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EU TRANSPORT POLICY IN POLAND FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF TEN-T PROGRAM REALIZATION

Abstract

European Union first attempted to create common transport policy in 1950s; in Poland, TEN-T program has been realized as a tool to implement the goals of EU transport policy since 2004. The aim of the article is to present the way EU transport policy has been realized in Poland and to what effect. The author hopes to present the most commonly committed pitfalls and to highlight the best projects and types of approach used so far when analyzing the infrastructure projects, realized within the TEN-T program.

Key words: TEN-T, INEA, transport infrastructure.

Introduction

Transport policy functions and targets

To understand better European transport policy and its influence on the activities undertaken by the Member States, here on the example of Poland, one ought to start from the very short overview of the milestones of the common effort of European countries to enable smooth, pro-business, efficient transport solutions, as well as with short definition so as to grasp shortly how important transport infrastructure, and therefore developing transport policy is. It seems transport policy has been one of the longest ever applied by the Community, its beginning older than European Union itself. The shape of the transport policy and its goals influence greatly other elements of economy through its functions and tasks it fulfills. Therefore, one should enumerate several of its functions, as Grzelakowski and Matczak and Przybyłowska did [Grzelakowski, Matczak, Przybyłowski 2008: 35]:

– regulatory-adjusting function: when transport policy is understood as an instrument and the tool to transform the transport system, meaning the

real zone of the transport sector and its adjustments to the requirements of the national and international environment from the market approach;
- information function: when transport policy shows the parties and the institutions and authorities the directions for the given transport system to develop, its goals and the tools to reach them;
- stimulation function: when transport policy is treated as a kind of an impulse for the transport system to develop, being at the same time the instrument able to boost certain development processes within this sector in order to gain the desired stages of balance or in-purpose imbalance;
- coordinating function: understood as focusing on coordinating the transport system both in the internal and external settings as a part of its relations with its environment, and equalizing its development dynamics with the speed of economy development;
- legal harmonization function: understood as the proper harmonization of the transport policy, meaning being coherent with other sector policies (of competition, regional, ecologic, etc.) as far as the goals and its realization tools are concerned, both in EU and with separate member states.

The functions, enumerated above, are to be mutually interconnected, in order to create the complete picture of transport policy as a process of conscious shaping the economy so as to establish smoothly functioning market mechanism. Therefore, the targets (Grzelakowski, Matczak, Przybyłowski 2008: 38–39) which the transport policy makers ought to complete, should:
- include the time criterion, understood as dividing the goals into medium- and long-term ones;
- be coherent and hierarchically ordered internally;
- be clear enough to be accepted by the society;
- be a sector derivative from the perspective of macroeconomic goals of the country, including economic growth strategies;
- maintain certain coherence with the goals of other sector policies of the country;
- take into full consideration the current, previously identified transport needs as well as the real possibilities to realize them in the certain time horizon;
- be properly coordinated with the transport policies of neighbouring countries and EU transport policy;
- provide optimal use of the existing resources of the transport system and promote its rational increase;
- stimulate transport system sustainable development.

One ought to highlight the fact that the requirements that were mentioned above are also influenced by the factor that are beyond the grasp or the influence of the given transport program creators and which nonetheless, as it seems, should be taken into consideration. Such are mainly political aspects that may influence the speed of voting the acts which give mandate to the following phases of the project, as well as various aspects of economic development, economic cycle included- during recession the projects with long-term time horizon might be

approved as initiatives offering employment to numerous groups of people, who otherwise would be included into the group of the unemployed, therefore limiting the chances to boost the economy. However, on the other hand, projects of such type may be greeted with lack of enthusiasm as those that generate huge costs which are to be paid at once, the fact, in case of a tight or limited budget, which may create considerable problems.

Shaping common European transport policy

As one might notice from this very short definition of transport policy functions, potential challenges it faces and problems that often require solving before even forming complete transport policy or initiate projects that are to put the policy into practice might be of great slowing force. That is why creating common transport policy for such important and enormous, also geographically, market, was, and still is, such an important issue. The range of enumerated transport policy functions may also serve as some answer so as to why creating and implementing common transport policy for all Member States of European Union has taken so much time and so great an effort.

In order to follow the way contemporary EU transport policy has been shaped, one needs to remind briefly some of the milestones of the path creating such important area. The first document that one ought to remember is the Treaty of Rome, accepted on 29th and 30th May 1956 by six Member States of ECSC, European Coal and Steel Community, establishing a general common market [The Research Infrastructure on European Integration, 2014].

European Union Treaty [Archives of UKIE, 2013], signed in 1992 in Maastricht, describes the idea of common market both in broader sense and greater detail than Treaty of Rome, offering room for further integration of the nations. However, the most interesting idea seems to be the idea of Single European Market, born in early phases of shaping the European Union; its elements, focused on providing the Member States with the procedures to ease the mutual cooperation, are dated on 1960s; and the reasons why they idea proved to be successful were, among others, the drop of competitiveness of European industry when compared to the USA,

However, the best known acts to influence shaping the common European transport policy are three Pan European conferences that took place in Prague in 1991, on Crete in 1994 and in Helsinki in 1997, thus establishing the idea of transport corridors, drawn throughout countries in Europe (not necessarily EU Member States then), identifying bottlenecks, potential threats to smooth transport paths and proclaiming decisions to be made so as to create really coherent, well implemented transport policy, therefore laying the foundations for all the activities, supervised currently by European bodies, directed to create functioning, common European transport infrastructure.

Finally, in order to enable closer examination of transport policy in Poland, one ought to remember that, as transport infrastructure is believed to be the basis

of economic development [Rydzkowski, Wojewódzka-Król, 2009: 443–447], its inconsistence with the need of developing economy may occur the series of negative effects, such as:

- transport time and costs increase;
- storage time and costs increase;
- transport services quality decrease;
- adverse structural changes in transport due to disproportion in the development of transport infrastructure of various transport branches;
- numerous difficulties in proper transport infrastructure development.

The process of transport infrastructure development is based on work of numerous stakeholders, Member States having different budgets and political approach. That is why it is so crucial to balance the process of sustainable transport infrastructure development.

Transeuropean network: transport

The need to harmonize the process of creating and developing the transport infrastructure of all transport branches was the drive to create the program which main goal is to help create such proceedings: TEN-T, Transeuropean network (TEN); as it concerns also other networks, energy and telecommunication among them, the full name includes also the type of network, meaning transport. The directives for this program concern rail, road, inland transport, airports, sea ports and transport management systems [Rydzkowski, Wojewódzka-Król, 2009: 465]. The time to create the network was originally established until 2010 with the European Directive 1692/96/EC, nonetheless, all the targets yet to be realized are constantly examined and updated if needed, as are the criteria of choosing the elements for the TEN-T network.

TEN-T administrative bodies

The first administrative body, responsible for implementing the concept of transeuropean network was DG MOVE, Directorate General for Mobility and Transport [DG MOVE, 2014]. Since 2006, the body responsible for preparing and implementing the programs of TEN-T, including its technical and financial aspects, was TEN-TEA [TEN-T Executive Agency, TEN-T EA, 2013, but in cooperation with DG MOVE, as the latter is still responsible for the full picture, the whole of transport policy, programming and evaluating TEN-T program. Currently, since the beginning of 2014, the successor of TEN-T EA, INEA [Innovation and Network Executive Agency, INEA, 2014], has been coordinating individual projects within TEN-T program. The program consists of hundreds of projects, realized either by individual Member State or by the group of them in every transport branch, and they all share the same goal of strengthening transport cohesion, thus providing interoperability.

Poland in TEN-T

In Poland, TEN-T program has been realized since Poland became a Member State of European Union. Nevertheless, the main targets of this program were present before that time in the process of shaping the transport policy of the country, as Poland was the realization stage for TINA, Transport Infrastructure Needs Assessment. TINA, as states Urząd Komitetu Integracji Europejskiej [UKIE, European Integration Comittee Office, 2013], was made in order to adjust the transport networks of the countries applying to the European Union at that time, meaning Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Cyprus. The program [UKIE, European Integration Comittee Office, 2013] was foreseen to: "build and modernize the highways and express roads, strengthen the rest of the road network and improve the quality of bridges and to create efficient connections among European Union countries and the countries applying to enter EU, as well as […] to adjust the road safety and traffic congestion level to European standards through removing so called bottlenecks and to create in the chosen areas (so called transport corridors) effective transport routes".

What is important, TINA program allowed to adjust already existing infrastructure network to the requirements of TEN-T program according to the Directive no. 1692/96 of European Parliament from 23rd July 1996. UKIE [UKIE, 2013] reminds that the road network described in TINA is exactly the same as the one describing Transeuropean Transport Corridors, described in the already mentioned conferences on Crete and in Helsinki. TINA was to be finished by 2015 and due to the fact of applying countries accession, the settings of this program that ceased to be realized on time were implemented into TEN-T program, and understood to apply to all Member States. It is to be highlighted that thanks to TINA program, preparing TEN-T requirements for the regions of the countries accepted to European Union in 2004 became definitely easier due to already determined infrastructure priorities and long-lasting preparations.

Poland became an European Union Member State on 1st May 2004; since that time TEN-T program projects have been realized in the country, Poland being called the biggest program beneficiary for the third time by Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ, *Społeczno-gospodarcze efekty członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej. Główne wnioski w związku z siódmą rocznicą przystąpienia Polski do UE*, p. 5, www.polskawue.pl, access: 10.10.2013); also, The Economist, assessing Polish efforts to gain European funds, highlighted the growing ability to gain and to use the funds, mostly infrastructure ones [*Accessing EU Funds…*, 2005: 27]. There were many programs realized in years between 2004 and 2012; as there is no space to discuss all of them in great detail, below, in Table 1, there are presented the summarized data concerning the number of the projects, the type of transport they concerned, as well as the amount of money that was funded within the project [INEA, 2014).

Table 1

TEN-T program realized in Poland from 2004 to 2012

	Poland		
Year	**Type of transport**	**No of projects**	**Mount**
2004	rail	2	3250000
	highway	1	1000000
2005	rail	3	4042670
	highway	2	13811923
	road	1	1700000
2006	rail	1	4900000
	sea	1	1500000
	road	3	3900000
	highway	2	2540000
	air	1	2387000
2007	Galileo	1	190000000
	road	2	8210000
	air	2	350810000
2008	Galileo	1	190000000
	road	2	8210000
	air	2	350810000
2009	rail	1	8822657
	air	2	8271124
	sea	2	17590800
2010	rail	1	8822657
	sea	2	17590800
	air	2	8271124
2011	rail	5	38698000
	air	1	1814000
	sea	1	1697020
2012	rail	1	1930000
	sea	1	558000
	road	1	2229000
Total		47	1252808775

Source: own.

Having analyzed the elements of the projects realized in Poland within TEN-T program, one may try to present the most important issues in several points:

- In the period 2004–2012, Poland tried to realize 50 projects, 47 of which were successfully brought to the end and three of which were cancelled. The reasons for cancelling were too long the time of the announced tenders, or, mostly, the problems with accepting realization variants (by the inhabitants of the area when the project was to take place), perhaps it may be claimed that the cooperation with all the project stakeholders could be improved in such cases.
- Many projects realized in Poland in that time concerned road transport, mostly highways; the road transport network was greatly improved in that time. Only recently has the number of projects concerning rail increased.
- Not many Project concerned inland transport, although there have appeared the ideas to use the possibilities the Odra river offers in the future.
- Projects concerning air and the sea transport focused mainly on improving the quality of the already existing point infrastructure elements, such as airports, or sea ports; none of the projects realized at that time concerned creating the new object of such kind.
- The issues of realizing the tenders within the projects seem to be the matter of great importance; some of the tenders are described as unprofitable by the companies, the president of the Supreme Audit Office pointed to the low prices as the reason for the reason many of the sub-contractor going bankrupt [Opinia prezesa NIK, 2014].

Nonetheless, in many cases, the projects were realized in very good manner, and their analysis allowed to create some of the good practices list. Some of the activities that are worth recommending, are presented below:

- Grouping the projects around priority projects, so as to speed up creating strong network of transport infrastructure of the given area and to avoid too great spreading of the funds resources.
- Focusing on obtaining the funds on actual realization of the goals understood as stages of building the infrastructure, instead of preparing the documents; such move helps to monitor every step of the realization process in greater detail
- Limiting the process of creating and writing the documentation describing the project realization (e.g. such stages could be prepared using the means of local governments, also, if possible, such stage ought to be limited in time as much as possible in order to avoid the situation when prepared documentation is out of date the moment the technical work has started).
- Professional approach to public consultation so as to avoid potential protests and the threat that the works are blocked; perhaps longer consultation process would in fact allow to shorten the whole process of the project building- when all the stages are agreed upon before, the potential protests seem to have less of public support and therefore, less power.
- Professional assessment of the use of projected ideas- to avoid the situation when the capacity of newly developed area is not used to its full extend.

As far as financing of the particular projects is concerned, Poland seems to be using all options available: from the TEN-T funds, INEA funds, but also from Marco Polo project, as well as from public private partnership, though truth be told, the latter does not seem to be the most commonly used. However, just the number of major TEN-T projects being realized in Poland shows it is impossible to be performed without the European Union help, both at project stage and from financial perspective. Poland has been using the experience of older democracies, suggestions taken from the neighbouring countries and case studies from Member States of similar size and history, like Spain. At the same time, constant analyses of the already performed actions seems of great importance, so as to learn also from Poland own experience and to constantly improve the methods of implementing European transport policy.

Conclusion

Poland has been European Union Member State for a bit over decade, being at the time a fast-learning student when it comes to use the experience of older democracies, Member States with similar or bigger history of using and exploiting available financial resources and expert knowledge in transforming transport infrastructure. There is still much to be done, and Poland faces huge challenges both in the area of adjusting to the greater picture of the whole European transport infrastructure map and in presenting its own, perhaps somewhat smaller, but no less important projects enabling eradicating bottlenecks and other transport inconveniences. Just the short overview of the projects performed within the possibilities offered by INEA shows how much Poland has achieved in such short time, and at the same time- how much it is still awaiting the country. It is to be hoped that all the lessons gained when undergoing the transformation of transport infrastructure in Poland will be the lessons well learned.

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