

## **Macedonian's experience on the application of the Espoo Convention**

### **Subject: CONSTRUCTION OF SECTION 3 OF RAIL CORRIDOR VIII: KRIVA PALANKA, REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA - BORDER WITH THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA**

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The project, which is the subject of the presentation, concerns the **construction of the section 3** of the railway line Kumanovo, between the Republic of Macedonia- and the border with the Republic of Bulgaria, which is part of Corridor VIII. The route of this section will pass entirely through the territory of the Municipality of Kriva Palanka, in the Republic of Macedonia i.e. it will start from the end of the section 2 on the cadastral plot 65, near the village of Dlabocica and will move up to the border with the Republic of Bulgaria, near the border crossing "Deve Bair" on the cadastral plot 88.5. From that point, through Tunnel No. 22, the railway line crosses the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, towards the village of Gjueshevo.

#### **The Project is at the phase of preparation of the technical designs and of the EIA Study.**

Corridor VIII is one of the pan-European corridors and connects the shores of the Adriatic and the Black Sea. It starts from the Italian port cities of Bari and Brindizi, the port of Durres in Albania and from that point via Tirana, Skopje and Sofia it continues to the final destinations, the ports of Burgas and Varna in the Republic of Bulgaria.

In the Republic of Macedonia activities are undertaken for the construction and the reconstruction of sections of this corridor where there is no railway line and/ or where the existing railway line should be restructured and revitalized, as follows: Western section-section between the Albania-Macedonia border to Kicevo, and Eastern section-section between Kumanovo and the border with the Republic of Bulgaria, where section 3 belongs to Kriva Palanka-Border with the Republic of Bulgaria, to which the stated project refers.

Aside from section 3, the Eastern section of Corridor VIII includes section 1, extending from Kumanovo to the village of Beljakovce in the length of 30,764 km, and the section 2 which extends from Beljakovceto the cadastral plot 65 near the village of Dlabocica (Municipality of KrivaPalanka), in the length of 33,9 km. The route 1 (Kumanovo-Beljakovce) is under reconstruction/construction, while route 2 (Beljakovce-KrivaPalanka) is in the process of tendering for construction. Unlike these routes, the route of section 3 has not yet been drilled and the procedure of preparation of conceptual and basic designs.

The implementation of the whole Corridor VIII project will provide connectivity to the Mediterranean/Adriatic Transport Area with the Black Sea Transport Area, and will support and facilitate the trade between Bulgaria, Macedonia and Albania through the railway transport.

#### **Category of the proposed project**

In accordance with the Decree on determination of the projects and the criteria on the basis of which the need to implement a procedure for assessing the impact on the environment is defined ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 74/05, 109/09, 164/12 and 202/16), the project falls under Appendix I-Projects for which there is mandatory impact assessment under the Espoo Convention, **(item 7. Construction of: (a) railway transport over long distances and airports with the main runway length from 2.100 m or more).**

Additionally, due to the border tunnel (no. 22) on the railway section, there was a need of cross-border cooperation between the competent ministries of the two countries, Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Bulgaria, under the Espoo Convention.

The both Countries (Republic of Macedonia and Republic of Bulgaria are the members of the Espoo Convention). As it is required by the above-mentioned Convention (point 2 and 3 from Article 2). The Macedonian Ministry of Transport and Communication (responsible body for implementation of the Project), initiated the meeting with the main stakeholder by the neighbouring (possibly concerned party) Republic of Bulgaria (Ministry of transport-MTITC, Ministry of Environment and Waters-MoEW and Railway administration-NRIC) to discuss about the Project which is of bilateral interest.

At the same time, when the Notification for implementation of the Project has been submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and published on its web site, as it is required by the Espoo Convention has started with the procedure for Notification to the neighbouring Country-Republic of Bulgaria in compliance with art. 3 (point 1 and 2) of the Convention.

The Notification has been prepared by the Responsible authority for the Project (Ministry of Transport and Communication) through the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning (as a National operational focal point of the Espoo Convention) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and sent to Republic of Bulgaria.