

Summary of sector trends: Transport
October 2011

The Mediterranean Corridor

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The Mediterranean Corridor is a strategic transport infrastructure projected to cover 1,300 km. It will cover four Spanish autonomous communities and play an essential role in the coordination of transport in Spain and also in the establishment of routes connecting Europe and Spanish Mediterranean areas as its routes include important Spanish ports such as Algeciras, Valencia and Barcelona.

The areas covered by the Mediterranean Corridor is home to 40% of the Spanish population, 40% of the national GDP, and 65% of maritime traffic. The Spanish Government and the authorities of the autonomous communities that make up the territory of the Corridor believe that its development is essential and that it will be key to improving the Spanish infrastructure network. This is why the Corridor has been included in the Strategic Plan to boost rail freight transport, to be integrated into the future TEN-T Core Network.

However, **funding to complete development of the Corridor is subject to it being considered a priority within the TEN-T Network**, an issue which is currently under discussion and which conflicts with the proposed development of an alternative route between Madrid and Algeciras. However, the Ministry of Development has pledged to defend development of the Corridor before the European Commission as a priority over other proposals so that it may become part of the the TEN-T Core Network, which will handle investments in rail infrastructure in Spain until 2030.

Impact on the sector

In March 2011 the Ministry of Development submitted the technical study of the Mediterranean Corridor that includes the development of a railway between the French border and Algeciras and should be operational by 2020. The network **aims to connect the major cities of the Mediterranean route (Algeciras, Murcia, Valencia, Castellón, Tarragona, Barcelona, Girona and Perpignan) to provide access to their ports and logistic nodes, break with the radial layout of the Spanish rail network and contribute to better economic and social structuring** of the territories involved, and to attain rail transport which is more competitive, sustainable and efficient.

Specifically, it is expected that:

- In 2012 high-speed service will begin between Barcelona, Girona and the French border, with an investment of more than €4 billion.
- In 2013 the track duplication works between Vandellós and Tarragona entered into service, which is presently the last stretch of single track between Barcelona and Valencia.
- The high speed network will extend to Alicante in 2013 and to Murcia in 2014.
- In 2011 the study for the development of the Mediterranean corridor along the Andalusian coast between Algeciras, Málaga, Motril and Almeria was tendered.

The Mediterranean Corridor will enable the creation of a first-rate European rail link for freight and passenger transport, improve and increase the share of freight transported by rail, reduce travel time for passenger transport, increase ticket demand and create a commitment to sustainable transport oriented towards environmental friendliness and energy efficiency.

Specifically, reports supported by the Chambers of Commerce of Catalonia and Valencia estimate that the Mediterranean network will increase profitability by 11% and, if the connections to ports and airports are suitable, they will replace truck transport on the roads between Mediterranean cities and could capture some of the present activity in the Hamburg and Rotterdam ports.

The **most significant benefits** that the development of the Mediterranean Corridor will provide include the following:

- Reduction in the travel time between Barcelona and Almería from 12:30 hrs to 4:15 hrs. In many other routes, times will be reduced by more than half the present times.
- Adapting the network to meet interoperability requirements with the European network will facilitate the movement of freight and passenger trains throughout Europe.
- Reduction of interference between passenger and freight transport, cost reduction and improvements in quality and reliability.
- The availability of trains up to 750m long, which will ensure the capacity and sustainability of freight transport and improve its competitiveness. It is estimated that the volume of freight transport will be more than double the current level.
- A decrease in traffic by 925,000 trucks and 1,150,000 light vehicles each year, which will result in a decrease in CO2 emissions of 325,000 tonnes.

Planned actions and investments are valued at more than €51.3 billion, of which €8.4 billion have already been implemented.

Reduced travel times will increase ticket demand, which is expected to multiply by 2.5, from the current figure of 3 million to 7.7 million trips annually..

Development of the Corridor may lead to the creation of jobs in the transport sector and in all productive sectors.

Impact on professional profiles

The development of the Mediterranean Corridor would make Spain and Catalonia into a major European and intercontinental logistics platform and would become a great opportunity to boost the economy, generate business activity around the logistics centres, foster entrepreneurship and create jobs.

The development of the Mediterranean Corridor would result in job creation due to:

- An increased supply of jobs related to the land transport of passengers and goods and those associated with maritime and air transport, since more interconnected rail network with different logistics centres (ports and airports) will increase transport capacity and thus lead to the creation of new jobs.
- The generation of activities ancillary to transportation activities such as the maintenance of machinery or infrastructure.
- The willingness of businesses from different economic sectors to set up in the Mediterranean area because it would become more competitive in terms of transport costs for goods and people.
- The promotion of tourism.
- Improved mobility of people, which would facilitate the movement of people between different territories and increase the employability of those who, for reasons of mobility and accessibility, are not looking for employment in cities where opportunities are more readily available.

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