

TO: Mrs. Corina Cretu, European Commissioner for Regional Policy

Mrs. Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport

Mr. Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness

SUBJECT: Request for including Craiova-Lugoj and Craiova- Pitesti highway sections on the priority list of the General Transport Master Plan of Romania, to be financed during 2014-2020 period from European funds

**Dear Commissioner,
Dear Vice-President,**

Regional Development Agency South-West Oltenia (RDA SW Oltenia), along with the local public authorities represented by the Regional Development Board (RDB), work jointly and act constantly for the development of the South-West Oltenia region, by attracting the funds available under the Operational Programmes and by boosting foreign and national investments, alongside with stepping up the use of local resources, in order to achieve social cohesion of the communities in Oltenia, to improve the quality of life and increase regional economic competitiveness. The Regional Development Board is composed of 20 members and includes, besides the five presidents of county councils, 15 mayors representing municipal, town and village councils in each county of the region.

The development of transport infrastructure represents the mainstay that supports the other components of the economic and social life. In this context, our institutions have been striving to convince the central public authorities to finance investments with major impact at regional level. Thus, ever since 2005, the RDA SW Oltenia has submitted to the Ministry of Transport a position paper, adopted by RDB, to support the financing of a highway or an express road on the Craiova - Pitesti route.

Between 2005 and 2012, we have continuously requested the Ministry of Transport to support the financing of a highway in the region, due to the fact that the major cities in the South-West Oltenia region and the main cities in other regions are connected only by national roads, of poor infrastructural quality. This has negative effects on quality of life of citizens in South West Oltenia region, such as increase of travel time, traffic jams and congestion or unfortunate increase in the number of accidents.

The development of a functional highway network that has national coverage, connects our country with other countries in Western and Southern Europe and meets the needs of the population, of entrepreneurs and investors. This is a mandatory condition for building the proper regional socio-economic development framework and reducing inter-regional disparities.

In accordance with the General Transport Master Plan (GTMP) of Romania for the period 2014-2020, **major road infrastructure projects in the South-West Oltenia were not included in the list of priority projects.** For this region, the Master Plan provides only the construction of a 124 km long Craiova-Pitesti highway, in public-private partnership (PPP), ranking 8th place in top priority and with an estimated deadline in 2020, and two expressways, namely: " Wallachia Express" (Bucharest - Alexandria - Craiova) and "Danubius Express" (Craiova - Drobeta Turnu Severin - Lugoj), to be completed between years 2030 and 2032.

Cohesion Policy finance, as a priority, the development of core network (TEN-T Core), so as to achieve harmonious and balanced development of regions, providing support to less developed regions and those facing structural difficulties, taking into account the need for economic growth, equal opportunities, creation of new jobs and sustainable development. To attain these goals, European policies aim at financing investments in poorer regions facing structural difficulties, **so we find it absolutely legitimate for the General Transport Master Plan of Romania to include, for 2014-2020 period, projects that connect South-West Oltenia Region to Western and Southern Europe, alongside with Pitesti-Sibiu highway.**

The current version of GTMP of Romania does not meet the cohesion policy principles, since road segments mentioned above, pertaining to South-West Oltenia region, are proposed to be tackled from uncertain sources (PPP or other funding in the case of Craiova-Pitesti highway), or exceed Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020, in the case of **Bucharest – Alexandria - Craiova and Craiova - Drobeta Turnu Severin - Lugoj routes,** which were proposed to be carried out between **2029 - 2032.** Given the fact that these routes have been already included in the **TEN-T Core** and even though we understand the need to prioritize investments, we cannot accept that no financial allocation, either from European or national funds, has been provided for road infrastructure development in the period 2014 - 2020 for a region experiencing such significant infrastructure shortage.

Given the European cohesion policy principles, which aim at a more balanced development of regions, **it is imperative that one of the poorest regions of Romania and of the EU, namely South-West Oltenia region, be directly connected to the central network in Europe (TEN-T Core).** The list of projects to be funded within the 2014-2020 period under GTMP comprises 12 projects, of which only 5 (five) belong to the Core network (TEN-T Core), the rest of 7 belonging to the global network (TEN -T Comprehensive). **This ascertains that GTMP has not been developed based on European Commission recommendations on improving the methodology for drafting the Master Plan, which plead for including several selection criteria aimed at achieving economic performance and TEN-T Core connection.**

In the latest version of the General Transport Master Plan of Romania, **no highway connection between Oltenia and Western Europe has been foreseen by 2030.** In the event that the main document, GTMP - that sets forth the investments in the transport infrastructure sector, will be approved in this version, bypassing the South-West region of Romania, Oltenia will remain isolated for a long period of time, leading to increased poverty in the region and deepening the development gap compared to other regions of Europe.

Harmonisation of strategic planning documents across several Member States and completion of priority corridors of core network, are requirements of the TEN-T Regulation. In this regard, we strongly believe that these principles should constitute the major criteria for the selection/ approval of projects financed from European funds for 2014-2020 period.

Moreover, our project proposals not only **correlates with GTMP of Bulgaria**, which foresees a highway between Sofia and Vidin, but is **an opportunity to capitalize Calafat-Vidin bridge**, which provides connectivity with the Southern region of Europe. **The bridge is a key point of both rail and road transit and facilitates traffic from Western to Southern Europe.**

The economic benefits of the construction of the above-mentioned sections of the highway, which would connect the South-West Oltenia region with other regions and would help increase mobility at European level, facilitating transit through Romania, **are a prerequisite for increasing the attractiveness of the region and boosting investors' interest in this area.** Also, a modern transport infrastructure would encourage job creation and a substantial increase in exports, bringing socio-economic indicators of region closer to the European average, as required by European policies.

Given the above arguments, we kindly ask you to consider our proposals and to **support the introduction in the priority list of Transport Master Plan 2014-2020 the funding of the highway sections transiting South-West Oltenia region, namely Craiova - Pitesti and Craiova - Lugoj from European and national subsidies including Large Infrastructure Operational Programme 2014-2020.**

These investments will help increase mobility and accessibility in Europe, complementing the network of highways in Romania and also will guarantee a balanced development of all regions of Romania, in accordance with European policies developed towards this direction.

Please find enclosed a map visualisation of the project proposals, as reflected in the current version of the GTMP, along with the Regional Development Board SW Oltenia Decision no. 16 of June, 15th, 2015, regarding the approval of the statement submission setting forth the amending of the GTMP 2014-2020.

We would be most honoured if You considered our proposal, which we trust will be a measure to continue and accelerate the development of regions.

Looking forward to our future cooperation, please accept the expression of our highest consideration!

Yours faithfully,

Aladin GEORGESCU

**President of RDB SW Oltenia
Vice-President of Mehedinti County Council**

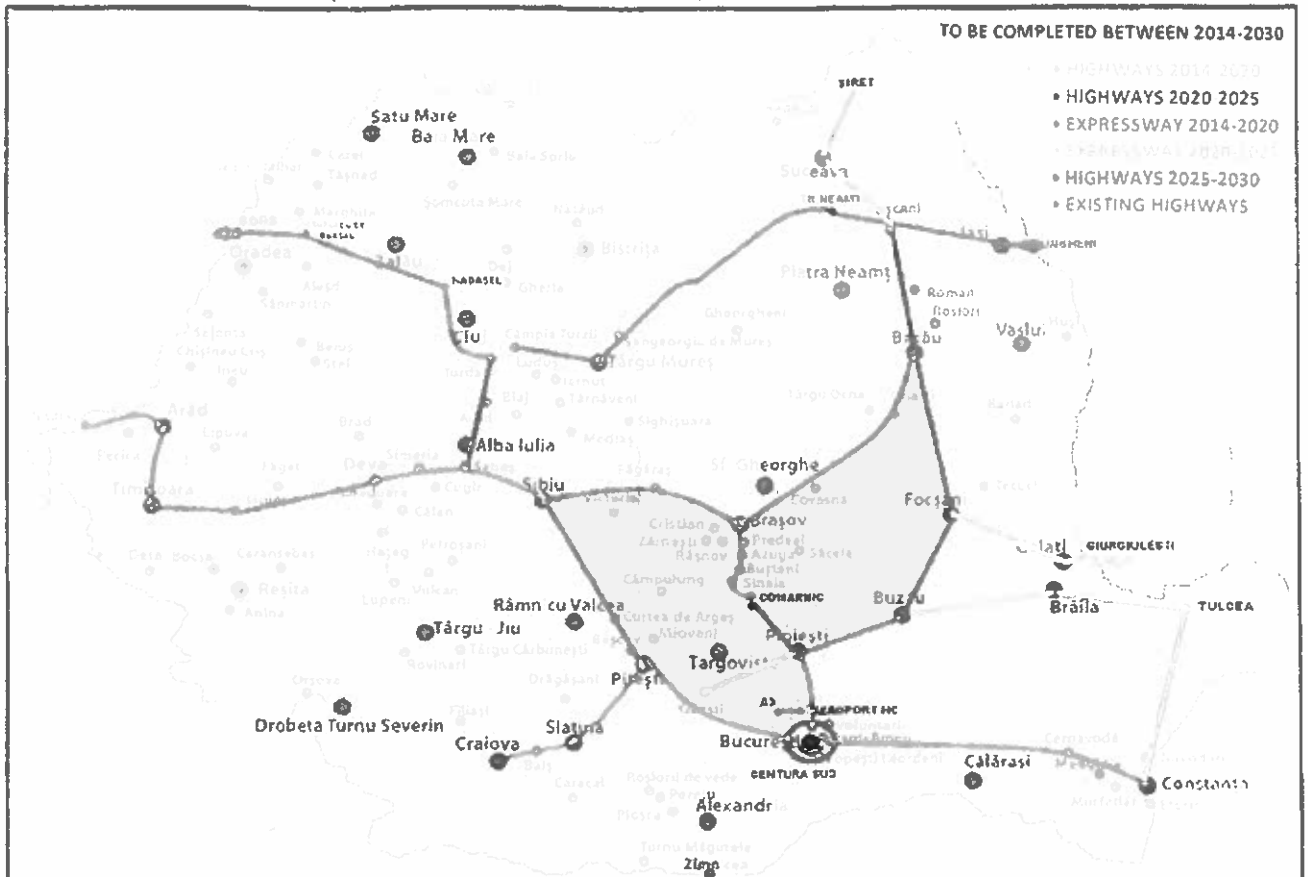


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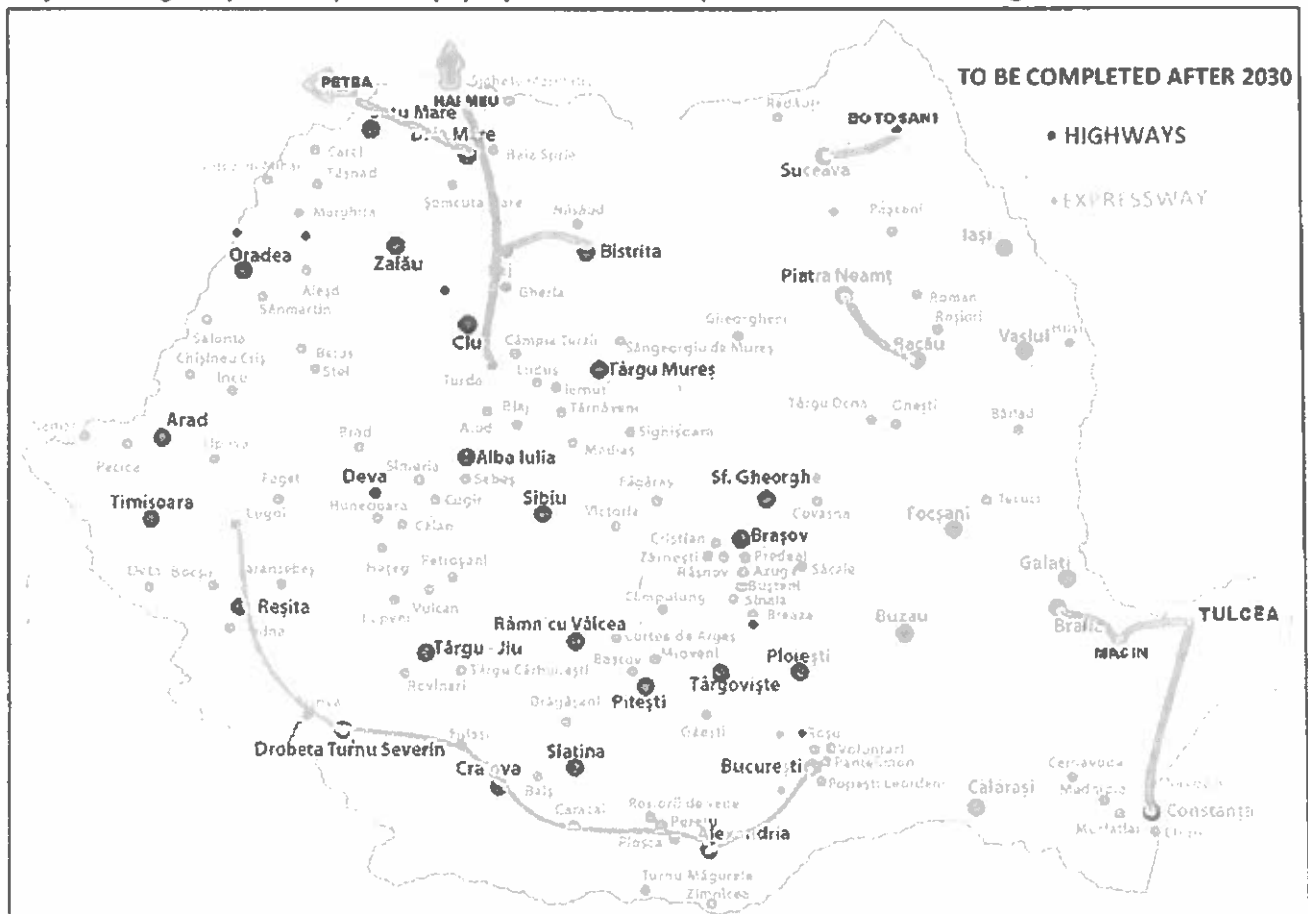
Director of RDA SW Oltenia



Projects of highways and expressways proposed to be completed between 2014-2030 according GTMP



Projects of highways and expressways proposed to be completed after 2030 according GTMP





CONSILIUL PENTRU DEZVOLTARE REGIONALA SUD-VEST OLTENIA

Dolj - Gorj - Mehedinți - Olt - Valcea

**DECISION NO. 16
of June, 15th 2015**

***Regarding the approval of the statement submission setting forth the
amending of the General Transport Master Plan 2014-2020***

Having in view:

- The backing document no. 10449/09.06.2015 regarding the approval of the statement submission setting forth the amending of the General Transport Master Plan 2014-2020,
- The provisions of the art. 7, paragraph 2, letter “n” of the Law 315/2004 regarding the regional development in Romania,
- The provisions of the art. 8, paragraph 2 of the Law 315/2004 regarding the regional development in Romania,

The Regional Development Board South-West Oltenia

DECIDES:

Art. 1 Approves the submittal of the statement towards Mrs. Corina Cretu, European commissioner for regional policy, towards Mrs. Violeta Bulc, European commissioner for Transport and to Mr. Jyrki Katainen, Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, in view of approval of the **General Transport Master Plan 2014-2020, comprising the request for the inclusion of the projects on highway and express roads sections that connects the South-West Oltenia region to the Western Europe.**

PRESIDENT OF RDB SW OLTENIA,

Aladin GEORGESCU

