Spatial conditions and challenges in improving accessibility in Europe

1 Introduction

In May 2011, in Gödöllö, during an informal meeting, the ministers responsible for spatial planning and territorial development in the European Union member countries approved the Territorial Agenda 2020. One of the priorities of this Agenda is “to improve the territorial connectivity for individuals, communities and enterprises”. The document in particular assumes that affordable access to services of general interest, information, knowledge and mobility are essential for territorial cohesion. Compared to the priorities of the Territorial Agenda of 2007, this means to shift away from the very extension of the Trans-European network (TEN) towards territorial effectiveness of the activities undertaken. In general, this means that spatial accessibility is a measure of such effectiveness.

The basic document for the elaboration of the Territorial Agenda 2020 was the report “The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union” (2011), developed by a team of experts, organised by the Hungarian EU Council Presidency. The text presented there relates to the essential challenges that were diagnosed in this document in the context of spatial accessibility. The results of some studies and research projects, in which the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw participated (including the evaluation studies concerning transport-oriented investment projects, supported by the EU between 2004 and 2006, see Komornicki et al. 2011) were also used. The author of the present report shortly comment on the position of spatial accessibility in European transport policy and then consecutively characterize the most important new conditions and challenges associated with the improvement of accessibility on the global, European, national/regional and local scales. On this basis, the possible directions of the further transport policy including the development of the network of trans-European corridors are determined.

2 Spatial accessibility in European transport policy

Transport-related investment projects, both in Europe as a whole and in particular in the member countries, were traditionally assessed based on the basic network parameters related to the existing or forecasted traffic intensity. This approach had definite shortcomings. Virtually by definition, it led to the further extension of transport systems within the most economically developed or densest zones. Transport policy at the level of the entire community, formulated in 1992 in the first White Paper on a Common Transport Policy, assumed the attainment of goals in terms of competitiveness, cohesion (regional development) and environmental protection. From the very beginning, it has been criticized as being based on the paradigm of open-ended growth of mobility of people and goods. The opponents suggested that unlimited mobility was not purposeful for social reasons and in terms of environmental protection requirements (Banister et al. 2000). Others saw very constrained chances for controlled limitation of mobility (Nijkamp et al. 1998), mainly in view of the strong connection to fiscal systems and budgetary revenues in the majority of the developed countries. This, in particular, results from the fact that taxes, associated with the broadly understood car ownership and use, constitute a non-negligible part of the budgetary revenue of European countries, therefore being one of the foundations for social expenditure (OECD 1982). Besides, the automotive industries are perceived as the “locomotive” of economic growth. A related illustration is provided by contemporary Poland, where the automotive branch is among the most dynamically developing ones in the post-accession period. Already in 2001, Menes (2001) estimated revenues from the broadly understood car ownership and use to the budget in Poland to be at roughly 13 to 14% of all the tax-related revenue. The chances for limiting mobility were

Dr. Tomasz Komornicki
Polish Academy of Sciences
Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization
Twarda 51/5
01-864 Warszawa
Poland
E-Mail: t.komorn@twarda.pan.pl
as well questioned in view of the – much smaller than expected – observed effects in this respect resulting from the development of telecommunications (including telework, Button 2005).

Despite these restrictions, the discussion exerted an influence on the European transport policy at the turn of the millennium, shaped under the circumstances of the already adopted Kyoto Protocol (1997). The European Union then faced the essential dilemma defined by

- the sustainable development paradigm (including climate policy and reduction of CO₂) and the associated need of replacing the investment-making policy by the demand-shaping (mobility-control) policy and the policy of improving an effective use of already existing networks (ESPON 1.2.1 2004)
- the approaching accession of twelve new member countries, of which the majority featured enormous lags in the development of modern transport networks, both internal ones and those ensuring connections to the economic core of the EU.

This dilemma could only be resolved through a regional differentiation (territorialisation) of the transport policy. The development of the transport infrastructure started to be perceived as a broadly conceived demand. Balancing transport costs and managing mobility (especially in metropolitan areas) became one of the objectives of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP). These questions found a substantive foundation in the research carried out within the ESPON 2006 Programme, first of all in the projects 1.2.1 and 1.4.4 (see www.espon.eu ). Project 1.2.1 referred to the territory of the European Union macroregions, in which different investment policies should be followed.¹ Related statements concerning the new member countries were only repetitions of earlier proposals for the development of infrastructure (Komornicki 2009).

In 2007, during the German EU Council Presidency, the Territorial Agenda of the European Union was adopted. One of the challenges of territorial character, diagnosed in this document, was the strengthening and extension of the TEN network. At the same time, accessibility as one of the fundamental indicators entered the Fifth Cohesion Report of the European Union. All these events brought about that perception of the development of infrastructure has been increasingly gaining a territorial dimension. The analyses carried out demonstrated that not only the traditionally understood transport needs are spatially differentiated. It was shown that the effectiveness of investment projects as well (understood as their influence on the economic development) is highly differentiated among the territorial units (Wegener et al. 2005). Spatial accessibility became a natural indicator, allowing to assess the effectiveness of investment projects at various spatial scales. It is currently commonly used both when evaluating terminated programmes (e.g. the Operational Programmes of the European Union Structural Funds) and when simulating effects of planned undertakings.

In 2010, in the framework of the forthcoming Hungarian EU Council Presidency, preparations for the elaboration of the new, updated Territorial Agenda were started. The time horizon of this document was defined to be 2020, in order to make it consistent with the document “Europe 2020”. This Agenda included the already mentioned shift of priorities towards the improvement of accessibility on different spatial scales. In the middle of 2011, the work was continued by the Polish Presidency. In the Polish Ministry for Regional Development the background document was elaborated with the primary aim of integrating the general European development objectives, contained in the document Europe 2020, and the priorities of the newly adopted Territorial Agenda (Böhme et al. 2011). A set of issues was proposed, referred to as “territorial keys”, which might constitute the determinants of the territorial aspect of development. One of them is spatial accessibility. Other ones, indirectly linked to accessibility, are “city networking” and “services of general public interest”. A case study was prepared to show the possibility of operationalising the notion of territorial keys by the example of spatial accessibility and the territory of Poland.

In the methodological sense, spatial accessibility is defined in a variety of manners. In contemporary studies of applied character, the following basic measures of accessibility are mostly used:

¹ Compare also the article of Görmar and Kurnol in this edition.
of these barriers is not unchanged. Present external relations remain to a large extent founded on the sea and air transport. Additionally, the global connections are served by a limited number of seaports (primarily container terminals) and airports (cargo and intercontinental passenger hubs). The excessive load on this structure has become an essential problem. Besides, the most important airports are located in the western part of the continent, which results in lower effectiveness of shipments to the quickly growing Asian direction (in terms of energy efficiency and the tendency to limit the CO₂ emissions of air transport).

Under these conditions, one of the potential challenges has become the development of ground transport connections to the Asian direction, and in the future, also to the African direction. In this context, attention should be paid to the very fast extension of road and railway networks in China and in Iran. Railway connections with Central Asia and China function already now, but their

3 Challenges of global accessibility

The significance of accessibility of the European space within the global dimension has been systematically increasing. Geographical and geopolitical conditions cause that in connection with other global growth poles serious spatial barriers exist. The role

Figure 1
External transport corridors of the European Union

Source: European Commission 2008
scale is severely limited by the long transit times across the territory of Russia. Road transport, however, is used between the European Union and such countries as Kazakhstan. In the case of Iran, it is the geopolitical barrier that plays the key role. This does not change the fact that the projects carried out in Iran bring the perspective of railway connections with India closer.

Regarding the development of overland transport towards Asia, the role of the railway nodes at the eastern borders of the European Union (the place of railroad gauge change) is increasing, especially of those on the main transport corridors. The Communication of the European Commission (2008), concerning the external transport connections in this context mainly indicates the routes linking Northern and Central Europe with Russia, Belarus and Ukraine through Finland, from the Baltic ports and through Poland and Hungary (see Fig. 1). The actual role of these routes undergoes important changes having a political and economic background. As a consequence of the extension of the European Union (in 2004), the primary direction of road transit from Russia to Western Europe changed. In earlier times, it went from Moscow through Belarus and Warsaw to Berlin. Nowadays, the traffic to a large extent takes place across the direct border between Russia and the European Union (the Russian-Latvian border) and then follows the route Via Baltica through Lithuania and the territory of Poland to Germany. The outlined changes bear consequences for the transport policy, including the setting of the TEN network, and for future transport-related investment projects supported within the framework of the cohesion policy.

A new possibility for improving accessibility might, paradoxically, arise from climate change. If the currently observed climate trends regarding the extent of sea ice of the Arctic Ocean persist, one might expect a much longer navigation period on the northern seaway.

All in all, with regard to the setting of the basic transport corridors, the global challenges might imply a perspective of broadly understood decentralization of intercontinental transport connections in both geographical and modal terms. This would result in the necessity of supporting: a) the development of airports in Central and Eastern Europe; b) the development of seaports in Northern Europe; c) the development of road and railway infrastructure in the countries directly neighbouring the European Union (in particular Turkey, Ukraine and Morocco); d) maintenance of the rank (investment priority) of some TEN corridors leading to the “outer gates” of the European Union.

4 Challenges to European accessibility

The studies of spatial accessibility, encompassing the entire territory of the present European Union, applying a consistent methodology, were carried out in the framework of the projects IASON and ESPON 1.2.1. They are now being continued in the framework of the still on-going project ESPON TRACC (see www.espon.eu). The most recent synthetic image dates from the year 2006 (Spiekermann/Wegener 2007). It allows for the assessment of the continental potential accessibility in road and railway transport and for the assessment of related changes that had taken place between 2000 and 2006 (within the previous financial perspective of the European Union, when the extension of the Union took place). The potential accessibility measure was applied there with separate analyses of the situations in road, railway and air transport and, additionally, in multimodal transport. The methodology adopted, along with the distribution of demographic and economic potentials in Europe, led to the highest values of the accessibility coefficient in the so-called “Pentagon” area (its core being located at the junction of the boundaries of Germany, France, Belgium and Luxembourg). Accessibility decreases in a natural manner towards the peripheries of the area in question. The disturbances in the concentric pattern of values of the coefficient result from the spatial distribution of large linear projects (motorways, high-speed railways) or from gaps in the infrastructure (frequently caused by the natural environment or by the heritage of political boundaries, strongly formalized in the past).

In the case of road transport, such a positive deviation is observed in southern Italy featuring a network of motorways. An opposite situation is registered in the new accession countries, where the regions situated rela-
Figure 2a
Potential road and railway accessibility in the EU27 countries in 2006

Source: Spiekermann/Wegener 2007
Figure 2b
Potential road and railway accessibility in the EU27 countries in 2006

This map does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the ESPON Monitoring Committee

Potential accessibility, rail
(2006, EU27 = 100)

- - 25,0
25,1 - 50,0
50,1 - 75,0
75,1 - 100,0
100,1 - 125,0
no data

Source: Spiekermann/Wegener 2007

© EuroGeographics Association for administrative boundaries
Regional level: NUTS 3
Origin of data: ESPON Accessibility update, 2006
Sources: RRG GIS Database, S&W Accessibility Model
tively close to the “Pentagon” remain rather poorly accessible. This, first of all, applies to northern Poland. The pattern of railway accessibility is much more irregular. In this case, the projects related to high speed railways in France and Spain are very clearly visible. In Central Europe, accessibility is lower than theoretically expected, not only in western Poland, but also in Czechia and Hungary. The Polish-German and Czech-German borders in 2006 were the lines of abruptly falling railway accessibility.

The period of 2000–2006 was characterized by the improvement of railway accessibility first of all on the territory of Spain, but also of central Italy, Greece and Southern Germany. These changes have been clearly caused by projects related to high speed railways. In road transport, the area of the biggest changes is, for the same period, constituted by Czechia and Western Poland. This is a consequence of realising several segments of motorways in these countries, but also of finishing basic motorways on the territory of the eastern part of Germany (partly the transit segments for traffic between Poland and the Czech Republic, on the one hand, and Western Europe, on the other). Air transport accessibility features a different kind of specificity – clearly the highest in the vicinity of large airports. In this case, changes in 2000 mainly took place in the new accession countries, especially in southern Poland as well as in Romania and Bulgaria. They were a consequence of the deregulated air transport market in these countries, which brought about the decentralization of traffic and the development of regional airports in secondary cities.

The enlargement of the European Union contributed to the shift of the weight of transport-related investment projects from the Mediterranean region towards Central Europe. Acceleration of projects in this area took place especially after 2007, when significant funds were granted for the period 2007–2013 in the framework of the Cohesion Fund and of the European Regional Development Fund. Yet, in spite of this, changes in the domain of accessibility on the area of the new member countries remained limited. This applies especially to Poland, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria. The transport systems of those countries had been developed under completely different economic conditions and turned out to be little flexible with respect to the requirements of the market economy. The transformation there brought changes in the directions of the main international connections and partly of the internal ones, as well. The acceleration of investments, made in transport after 2004, brought an increase of the internal differentiation in terms of accessibility (the benefits remain spatially selective). Besides, the TEN network first of all encompassed the transport corridors that had the highest ranks in the previous socio-economic system. Many of them primarily served the needs of the heavy industry and transit (in particular – from the former Soviet Union to the former German Democratic Republic, Komornicki 2007). Thus, paradoxically, support from the European Union in some cases assisted the realization of plans dating from the 1970s. Simultaneously, some other directions, serving new economic relations already generated within the European Union, remained outside the investment programmes. Examples were the mutual connections between Poland and Czechia (constituting elements of the diagonal transport setting between Northern and Central Europe, on the one hand, and South-Western Europe, on the other). Besides, the very density of the TEN-T network in many countries of Central Europe is significantly lower than in Western Europe. Networks of motorways are in the initial phases of development, while high-speed railways are virtually absent.

Contrary to Southern Europe, the investment process in the new member countries primarily brings about improvement of road accessibility. This is partly due to the very low starting levels. In such conditions, a relatively small project brings a perceptible effect. However, taking into account the qualitative aspect, it can be assumed that quite soon the main determinant of the core-periphery relation in Europe shall be constituted by the access to high-speed railways (and not only, as this is the case nowadays, to the modern road network). Given this perspective, even the currently observed development of the motorway network in the accession countries shall most probably not allow for overcoming the syndrome of peripherality.

\(^{2}\) See also the article of Adelsberger in this edition.
The effectiveness of transport-related investments, carried out with EU funds within the programming periods 2004–2006 and 2007–2013, is in some regions limited by the excessive dispersion of means invested. In Central Europe, key projects were undertaken both in the framework of the TEN corridors and outside them. There was no effective mechanism for directing the funds first of all to projects considered by the Union to have the highest priority. A good example is provided by the project Rail Baltica, ranked among the highest priority undertakings, having key significance in the context of modal changes in serving Baltic countries (and of the already mentioned transit from Russia). Besides, on the territory of Poland, for instance, the sole activity carried out along this route was to modernize a segment inside the agglomeration of Warsaw. At the same time, in the vicinity of the border with Lithuania, the ultimate course of this route has not yet been established.

A separate question is still constituted by the existence of regions featuring particularly low accessibility levels on the European scale. These areas include some islands, mountain areas as well as the sparsely populated northern part of Nordic countries. The same category includes some regions, where low accessibility is not so highly dependent on natural conditions, but is mainly the consequence of long lasting underinvestment and a low position in the current hierarchy of priorities. Examples are eastern Poland, northern Romania or southern Bulgaria. Limited financial means cause that the governments of the respective countries first of all implement projects linking those countries with Western Europe, thereby deepening the peripheral character of the less accessible regions. Policies related to the isolated areas must to a higher degree take the air transport and the complementary role of the telecommunications infrastructure into account.

Taking into account the questions outlined, further deepening territorial aspects of the priorities in the domain of transport-related undertakings, appears to be fully justified. In this context, it seems to be of essential importance to increase the competence of the European level in terms of dedicating the structural assistance to the investment projects considered to be of high priority. Among the TEN corridors, the role of connections between the new member countries (like, e.g., between Poland and Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria) must be enhanced. In the context of the planned shift of priorities towards transport branches that are more environment-friendly, treating high-speed railway lines, extending towards the peripheral areas of the continent, as European priorities should also become the subject of consideration.

5 The challenges of national, regional and local accessibility

In the periods of investment-related advance in transport systems, those levels of accessibility, perceived from European, national and regional perspectives, are in a process of differentiation. Some areas, which are relatively easily accessible from the core of the European Union, might remain peripheral on a national scale. An example is provided by the regions of western Poland (especially the Lower Silesian province with the city of Wrocław), increasingly well connected to the German road network, while connections to the capital of Poland, Warsaw, are still quite bad (see Fig. 2 and 3). Simultaneously, within the Lower Silesian region itself, the situation, in addition, is internally differentiated. Some local centres, situated in Sudety Montains, are very poorly accessible from Wrocław. A centre that is well connected at the national level might turn out to be poorly accessible from its hinterland, which has an impact on the magnitude of the labour market and accessibility of social services. This, in particular, applies to some of the metropolitan areas struggling with permanent congestion.

The uneven distribution of accessibility in the regions is in some cases a consequence of the policies implemented, including investment-making policies, making use of the Structural Funds of the European Union. One of the causes seems to be the excessive orientation of these means towards transit projects of international dimensions. This entails the underinvestment of some connections between the most important centres in particular countries. Thereby, the possibility of developing network patterns becomes limited, which means a negative influence on economic growth. In the case of the new member states, the
hence the development-related role of transport) was in Poland one of the essential decision factors. Economic difficulties, though, caused that the factor of satisfaction of current demand remained decisive. Disproportions in the accessibility at European and national levels became the basis for the typology proposed in the report of the Polish Presidency (Böhme et al. 2011), which is a case study of territorial key accessibility in Poland. Polish regions were classified as featuring a relatively high level of spatial accessibility in both, one or none lack of investments along some of the corridors deepens spatial polarisation. This issue becomes more pronounced in the context of the global economic crisis. Thus, for instance in Poland, the plan for road construction projects for the period until 2015 was modified in 2011 (Ministerstwo Infrastruktury 2011). In the new time-table a large proportion of projects realised in western Poland was preserved while almost all of those that serve the accessibility of the eastern peripheries were not considered. At the stage of establishment of the list of the key projects (in 2007), accessibility (and

Figure 3
Road accessibility of Warsaw, 2010

Source: Komornicki et al. 2008
of these two dimensions. For each of these types, specific principles for the future cohesion policy were proposed (defined with regard to the principles of concentration and conditionality that were proposed in the Fifth Cohesion Report). It was assumed that in the case of good European and national accessibility, external support for the investment projects should be limited to the activities conducive to the advantageous modal changes and should have the form of loans and not direct disbursements. Within those areas, featuring a low level of national accessibility and high level of the European one, the funds should be concentrated to internal connections, especially in the intermetropolitan setting. In the case of extremely poorly accessible regions, potential investments should be formally constrained to a smaller extent (conditionality).

The challenges associated with transport-related accessibility on the local scale are of a different character. They, on the one hand, concern metropolitan areas (MEGAs) and functional urban areas (FUAs) and, on the other hand, accessibility of services of general public interest (especially for peripheral, sparsely populated or depopulating areas). The problems of accessibility in large centres and in their vicinity are associated with congestion caused by the mobility of inhabitants in particular including job commuting. The main issue is the optimisation of daily mobility in time and space, with consideration of the complementary use

Figure 4
Road accessibility of hospitals in the Polish NUTS 2 region of Masovia

Source: elaborated by M. Stepniak in the framework of the project “Development Trends of Masovia”
of the individual and collective transport. A number of economic studies has been recently devoted to modelling respective solutions (e.g. Scott/Axhausen 2006). Their purpose is often to elaborate the foundations for the system of universal road fees (road pricing, see e.g. Ubbels/Verhoef 2005) potentially allowing, to implement the universal “mobility policy” on various spatial scales. Metropolitan areas, in addition, feature very high costs of transport investment projects (both in road transport and in public transport), which puts such areas in a doubly disadvantageous situation: As regions with relatively high GDP per capita levels they can frequently not enjoy structural assistance by the European Union (regions exceeding 75% of the Union average in this respect), while, at the same time, costs of projects such as urban railways, subways or bypass roads quite often remain beyond the capacities of their own budgets.

The problem of access to services of general public interest is connected with the issue of internal peripheries – areas often situated at the boundaries of the administrative units that are far away in terms of space (and especially time) from subregional centres ensuring services such as hospitals, secondary schools, or culture. Such a kind of periphery is sometimes encountered within the confines of larger units, considered to be well developed and well accessible. Figure 4 shows the access to hospitals in the province of Mazowieckie, surrounding the capital of Poland, Warsaw. The province of Mazowieckie features the highest GDP per capita in Poland, exceeding 75% of the EU average, meaning that from 2014, it will not be eligible for Structural Funds and has a relatively high level of transport accessibility. The values of these indicators are the result of the even better situation in Warsaw itself and the frequently quite problematic one in the outer zone of the region. Zones of poor access to hospitals can be observed at a relatively small distance from Warsaw (especially over the southern direction) and this despite the relatively even distribution of the very hospital units. Areas of poor accessibility frequently are also the result of a lack of definite fragments of secondary infrastructure (e.g., bridges over rivers).

Overcoming this problem requires high quality coordination in realisation of transport projects of different ranks. Gaps in the secondary network frequently limit the spatial effect of larger-scale undertakings. An additional difficulty is the frequently excessively political character of the decision process. This is conducive to the unduly dispersion of funds for transport developments (so that they find their way to every unit of a lower rank irrespective of the actual needs, Komornicki 2008).

6 Future transport policy and improvement of accessibility

Returning to the previously cited statements from the Territorial Agenda 2020, one should pay attention to the fact that the development of transport network and corridors in Europe will be significantly affected by several of the defined challenges for territorial development. This especially applies to the challenges associated with climate and energy as well as to global competition. The share of transport in CO₂ emissions increases and the European Union tries to establish itself as the world leader in mitigating climate change. At the same time, one should in the long term expect an increase of liquid fuel prices. The problems of the transport policy shall, therefore, to an increasing degree be solved in a comprehensive manner with an appropriate spatial differentiation.

This in particular concerns the improvement of effectiveness of the existing transport networks. Within the core areas of the European Union, this improvement is possible with measures of low investment intensity. In the peripheral areas and on almost the entire territory of the new member countries it is necessary to continue investments into infrastructure (in both road and railway transport). At the same time, the frequently postulated modal changes must also be regionally differentiated. It is essential to identify the segments of the market of shipment – of both cargo and people – best suited for supporting the railway transport as well as inland and coastal navigation. High potential for a territorially differentiated transport policy might arise from the introduction of the universal system of electronically executed road pricing (partly replacing taxation of liquid fuels). It would provide the possibility of diversified limitations to individual car transport depending upon the region, road category as

See also article of Buthe/Pütz/Spangenberg in this edition.
well as time period and technical parameters of the vehicle. The first country, having announced the introduction of the system of common road pricing in the nearest future, are the Netherlands.

A response to the challenges, related to global accessibility, should consist in the tendency towards limited deglomeration of intercontinental traffic among seaports and airports. An important role in air connections to Asia should be assigned to the large airports of Central and Eastern Europe geographically privileged in this respect (including the new airport of Berlin and facilities in the new member countries). In cargo transport one might expect a slow increase of significance of surface connections, first of all through Russia and Kazakhstan to China, in a farther perspective through Turkey and Iran to India and through Morocco to Western Africa.

In the European dimension in the period until 2020, it is necessary to preserve the differentiated transport policy with respect to the old and new member countries. This is demonstrated by the analyses referred to, showing the theoretical possibilities of improving accessibility with the effect of raising the standard of all roads to the level of motorways or of railways to high-speed railways (European Commission 2010). In percentage terms, the respective increase, as a rule, does not exceed 20% in Western Europe while in eastern Poland or in Romania it exceeds 100%. It is also necessary to maintain the balance between the support for TransEuropean and basic networks (road and railway) linking metropolises (MEGAs) as well as medium-sized towns in national and local transboundary settings. The objective in this case is to prevent excessive differences in the levels of European, national and local accessibility. Projects realised in consecutive years (especially those supported by the European Union) should be subject to evaluation of their impact on accessibility at all spatial scales mentioned. Projects improving the situation on all scales thereby gain natural priority. In this context, it is not only important to properly select the projects, but also to adopt appropriate standards for their realisation. A good example is provided by the too sparse nodes along the newly built motorways. In view of the drive towards cost minimisation, the situation is frequent in the new member countries. A consequence is the “tunnel effect”, i.e. the project does not only impede improvement of accessibility on the regional scale, but even gives rise to emergence of new internal peripheries.

In the “The Territorial State and Perspectives of the European Union” (2011) document and in terms of policy recommendations, the following objectives in connection with spatial accessibility and development of European transport networks were considered most important:

- to improve linear linkages between primary and secondary transport networks especially in the new Member States so that the improvement of European accessibility can be harmonised with the national accessibility of regions within a member state
- to deconcentrate the EU’s external transport links.

It was also concluded that the support for priority projects of the European Union (within the framework of the TEN network) should be stronger and the dedicated concentration of means more pronounced.
References


European Commission, 2008: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the progress of exploratory talks regarding cooperation in the field of transport with the neighbouring countries. Brussels.


