parts of the border region there is no favourable access to one of these mentioned airports. This can be seen as a disadvantage regarding attractiveness of a region for international investors.

The Danube as a European inland waterway is also important for the border region in a multimodal context. There are 4 inland ports (*Linz, Ennschafen, Krems* and *Wien*) with high capacities and multimodal equipment in the region.

Increasing mobility and more flexibility of the economic system lead to new needs for the transport system. In this sense the border region will be confronted with the following problems regarding mobility and transport infrastructure:

- Increasing transport volumes (goods and persons) along the (international) transport routes and in the urban agglomerations due to increasing road traffic
- The danger of decreasing tendencies of public transport services and withdrawal from the less populated rural areas as consequence of the restrictive public budgets
- Pressure on the environment and living conditions (e.g. air quality, noise, pollution, land use) due to increasing traffic

From the economic framework and expected development process and the needs of the population living and working in the border region the following issues can be deduced.

A growing (regional) export oriented economy implicates more transport volumes and structural changes in the transport sector. The growing international transport and traffic flow are the main indicators of this development. But not only the international relations are expanding, also the regional and cross border exchange of goods and services as well as commuting activities are rising. The growing commuting activities are caused by the increasing concentration of jobs on the one hand and the ongoing suburbanisation process on the other hand. For the way from home to the working place the private car or public transport means are used. In general elderly people, children and women use the public transport system to a high extent. The more intensive the cross border relations and exchanges of goods, services and persons the higher the requirements for new solutions regarding the development of the cross border transport infrastructure and system.

The changes in consumer behaviour and recreation activities lead to modified mobility. The programming region can be characterised as a region with high attractiveness for recreation and leisure for the local population and for tourists. The specifics of traffic caused by tourist activities are high seasonal and regional concentration.