

A fast tram and TEN-T: will fight as partners or rivals?

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The question is not which name the chosen transport system will have (e.g. the metro-bus at French Rouen or the low-platform tram at Strasbourg contain all attributes of metro, including subsurface tracking with architecturally interesting stations). The decisive factor is the way of its leading against the terrain.

Integration into the European railway network

Initially the putting of the fast-route tram into operation by the reconstructed Old Bridge was envisaged already in 2010. However, the annulment of results of the first competition on its final form, with the engagement of public and subsequent quandary of the city regarding the type and the extent of repairs shuffled cards. From one side emergency state, on the other side the financial crisis pressure decided at the end on the more modest scenario of the repair for 20 million Euro instead of the planned reconstruction for 50 million Euro. Recently the passage of the first tram by „the renewed“ Old Bridge is expected in 2011, which is, however, in the position of declaration rather than the achievable commitment, taking the next-year parliamentary and municipal elections into consideration.

On December 15, 2008 the municipal council approved amendments and appendixes to the city planning scheme, which reflect the project of TEN-T 17 corridors railway connection with the railway network and the airport. The first construction Bratislava-Predmestie (Suburb) - Bratislava-Petržalka will integrate the existing railway lines on both sides of the Danube by the tunnel lining under the centre of the city and the river bed (with the total length of 6.88 km, of which 6.43 km is led through tunnels) and represents technically and financially the most difficult project, which has an ambition to increase the interoperability of the railway network and to integrate Bratislava into the European railway network until 2015.

In January 2009 Dopravoprojekt, the designer of the TEN-T project, became the general partner of the 3rd general assembly of the initiative Magistrale for Europe, founded in 1990 by cities, regions and chambers of commerce on the magistrale Paris-Strasbourg-Munich-Vienna-Bratislava-Budapest in order to speed up the modernization of the track. The railway corridor between the North and the Mediterranean Sea forms the main axis from the east to the west of the Europe. Bratislava has been a member of the initiative since 2007.

Embedding below the ground is the only alternative

Regarding the highly urbanized municipal environment and the planned high-buildings in the Eurovea complex surrounding, which should intersect the route of the connection, the track is led here and there 40 m below the surface. On the route are to be built 4 stations - 2 excavated and 2 made through a ground - with the estimated length from 150 to 400 m depending on their functional use. The project will be, therefore, in addition to the transit connection of railway corridors, perform functions of inner-city transport. It would be silliness not to use it for decades being prepared but still unrealized construction of the carrier transport system of MHD.

The Slovak Tunnel Association also stood up for the TEN-T project, which views it as the key project for the regional and the inner-city mass transport. From the track partially led under the Danube can also reap the city. Of course, it will be only in the event that its leadership will accept such offer and re-evaluate

the concept of the fast tram, which it does not intend to abandon preliminary.

Even the workshop dealing with Staromestská ulica, which presents only a partial segment of this problem, clearly showed: to be the city development sustainable, the transport in it must be embedded under the ground. The fact that not everybody think about this option, that it is the only one, indicates the latest rough development of the conflict - the fast tram vs. TEN-T.

ZEED: the tram to Petržalka is unnecessary!

„Preferably the whole carrier transport system in 2015 or 2016 than the tram to Rusovská cesta in 2011," say unison the representatives of the civil initiatives For Ecology and Effective Transport (ZEED). The project of the planned tram is unnecessary according to them, because it does not solve the traffic effectively neither in the capital city nor in the municipal district itself. They advise the city to focus on the cooperation with the Railways of Slovak Republic (ZSR) and the Bratislava self-administrative region and move over 66 million Euro earmarked for the tram into the building "the real transport system" for the entire city and its surroundings on the basis of the railway infrastructure and the connecting of corridors within the TEN-T project financed from the State and the EU means.

„The city mediates the tram, there are no studies or a vision, how to go further. The entire project is a pre-election initiative of the mayor that can ultimately cost much money, " believes Martin Kugla, the analyst of Fair Analyses, and recommends to suspend the project, until the variants of tracks leading analysis are elaborated. According to him, the tram should be forgotten and attention to be paid to the TEN-T project and its continuation under the ground at the track gauge of 1 435 mm.

Bratislava: To cancel the tram do not have reason!

The first deputy of the mayor, Milan Čílek, however, insists on his opinion. As he pointed out, Bratislava will continue in the project of the tram from Šafárikovo Square to Bosákova Street in Petržalka, because he sees no reason for its suspension and does not consider it be „temporary" or „useless" in any case. The tram to Petržalka is, according to him, a part of the capital city policy while extending tram transport, which he sees as more ecology and city-creating element compared with the train.

If the state will succeed in the implementation of the TEN-T 17 project of the railway corridors connecting in Bratislava the city will invite it. If not, it will not be a problem to whip the tram tracks to Janíkov dvor, Čílek refutes doubts, whether it is real to also use the tram from the opposite end of Petržalka, and recalls: "Prior to 5 years two public discussions were in relation to the tram. I ask where these people were. "The city will promote that throughout all Bratislava were only the tracks with the 1000 mm track gauge.

****Fabor: The question is not „or" but „and"! ****

Stavebné fórum.sk asked Tomáš Fabor, the mandatary of the mayor for transport systems, for his opinion of certain aspects of the carrier transport system in the capital of Slovakia, particularly in relation to the TEN-T project being prepared by ŽSR.

In the case of implementing the system based on the fast tram (with known technical specifications, including the track gauge) - are you assuming its compatibility with the TEN-T?

With compatibility already deals the prepared techno-economic study, which is processed in variants. On July 07, 2009 will be its final hearing and till the end of September 2009 should be taken the decision on the level of MDPT SR, ŽSR and the capital city of Slovakia Bratislava. The question of compatibility is solved only in the field of the associated investments (dual operation). The tram and the railway transport will supplement each other and create together the carrier transport system.

Would it be acceptable for the city leadership to break away from keeping the variant of the surface tramway track (over the Old Bridge), from which several opponents do not expect the radical solution of the critical traffic situation in Bratislava?

The tram solves the connection of the centre (tramway networks) and the railway the connection to the railway infrastructure, the Petržalka connection to the eastern part of the city (Old Town, Ružinov, New Town, Rača, Vajnory, Podunajské Biskupice, Vrakuňa) and connection to the region. The city does not break away from the tram, because the question is not „or“ but „and“. The tramway and the railway systems are supplementing each other.

We addressed Dana Hurtová, the deputy of the director for communication with media at the General directorship of ŽSR to the similar question of whether ŽSR attempts to persuade officials of the capital city about the redundancy to introduce the dual rail system in Bratislava.

„ŽSR so far continues in preparation according to the project and since the initiative with the tram comes from the Magistracy of Bratislava, it is not our responsibility to respond,“ was the brief reaction.

The traditional dilemma persists

Dopravoprojekt as the winner of the tender for the techno-economy study development of the carrier transport system in Petržalka and its connection to the railway corridor TEN-T 17 was looking for the optimal variant from the technical, technological and economic terms. The problem relating to the gauge of tram and train tracks, which after left the tunnel meet in Bosáková Street, solve two types of the traction power supply. Nevertheless, there is no clear view on the construction of vehicles, varying heights of platforms and number of tracks. About the gauge tracks unification across all Bratislava to the railway one (1 435 mm) the city does not consider. Be clear only on the fact that trams will run to Petržalka over the reconstructed Old Bridge and not through the tunnel under the Danube, and that " trains from Paris will not travel by Vajanského nábrežie is quite less.

Faster, more convenient and higher quality transport for inhabitants of Bratislava does not „threat“ in the early future there. Thirty five year old history of proposals and attempts to solve the MHD Bratislava - from the Soviet-type heavy-metro through by the government and the city finally refused automated light metro VAL of French company Matra Transport International to the present sketch of the fast-route tram - have already cost Slovak taxpayers tenth million of Euro. However, expending for various studies and projects is not at the end and even after such a long time the dilemma „metro or tram“ remains opened. Whether from principal or prestigious grounds or...

Photo and maps - STA / ŽSR

Map n°1 - Project TEN-T on the Bratislava site

Map n°2 - Connection of Slovakia to the European rail corridors

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