

Response to questionnaire for:

**Assessment of strategic plans and policy
measures on Investment and Maintenance in
Transport Infrastructure**

Country:

Spain

1. INTRODUCTION

Spain has been making huge investments in transport infrastructure projects in the last 15 years, in some cases as "strategic decisions" to have a structured territory (supply model) regardless of the demand or economic feasibility.

The decisions were influenced, in part, by the decentralized government model created in Spain after the recovery of democracy in 1977, with 17 regions with some attributions of state Administration ("Autonomous Communities") and great power given to local Administrations to incide in infrastructures planning and construction (perhaps as a pendulus effect after 40 years of dictatorship under Franco's rules).

While most of the economically relevant corridors (Mediterraneum corridor from Valencia to France and Ebro corridor from Bilbao-France to the Mediterranean coast) demanded new infrastructures in the 70's and the lack of financial resources by then forced to generate the first PPPs financing toll highways with long concessions periods, during the period of money availability in the last decade (in great part coming from UE cohesion funds) free highways were build in zones with low demand creating public assets like "an investment in the future". This has generated some social tension regarding tolls in some regions (Catalonia, for example).

The high speed rail (HSR) planning rule of "every province capital has to be at less than 4h from Madrid" generated a centralized supply model regardless of the demand (or even population size of the province capital) and orography: Spain now is the second country in the world with most km of HSR (after China, and before Japan and France), but with reduced demand and thus limited economic feasibility. The network is not finished and during the current political period, priority is given to link Madrid with Galicia with HSR.

Ports have also been competing among each other for local territorial reasons, instead of fomenting complementarity: all of the main ports have grown, and have built new container terminals, good accesses and passenger terminals for cruises.

Spain has nowadays 50 commercial airports: the 10 airports build in the last decade for "territorial requests" have with very little or no demand (one of them, Castellón, was inaugurated and has never seen any plane); all the provinces wanted their airport for political reasons and in comparison to other territories. Madrid and Barcelona airports have undertaken huge investments in new terminals (about 7,000 mEuros and 3,500 mEuros respectively): Madrid is the national hub for the Iberia group, especially linking Spain and the rest of Europe

with LatinAmerica, while Barcelona struggles to be also a hub without a major airline betting for the airport so far.

As a summary, the transport networks and services in Spain are very good, since most of them are very recent and modern, but the demand and economic feasibility is low.

1.1 Infrastructure

(2010 data)

- **Highways and roads**

Length of Spanish road Network in 2010 was 165,787km (25,733km highways and the rest of national roads, 71,464km regional level roads and 68,590km province/local level roads).

High capacity highways: **15,965 km**, out of them:

- Toll highways = 2,991 km
- Free highways (segregated ways, minimum of 2 lanes per way) = 11,271 km
- Double way roads = 1,703 km

Traffic in central Administration roads is 123,620 milion veh-km (51,3% of the total traffic, 13.6% of HGV) and in regional Administration roads is 101,752 milion veh-km (42,2% of the total traffic, 8.4% HGV).

- **Ports**

28 ports in total, the most important are: Barcelona, Valencia, Algeciras, Bilbao, Tarragona, Palma de Mallorca, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

- Exterior goods: 281,658 thousands of tons
- SSS (within Spain): 78,181 thousands of tons

Total: 359,838 thousands of tons

122.7 thousand ships entered in Spanish ports during 2010.

Passengers: 27.19 million pax in 2010.

- **Airports**

Number of airports in 2010: **47**.

Passengers 191,553 thousands (domestic 76,568 kpax, international 114,985 kpax). The most important airports are Madrid, Barcelona and Palma de Mallorca (tourism) and Málaga.

Air cargo: 636 thousands of tones (domestic 148 thousands of tones, international 488 thousands of tones).

- **Railways**

Total length in km 15,916 km.

Passengers in total 469 millions.

Freight 7,872 millions of tones.

High Speed Rail (called AVE) = 22,193,000 passengers in 2010. Km of HSR operating in 2011= 2,849 km.

1.2 Performance

The performance and reliability of the Spanish transport network is good, since a lot of the infrastructure is new, demand has lowered due to economic crisis, the network is cohesive and redundant (although very radial), and the above mentioned "territorial requests" have brought some over-supply.

There is only some congestion at less than 30km of the major cities (over 1,000,000 inhabitants) and during the rush hours. Some access to ports need to be improved like in the port of Barcelona. The rest of the high capacity roads have little traffic and high reliability. Many highways have information systems regarding travel time, and some lane management (close to the main cities).

Spain has the only HSR "reliability compromise" in Europe, in the high speed rail line Madrid-Seville: the paid fare is returned for any delay larger than 5 minutes. Some other HSR services, more frequent and more complex, cannot support such an impressive quality label.

The new terminals in Madrid (T4) and Barcelona (T1) airports and the economic crisis reduced delays and improved air transport reliability: some of the Spanish airlines like Vueling hold the maximum punctuality in Europe, and hold with their customers a "reliability compromise".