

EU Funds in Central and Eastern Europe: Cohesion or Collision?

This map shows a selection of 22 environmentally damaging or otherwise disputable projects, with a total cost of around €6bn, that are being realised or planned in Central and Eastern European countries. Most of them are still waiting for approval in order to receive co-financing from the EU's Structural and Cohesion Funds. These projects are on a collision course with the EU's own policies and goals. This is not how EU taxpayers' money should be used. Such projects must be modified or stopped.

KEY TO THE MAP

- Motorway
- Inland waterway
- Waste incinerator
- Bridge
- Dam
- Railway project

Project status:

- Financed** (already received EU funding in 2000-2006)
- Planned** (included in national priorities for EU funding in 2007-2013 or the current period)
- Potential** (might be proposed for EU funding in 2007-2013)

POLAND

Via Baltica express way (S-8) (total cost unknown) (budget unknown)
The planned S-8 route of Via Baltica, part of the trans-European corridor from Warsaw to Helsinki, would cause irreversible damage to three sites of EU importance in NE Poland that have been proposed for the Natura 2000 network. The affected sites are home to endangered species such as the greater spotted eagle, the corncrake, wolfs, elks and lynxes. Rather than enhancing economic development in the region, the S-8 route for transit traffic is likely to destroy the region's greatest asset - its attractiveness for tourists. There are several alternative routes. One alternative route would pass by the towns of Łomża and Grajewo. This would not only be 30 km shorter but would also bypass most of the endangered sites.

S3 expressway (Szczecin-Gorzów section) (total cost €930m)
The 82 km long section of the planned expressway between Szczecin and Gorzów cuts through two Natura 2000 sites and runs close (less than 1 km) to the borders of two other Natura 2000 sites. In total, 18% of the length of the expressway runs through areas that have been designated for protection under the Natura 2000 network, while a further 12% of the road passes the vicinity of such areas. If constructed, the expressway would endanger populations of unique bird species such as the white-tailed eagle, the black stork and the lesser-spotted eagle. Alternative routing variants have not been seriously considered. The project's promoters are failing to recognise its impact on nature conservation.

The Nieszawa dam (total cost €500m)
A new large reservoir is planned in the lower course of the Wisła river, one of the last free-flowing rivers in lowland Europe. Experts maintain that the investment is economically unjustified, will not diminish the flood risk and will wipe out the unique habitats of the Wisła river's ecological corridor of international importance. The area is particularly important as a major wintering place for unique bird species like the white-tailed eagle, goosander, the goldeneye and the smew. In fact, the entire area of the planned reservoir would overlap with one of the Natura 2000 sites. Construction of the dam would not only destroy the site, but would also threaten three other Natura 2000 sites located along the river below Nieszawa, endangering the pristine character of the river.

Municipal waste incineration plant in Krakow (total cost €93m)
The planned incinerator, with a capacity of 255,000 tons per year, would jeopardise the separate waste collection, recycling and composting system that is currently being developed in the city and would undermine all incentives for the further development of such environmentally and economically more justified solutions. Paid for by EU funds, the construction of the facility would be seven times more expensive than an alternative option based on advanced composting and recycling. The incineration scenario is being strongly promoted by municipal authorities despite strong opposition from the local community that will be directly affected by the facility, i.e. roughly 1/3 of Krakow's inhabitants.

ESTONIA

Saaremaa bridge (total cost €230m)
The Estonian government is planning to use the EU funds to replace the existing ferry connection between the mainland and Saaremaa Island with a 7 km long bridge. The total costs appear to be too big for achieving improved accessibility to an island with only 40,000 inhabitants. A bridge to the island would significantly increase the volume of mass tourism, putting excessive pressure on the island's very vulnerable ecosystems and disturbing seabed ecosystems. The island's development can be better addressed by other types of investments, and intensifying the ferry connection would cost far less than building a bridge.

LATVIA

North corridor of Via Baltica in Riga (total cost €650m)
With the help of EU funds, a new motorway is supposed to link Riga with the Via Baltica road corridor. The planned route passes in a tunnel under an old cemetery in Riga and right next to the Jaunciems Natura 2000 site on the outskirts of the city, posing a risk to the habitats of rare nesting species like the corncrake. While these sections are already being designed, no assessment of their environmental impacts has been carried out so far. Also, an overall assessment of the motorway's impact on the environment and human health (e.g. from increased air pollution) has been avoided by 'slicing' the project into several parts.

SLOVAKIA

D1 motorway through Považská Bystrica (total cost €138m)
A motorway on a flyover bridge above residential houses is to be built through the town of Považská Bystrica with EU funding support. Trucks will be passing above people's heads day and night, causing excessive noise and air pollution. Alternative solutions such as a route around the town with a tunnel, recommended by experts who assessed the environmental impacts, have been ignored. The affected communities have not been properly consulted and compensated.

Hazardous waste incineration plant in central Slovakia (total cost €23m)
The Petrochema Dubova company is using its political connections with the authorities in the Banská Bystrica region to push for the construction of a new waste incinerator with EU subsidies. Neither the company nor the authorities have considered non-incineration alternatives, but have together pursued the construction of the incinerator without properly assessing if it is really needed. The construction plan has already been refused for three proposed sites, mainly because of environmental concerns. However, the Banská Bystrica authorities continue to look for other sites.

Slatinka dam (total cost €81m)
The Slovak Water Management Company plans to use EU funds to build a dam near Zvolen, even though the need for it has not been proved. The reasons given to build the dam have been changed several times, the latest being that the dam is to provide cooling water for a nuclear power plant 100 km away in Mochovec. If built, the dam would flood a 12 km long valley, which is a potential Natura 2000 site. Valuable natural habitats, home to otters and rare orchids, would be destroyed or seriously affected. In addition, the historical village of Slatinka would be wiped out and almost 100 inhabitants would be directly affected or relocated.

R1 expressway through Žiar nad Hronom (total cost €58m)
A section of the R1 expressway is to be routed on a high bank with noise barriers through the town of Žiar nad Hronom, creating a "Chinese wall" between residential houses and the River Hron. The road would pass at a distance of 120 metres from the town's municipal park with sports facilities - its main recreational area - and would increase the noise levels in the park above the permitted norm. Slovakia's Supreme Court has confirmed that citizens' rights to timely information were neither respected by the investor nor the local authorities.

ROMANIA

Navigation plans on the Danube river - removal of bottlenecks (total cost €168m)
As part of the trans-European waterway project connecting the Rhine and Danube rivers, bottlenecks in the Danube river between Bulgaria and Romania are to be eliminated. The proposed project, involving the artificial deepening of the river to reach a minimum depth of 2.5 metres at all times of the year, will have a permanent negative impact on valuable intact stretches along the Danube. These sites host several species of EU importance (e.g. the globally threatened Dalmatian Pelican) and are therefore candidate Natura 2000 sites. Less destructive, ecological and innovative principles for inland navigation are possible including improved vessel design.

THE CZECH REPUBLIC

D-8 motorway in Eastern Kránské Hory (total cost €634m)
A section of the Prague-Dresden motorway, financed by the EU's pre-accession fund ISPA and by a loan from the European Investment Bank, is being built across the Eastern Kránské Hory (Ore Mountains). The route goes through valuable ecosystems with marshes, peat bogs and mountain meadows that were intentionally kept outside the neighbouring proposed Natura 2000 site due to the planned motorway. Alternative routes proposed by experts have been neglected.

Municipal waste incineration plant in Opatovice (total cost €68m)
A planned waste incinerator with a capacity of almost 100,000 tons per year would result in the waste of many valuable materials that could otherwise be reused or recycled. In contrast, opting for waste prevention and recycling would be a far cheaper solution. It would also create many more jobs in the region. The project, which faces strong opposition in the surrounding municipalities, totally contradicts the Czech National Waste Management Plan which has pledged support for recycling and alternative waste treatment technologies.

Railway station replacement in Brno (total cost €845m)
The city of Brno is planning to move the main railway station from its current, attractive site in the city centre to a peripheral quarter almost 1km to the south. The relocation would complicate the lives of tens of thousands of people commuting to and from Brno every day. The city centre would no longer be accessible from the station on foot, and people would have to spend more time travelling on public transport. Modernisation of the station in its current location would be far more appropriate and popular and would also allow high-speed trains to pass through Brno. In a 2004 local referendum, 86% of voters rejected the station's relocation. The city council, which had openly called on citizens to boycott the voting, has ignored the results, referring to a low turnout (25%).

Danube-Oder-Elbe canal project (total cost €666m)
A huge inland waterway with an overall cost of €10-15bn is planned to connect major central European rivers. The first 80 km section of the canal, linking the Danube river with the city of Břeclav, was proposed for EU financing in the 2004-2006 period, but has been delayed. If realised, it would destroy some of the most valuable natural habitats in central Europe - the floodplain forests of the Morava and Thaya rivers that are to be designated as Natura 2000 sites. The canal, which would involve pumping water uphill over large distances, would run parallel to an existing under-utilized electrified railway network, while only marginal growth in inland waterway cargo is expected in the future. Hence this project would not even help to reduce the number of lorries on the roads.

Brussels

€157 billion

HUNGARY

Waste incineration plant in Várpalota (total cost €142m)
In spite of opposition from local citizens, including a petition signed by more than 3,000 people, the construction of a new waste incinerator with a capacity of 100,000 tons per year in Várpalota near Lake Balaton is among Hungary's priorities for EU funding. The planned incinerator will dramatically increase air pollution in the region and undermine the growing potential for waste prevention and recycling systems, which are not only cleaner but also create more jobs.

M0 - Budapest ring-road (total cost €348m)
The eastern section of the Budapest ring road, financed by the Cohesion Fund and the European Investment Bank, will cause excessive noise and air pollution levels in surrounding urban areas and a drop in real estate prices. Citizens living along the route are not being compensated properly and have objected to a number of legal breaches during the project's preparation. Moreover, the section is unnecessary as another nearby planned motorway, the M31, is going to fulfil the same function. A complaint against the project backed by 4,700 signatures has been sent to the European Parliament to ensure the citizens' right to justice. Public transport needs to be developed above all else, to stem the ever increasing volumes of car traffic around Budapest.

M3 motorway (Nyíregyháza-Vásárosnamény) (total cost €340m)
The 43 km long section of the M3 motorway is planned to connect Nyíregyháza with Vásárosnamény, close to the Ukrainian border. The proposed route crosses a valuable wetland area and a protected oak forest included in the Natura 2000 network, thus threatening the population of grey heron in the area. The routing is exaggerated as the connection can be realised with a shorter, cheaper and environmentally more sensitive alternative. Moreover, due to generally low traffic volumes throughout the region there is no urgent need for such a project.

Danube-Tisza canal and the Csongrád dam (total cost €640m)
A new reservoir to be built on the river Tisza, one of the last near-natural European rivers with rich biodiversity, would severely threaten several protected or rare species like the mayfly and sturgeon. The Csongrád dam is linked to another planned mega project - a canal between the Tisza and Danube rivers, which involves several clashes with nature conservation, e.g. with the Kiskunsági and Danube-Ipoly National Parks. The supposed benefits of the two projects - making the river more navigable and stopping the desertification of the region - are highly disputable. But the damage would be very tangible. Studies show that the canal cannot stop desertification but instead will undermine the potential for ecotourism in the region. The canal is not even necessary given the huge unused capacities of the existing railways.

BULGARIA

Ljulín motorway (total cost €149m)
The 20 km long stretch between Sofia and Pernik, another section of the trans-European corridor between Sofia and Athens, requires the construction of a motorway. The existing road causes serious traffic jams and air pollution as it passes through the narrow streets of Sofia. However, the route selected by the Bulgarian government and financed by the EU's pre-accession fund ISPA will not solve the existing problems, as the traffic on the existing road will continue to grow. The motorway route will also negatively affect the air quality and mineral springs of the Bankja Spa Resort, renowned for having some of the best conditions in Europe for the treatment of cardio-vascular diseases and visited by 200,000 people a year. Local residents strongly oppose the motorway plans. Economically and environmentally more sound alternative routes are feasible but the government refuses to assess them.

Struma motorway through Kresna gorge (total cost €600m)
The 17 km long Kresna Gorge Valley is home to an extraordinarily high number of endemic or rare protected species such as otter, tortoise, the leopard snake and 17 bat species. The unique habitat of the gorge is threatened by the Struma motorway, part of the trans-European corridor between Sofia and Athens. If routed directly through the gorge, as currently planned by the Bulgarian government, the motorway will irreversibly damage the gorge's ecosystems, and it will cause noise and air pollution in the town of Kresna where the road is set to run only 30 metres away from houses. A feasible alternative route exists which would avoid the gorge. It would only be 2 km longer but it would save the gorge's unique nature and the great potential for eco-tourism in the region.

National Hazardous Waste Centre (total cost €56m)
Two hazardous waste incinerators are planned to be built in the region of Stara Zagora, as part of a centralised system for treating the whole country's hazardous waste. The project would significantly increase negative impacts on human health and the environment in an already heavily polluted region: in 2005, dioxin levels in free-range chicken eggs tested in a nearby village were already 20 times in excess of EU limits. There are serious doubts about the project's economic viability and there is also a risk that the disposal system supported by EU funds would create economic incentives for the import of hazardous waste from the EU countries. None of the available technological alternatives have been considered despite opposition to the project from people in neighbouring villages. The European Commission has so far refrained from funding the centre, but the Bulgarian authorities are still hoping to receive EU funds for its construction.

Billions for sustainability?

Threats and opportunities of EU funds in the new member states

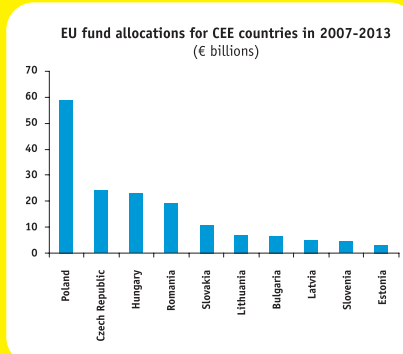
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Big money is en route to Central and Eastern Europe...

The European Union currently invests around €8 billion a year in its new member states through Structural and Cohesion Funds. The subsidies can be used for all kinds of projects: transport infrastructure, sewage treatment plants, support for businesses, training and education. From 2007 on and including Bulgaria and Romania, this flow of euros will increase to 22.5 billion a year. In per capita terms, this is significantly more than the Marshall Plan after the Second World War. Several more billions are to be added as co-financing from the budgets of the recipient countries.



... but how will it be used?

This huge financial injection, guided by the EU's cohesion policy, will shape the long-term development of the regions east of the former Iron Curtain. As to what kind of development the EU billions will support, this depends on how exactly the funds are used:

- for more large-scale motorway projects or for improving public transport?
- for expensive and polluting waste incinerators or for waste prevention and recycling?
- for channelling rivers with concrete or for integrated river basin management?
- for environmental destruction or for nature conservation?
- for energy-intensive projects or for energy savings?

Effective and environmentally benign use of EU funds is very much in the interests of people in the new member states as well as of taxpayers all over Europe.

Threats to the sound use of the funds are numerous...

Currently, the EU often finances environmentally harmful or economically doubtful projects. It also supports unsustainable, outdated types of development, for example in the transport and waste sectors. While the EU publicly promotes reducing the growth of freight transport and shifting it from road to rail, the majority of its funds for transport go to financing roads, which contribute to ever increasing car and truck traffic. And while the EU openly promotes the prevention and recycling of waste over incineration and landfilling, most of its subsidies are likely to be spent on the latter two waste disposal methods.

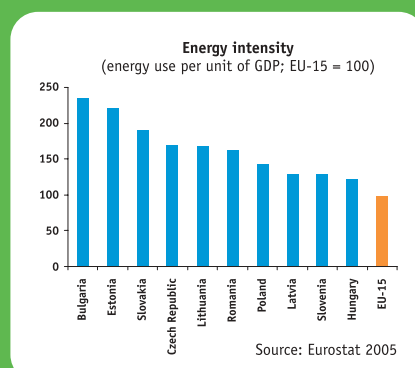
... but so are the opportunities.

However, EU funds have the potential to foster sustainable development, as long as the rules and priorities are set right both in Brussels and in national and regional capitals. The plans for the use of the funds in the period 2007-2013 are currently being prepared. This is a unique chance for the CEE countries to set their economies on a sustainable path, bringing real improvements to people's quality of life.

Energy: boosting efficiency and renewables

It takes on average 50% more energy to produce a unit of GDP in the CEE region as it does in Western Europe (see chart). The potential for energy savings in the region is thus huge, especially when high energy expenditure in CEE states undermines their competitiveness. EU funds could help secure massive energy savings across the economy and thus reduce energy bills for households, schools, hospitals, municipalities (e.g. by switching to efficient public lighting) and businesses.

In particular, EU funds should be invested into the insulation of buildings and the modernisation of district heating installations. District heating is commonplace in the new member states, with around 40% of households connected in comparison with 10% in the old member states. Old coal or oil boilers can be converted to modern, efficient gas or biomass boilers. Many district heating installations can also be redesigned for the combined generation of heat and electricity.



EU funds should also be used to unlock the large but unused renewable energy potential of CEE countries. Not only are biomass, wind and solar energy clean, but they also generate net benefits for the economy. In Germany, for example, 150,000 people are employed in the renewable energy sector today, three times more than in the entire coal sector. Experience also shows that the renewable sector is based on small and medium enterprises and thus is more decentralised. While nuclear and coal power plants or mines concentrate employment in only a few big centres, which become dependent on them, renewables spread jobs and other benefits more evenly across many communities and regions.

Making effective and environmentally sustainable use of EU funds

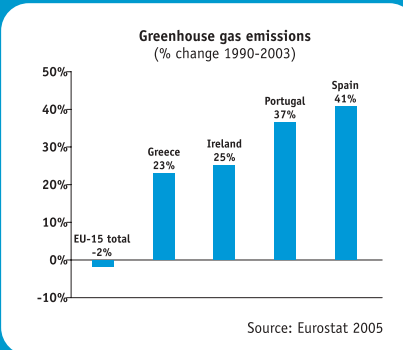
- **Strategic vision at all levels:** The lesson from the old member states (e.g. Wales or Ireland) is that local, regional and national authorities need to develop and stick to clear strategies rather than just spread money around on various projects with short-term impacts and few public benefits.
- **Facilitate access to EU funds for small applicants:** National or regional administrations should use a small part of the funds to establish professional and free-of-charge public services that assist municipalities, citizen groups and small businesses with the preparation of high quality projects, while taking care of the bureaucratic burden. Such a scheme functions productively in Wales for example.
- **Environmental assessments:** Negative environmental impacts of EU funded programmes and projects can be prevented through Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEA) and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA). These obligatory procedures, which involve consultations with the public, enable the programmes and projects to be optimised and any environmental damage to be minimised. However, if such assessments are only treated as rubber-stamping exercises, EU funding should be strictly rejected.
- **Environmental and social selection criteria:** Selection criteria for EU funding should attribute more points to projects with positive environmental and social impacts, while projects with negative impacts should be disqualified. Such a system has been implemented in Austria for example.
- **Involvement of civil society:** Municipal self-governments, non-governmental organisations, trade unions and the academic sector should be given a greater say in the monitoring of EU funds in order to offset the disproportionate influence of various lobbies and to prevent misuse and corruption.



Mixed record of EU funds: experience from the old member states

In Greece and southern Italy, for many years a lot of EU aid was wasted on projects of little value amid reports of widespread corruption. In contrast, countries like Ireland gradually learned to make more effective use of its EU money through well-coordinated strategic targeting of funds. Ireland also invested much more, including national funds, into research, training and innovation than into transport infrastructure.

The environmental record of EU funds is also mixed. A lot of money has been invested into so-called environmental infrastructure in the poorer EU countries, such as water treatment plants, sewage systems, and waste disposal facilities. However, very little was done in terms of tackling pollution at the source.



The record of EU funds on climate change - one of the biggest challenges for mankind - has up to now been an unequivocal failure. The four "cohesion countries" (Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain), which have so far received the most EU money, have also witnessed by far the greatest increases in greenhouse gas emissions in the EU (see chart). While the blame cannot be wholly pinned on EU funds, EU money has undoubtedly helped to fuel climate change instead of cooling it.

Rocketing fuel prices require a shift to efficiency

World fuel prices have recently soared to record levels and are set to remain high. At the same time, the effects of climate change are being increasingly felt through more frequent and extreme droughts and floods. Business as usual cannot be an option. CEE countries must not repeat the development mistakes of western Europe. EU funds in the new member states need to be directed towards energy and resource efficiency, renewable energy, eco-friendly technologies and sustainable transport. This kind of development will reduce oil dependence as well as climate pollution, and will support competitiveness, technological innovation and job creation.

GDP is not the way to measure development

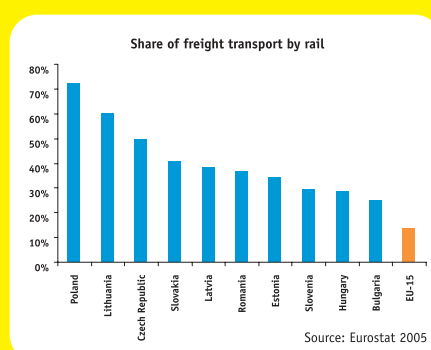
The growth of GDP (gross domestic product) does not automatically make any society modern and healthy. GDP does not account for the negative social and environmental costs of growth and often treats them as benefits, even when they decrease the well-being of people, e.g. the clean-up of pollution and ecological disasters, paying for noise barriers, medical costs due to pollution, and car wrecks. Growth should therefore be conditioned by measurable social and environmental progress and by a real reduction of regional disparities in living standards. However, the EU's cohesion policy is still based on the standard narrow and misleading GDP indicator, while even China has already introduced the concept of "green GDP" - taking negative environmental impacts into account when measuring development in its provinces.

EU funds and corruption

Studies show that the construction sector is more prone to corruption than any other economic sector. As this is the sector which benefits most from EU funds, governments and the EU must emphatically insist on the proper use of the money, which means that the spending must be transparent and it must involve public participation. In this way EU funds could actually help reduce overall corruption in CEE by spreading good practice throughout the public administration sectors.

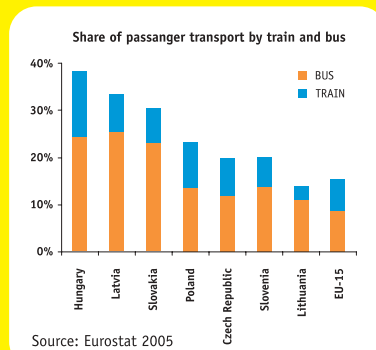
Transport: avoiding the vicious circle

The new member states can still avoid the vicious circle - familiar across western Europe - of ever increasing car dependency, noise and air pollution, urban sprawl, chronic congestion, and further road building. The share of freight transported by rail and of passengers transported by public transport in the new member states is still considerably higher than in the old member states (see charts), although it has declined in favour of trucks and cars in recent years. Money has been poured into building new motorways (usually part of the EU-promoted Trans-European Networks) that serve lorries, while motorway fees cover only a minimal part of their costs. At the same time the railways have suffered from a lack of financing and increasingly expensive charges for their usage.



EU funds should be used to reverse these trends in order to make the best of the new member states' advantage in rail and public transport. Unfortunately, money from both Structural and Cohesion Funds has so far been skewed in favour of motorways and roads in the new as well as in the old EU member states. In the latter, 50% of transport investments from Structural Funds went to roads and motorways and only 29% to the railways between 2000 and 2006.

A number of studies have debunked the widespread myth that motorways drive economic development. Economic impacts are as often positive as negative, depending on specific circumstances. Moreover, this does not include the negative external costs of transport, such as accidents, damage to health, and climate change impacts, which are estimated at around 8% of the EU's GDP. If any transport investments are vital for the everyday life of most people and for regional development, it is support for public transport, the rehabilitation of local and regional railways and roads, and improvements in transport safety.

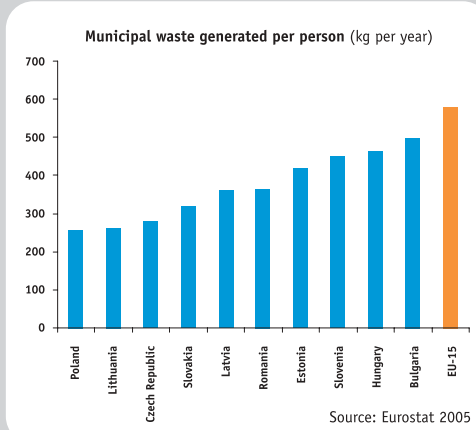


In the cities of Central and Eastern Europe, funding for public transport was cut back in the 1990s. In Budapest, municipal subsidies to the public transport company were reduced by two thirds between 1990 and 2000. The result has been higher fares and a lack of funds for the renewal of vehicles, encouraging a switch to private car use. The number of cars per person is already higher in the Czech Republic and Slovenia than in one of Europe's richest countries, Denmark. This trend needs to be reversed through the focused investment of EU funds into metro and tram systems, as well as bicycle lanes and the creation of pedestrian zones.



Waste: goodbye to the throw-away society?

The amount of municipal waste coming mainly from households is still significantly lower in CEE countries than in the old EU-15 (see chart). Poland, the Czech Republic and Lithuania each produce less than half the EU-15 average. The danger is that waste amounts will increase drastically in line with increased material consumption.



Most recyclable household waste is landfilled and burned causing significant pollution. Moreover, this is an outright waste of precious natural resources. Every ton of wasted material which ends up in a landfill or an incinerator must be extracted or produced again, leading to further pollution, energy use and expensive imports.

Recycling, reuse, and composting of waste are not only more environmentally sound than incineration and landfilling, but also create significantly more jobs for the same amount of money.

With a focused investment of EU funds on these methods, the new member states will be able to make the switch from a throw-away society into a resource efficient economy within a decade.

However, there is a danger that the pressure to absorb all the EU money for the 2007-2013 period will lead to the construction of oversized incineration and landfill capacities which will in turn encourage increases in waste production. Dozens of new incinerators (often called "energy recovery plants") are planned to be built in the CEE region with the help of EU funds. This would perpetuate the unsustainable approach to the waste problem for many years to come.



Waste incineration plant in Prague: an outmoded way of dealing with waste

Nature protection: an economic asset

EU funds can and should be used to support protected areas in the European "Natura 2000" network and river basin management under the Water Framework Directive. The protection of nature is not only crucial to halting the loss of biodiversity and to ensuring the long-term sustainability of economic development, it is also an economic asset. National parks and nature reserves attract eco-tourism and create jobs in marginal regions. The new member states brought an invaluable gift to the EU in this regard: large areas of wild or well-preserved nature, beautiful landscapes and many species that are already extinct in the EU-15. As for the river basins, the protection of floodplain forests and meadows reduces the damaging power of floods which have repeatedly hit the CEE region in recent years.



The EU funded Prague-Dresden motorway cutting through the Krasné Hory mountains in the Czech Republic

However, EU funds could well undermine the EU's own nature and river protection policies. Many of the natural treasures of CEE countries including the Biebrza and Narwa parks in Poland, Kresna gorge in Bulgaria, as well as the intact stretches of the Danube, Tisza and Morava river basins, may soon be sacrificed to make way for reckless construction projects subsidised by EU funds. There are also dozens of potential clashes between the EU's trans-European transport network - including many new big road projects - and the Natura 2000 network.

Fortunately, most of the conflicts between economic development and nature protection can be prevented through better planning, consultations, and properly carried out SEA and EIA procedures. Yet question marks remain as to whether there is the political will to do so at both the national and EU levels.



A valuable wetland forest could be threatened by the Danube-Oder-Elbe canal, if supported by EU funds

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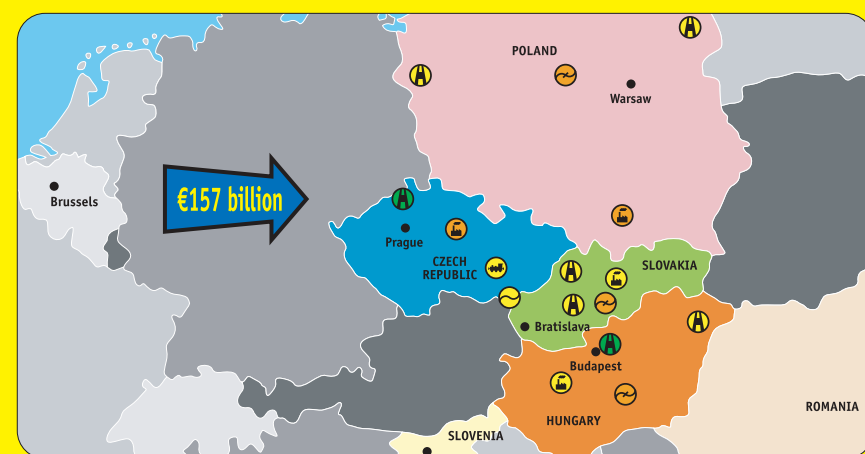
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Map of controversial projects in the new member states

EU Funds in Central and Eastern Europe:

COHESION OR COLLISION?



The European Union is about to pour €157 billion in Structural and Cohesion Funds into its new member states and accession countries for the 2007-2013 period. But how will this enormous pot of taxpayers' money be used? Under the present rules, EU funds can be the catalyst for many sensible projects that improve the quality of people's lives and strengthen Europe's cohesion, but they can also do harm. This map shows some of the already funded, planned and potential projects in Central and Eastern Europe which are on a collision course with the EU's own policies and goals. Most of these environmentally damaging or otherwise controversial projects are still on the drawing board or await approval from Brussels. Such unsound use of public money can still be prevented.

An interactive version of the map is available at: www.bankwatch.org/billions