



Railway axis of the Ionian/Adriatic intermodal corridor

These two interlinked rail routes will lead to huge increases in capacity for intermodal links between sea and rail transport, by connecting the major ports in Greece with each other, and with main rail routes to the rest of Europe.

What is the axis?

These new rail links are founded on Greece's geographical position at the crossroads between Europe, Africa and Asia. And with Greece linked through three of the 10 pan-European corridors (corridors IV, IX and X) to Dresden, St Petersburg and Salzburg respectively, there is huge potential to link Europe with the rest of the world.

The first rail line, linked to existing infrastructure, will create a high quality and environment-friendly land-transport 'bridge' between the port of Igoumenitsa (on the Adriatic) and Thessaloniki (end point of railway corridor X), Volos (motorway of the sea towards Asia and the Middle East), Alexandroupoli (end point of corridor IX), and Piraeus (the major hub of the eastern Mediterranean).

The second line will connect the four Greek ports of the Adriatic-Ionian corridor (Patras, Igoumenitsa, Kalamata and Astakos). This will allow these ports to develop complementary services, and balanced traffic flows through greater use of intermodality (maritime-rail links). This line will also provide a direct rail connection of the Igoumenitsa terminal with the port of Piraeus and the Athens railway hub at Thriasion, through the existing Patras-Río-Corinth-Athens line.

What are its expected benefits?

This axis will complete a major part of the missing railway infrastructure in northern Greece, allowing the operation of the so-called Egnatia railway axis. Connections between the rail networks of south-eastern Europe (Greece, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey) will become much easier and more efficient.

These routes will significantly increase the capacity of the rail network for efficiently accommodating intra-EU and international transport flows towards central European markets, which are currently served by road and long-distance maritime transport. Improved intermodal operation along the Adriatic-Ionian corridor will create significant time and cost savings for cargo transit as well as encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport.

Greece, at the periphery of the EU, will be better connected with the rest of Europe. Also, the Río-Antirío-Ioannina line crosses the Epirus and western Greece regions, two of the poorest regions in the EU, and so will reduce isolation and assist economic development.

Improved interconnection between the major ports of the Adriatic-Ionian corridor with the Greek Aegean ports, will also strengthen the implementation of motorways of the sea schemes in the eastern Mediterranean (*see axis 21*).

What is its current status?

The lines are included in the Greek national master-plan study on the creation of a national network of intermodal freight transport centres. Funding amounting to 40 % of the estimated costs has been secured from the regional development programmes (PEP). The rest of the cost will be covered by the private sector through PPPs. Most of the technical studies for the lines are now being assigned to contractors.

A memorandum of understanding was signed in June 2004 for establishing intermodal transport operations (involving the Ionian-Adriatic corridor) with south-eastern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean. This route will form part of more extensive transport links in the wider Balkans area, and promote trade flows between this region and the EU.

Priority section	Type of work/status	Distance (km)	Timetable	Total cost as of end 2004 (million EUR)	Investment up to 31.12.2004 (million EUR)	TEN-T contribution, including studies, up to 31.12.2004 (million EUR)
Kozani–Kalambaka–Igoumenitsa	New rail	317	2006–12	1 395	0	0
Ioannina–Antirio–Río–Kalamata	New rail	475	2009–14	1 094	0	0
TOTAL		792		2 489	0	0

