

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION-INTEGRAL CONNECTIVITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Prof. Nikola Yankov, PhD¹

Abstract: The article discusses the manner in which tracing, designing and implementing trans-continental meridian transport corridors and axes could facilitate the development of peripheral and marginalized EU regions. We do so after relating the issue of integral connectivity to the framework of a process referred to as re-continentalisation (or, sub-recontintalisation with reference to the European Union).

It presents a vision about better transport connectivity between countries in the eastern part of the EU, and between Bulgaria and Romania in particular. The article states that after their meaningful integration, the specific transport corridors, axes, sub-axes and connectors become an essential tool for the joint (economic, social and environmental) development of some less-developed regions in those countries.

It also identifies specific tools for the conceptualization and development of the EU Road Transport Grid, as well as some ideas and visual models about trans-national meridian transport corridors.

Key words: re-continentalisation; visions; transport macro axes; transport axes and sub-axes; transport corridors; trans-border transport.

JEL: 019, 052, R10.

Introduction

When very large systems are in a process of transition (in this article, we refer to the continent of Europe and the European Union established on

¹ n.yankov@uni-svishtov.bg

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION...

it), it is necessary to employ an integral approach. Such an approach is a steppingstone for changing the design of those large systems in line with a common clear vision. This vision constitutes the basis for redesigning a system and initiates a complex process that is referred to as **re-continentalisation**.

By applying the integral approach, it is possible to trace and cover the subordinate units of the knowledge chain. Those include:

- < > The process of continentalization;
- < > The process of re-continentalization (with a focus on the European Union);
- < > The process of integral connectivity within the EU;
- < > The process of optimizing the European transport grid (ETG);
- < > The process of establishing missing and necessary components of the grid;
- < > The process of tracing a meridian Eastern European North-South corridor.

It is essential that this chain be embraced by macro-visioners and macro-strategists.

1. From Globalisation to Continentalisation and Re-continentalisation

We approach continentalization as a process that includes steps towards raising the integral connectivity within a continent. It promotes the establishment of continental unions with different objectives and of different scopes.² According to D. Rifkin, continentalization is a stage, which follows globalization (Rifkin, 2012, p. 414).

In modern sense, continentalization may be related to employing the principles of rational society and rational economy to individual continents

² Examples of continental unions include the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN); the African Union; the Union of South American Nations. In Northern America, those are the union of the Northern states of the USA and the union of provinces in Canada that aim at establishing integrated continental markets.

(Yankov, 2001, p. 89-199). Some of the specific issues of the process include:

- Establishing subcontinental unions with common and jointly coordinated management of strategic spheres;
- Creating a common continental market and single subcontinental markets that are highly interactive;
- Improving continental and subcontinental integral connectivity;
- Uniting EU member states in setting and accomplishing super-strategic goals, e.g. joint effort to protect the environment and resources, transport connectivity, etc.

The review of super-strategic issues in terms of pre-designing (the re-design) of the European Union leads to the conclusion that the union needs to change its current approach and to focus on a specific process we refer to **re-continentalisation**. In this case, the European Union is approached as a sub-continent on the continent of Europe. Hence, one of the strategic issues that needs to be resolved is achieving integral internal and external connectivity between member-states and between them and the other countries on the continent and, in particular, the countries in the Eastern part of the continent.

The joint development of European countries is one of the objectives of the process of re-continentalisation (or subcontinentalisation) that started years ago and is currently facing complex problems. Some of these problems are due to the fact that a number of economic and political alliances are in the process of making a transition to the Third and the Fourth industrial revolutions in a situation of endangered and over-exploited natural environment.

In our opinion, the process of re-continentalisation is an alternative approach to re-designing and re-formulating the goals of the European Union. Hence, a question that follows logically is: "What should the institutions do to ensure the intelligent re-continentalisation of Europe and especially its strategic driver, the EU, within the context of a process of neo-integration?"

Re-continentalisation starts with integral strategic thinking and with applying a macro-approach (vision) to the process of sub-continentalisation. The configuration of a similar approach is presented in Figure 1.

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION...

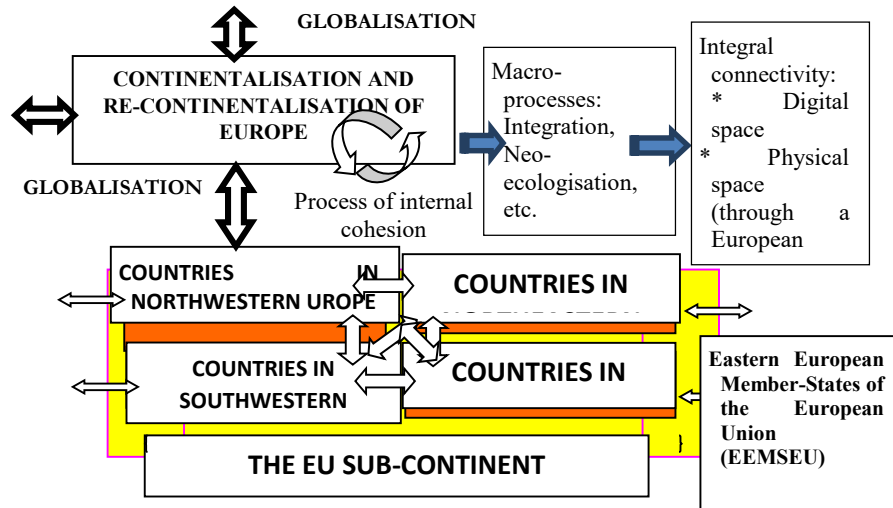


Figure 1. Objects and processes within the context of re-continentalisation

Strategic thinking in the described new situation is the basis for the process of re-continentalisation. In our opinion, that process refers to:

- * **the major functional** sub-systems of the European Union – superstructure, structure, infrastructure and infostructure of all countries and, in particular, of EU member-states;

- * **superstrategic processes in (issues of)** the EU, like consolidation; integration; internal convergence and cohesion; reducing the disparities between member-states, and integral connectivity. In terms of integral connectivity, a strategic problem and process is ensuring good road transport service.

One of the components of the process of re-continentalisation is connectivity. It aims at intensifying the interaction and partnerships between countries, regions, markets and agents within the European Union. In addition, re-continentalisation is the basis for a further stage of their integration.

In terms of Eastern-European member-states of the EU (EEMSEU), the process of re-continentalisation implies: restructuring of their superstructure, structure, infrastructure and info-structure; integral

(horizontal, vertical, diagonal) connectivity in the digital and in the physical space. The objects of the integral vision about the European Union are presented in Figure 2.

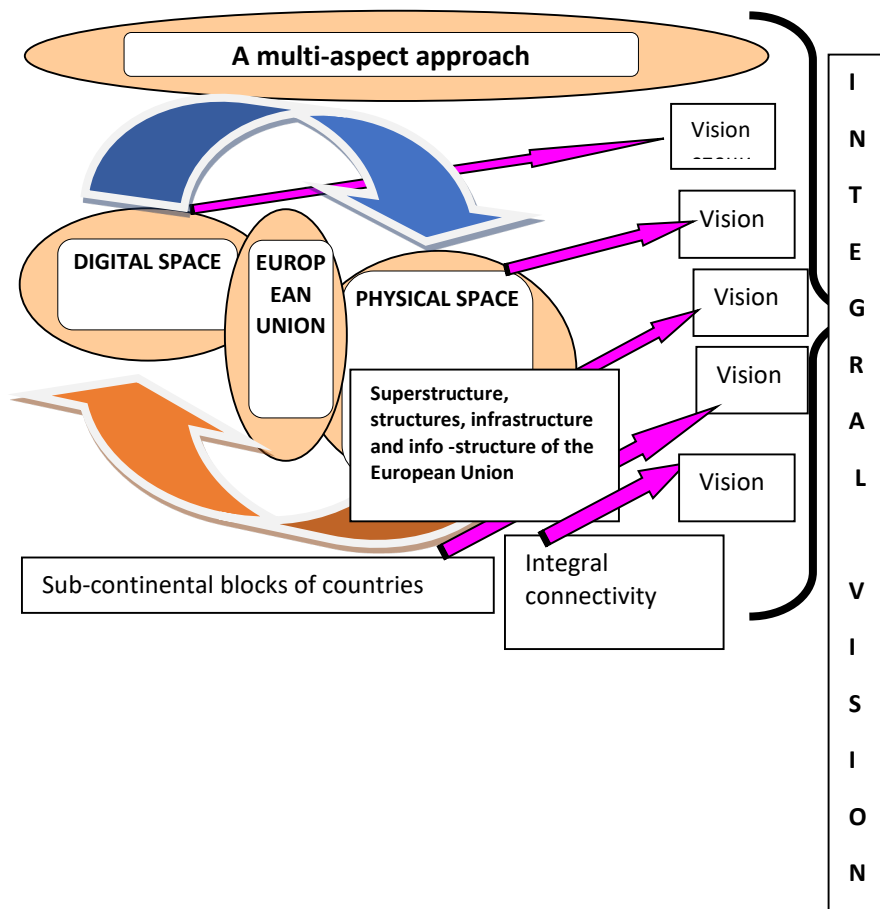


Figure 2. Objects of the integral vision about the development of the European Union

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION...

The horizontal-vertical-diagonal approach to the European Union as a formation and its macro-regions and regions is a prerequisite for the materialization of the process of re-continentalisation. Within the framework of that process, the most important issue is that of rational infrastructure (and especially, transport) physical connectivity.

2. Instruments – Approaches to Connectivity as a Component of the Process of Re-continentalisation

Resolving the issues of integral connectivity on the sub-continent of the European Union requires instruments that would assist the process of solving that problem and its management.

The **Integral (holistic) approach** covers the functional complexes of large systems – the system of the European Union Community in general and the society of each member-state in particular.

Shifting the focus of thinking patterns to re-continentalisation implies following the underlying principle of the integral approach, which is 'Think and form concepts continentally, devise strategies regionally and locally'. In other words, this is paraphrasing the well-known slogan 'Think global, act local' into a phrase that urges TO THINK (not only GLOBALLY, but also CONTINENTALLY and SUB-CONTINENTALLY) and TO ACT at a union-based, national, regional and local level. This principle also relates to applying a **continental approach** to the road transport grid of the European Union.

Shifting the focus of attention and actions to the future that is denoted with the term 'futurizing' (Siegel, 1999) requires employing a **visionary approach** instead of the traditional inertia approach. With its instrument, **VISTRAPLAN (Vision-Strategy-Plan)**, the visionary approach is a major tool for managing the process of re-continentalisation. The next part of the article focuses on its implementation for the development of the transport network of Eastern-European EU member-states.

The VISTRAPLAN complex may be used as an instrument not only for managing the sub-recontinalisation of the European Union, but also for the transport grid (network) of the East-European countries -Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Hungary, Greece and Poland.

The approach supports, coordinates and subordinates visions that need to be developed at different levels – from a Hyper Vision (about sub-continentalsation at large) to tracing, designing and implementing projects about the road transport grid (parallel and meridian transport corridors).

The visionary approach coordinates the subordinated visions of different systems and networks. The objects, levels and components of the visionary approach are presented in Figure 3.

3. A Macro-approach to the Issue of Rational Physical Connectivity

Within the context of the framework discussed above, an important issue is “How to approach re-continentalsation as a strategy and a vision in terms of one of its major components, that is, the road transport grid/network?”

The concept about the integral connectivity of the EU sub-continent projects interactions between EU member-states, as well as between them and other countries on the continent. The concept outlines the profile of a redesigned transport infrastructure.

Integral connectivity refers to the physical and the digital space of the EU. Territorial (or physical) connectivity is one of the components of re-continentalsation. It focuses on internal connections that need to be optimized, therefore it is an up-to-date strategic issue.

Improving the territorial (physical) connectivity relates to rationalising the Transport Grid of the European Union (TGEU) whose foundations are different transport corridors and axes.

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION...

OBJECTS AND COMPONENTS OF THE VISIONARY APPROACH	
ULTRA VISION	RECONTINENTALISATION OF EUROPE AND SUB-RECONTINENTALISATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
MACRO VISION	Strategic processes – integration, cohesion, consolidation, reducing the disparities between EU member states, integral connectivity within the EU and with other countries on the European continent
VISION ABOUT INTEGRAL CONNECTIVITY	Refers to the digital and the physical (territorial) space
VISION ABOUT CONNECTIVITY OF THE TERRITORIAL (PHYSICAL) SPACE	Rational development of the road transport grid of the EU – tracing, designing and implementing projects about connecting corridors, parallel and meridian axes, sub-axes and points
VISION ABOUT MERIDIAN CONNECTIVITY OF EAST-EUROPEAN EU MEMBER-STATES	South-European meridian transport corridor connecting the Baltic Sea and the Aegean Sea (BATC) Development of adjacent territories and regions Components (units) of the corridor
VISION ABOUT THE TRANSPORT GRID ON THE EASTERN BALKANS	Refers to the transport grid on the Eastern Balkan Peninsula - Bulgaria, Romania and Greece
VISION ABOUT THE TRANSPORT GRID ON THE LOWER DANUBE MACRO-REGION	Refers to connecting the transport regions of Bulgaria and Romania
VISION ABOUT SPECIFIC CONNECTING AXES AND POINTS (HUBS)	Meridian corridor VTAS (Veliko Tarnovo – Alexandria – Svishtov) as a component of the BATC, with critical spots – a bridge between Svishtov and Zimnicea and a connection between Svishtov and the Veliko Tarnovo-Ruse highway and a tunnel under the Balkan Mountains

Figure 3. A hierarchy-subordination model of visions about the road grid of the EU at different levels

A crucial moment is identifying the axes and connecting points that are required for further integration of different transport axes and corridors into strategic macro- axes.

Applying the integral approach to the TGEU includes the analysis of the following:

- The design of specific new road transport corridors, axes and sub-axes, which is an essential tool for the overall joint development – economic, social, ecological – of the peripheral regions;
- Vertical (meridian), horizontal (parallel) corridors and axes – West – East – West, North- South – North;
- Diagonal connecting axes (Northwest – Southeast and Northeast – Southwest);
- Axes, connecting strategic corridors;
- Axes which may be used as an engine for the development of marginalized regions (in this case, of Bulgaria and Romania, i.e. the Danube region referred to as 'Pridunavie');
- Critical strategic connecting points (roads, tunnels, bridges, etc.).

The visionary and strategic rethinking of re-continentalisation in terms of one of the major components of its basic infrastructure, i.e. the road transport grid/network, thoroughly includes its vertical, horizontal and diagonal axes. This activity may result in designing a common European vision about the future of the EU of the 27+ and its rationally developed transport network.

The conceptual vision about the transport network of the European Union and its vertical, horizontal and diagonal connecting axes is presented in Figure 4.

The detailed integral model of the transport grid may be used for:

- Analysing and designing new strategic vertical, horizontal and diagonal connecting axes;
- Identifying the sub-axes and hubs (points) that would connect them.

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION...

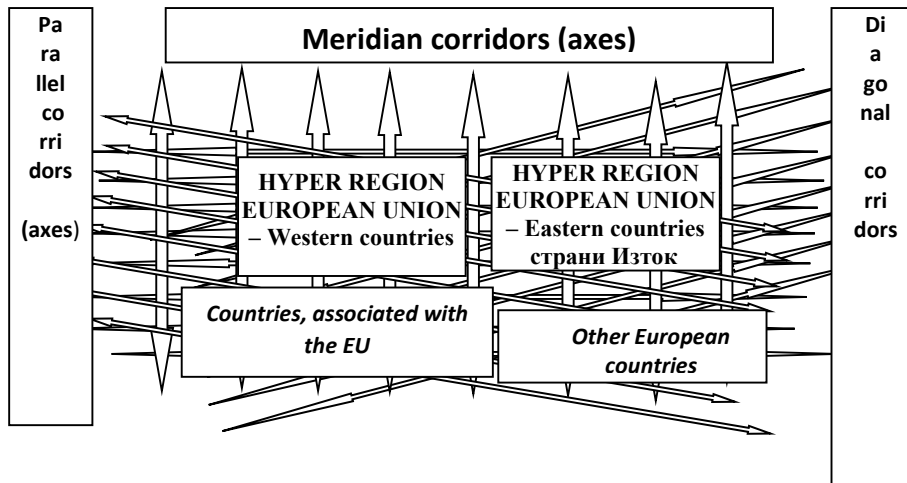


Figure 4. An integral model of the Transport grid of Europe

The integration of road transport axes into corridors requires that their structural components should be preliminary identified. Figure 5 gives an overall idea about these components.

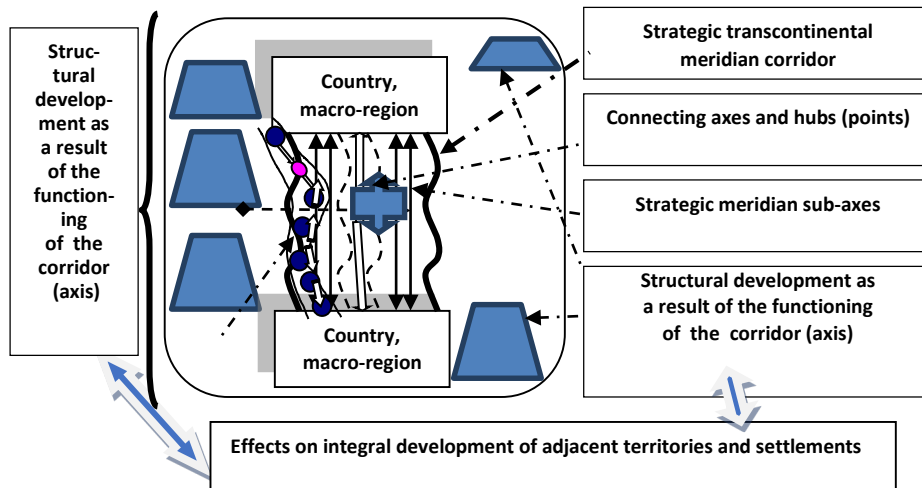


Figure 5. A model (components) of a connecting meridian transport corridor

A further stage in the development of the transport axes requires initiatives and visions about developing joint projects with convincing transnational and cross-border effects.

4. A Vision about Improving the Meridian Connectivity of East-European Member-States of the EU

One of the key moments of the vision is employing the trajectory approach. Some of the trajectories are presented in the table below.

<i>COMPONENTS OF THE TRAJECTORY</i>		
Beginning of the trajectory (FROM)	Interim moment (TOWARDS)	End of the trajectory (TO)
Created macro-vision of the EU Transport grid in general	A specific project about each component of the grid – a corridor, an axis, a sub-axis, a hub	D eveloping an effective and well-performing transport network/grid
Macro-vision of the EU Transport grid	V isions of restructuring the national priority axes included in the grid	D esigning specific corridors or sub-axes and hubs that are currently not available

As for the grid, the idea is to ensure purposeful tracing and the implementation of single projects which will however be governed by supranational priorities and an exhaustive continental vision. To achieve this, an applicable principle will be that of rational re-designing (Yankov, 2009a, pp.189-199) which, in this context, may be modified as follows: "For every individual project for a transport axis which has been developed as an end in itself, there is/are another/other projects whose effects would be more beneficial to the European Union and the community".

Connecting EEMSEU countries through transport meridians requires a macro-approach. Provided that the concept of a meridian corridor is formed and then the meridian corridor is created, it might be possible (and even imperative) to build a 'bridge' between two strategic seas – the Aegean and the Baltic Seas to connect six EU member-states, namely, Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland. We will refer to such a

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION...

corridor as **BATC** (a Baltic-Aegean Transport Corridor). The corridor will be used to directly connect the countries and it might have an impact on the development of the countries on the Eastern Balkan Peninsula.

The structure and some of the components of the macro-vision about BATC include:

- * A transport corridor/axis Poland - Slovakia - Hungary;
- * A transport corridor/axis between the countries from the Lower Danube macro-region - Bulgaria and Romania. The focus is on the transport axis Veliko Tarnovo – Svishtov – Alexandria which will be referred to as VTAS. The corridor will have strategic connecting points – a bridge over the Danube to connect Svishtov in Bulgaria and Zimnicea in Romania; a tunnel under Mount Shipka, and a connecting road from Veliko Tarnovo to Svishtov.
- * A transport corridor/axis between Bulgaria and Greece.

BATC might have a special role in the European economic space by performing specific functions. A summary of the idea about the transport corridor from the Aegean Sea to the Baltic Sea (with a critical connecting point on the Danube) is presented in Figure 6.



Figure 6. The route of the Baltic-Aegean transport corridor

After the location of the 'soft' connections has been identified, the related physical components, structures and infrastructure will be developed. These might facilitate the process of integration among EEMSEU countries as well as with their neighbouring countries.

5. *The Case of the Meridian Transport Corridor Bulgaria – Romania*

Tracing, designing and implementing the strategic components of BATC (regional axes and sub-axes) may promote the development of adjacent border regions in Northern Bulgaria and Southern Romania. The specific sub-axes and connecting points (connectors) will have an economic impact on the revitalization of peripheral, marginalized and further declining territories. This statement refers to both Bulgarian and Romanian regions along the Lower Danube.

Within that context, the connecting axis Veliko Tarnovo – Svishtov – Alexandria (VTAS) is a critical unit in the system of the BATC. Its implementation may accelerate the process of catch-up growth and sustainable development of Bulgarian and Romanian Danubian regions (Central Northern Bulgaria and Central Southern Romania). Therefore, the focus of attention should be on certain individual components (or critical points), one of them being the connection across the Danube along the meridian axis VTAS (Yankov, 2009b, pp. 5-23; Yankov, 2009c, 189-199; Yankov, 2013, pp. 275-283).

The development of the system of Bulgarian-Romanian trans-Danubian and road meridian transport axes may lay the foundations for a more intense horizontal and vertical integration between the cross-border regions in the two countries. The VTAS axis may also be used as an instrument for promoting the development of villages, towns, and above all, ports in the Bulgarian-Romanian Danube region. Furthermore, it could become a prerequisite for joint international entrepreneurship (Yankov, 2007, pp. 5-23).

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION...

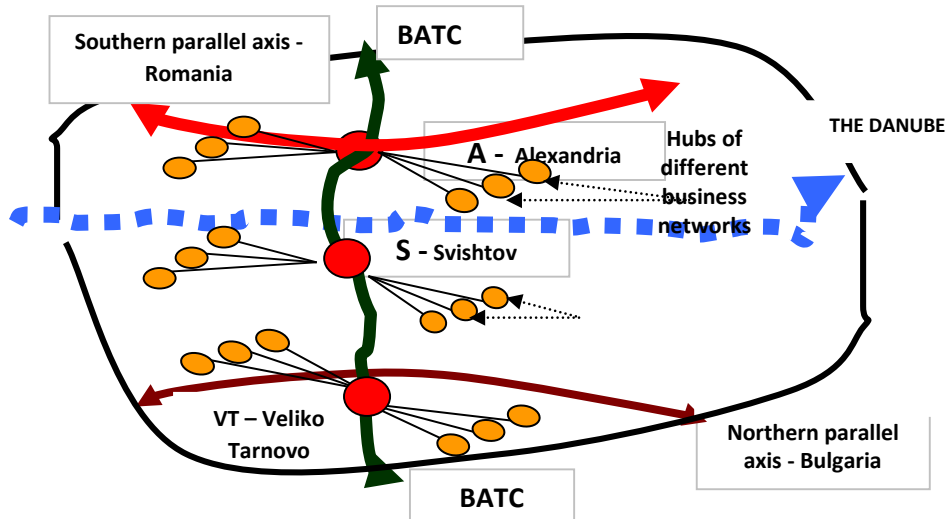


Figure 7. Visual presentation of the trans-meridian axis VTAS

The VTAS axis may function efficiently provided that there is a physical connection across the Danube, that is, a bridge between Svishtov and Zimnicea. The idea about connecting Bulgarian and Romanian railways via a bridge in Svishtov was first launched in 1909, after the railway connection Levski – Svishtov was built, and was later supported with sound scientific arguments in a publication made by the commercial association in Svishtov in 1930 (Postroyavaneto..., 1930).

In addition to connecting Bulgarian and Romanian regions which are peripheral or less developed economically, VTAS will have another strategic effect as it will prevent traffic overload along the axis Veliko Tarnovo - Ruse – Danube Bridge 1 – Bucharest by diverting the traffic from Istanbul to Central and Western Europe. It is therefore necessary to reconsider the

project about the Ruse-Veliko Tarnovo Motorway³ and divert some of the traffic to Central and Western Europe to that project.

On a continental and international scale, the VTAS axis might be a solution for ensuring a more direct access to markets of goods and human resources. Its implementation may inspire entrepreneurial initiatives in marginalised and peripheral regions of Eastern European EU member-states.

The VTAS axis will act as a redistributor within the overall scheme of BATC. It will also divert cargo and passenger flows and make it possible to avoid their agglomeration in Bucharest.

Conclusion

Within the process of sub-re-continentalisation, East-European EU member states countries are facing the problem of establishing more intensive and direct transport connections with one another. If the concept about a meridian corridor BATC is formed and then materialised, that corridor may be used to connect two European seas and six countries in the EU - Greece, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland.

The macro-vision about the foundation of that connection, BATC, is one of the solutions to the issue of connectivity between those countries. One of the effects of a functioning meridian corridor between the countries in the EEMSEU group will be establishing the prerequisites for promoting the development of marginalised, declining, weaker and peripheral regions. Within this context, it is possible that there might be different competitive visions about such meridian corridors and their individual components. This, in turn, promotes further inclusion and integration in different EU networks and on the European continent.

The meridian transport corridor may lead to changes in the regional development of the countries in the Eastern European Union. It is therefore necessary to strategically reconsider the process of continentalization (sub-re-continentalisation) and its implementation.

³ <https://gradat.bg/infrastruktura/prez-2020-g-obyavyavat-porchkata-za-stroitelstvo-na-am-ruse-veliko-trnovo?fbclid=IwAR0dmf5E2TbISr4a3RX3LU1Qy6RkTGV8iBLwLzGJB4F7GI56RNSg12J6vtQ>

A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION...

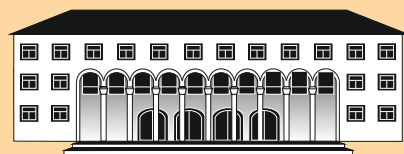
Each member-state should seek opportunities for the rationalization of effort in terms of the macro-vision and the vision about the development of the Transport grid of the European Union, and, in light of this, to offer alternatives to the options that have been put forward so far.

References

- Postroyavaneto mosta nad r. Dunava za svĚrzvane na balgarskite i romanski zheleznitsĚ. Svishtova, Svishtovskoto targovsko druzhestvo, 1930.
- Rifkin, J. (2012). La troisième révolution industrielle. Comment le pouvoir latéral va transformer l'énergie, l'économie et le monde, Paris, Les Liens qui Libèrent.
- Siegel, David. (1999). Futurise your entreprise. Jon Wiley & Sons., N.Y
- Yankov, Nikola. (2006).VTAS – shans za transgranichen region ot sreden klas - v-k "Borba" (V. Tarnovo), 09.01.
- Yankov, Nikola. (2007). Ochertavane ramki za biznespredpriemachestvo v transgranichni regioni. Biznesupravlenie, No. 4, pp. 5-23.
- Yankov, N. (2009a). The necessity for a different paradigm for economic development. „Amfiteatru Economic”, Bucuresti, No 25, pp.189-199.
- Yankov, N. (2009b). Conceptual axes and directions for entrepreneurship in trans border regions – the case of Veliko Tarnovo - Alexandria - Svishtov meridian axis., Alexandria, pp. 5-23.
- Yankov, N. (2009c). Management and marketing of transborder regional integration process. Amfiteatru Economic, Bucuresti, No 25, pp.189-199.
- Yankov, Nikola. (2013). Outlines of the trans border meridian axes integration: In „The future of integration, the future of the European Union” Proceeding of the Jubilee Scientific conference, Svishtov, Bulgaria, pp. 275-283.

ISSN 0861 - 6604

BUSINESS management



3/2020

PUBLISHED BY
D. A. TSENOV ACADEMY
OF ECONOMICS - SVISHTOV

BUSINESS management 3/2020

Editorial board:

Krasimir Shishmanov – editor in chief, Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov Bulgaria

Nikola Yankov – Co-editor in chief, Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov Bulgaria

Ivan Marchevski, Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov Bulgaria

Irena Emilova, Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov Bulgaria

Lubcho Varamezov, Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov Bulgaria

Rumen Erusalimov, Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov Bulgaria

Silviya Kostova, Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov Bulgaria

International editorial board

Alexandru Nedelea – Stefan cel Mare University of Suceava, Romania

Dmitry Vladimirovich Chistov - Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation, Moscow, Russia

Ioana Panagoret - Valahia University of Targoviste, Alexandria, Romania

Jan Tadeusz Duda – AGH, Krakow, Poland

Mohsen Mahmoud El Batran – Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt

Nataliya Borisovna Golovanova - Technological University Moscow , Moscow Russia

Tadija Djukic – University of Nish, Nish, Serbia

Tatiana Viktorovna Orehova – *Donetsk National University*, Ukraine

Yoto Yotov - Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA

Viktor Chuzhykov - Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman, Kyiv, Ukraine

Proofreader – Anka Taneva

English translation – senior lecturer Zvetana Shenkova, senior lecturer

Daniela Stoilova, senior lecturer Ivanka Borisova

Russian translation - senior lecturer Irina Ivanova

Technical secretary – Assist. Prof. Zhivka Tananeeva

Submitted for publishing on 16.09.2020, published on 25.06.2020,
format 70x100/16, total print 40

© D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, Svishtov,

2 Emanuil Chakarov Str, telephone number: +359 631 66298

© Tsenov Academic Publishing House, Svishtov, 24 Gradevo str.

BUSINESS D. A. Tsenov Academy
of Economics, Svishtov
management Year XXX * Book 3, 2020

CONTENTS

MANAGEMENT practice

R&D DISCLOSURES AS PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF BULGARIAN INNOVATIVE COMPANIES Assoc. Prof. Daniela Ventsislavova Georgieva, PhD	5
A VISION ABOUT THE CORRELATION RECONTINENTALISATION- INTEGRAL CONNECTIVITY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION Prof. Nikola Yankov, PhD	18
THE EFFECT OF SOME BANK INDICATORS UPON THE GDP, THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN BULGARIA Head Assist. Prof. Aglika Kaneva, PhD	34
CREATION OF A MECHANISM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GREEN PURCHASES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: UKRAINIAN EXPERIENCE Viktoriiia Psota	57
ORGANIZATION OF A MOBILE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CENTER Serghei Peancovschii	71