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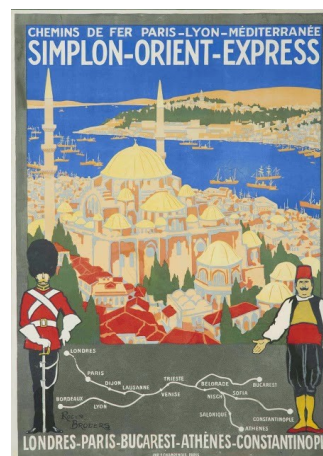
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#### IMPRESSUM

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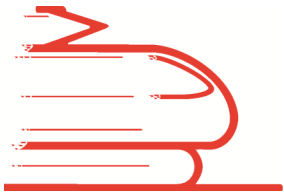
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## International Monetary Fund “reinvents the wheel”

Dear readers, membes and friends of RCSEE,



In the recent document made by the IMF bureaucrats, readers were suggested that “There is nothing new in the Balkans”. Recently the media cited parts of the report, claiming that the Western Balkans region (Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Albania) records only 30% of EU15 income. This difference reduced by only 12% in the past 18 years. It is clear therefore, that unlike the state of Denmark, a lot of things are rotten here. And who doesn’t know that yet? According to the report published in February by the IMF, this slow economic growth is mainly caused by terrible condition of public infrastructure, primarily rail-ways. Lack of quality infrastructure network and roads seriously limits both producers and consumers as well as efficient trade exchange.

This document further claims that the bad situation in the energy sector, that is lack of reliable supply of electricity and water, reduces production capacities of these countries, making them uncompetitive in the attraction of foreign direct investments.

According to the Global Competitiveness Report for 2016-2017 average ranking of Western Balkans countries in quality of infrastructure is 85 out of 135 countries. In total, infrastructure index shows that the region in question is 50% lower placed than the EU. Best ranked is Serbia, whose infrastructure is 30% below EU average, and the worst ranked is Albania—70% below the EU average.

Specially noted were the issues with public administration, bureaucracy and government institutions that are almost entirely uncoordinated even on the basest projects.

The situation is not much better in the public procurement processes, or in the weak banking sectors not capable of following the realization of important infrastructure projects.

Finally, this IMF report mentions a well-known fact that „choice of priority infrastructure projects should be protected from political influence“. However, it doesn't say how to accomplish this in countries goverened by authoritan partocracy who are (due to „regional stability“) openly supported by leaders of most influential countries of international community?

Kindest regards,

Milan Vučković

RCSEE Director, Chief Editor **SEE RAIL Perspective**





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### FBIH Railways sign a contract on electrification of part of Unska railway with Step d.d. company from Sarajevo

**January, Sarajevo, B&H:** Public relations department of Railways of Federation of B&H announced that this company signed a contract on January 16 with **Step d.d.** from Sarajevo, which presented a best offer on international tender for electrification of part of the railway on river Una section, from Blatina to Bihać, in a total length of 47 kilometers.



Net worth of this contract is 1.15 mil EUR, and the deadline for completion of works is 75 days. This project is also supported by the Government of the Federation of B&H and Railways of the Republic of Srpska.

After the completion of these works, Railways of the Federation of B&H will, after 27 years, reestablish railway passenger transport via „BH Train“ between Sarajevo and Bihać. Through this project, Railways of the Federation of B&H will fulfil their goal of connecting all major cities in Bosnia in a single railway network, which will enable further development projects and improvements for individuals and the economy. Finally, Step d.d. Sarajevo company is an esteemed member of RCSEE.

### Railways of Republic of Srpska open automated level crossing “Ljeb”

**February, Doboj:** After the test period, on February 8 automated signaling-safety devices on level crossing Ljeb became operational. This crossing is found on a regional road at Dragalovci settlement. Mechanized lowering and lifting of barriers is now a part of history. Complete safety system of level crossing is automated, and the wait for intersecting road vehicles has been reduced.



Agreement on automatization of this level crossing was made between the Railways of the Republic of Srpska and Energy Financing Team (EFT Group), owner of Stanari thermal power plant.

Total worth of this project is approximately 300,000 KM ( 153,000 EUR). With completion of project PS-03, automated safety devices will be set on 16 level crossings out of 57 found on Doboj – Banjaluka section of railway.



(Photos: Željeznice Republike Srpske <http://www.zrs-rs.com>)



## Cooperation on further development of Mediterranean corridor

**January, Zagreb:** Recently, according to the website of **Croatian Railways Infrastructure**, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure, management of Railway Infrastructure of Croatia and Kingdom of Spain. State secretary **Nikolina Brnjac**, together with members of management of Croatian Railways Infrastructure **Nikola Ljuban** and **Marko Z. Žubrinić** visited Spain on 23rd and 24th January 2018. Cooperation between two states resulted first in the **Memorandum of understanding between the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure, Croatian Railways Infrastructure and ADIF**, as a managing company of Spanish railway infrastructure, which has formally established a dialogue which results in further cooperation on the development of Mediterranean corridor, one of the nine corridors of Trans-European Transport Network.



During the visit Croatian delegation had an opportunity to meet with the representatives of the Ministry of Transport and Construction of the Kingdom of Spain. During the meetin the two sides discussed the possibility of joint action in future expansion of Mediterranean corridor. This initiative is highly important for Croatia, which is lobbying for inclusion of the port of Ploče in Mediterranean corridor, as well as its expnasion to railway in Lika, connecting the ports of Zadar, Šibenik and Split with the corridor.

## Construction of second track, renewal and modernization of railway section Škrlevo - Rijeka - Jurdani

**December, Rijeka:** During December 2017 Croatian Railways Infrastructure, Primorje-Gorski Kotar County, City of Rijeka, City of Bakar and Matulji municipality signed an Agreement on co-financing creation of project documentation for construction of second track, renewal and modernization of railway section Škrlevo – Rijeka – Jurdani.

The estimated value of project documentation for this project is **10 million EUR**. Croatian Railways Infrastructure, project coordinator, has secured a grant from **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)** in the maximum amount of 85 percent of estimated costs, or 8,5 mil EUR.



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## Serbian Railways Infrastructure purchases 5 new track motorcars from French company Geismar

**February, Beograd:** Serbian Railways Infrastructure and French company Geismar signed a contract on the procurement of five heavy-duty track motorcars.

Value of the procurement is 4.5 million EUR, and the funds were secured from the credit line of European Bank for Renewal and Development. Contract was signed by **Miroljub Jevtić**, DG of Serbian Railways Infrastructure and **Srdjan Babić**, Geismar representative for this part of Europe.

These motorcars are necessary to Serbian Railways Infrastructure for maintenance of electrified rail lines. It possesses mechanization necessary for maintenance of

contact network on Serbian railways. In the past four decades, Serbian railways obtained only one such motorcar, fifteen years ago.

According to Jevtić, first motorcar will arrive in Serbia in March 2019, and all five will arrive in succession until the end of 2019.

Procurement of mechanization for maintenance of construction and electrical infrastructure, according to the Serbian Railways Infrastructure, will surely contribute to intensifying of maintenance activities in the upcoming years, and create conditions for safer and punctual railway traffic on Serbian railways.



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- Energy Measurement
- Fuel Saving
- Fire Protection





### Representatives of European network of Railway Police Forces (RAILPOL) visited Belgrade

**February, Beograd:** Main reason of the visit is prevention and reduction in cross-border crime. RAILPOL is an international organization, in charge of police activities on railways in EU Member States

RAILPOL delegation was led by the president of the organization, **Bert Westland**, and it discussed the safety challenges of terrorism, international contacts, exchange of information and experiences and control of migrant routes with the representatives of the Center for Safety of Serbian Railways Infrastructure, Minis-

try of Interior Affairs and Police department for railway safety.

During the visit to Belgrade Railway Station, Westland said that „Even though Serbia is not an EU member, it is of great importance for European network of railway police forces due to geographical location and important intersection of roads and corridors. That is why Serbian initiative for joining RAILPOL was very well accepted in the Council of this organization".

Representatives of Center for Safety of Serbian Railways Infrastructure showed the an example of joint cooperation in the necessity of migrant control on known migrant routes.

RAILPOL is founded in 2003, and is funded by the European Commission.

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### SLOVENIA

#### Upcoming railway line Ljubljana - Zagreb - Beograd

**February, Ljubljana:** Representatives of Slovenian Cargo, Croatian Railways Cargo, Serbia Cargo and AGIT spoke of the possibility for national operators to revive transport of goods on Corridor 10, on the railways of Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia.

The goal is to redirect individual shipments, that are currently being transported by road traffic, or trucks, back to rail transport, said the Serbian Cargo on its website.

- It will be a great challenge, but good cooperation between these three transport companies, providing quality and reliable service, as well as competitive price of transport, make these plans very optimistic - said in a press release from Serbia Cargo.

Additionally, it is planned for pilot project to start in March this year, and later, depending on the interest and demands from the clients work on adjustment and improvement of the project.

It is even possible to introduce a train named Sava Express that would operate on Ljubljana-Zalog-Belgrade marshalling yard route.



### MACEDONIA

#### Project documentation for Kičevo - Lin (Albania) railway finished

**January, Skopje:** Recently, in EU Infocenter in Skopje project documentation for the construction of Kičevo (Makedonija) - Lin (Albanija) railway, a total length of 62.5 kilometers, was presented.

Project proposes three new stops in Brždani, Preseka and Izdeglajve and completely new stations in Mešeišta, Struga and Radožda.

European Union has provided support for creation of the documentation for this regional network in the amount of 7.7 million EUR.

Director of Macedonian Infrastructure, **Irfan Asani**, said that the work on the creation of project documentation for this project began back in 2009. According to him, this project is worth 500 million EUR.

In most optimistic scenario, this section should be finished by 2022.

Project documentation was created by a consortia led by Spanish company "Tipsa".



### Montenegro: Tunnel Sozina Reconstructed

**February, Sozina:** Works on the reconstruction of railway in tunnel Sozina, on Belgrade-Bar railway, 6,712 meters of length, are finished.

The works included replacement of existing wooden sleepers with concrete, replacement of rails, overhead lines and signalization and cleaning of existing drainage channels.

Works were performed by Strabag AG Austria company, under the supervisions of Institute for Construction from Podgorica. Contracted value was 4,190,245 EUR.

Project is realized as a part of Operational Programme Regional Projekat 2012-2012, adopted by the Government of Montenegro and European Commission in 2013, and financed from Instrument of Pre-Accession Assistance through component III – Regional Development.



### Deutsche Bahn working positively despite numerous challenges



**February, Berlin:** First man of Deutsche Bahn (DB), **Richard Lutz** considers his company's performance in 2017 as very positive. Despite numerous challenges and problems (technical malfunctions, weather conditions, delays) profit and loss balance is much better than 2016. That is, train as a mean of transportation in Germany has become more popular than ever.

International trains were used like never before: above all, ICE fleet of 260 units, according to the German *Handelsblatt*, saw a record growth of 58.5%, three percent higher than in 2016.

A slightly lesser growth of passengers was recorded by slower IC trains (49.7% compared to 48.3% in 2016). Total number of passengers transported by DB in 2017 was 141 million (compared to 139 million in 2016).

ICE trains (with speeds up to 300 km/h) have become a serious competition to airline companies Lufthansa and Easyjet on Berlin-Munich section, where the number of passengers in the last year was almost doubled (3.6 million).

### Signaling and Altpro held an event on Belgrade University Faculty of Transport

Two cluster members, companies **Altpro from Zagreb** and **Signaling** from Belgrade held an event on January 26, in **Belgrade Faculty of Transport** named „Cooperation of business and academics“.

Event was opened by the dean of Faculty of Transport, **Dr. Nebojša Bojović**. Guests and participants were also greeted by the Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia in Serbia, **Mr. Gordan Bakota**, and the State Secretary in the Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, **Mr. Miodrag Poledica**. Also, the event was attended by the Director General of Serbian Railways Infrastructure, **Mr. Miroljub Jevtić**, who announced a project with World Bank for purchase and installation of 60 automated level crossings.

Event was used for signing of several important contracts. First of them was an agreement on business and technical cooperation, signed between Director of Signaling company, **Makso Đukić** and the dean of Faculty of Transport, **Nebojša Bojović**.

Also, another contract was signed, an agreement on donation between Altpro and Signaling and Serbian railways infrastructure, through which Altpro and Signaling companies donate complete safety equipment for level crossing in Klenje settlement, in Belgrade municipality of Voždovac.

Finally, a scholarship agreement was signed, through which Signaling company from Belgrade grants a one-year scholarship to Teodora Milenković, best student of Railway Traffic and Transport section of the Faculty of Transport.

After the introductory part, gathered participants saw the presentations from several companies from the Republic of Croatia. Zvonimir Viduka presented business activities of Altpro companies on international markets, with special focus on the innovation process. Jovana Đurić, Director of Telecor company from Zagreb presented the patents and products developed in this company, while Andrijana Parić from Sense Group presented the possibilities for financing of railway projects from EU funds.



### EU support to RCSEE and its Member

Railway Cluster for South-East Europe, together with several other partner organisations from EU Member States, has received support from the European Commission for realization of “Promoting European Rail Excellence Outside EU” (PERES) project.

PERES project aims to network companies from partner Clusters and promote their partnership and cooperation, as well as providing them concrete support for entry into non-European markets.

70 percent of the funds for implementation of the project will be provided by the European Commission, while the remaining 30% will be secured by the Cluster (through effort and contribution of the Cluster Team, symbolic participation fees and partial coverage of travel costs).

RCSEE partners in this project are:

**DITECFER** (<http://www.ditecfer.eu/>), Tuscany, Italy

**I-TRANS** (<http://www.i-trans.org/>), France

**BTS Bahntechnik Sachsen** (<http://bts-sachsen.de/>), Saxony, Germany

**RAIL ALLIANCE** (<http://www.railalliance.co.uk/>), UK

Most important activities in the project will be meetings of Cluster representatives aiming at creating quality me-

chanisms for their networking. One of these meetings will be held for all companies from South-Eastern Europe in Belgrade, in autumn 2018 or beginning of 2019. We will have an opportunity to host representatives of most important European Clusters and European Commission for railways, and to create contacts with their member companies. It will be another excellent opportunity for creating contacts and business networking.

One of the key activities included in the project will be the meeting of all interested cluster members from all five participating Clusters, to be held in Belgrade in second half of 2018 or early 2019. We feel that this event will be an excellent opportunity to meet and network with a number of SMEs from EU, and make potential partnerships for future business ventures.

Also, ultimate goal of PERES project is to enable certain members of our Cluster an opportunity to partner up with companies members of other European partner organizations and jointly present themselves on a large, non-European market that will be selected.

We will continue to inform you on all developments concerning PERES in the upcoming months.



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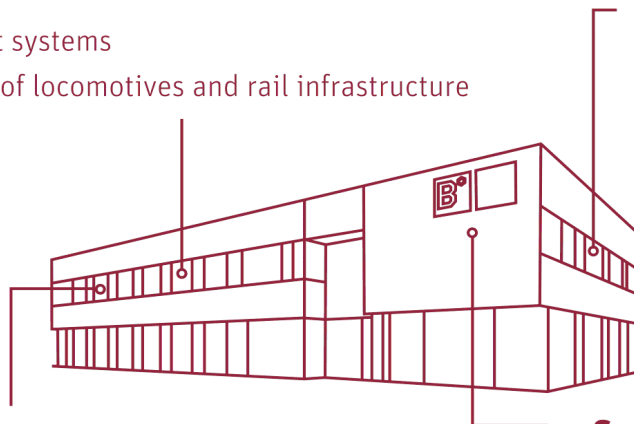
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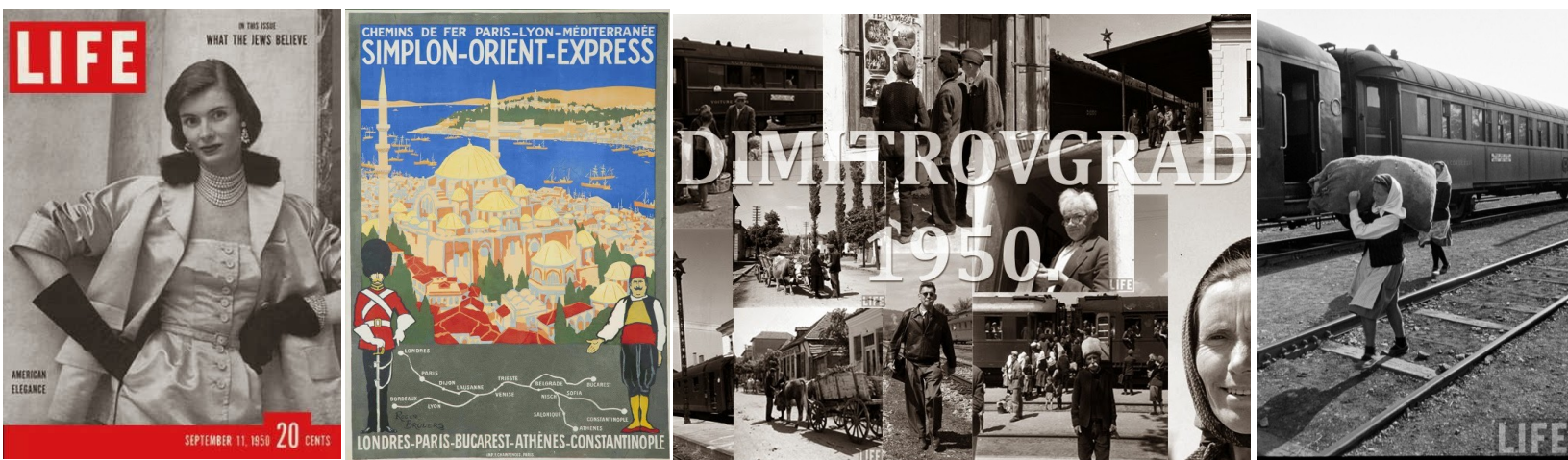
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## TIME MACHINE:

### American LIFE Magazine published reportage on Dimitrovgrad in 1950

Back in 1950, US photographer **Jack Birns** and his colleague journalist **Roy Rowan** boarded the train for Istanbul on Victoria station in London. The train at the time was renowned **Simplon Orient Express**, and their task was to make a travelogue for LIFE magazine. Following the route of this journey, two journalists reached Dimitrovgrad in Serbia, located next to the border with Bulgaria, where they had time to walk through the town and record the life in those times. LIFE published this reportage in issue on September 11, 1950, on page 137. Reportage contains 30 photos out of almost 1,800 made during this trip.



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