

**THE POTENTIAL OF THE
ROMANIAN TRANSPORT NETWORK**

*Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I would like to begin by thanking you for the opportunity offered to Romania to present to the distinguished audience a few considerations regarding the potential of the transport system of Romania in order to be a link within the connections of the transport infrastructure networks between Europe and Asia. It is unanimously recognised that a modern and sustainable transport infrastructure represents the “engine” of development of the national economies, thus allowing the intensification of the economic activities, the increase of the economic competition and the integration of the national economies into European and world economy. As a consequence, our efforts must be correlated in order to identify optimum solutions for transport that would fully value the potential of the existing transport links, as well as of those to be identified.

Ladies and Gentleman,

Bearing in mind the above-mentioned, we would like to underline that the potential of Romania as concerns the facilitation of the Euro-Asian transport is assured mainly by the competitive advantages of Romania, namely the connection of the road, rail, inland waterways and maritime national transport network to the Trans-European transport network TEN-T.

Thus, due to its favourable geographical location, Romania represents a pillar ensuring the connection between the European Union Member States on the one hand and the States - Parties to the Basic Multilateral Agreement on International Transport for Development of the Europe – the Caucasus – Asia Corridor, signed at Baku on 8 September 1998 (Basic Agreement) on the other hand can be ensured, by the Transport Corridor Europe – Caucasus – Asia, as well as by the Pan-European Transport Corridors IV (road and rail) and VII (the Danube river).

Of course, the development of the Euro-Asian transport links raises a series of problems which can be solved through the appropriate development of the infrastructure in order to enable it to have the capacity to answer to the necessities, by creating the legal framework that could assure the functioning in optimum conditions of the transport networks and, last but not least, by undertaking the measures meant to eliminate the administrative barriers.

In this respect, an aspect that is not to be neglected is that, for the future development of the transport infrastructures, it is necessary to achieve a better co-ordination between the actions of the international organisations as UNECE, UNESCAP, ECMT, BSEC and TRACECA (which will become an organisation in accordance with its short term strategy) and of other international organisations, as well as with regional initiatives involved in the development of the transport network, meant to interconnect the European transport networks with the Asian ones, in order to realise an optimum selection of the priority transport axes. This means first to take the appropriate measures at national level and after that the co-ordinated approach of measures at regional level.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Romania develops and modernises its transport networks in order to face the new model of transport which emerged from its economy evolution. As an integral part of this process, Romania actively promotes a policy aiming mainly to ensure the accessibility for the commercial and economic connections with its neighbours – Member States of the European Union and Black Sea riparian states. This is why it is important that its transport network be at a standard that could answer efficiently to the traffic demand.

In this context, the Government of Romania obtained the support of the International Financial Institutions and of the European Commission for the financing of projects in the field of transport, projects aiming to contribute to the intensification of the efforts undertaken until now in order to make the transport activity more efficient, in parallel with its harmonisation with the new requests imposed by the market economy and integration into the European Union.

The main infrastructure projects with foreign financing relevant for the region refer to:

- The rehabilitation of Bucharest – Constantza railway, project financed by the Japanese Bank for International Co-operation and the European Commission,
- The construction of Bucharest – Constantza Motorway, financed by the European Investment Bank,
- The construction of the Constantza bypass and
- The construction of the barge terminal in the Port of Constantza, financed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development,
- Projects for the improvement of the navigation conditions on the Danube.

All these projects are co-financed by the Government of Romania. By mentioning this, I want to highlight the importance that we pay to the development of Pan European Transport Corridor No. IV – road and rail, as well as our interest for the creation in the Black Sea area of a modern system of integrated transport of the European network and openend to the multimodal connection with the Caucasus and Central Asia.

As regards the **Pan European Transport Corridor No. IV – road component**, until 2011 the Government of Romania has in view the construction of 873 km of motorway. The total value of this investment is Euro 4.813 billion. We have already ensured the financing for a few sections of motorway and in the near future we have in view the signature of other loan agreements with the International Financial Institutions but also the usage of the cohesion funds.

On the **Pan European Transport Corridor No. IV - rail component** we have in view the rehabilitation of 1,360 km of railway, investment which requires funds amounting to about Euro 6 billion. Part of these funds are already ensured by the European Investment Bank, the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation, the European Commission through ISPA Programme and the State budget. We intend to continue cooperation with these institutions for the financing of the other sections of railways and we also want to access the cohesion funds in the next period.

Bearing in mind the key objective of Romania to integrate in the European Union, the development of the infratsructure on the route of the **Pan European Transport Corridor No. IV** represents an absolute priority for the Ministry of Transport, Constructions and Tourism.

The importance which the Government of Romania pays to the development of the **Pan European Transport Corridor No. IV** comes out of a multitude of projects that cover integrally the section on the Romanian territory. At present, on all the sections (road and rail), measures have been taken to accelerate the achievement of the projects in different stages of preparation and execution.

The projects under implementation on the road component of this corridor are: Arad Ring and Arad – Timișoara – at motorway standard; Deva – Orăștie Motorway; Sibiu bypass; Pitești bypass and, respectively, Drojna – Fetești and Fetești – Cernavodă Motorway.

As concerns the **rail component, the projects under implementation are:** rehabilitation of **Bucharest North – Băneasa railway, Fetești – Constantza railway;** rehabilitation of **Bucharest Băneasa – Fundulea – Fetești railway** and rehabilitation of **Câmpina – Predeal railway.**

At present, on the **road component of the corridor, the section Bucharest – Drojna (97,3 km) is finalised,** and on the **rail component** the section **Bucharest – Campina (90 km) is finalised.**

Ladies and gentleman,

Taking into account that Romania represents 47% of the navigable sector of the Danube and that this waterway is used much more under its potential, the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Tourism pays special attention to the development of the sector Pan-European Transport Corridor VII – the Danube, which is crossing the territory of Romania. In this respect, a series of projects are under development and will be implemented in the near future which will contribute to the development of the river transport of goods and passengers on the Danube and in the Port of Constantza. These projects mainly aim at modernization and the development of infrastructure, the increase of traffic safety and environmental protection.

With a view to modernize the development of the infrastructure of Corridor VII, several projects were identified aimed at improving the conditions of navigation, as follows:

- on the sector Calarasi – Braila
- on the common Romanian-Bulgarian sector of Danube, situated on axis no. 18.

As concerns the increase of traffic safety on the Danube, it should be mentioned that in 2005 the European Union approved the RIS Directive (River Information System) regarding the implementation on the inland waterways of a unitary survey system of the river vessels. According to the provisions of this directive, in 2005, the development of the project of survey and control of the traffic on the Romanian sector of the Danube began, this project being finalized in June 2006. A topo-hydrographical survey and signalling measurements on the Romanian sector of the Danube will also be carried out.

Particular attention will be given to the measures meant for environment protection, in accordance with the standards. Thus, at present, there are ships which take the residues in the ports of Giurgiu and Galatzi. In the main river ports (Turnu-Severin, Cernavoda, Tulcea and Sulina) projects will be achieved concerning the taking over of oil residues, waste waters and garbage from the ships.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my speech, I would like to make reference to the Port of Contantza, the main Romanian port and the largest port to the Black Sea. The Port of Constantza is situated at the crossroad of the commercial routes making the connection between the markets of the countries from the Central and Eastern Europe which have no sea exit, with the Trans-Caucasian Area, Central Asia and the Far East.

The favourable geographic position, as the importance of the Port of Constantza is emphasized by its connection with two Pan-European Transport Corridors, thus: Corridor VII – the Danube (river) and Corridor IV (road and railways).

The Port of Constantza is one of the main centres of distribution which serves the Central and Eastern Europe area, offering a series of advantages, among which we can mention:

- a multifunctional Port with modern facilities and depths of water in the port basin sufficient for berthing for the biggest vessels crossing the Suez Canal;
- the direct access to the countries from Central and Eastern Europe through the Pan-European Corridor VII – the Danube;
- a centre of distribution of containers towards the ports at the Black Sea;
- good connections with all transport modes: railways, road, river, air and pipes;
- Ro-Ro and ferry boat terminals which ensure a fast connection to the ports of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea;
- Modern facilities for passenger boats;
- Land surfaces available for future developments.

The Port Constantza is connected to the national road and railways network, being situated on the Pan European Transport Corridor IV (road-railways) and near the Pan European Transport Corridor IX (road) which passes through Bucharest. At the same time, the Port of Constantza is 20 km from Mihail Kogalniceanu Airport.

The Port of Constantza is also connected to the national pipes network, and the connection with the Danube – the Pan European Transport Corridor VII is made through the Danube – the Black Sea Channel. Thus, there is a direct waterway between the two commercial pillars of Europe: the Port of Rotterdam (the North Sea) and the Port of Constantza (the Black Sea).

The Port of Constantza is at present the only port in the Black Sea area which succeeded in overcoming the problems of operation nature thanks to some strategic investments of infrastructure. Thus, it has at present the largest capacity to operate containers from the Black Sea, namely 1,000,000 TEU.

For the time being, the operation capacity of the Port of Constanza is about 105 million tons/year. The traffic in the Port of Constantza increased from 50 to 61 million tons between 2004 and 2005. Thus, the maritime traffic increased from 39 to 47 million tons, while the river traffic increased by 23%, to 14 million tons. The new status of the Port of Constantza as a port junction for the container transport in the Black Sea is reflected in the increase of 56% of transit traffic to 5.5 million tons in 2005.

The container operation increased from 386,000 TEU in 2004 to 768,000 TEU in 2005, registering an increase of about 100%.

The main programmes of development and modernization implemented starting with the year 2000 were the following:

- achievement of the rehabilitation programme of the North breakwater;
- achievement of the first phase of the new container terminal (Mol IIS),
- implementation of the modern information system (VTMIS), the improvement of the high level management of the port and the achievement of the connection to the global port system.

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We have also in view:

- the construction of a barge terminal in the Port of Constantza meant to increase the safety in operation of the vessels;
- the increase of the operation capacity of the container terminal in the Port of Constantza (Mol IIS); in this respect, we mention that the works for phases II and phase III have started.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is well known that at present the European Union pays special importance to the development of the concept of “Motorways of the Sea” introduced by Decision No. 884/2004/EC. At the same time, in the final Report of the High Level Group for the extension of the main trans-European transport axis in the countries and in the vicinity areas of the EU, published in November 2005, 5 priority axis are identified and the “Motorways of the Sea” are one of the priority axis, together with the North Axis, the Central Axis, the South-East Axis and the South-West Axis, as you well know.

Therefore, we would like to mention that the launching of the Concept – the Motorway of the Sea from South-West Europe (the Western side of the Mediterranean Sea connecting Spain, France, Italy, including Malta with connections to the Motorway of the Sea from the South-East Europe and also to the Black Sea) will lead to the creation of a link to the Black Sea area. So, it is our duty to make this opportunity concrete. The Port of Constanza has the potential to become the connection point of the Black Sea to the logistic transport chain which is to be created within the Motorway of the Sea from the South-West Europe.

Therefore, I take this opportunity to tell you about our wish to integrate the Port of Constantza within this corridor – the Motorway of the Sea from the South-West Europe, achieving thus the connection to the Black Sea basin.

Thank you for your kind attention.