
HIGH-SPEED RAILS IN MIDDLE-SIZED EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: A TOOL FOR DOMESTIC MOBILITY OR A MODE OF INTERNATIONAL CONNECTION?

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Abstract

High-speed rail (HSR) and its impact on local/regional development belong to frequent topic of political debate in middle-European post-totalitarian states. A decision to built HSR network has different roots: while large states were primarily motivated by need of fast internal interconnectedness, middle-sized countries must consider international use as well as a benefit to a limited number of national centres. Funding the HSR construction from the EU sources requires an evidence of investment efficiency which is rationally bound to a volume of passenger transported. As this volume is multiply higher in domestic transport than in the cross-border contact, politics are pushed to stress a national/internal importance of HSR. However, this view goes against the EU transport policy of TEN-T corridors. The contribution widely discusses this opinion imbalance and tries to bring an evidence of HSR impacts at both – national and international – regional levels. At first, examples of HSR issues from Czechia, Poland, Hungary and Austria are presented. Then, an empirical assessment for Czechia is done with help of potential and cumulative accessibility concept using population and economic data. The contribution finishes by transport policy recommendation.

Keywords: High, speed rail, HSR network, potential accessibility, cumulative accessibility

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