



SERBIA

Partners:

- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure
- Corridors of Serbia Ltd
- Public Enterprise Roads of Serbia

Estimated total investment:

- €255 million

EU contribution:

- €40.6 million

EIB loan:

- €100 million

EBRD loan:

- €80 million

Beneficiary contribution:

- €27 million

Transport

2018 CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

Orient/East-Med Corridor: Serbia – Kosovo* R7 Road Interconnection, Niš (Merošina) – Pločnik (Beloljin) Section

This investment project will build a 32 km-long half-profile motorway on a section of the Orient/East-Med Core Network (Route 7) in Serbia. It is the first road section of the three comprising the Niš – Merdare – Pristina motorway to receive investment co-financing under the Connectivity Agenda.

The existing road on the Niš (Merošina) – Pločnik (Beloljin) section consists of two lanes on a poor alignment, irregularly maintained. It goes through urban areas, thus posing safety risks to the local pedestrians and causing major delays to transiting vehicles. The proposed investment will result in a highway that bypasses such areas, as well as improves the level of service and traffic safety. The new alignment will also allow for a future expansion to a full motorway profile, once the traffic demand increases.



Existing Route 7 road in Merošina, Serbia.

Results:

- 32 km-long highway, including several bridges, tunnels, overpasses, multi-level junctions (interchanges) and associated utilities.



Proposed design for Niš (Merošina) – Pločnik (Beloljin) section (WBIF Infrastructure Project Facility 4).

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Previous EU Assistance:

- €7.4 million (technical assistance for project preparation)

Estimated Start Date:

- End of 2021

Estimated End Date:

- End of 2024



Map of Route 7, with Niš (Merošina) – Pločnik (Beloljin) section.

The Orient/East-Med Corridor in Serbia and Kosovo includes the Niš – Merdare – Pristina E80/R7 road sections (approximately 110 km). Strategically linked to Corridors IV and X, this road interconnection is of great importance for freight and passenger transportation in the Western Balkans as it is the region's shortest route between the Port of Durrës on the Adriatic and South-Eastern and Central Europe, as well as with the Mediterranean and Black Sea countries.

The location (Spatial Plan) of the entire Route 7 in Serbia, from Niš (Merošina) to Merdare, was approved by the Government in October 2017. The Niš (Merošina) – Pločnik (Beloljin) section is now at the stage of detailed design. Land ownership issues are to be addressed in the coming period, while an updated environmental and social impact assessment study is to be approved by the relevant authorities in Serbia and participating International Financial Institutions by the end of 2020.

The European Union has funded all project preparation activities, through the Western Balkans Investment Framework. JASPERS (Joint Assistance to Support Projects in European Regions) and CONNECTA (Technical Assistance to Connectivity in the Western Balkans) have also provided technical advice during the preparation of this project.

The other section on Route 7 in Serbia – Pločnik (Beloljin) to Merdare – is at preliminary design stage. Following the adoption of an updated Spatial Plan in August 2019, the preliminary design is scheduled for completion in 2020. The section from Pristina to Merdare, in Kosovo, is planned to be tendered under a design and build contract. The EU has provided grant support to cover all these preparatory activities.

Benefits

- Increase in travel speed to 100 km/h and hence decrease travel times substantially along the route.
- Reduced environmental impact on urban areas that were previously crossed by the existing road and reduced congestion.
- Increase in annual average traffic by more than 2,000 vehicles/day, bringing daily traffic to more than 8,500 vehicles/day after the first year of operation.
- Reduce accident rate and vehicle operating costs.
- More than 350 jobs created during construction as well as operation and maintenance periods.
- Improved trade flows with countries in the region and thus a positive impact on the economy of Serbia.