

# EU FUNDS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

## ROADMAP TO SUSTAINABILITY OR DEAD-END

### INVESTMENTS?

This map presents environmentally and socially harmful projects being supported by EU Cohesion Policy Funds.

In an era of scarce public resources, every cent of EU taxpayer money must contribute to the shift of Europe's regions towards the right track of sustainability.

Total cost of harmful projects already financed

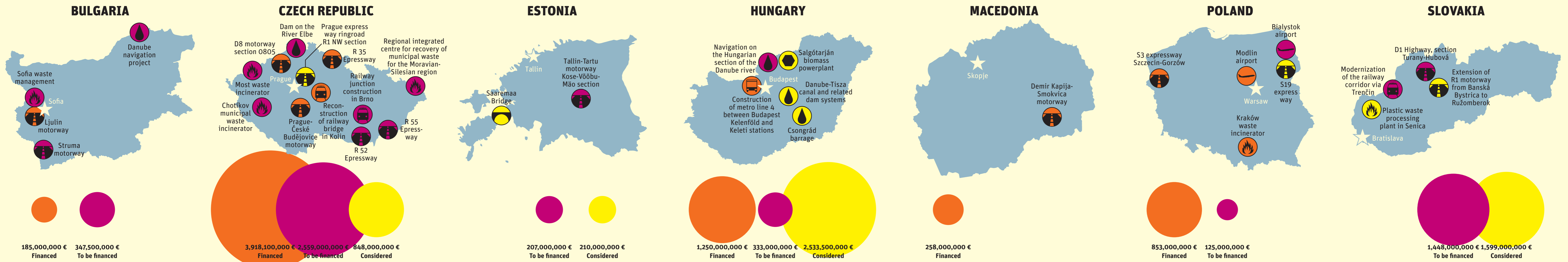
€ 6,469,100,100

Total cost of harmful projects to be financed

€ 4,961,500,000

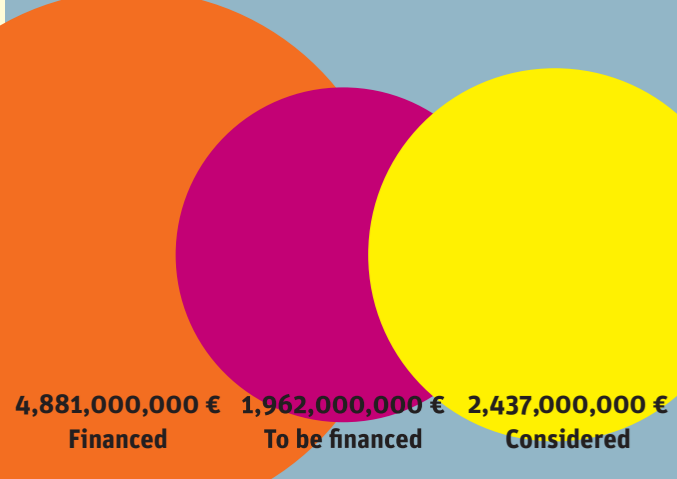
Estimated cost of harmful projects considered for financing

€ 5,190,500,000



#### ROADS

Road construction locks the region into carbon-intensive transport patterns and rule out the development of sustainable mobility for people and goods, and poorly designed projects threaten the region's robust biodiversity.

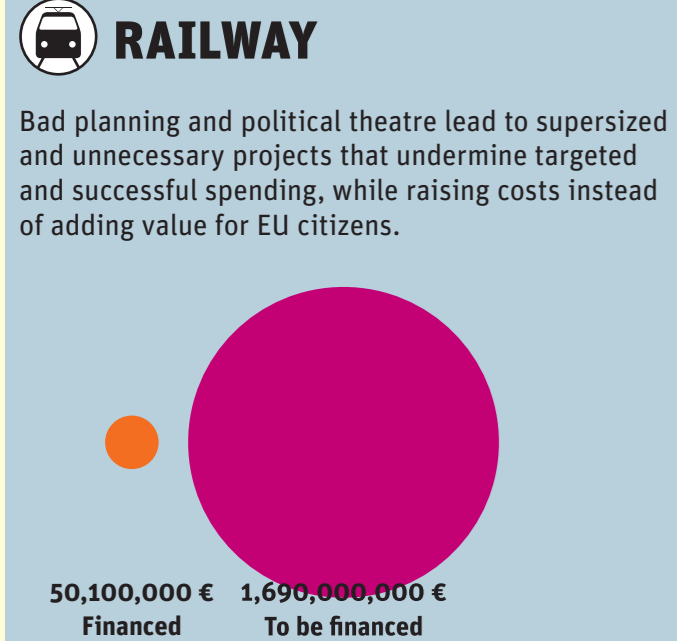


#### BULGARIA

**Struma motorway through Kresna Gorge** The motorway endangers the Kresna Gorge, a unique valley in southwestern Bulgaria that is home to an extraordinarily high number of endemic and rare protected species like otter, tortoise, leopard snake and 17 bat species.

An alternative solution that would avoid the gorge has not been pursued even though the 2007 environmental impact assessment recommended this. Other planned sections of the motorway have breached EU NATURA 2000 environmental legislation.

**Ljulín motorway** The 19 kilometre Sofia – Pernik motorway, at nearly EUR 10 million per kilometre, is one of the most expensive roads in the EU, but its impact on traffic alleviation is suspect at best and even the Bulgarian government acknowledges that traffic will



continue to grow. The existing bottlenecks on access roads leading to the motorway cross densely populated areas and bring noise, pollution and more traffic, causing local communities to protest.

#### CZECH REPUBLIC

**Prague – Česká Budějovice motorway/expressway connection (D3 and R4)** The R4 expressway via Písek has been discussed and under piecemeal construction since the 1970s and could provide the missing link if extended further south to Česká Budějovice. The longer and similar D3 route via Tábor has also been under construction since the late 1990s, in spite of no clear economic justification and severe clashes with protected nature areas in the Prague vicinity. Czech transport authorities are however investing in both routes.

**D8 motorway, section O805** Constructing the remaining 16.4 kilometres on the Prague-Dresden motorway would pass through the protected landscape area of Česká Sředohof, which Alexander von Humboldt once referred to as "the third most beautiful view in the world".

**R55 expressway** The 10-kilometre section between Olomouc and Břeclav would cross a NATURA 2000 site and endanger protected bird habitats. A tunnel variant is under consideration, but this would cost nearly three times more than the alternative proposal that would also bypass the NATURA 2000 area.

**Prague expressway ringroad R1 - NW sections** The southern variant for Prague's ring road has received official backing, even though it would cut through residential and protected natural areas and recreational sites, while increasing heavy transit traffic through the city and more frequent traffic jams. This variant is more complex with tunnels and bridges, costing the city exorbitantly and creating safety hazards. By contrast, the northern alternative that bypasses urban areas is clearly recommended in the environmental impact assessment and costs at least EUR 165 million

#### CZECH REPUBLIC

**Railway junction reconstruction in Brno** The main railway station would be moved about one kilometre from its current location in the city centre, complicating the lives of tens of thousands of commuters and increasing travel times. A 2004 local referendum concluded that modernising the station in its current location is widely favoured and far more appropriate.

**Reconstruction of the railway bridge in Kolín** The project would increase the height of a railway bridge underpass to enable river navigation. However the project has been questioned for its economic and financial feasibility, as too little water transport is expected to justify the project, construction costs are prohibitively high, and the sole company participating in the tender procedure was awarded the contract.

less. Nevertheless the Ministry of Transport is still pursuing the southern variant and considers avoiding EU funding for the most problematic parts of the project.

**R35 expressway** This controversial 30 kilometre section of expressway between Turnov and Ůlibice near Opatovice nad Labem is part of the 2010 regional strategy and would potentially cut the unique "Czech Paradise" UNESCO-protected landscape. The costs of the Opatovice crossing have also risen unreasonably high and are under question by the Commission.

**R52 expressway** The project includes 20 kilometres of new expressway and repairing an existing 10 between Brno and Vienna. This section would adversely affect three NATURA 2000 sites and several unique Moravian landscapes, including the Pálava UNESCO biospheric reserve and the Lednice-Valtice cultural complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

#### ESTONIA

**Tallinn–Tartu motorway, Kose-Võõbu-Mäo section** Set to be finished in 2016, a major stage of the Tallinn-Tartu motorway includes two 45-kilometre sections that are planned through both forests and wetlands. Moreover the justification for the project is weak, as traffic intensity is relatively low.

#### MACEDONIA

**Demir Kapija – Smokvica motorway** The 32-kilometre motorway section between Demir Kapija and Smokvica will be constructed in a pristine forested area and built near the protected Demir Kapija gorge, rich in many endemic and rare animal and plant species. The gorge is one of the richest ornithological reserves in Europe, and the project would damage many habitats and ecological corridors, including brown bear migration corridors. Restoration efforts are ambiguous and do not guarantee appropriate compensation.

The project should not be supported with EU funds, as the rationale is unclear and issues related to the transparency of contracting are serious.

#### SLOVAKIA

**Modernization of the railway corridor via Trenčín** Upgrading this section of the Pan-European rail corridor V involves a critical section via Trenčín, where the tracks would pass directly through the city centre. The construction would significantly alter city life and modes of transport, and several family homes and newly constructed summer resorts would be demolished. In spite of procedural flaws and the cancellation of the building permit in May 2011, the project is still under consideration for EU funding.

#### POLAND

**S3 expressway Szczecin–Gorzów** This 81-kilometre expressway is an exemplary case of disregard for EU environmental law. Having damaged NATURA 2000 habitats and facing action from the Commission, Polish authorities applied for a new environmental decision that included compensation measures and new NATURA 2000 sites elsewhere. However this decision is not yet in place, meaning that construction is operating without valid permission. Also this does address the absence of proper alternative assessments as required by the Habitats directive.

**S19 expressway** The proposed "Via Carpatia" expressway in eastern Poland will cross a particularly rich region of natural areas and several NATURA 2000 sites. Any new section of "Via Carpatia" should be carefully assessed for its impact on ecosystems and ecological corridors and, as in the case of Via Baltica, sound analyses should be the basis for alternative routes.

#### SLOVAKIA

**D1 Highway, section Turany–Hubová** This section of the D1 motorway passes through an area mostly covered by NATURA 2000 sites. In spite of recommendations in the environmental impact assessment, the more destructive route was selected, jeopardising also several communities living near the construction. NGOs, experts and the Commission have all raised concerns about the project.

**Extension of R1 motorway from Banská Bystrica to Ružomberok** The planned 50-kilometre extension of the existing R1 motorway would damage one of the most precious natural areas in Slovakia – the two national parks at Veľká Fatra and Nízke Tatry. While supposedly satisfying the regions' transport needs, the motorway will in fact only increase transit traffic flows without benefitting local populations.

#### POLAND

**Białystok airport** This project in northeastern Poland has been criticised by local environmental groups for the damage it presents to the world-famous Biebrza and Narew national parks and their unique bird populations. The clashes with important bird areas also implies flight safety concerns due to probable collisions between planes and birds. In early 2011 the project's environmental decision was revoked, and a new environmental impact assessment is under way to consider other project locations.

**Modlin airport** The project will redevelop a former military airport near Warsaw to supplement the main Warsaw airport with charter, low-cost and cargo operations. Situated near the confluence of two major rivers – the Narew and Vístula – the airport is located at a key stopover site for migrating birds and several NATURA 2000 sites. Not only will the airport impact the surrounding environment but also may pose flight safety risks from likely collisions with birds. As the project's environmental decision was upheld in Polish courts and airport construction is underway, only the Commission can now ensure compliance with EU legislation.

#### HUNGARY

**Navigation on the Hungarian section of the Danube** This project would deepen to two and a half metres the entire Hungarian stretch of the Danube and transform the river-basin by deepening, regulating, damming and cutting river-arms. The works can have unpredictable consequences on the flora, fauna and drinking water base and damage many of Hungary's last great river landscapes, wetlands and floodplain forests, all of which are NATURA 2000 sites. The works also endanger the river's functions as a source of drinking water, flood management, risk prevention and fishing, tourism and recreation. Alternative measures to serve water transport have been proposed, including signposting waterways, water level forecast and navigation systems, and fleet modernisation.

**Csongrád barrage** These proposed dams on the Tisza river upstream from Csongrád and the 400 megawatt power plant would damage the habitats of hundreds of protected and several thousand non-protected species. Water upstream from the dam would stagnate, leading to algae proliferation and a dramatic recomposition of fish species. The level of ground water downstream would decrease, and it is uncertain whether this section could be secured continuously especially during droughts and low water levels when the power plant will likely have priority over ecological needs.

**Danube – Tisza canal and related dam systems** The 46-metre canal to channel water from the Danube to the Tisza is designed to prevent further desertification and also serve as a transport route. Yet the project clashes with conservation efforts and may in fact exacerbate desertification due in part to the potential cutting of water-retaining ground layers. Damming the two rivers would have disastrous impacts on ecosystems and biodiversity, threatening the habitats of hundreds of protected and several thousand non-protected species on the Tisza. Project alternatives include water retention and adapting farming patterns to changing ecological conditions.

#### CZECH REPUBLIC

**Elbe dam** The dam to facilitate water transportation near Děčín would irreparably harm the Danube's last free flowing section in the Czech Republic and the unique Elbe Canyon, which is planned as a NATURA 2000 site. The dam would lead to a loss of rich river ecosystems, including beaver, otter and many fish species

#### BULGARIA

**Danube navigation project, Iron Gate–Silistra–Braila section** This project would remove 13 bottlenecks and intensify navigation on this section of the Trans-European transport corridor VII by ensuring a depth of two and half metres at all times. Deepening the river, regulating water flows, cutting side-arms and reinforcing riverbanks would irreversibly damage the Danube's rich biodiversity and its ability to self-purify. The bottlenecks set for elimination are the last free-flowing and most precious stretches. The project will impact valuable island ecosystems – several of which are EU LIFE projects – and NATURA 2000 natural river banks in both Bulgaria and Romania.

#### HUNGARY

**Salgótarján biomass power plant** When operating at full capacity, this biomass plant would produce enough heat and electricity to supply roughly the entire population of Salgótarján. However because of its reliance on waste wood from forestry and chopped logs, logging would increase pressure on surrounding forests, where not enough wood is produced annually to fuel a power plant with even 20 percent less capacity. Also the plant would be constructed in a populated area, so air pollution and low-particulate dust is of major concern.

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#### WASTE INCINERATORS

Incinerators are expensive and controversial, and undermine targets and efforts to reduce, reuse and recycle municipal waste.



#### BULGARIA

**Sofia waste management project** The project proposes construction of a landfill, small compost facilities and a mechanical-biological plant (MBT) that will produce refuse-derived fuel (RDF) for burning in distant cement kilns. The municipality is reluctant to invest in recycling facilities that could help increase poor recycling rates, and alternative advocated by NGOs – the "no-burn" approach – has been neglected, putting Sofia at risk of missing the opportunity to achieve a sustainable, resource-efficient and long-term waste management system.

#### POLAND

**Kraków waste incinerator** Project costs of the 240 000 tonne Kraków waste incinerator have risen year after year and are now almost twice as when originally proposed. The project will lock the city into an expensive waste management system and disadvantage recycling, as the incinerator requires a constant supply of mixed municipal waste. This will contribute to keeping recycling rates low. Similar EU funds investments for waste incinerators are currently being prepared in several other Polish cities.

#### ESTONIA

**Saaremaa Bridge** This seven-kilometre bridge to replace the existing ferry line is neither economically viable nor justifiable since construction costs are seriously underestimated. It is a luxury project for a small country and would for a long time take away financing from other infrastructure investments and maintenance. The bridge would also damage a NATURA 2000 site and significantly affect birds and sea mammals.

#### CZECH REPUBLIC

**Most waste incinerator** This region has the highest ratio of municipal waste production in the Czech Republic, so first decreasing waste generation through waste prevention should be the first programs for support. The capacity of the planned incinerator should then decrease accordingly.

**Chotkov municipal waste incinerator** This incinerator would serve Plzen at a capacity of nearly 100 000 tonnes per year, but its location in the nearby village of Chotkov faces strong local opposition. No public hearings were held, and local authorities insist that a proper environmental impact assessment is not needed.

**Regional integrated centre for recovery of municipal waste for the Moravian–Silesian region** The capacity of this incinerator would be built to correspond with the nearly 500 000 annual tons of municipal solid waste produced. Yet installing this much capacity would undermine EU targets for a 50 percent recycling ratio and decreasing the overall amount of municipal solid waste generally. The unpopular incinerator would also be constructed in an area with some of the highest air pollution levels in Europe, a situation which incineration would exacerbate.

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#### SLOVAKIA

**Plastic waste processing plant in Senica** This plant would process mixed plastic waste and produce both light heating oil and a grit byproduct for use in construction. The environmental impact assessment did not fully explain the production processes however, including the origin of inputs and whether a market exists for outputs. The contract also threatens the sound use of public money, as the municipality bears all project costs including the application for funds, and project implementation and administration. The municipality also commits to provide 4 000 tons of plastic waste annually and faces fines for each missing tonne, even though Senica only produces about 1 500 tonnes annually.