

Corridor Vc South Mostar section

Participation of war returnees and ethnic minorities
in decision-making in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Task Force on Public Participation in Decision-Making
under the Aarhus Convention, Ninth meeting, Geneva,
hybrid, 1–2 March 2021

Learn more: bankwatch.org



Corridor Vc, background

South Mostar section

Strategic project for integration of the Western Balkans and the EU

More than 300km run through BiH

EBRD, EIB and WBIF investments total EUR 2 billion

Controversial section South Mostar – Tunnel Kvanj



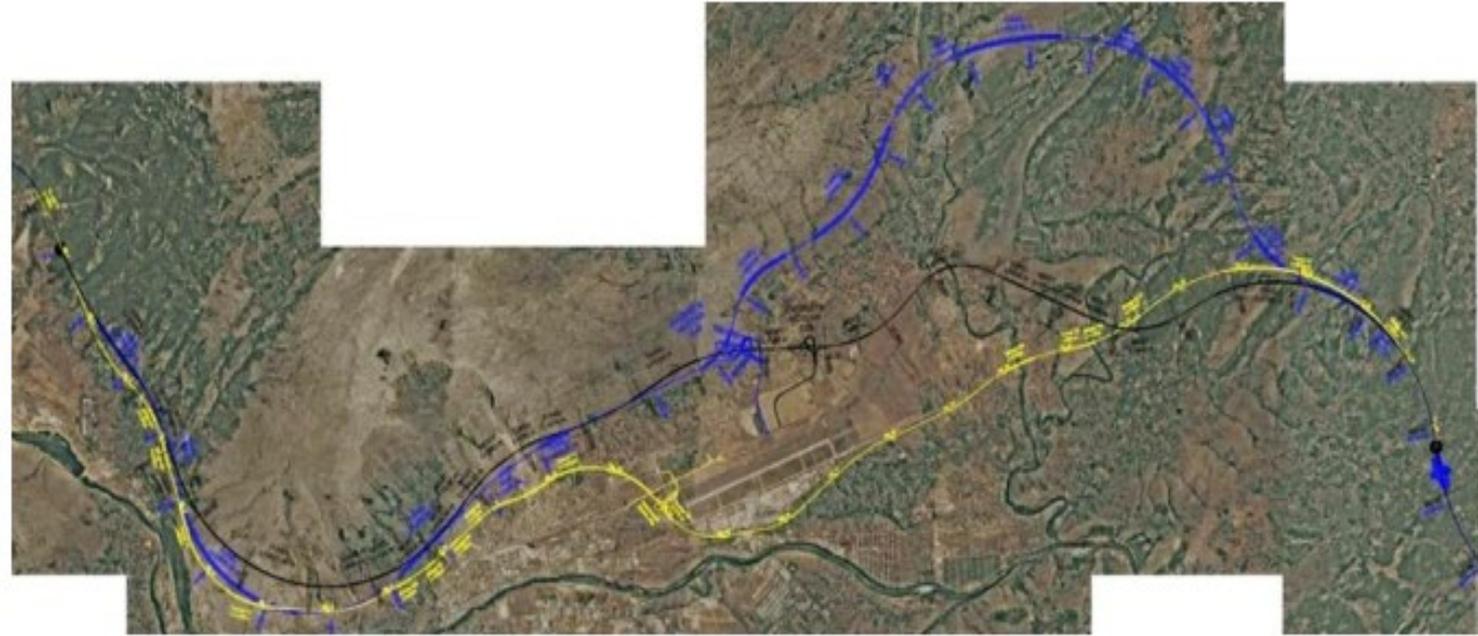
Corridor Vc, South Mostar affected communities

Multi-ethnic South Mostar community: villages Malo Polje, Carski Vinograd, Ortiješ and Kosor, Blagaj.

War returnees, who were displaced during the Bosnian war from 1992 to 1995 and rebuilt their lives in the villages Ortiješ and Kosor.



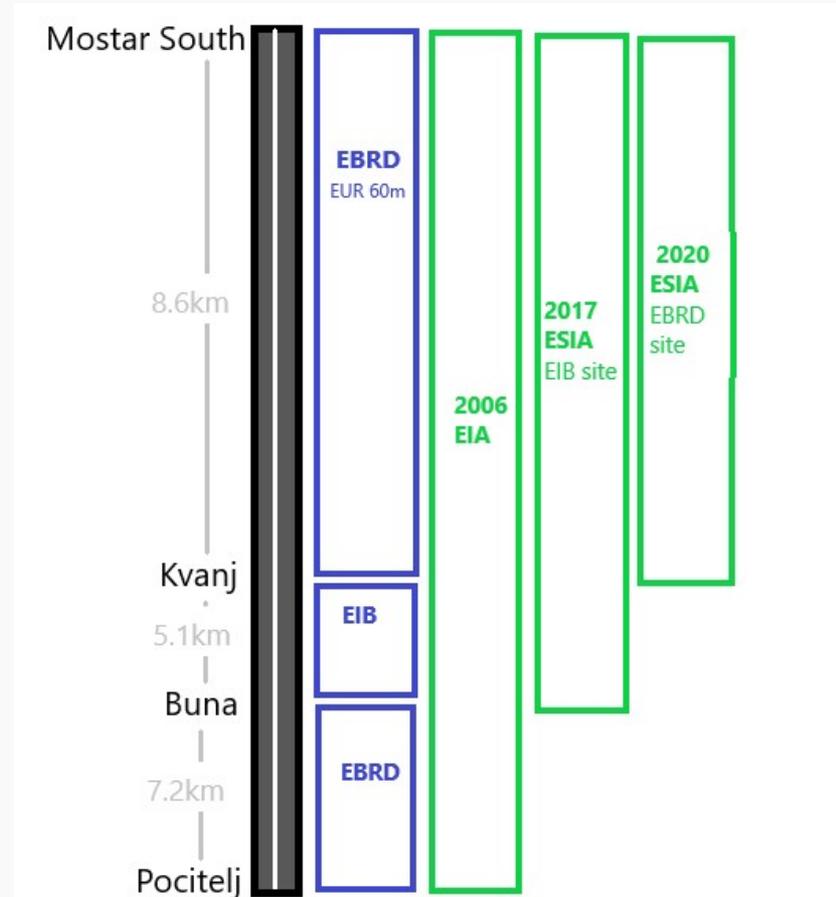
South Mostar section: alternative routes



Route selection:

The 2020 ESIA refers to three different MCAs:

“The multicriteria analysis revealed that, from the aspect of technical-operational costs, the [valley] variant of the motorway near Ortiješ airport is more favourable, while from the aspect of spatial-economic and spatial-ecological criteria, the [ridge] variant of the motorway in the hinterland of Blagaj is more favourable.”



Lack of public participation in route selection

Spatial Plan for Area of Special Interest to FBiH – Motorway Corridor Vc

“The initial text of the Spatial Plan for the Motorway on Corridor Vc in FBiH was prepared in 2010 without the sections in Blagaj and Počitelj, due to opposition by local communities. [...] In 2011, the full draft of the amended Spatial Plan was made available for public consultations.

Two public hearings were organised: a public hearing in Mostar (November 2011), organised by the Federal Ministry of Spatial Planning, and a public hearing in Sarajevo (November 2011), organised by the BiH Parliament (Committee for Transport and Communication).

The Plan was then adopted by the FBiH Parliament and officially published in December 2017.”

Corridor Vc, South Mostar marginalisation of opponents

September 2020 consultation – bad practice of public consultation during pandemic.

ESIA-2020 focused:

- on the valley route, so all options were not open;
- on expropriated households, not property owners on the two sides of the international corridor.

Meetings in Febr. 2021 deliberately excluding valley route opponents.



Conclusions

All options need to be open for consultation – there is a viable alternative and wide public consensus that the “ridge” route is better than the “valley” route.

All affected people need to be consulted in the decision-making process, especially vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities.

Project promoters need to seek to build consensus in communities and to support peace-building efforts - rather than use “divide and rule” tactics that can cause or deepen community conflicts.

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