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RAILHUC: VISION 2030

The RAILHUC project goes on with transport analyses and traffic modelling in different partner hubs, aiming at embedding local and regional transport systems into railway networks at higher level, including TEN-T. High-speed railways being one of the topics addressed, RAILHUC tackled this theme at the occasion of its 1st international conference in Brno, Czech Republic, on 12 September 2013.

The Exhibition Centre in Brno, capital of the South-Moravian Region, hosted the transnational conference „VISION 2030: Development options of high-speed rails in the Czech Republic“. Organised by KORDIS JMK, joint stock company, coordinator of the Integrated Transport System of the South-Moravian Region and one of the RAILHUC project partners, the event focused on current practice in the field of high-speed railway in the Czech Republic and central Europe, with a view of strengthening the role of the railway transport and connections with hubs in other partner countries and regions. The conference brought together representatives of the RAILHUC partner consortium, decision-makers, railway transport carriers and infrastructure managers, universities and institutions working in the railway transport.

In the context of importance of accessibility for comprehensive development and competitiveness of regions, the conference speakers highlighted the potential of the high-speed railway transport to become one of the key factors of improving and innovating mobility solutions, particularly in terms of integration of local and regional transport systems into trans-european transport corridors and networks.

In the framework of the present-day Czech practice in the domain of railway transport, both the national Ministry of Transport and regional decision-makers agreed that introduction of high-speed railway (or the conception of „fast connections“, as it is called in official documents) seemed to be a logical and meaningful solution for the Czech Republic to get fully interconnected with both neighbouring and more distant EU regions and to maintain its position at the crossroads of Europe, not to be wiped out of the traffic maps.

The Ministry of Transport together with the Railway Infrastructure Administration, state organisation, presented the conception of „fast connections“, being perceived not only as a set of infrastructure, operation and technology-related measures, but rather in a more complex way as a tool of local and regional development. Therefore, the current plans encompass, apart from construction of brand-new railways for fast trains, also refurbishment of existing conventional tracks and creation of feeding lines to enable permeability between conventional and high-speed network.

To share their long-term experience from implementation of high-speed railway, the Italian speakers gave a presentation of the railway infrastructure system in Italy and its management, including a concrete example of good practice: city of Bologna and integration of its local public transport systems into high-speed railway services. [Representatives of the Emilia-Romagna Region then introduced the RAILHUC project and informed about its aims and key activities.](#)

Closing contributions of the conference got back to the intended concept of fast connection between Prague and Brno. KORDIS JMK, joint stock company, informed about first results of their „Socioeconomical study of the demand and opportunities for high-speed railway between Brno and



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Prague in wider EU aspects”, that has been carried out by means of investigation among prospective passengers, and a representative of the Masaryk University of Brno outlined possible impacts of the fast connections implementation on the demographical and socio-economical development of the adjacent regions.

As transnational exchange of experience and transfer of know-how are at the centre of the RAILHUC focus, the conference provided its participants with a unique opportunity to meet, discuss and directly contribute to fulfillment of the RAILHUC mission.

In all hubs and regions involved in RAILHUC, the conference will now be followed by a series of public discussion events and round tables. These are targeted at presentation of traffic modelling results to decision-makers and stakeholders and at negotiation of the proposed interventions, in order to shape the future regional development and improve accessibility by rail both within the Central Europe programme area and outside it.

In agreement with the Comune di Reggio Emilia, which is actively supporting the Regione Emilia-Romagna in the RAILHUC project for all activities connected with the analysis on the Reggio Emilia HS hub, the second local event on 25 June 2013 was organised to present to several local stakeholders both the RAILHUC first results and the recently approved ENTER Hub project (funded by the URBACT Programme) which involves the Comune di Reggio Emilia. The reason to join the presentation of the two projects was to appraise the synergies between the two as long as ENTER HUB is focusing its investigation on the possibility to use the new Reggio Emilia HS hub as a new pole able to attract to Reggio Emilia both businesses and international cultural exchanges. Moreover, exactly as RAILHUC, ENTER Hub aims at involving in its analysis the same stakeholders targeted by RAILHUC and boost the participatory activities to facilitate a decisional bottom-up approach.

Mr. Andrea Arcelli, coordinator of the RAILHUC project, presented the overall framework of the project. The review of the current positioning has been accomplished. Fresh data coming from new users interview done at the Bologna, Reggio Emilia and Parma stations have been consolidated and new O/D flows identified. Such data have been included in the new VISUM model which is returning very interesting results in these days. Mr. Arcelli anticipated the September event which will be based on model results and future scenarios presentation. He took the chance to invite the public to the September event and to the other event which will be organised in parallel with the specific roundtables foreseen by the project.

Mr. Tommaso Simeoni, technical expert of the Regione Emilia-Romagna on the RAILHUC project, gave a detailed presentation of data update promoted by the investigation cofounded by RAILHUC. In particular he presented the best practice of HS station in Europe the passengers flows and the captive area identified through to the revision of the current Reggio Emilia positioning.