



Orient/East-Med Corridor (CX): Serbia – the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Rail Interconnection

Partners:

- Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, Serbia
- JSC Serbian Railways - Infrastructure (Železnice Srbije Akcionarsko Društvo)
- Central Finance and Contracting Unit (CFCU) - Ministry of Finance, Serbia

EU contribution:

- €47 million (75% of investment cost)
- €1.5 million (project preparation support)

Estimated total investment:

- €62.7 million

Beneficiary contribution:

- €15.7 million

Transport

The Orient/East-Med Corridor (CX) runs between Salzburg in Austria and Thessaloniki in Greece. On its main course, it branches out to Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Conditions of the railway tracks on this corridor vary, but large sections of the route can accommodate maximum travel speeds of only 60 km/h.

Serbia's rail network comprises 3,819 km of track. Its backbone is located along the Orient/East-Med Corridor and includes the Šid – Belgrade – Niš – Preševo route into the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

With this investment project¹ 23.4 km of railway track will be fully renovated, from Niš to Brestovac, towards Preševo, including signalling and telecommunication systems. The upgrade will enable travel speed and axle load to be increased to 120 km/h and 225 kN respectively.



Passenger train on the Brestovac – Niš railway route.

Results:

- 23.4 km of railway track from Niš to Brestovac upgraded to modern standards.
- Increase in passenger and freight travel speed from 60 km/h to 120 km/h throughout the Niš – Brestovac railway section.



Railway station in Niš, Serbia.

¹ Subject to a final decision by the budgetary authorities.



Map of Niš – Skopje Rail Interconnection.

Estimated Start Date:

- End of 2016

Estimated End Date:

- End of 2019

The Orient/East-Med Corridor (CX) routes in Serbia account for 872 km of track in total, which is 23% of the entire Serbian railway network. Train speed exceeds 100 km/h on only 3.2% of the track and on roughly 50% of lines speeds are limited to 60 km/h.

The Niš – Brestovac section is part of the 151 km long single-track Niš – Preševo railway line, which connects Serbia to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and further to Greece, along the Orient/East-Med Corridor (CX). The line was built in the period 1886 – 1888 and has been regularly maintained since then, albeit to a lesser extent in the 1990s. It has not been subject to any complete overhaul until the 2000s.

Moreover, the signalling and train control system on this section has been in use for more than 50 years which jeopardises transport safety and slows travel speeds.

The bulk of inland freight in Serbia is transported by rail, similar to Montenegro but unlike most of the other Western Balkans states or EU-28. In 2013/2014 alone, an average of 3,000 million tonne-km was accounted for by rail, while inland waterways represented 700 million tonne-km and road 2,800 million tonne-km. Renovating the railway network in Serbia is thus essential to support and boost the national economy, allowing

people, goods and capital to move more freely in the region.

Benefits

- Domestic and international train travels to increase by 57% by 2020.
- Increased economic growth as most inland freight in Serbia is transported by rail.
- Safe and secure rail transport for both freight and passengers.
- Modern signalling and train control systems in accordance with EU standards.
- Shorter travel times.
- Reduced operational and maintenance costs for railway operators.
- Improved trade flows with countries in the region and thus a positive impact on the broader economy of Serbia.