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The Correlation between the Military Transport Network and the Trans-European Transport Network

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Abstract

Currently, the problem of military transport in the European area is being debated by the leaders of security-generating organizations. The Trans-European Transport Network, although developed for transporting civilian goods and personnel, can be a solution for moving military troops, equipment, and materials in Europe. This article aims to highlight the extent to which the existing corridors on the trans-European transport network correspond to the military transport network and the solutions that could simplify the process of civil-military use of the already existing network. At the same time, the authors intend to correlate the existing elements with those necessary to ensure military mobility in the European area, through the methods of documentary and comparative analysis.

Keywords:
transport network; military mobility; TEN-T; transport corridors.

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The role of the development of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) is to build a multimodal transport network by rail, road, inland waterways, and inland sea routes or by air, in order to ensure sustainable economic growth for European states. However, given the current geopolitical context, it has become increasingly evident that there is a need to use the already existing network and adapt it to specific military needs so that the rapid deployment of military forces, equipment, and techniques in any region of Europe can be ensured.

However, in order to allow for increased military mobility within the European area and beyond, improvements in the dual-use capabilities of the transport infrastructure within the TEN-T network are needed, as they are essential for ensuring Europe's security and defense. The development of TEN-T to enable military mobility would ensure the removal of bottlenecks, the filling of existing gaps in transport networks, and the removal of technical barriers, while also reducing the environmental impact of transport and increasing the safety and resilience of the network (European Commission 2024).

The issue of transport in Europe has been debated for many years. In 2005, the Trans-European Transport Network was developed, a project that reduces the distances between European states by building various transport routes, which ensure access to any corner of the continent. However, the discussions on military mobility are relatively recent, this being a topic that has taken shape, especially after 2017.

The purpose of this article is to conduct some research in order to analyze the similarity and coherence between the trans-European transport network and the military transport network, so as to highlight the gaps that exist at the moment and possible ways in which they can be eliminated.
The article will conclude with proposals of future measures or activities that could support the faster movement of military troops using the TEN-T and measures to adapt to military transport needs.

The research consisted in analyzing a considerable number of bibliographic sources in the field of civil and military mobility in the European area, such as: scientific articles, doctoral theses, articles from specialized journals, online media sources, press releases, and reports prepared by the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the member states.

The research aims to identify coherent and pertinent answers to the following research questions:
1. What is the current level of development of the link between the two types of transport networks?
2. Why is the correlation of dual-use mobility important to improve security in the European area?
3. What measures could support efficiency in ensuring full coherence between the two types of transport networks?

In order to identify the answers to the research questions formulated above, the authors intend to develop the following research route: they will analyze, based on the identified bibliographic sources, data on the trans-European transport network. Then, from the same perspective, they will identify the specific elements related to the military transport network. Subsequently, they will compare the two transport networks, in order to identify the existing similarities or differences to finally determine potential solutions to improve the development of a dual-use transport network. The research methods used will be the documentary analysis, so as to identify the necessary data on the two types of transport networks and, subsequently, the comparative method, to compare the data obtained. The potential limitations in the development of the research would consist in the lack of access to a large number of scientific sources, given the nature of the field studied and the lack of different perspectives for the development of the work, taking into account the fact that the main entities interested in this field are the EU and NATO organizations.

The motivation for this research comes from the authors' interest in understanding the relationship between the two analyzed components: the trans-European transport network and the military transport network.

Evolution and Purpose of the Trans-European Transport Network

Efforts to develop an integrated transport system in the European area began to take shape in 1990 when the European Commission adopted the first action plan on trans-European transport networks (in the fields of energy, telecommunications, and transport). The aim of the creation of TEN-T is to develop and integrate a transport network that facilitates the rapid movement of citizens and goods in Europe.
In 2005, the European Union established the creation of a transport network connecting all Member States. From that moment until now, the EU has been putting pressure on Member States to improve their own transport infrastructure (European Commission 2005).

In 2009, the EU adopted the document entitled "*Towards a better integrated trans-European transport network at the service of the common transport policy*", which laid the foundations for *Regulation (EU) no. 1315/2013*, which set out the priorities and standards of the Member States on transport. Even though this regulation was only adopted in 2013, there were other similar documents before that, which were based on directives published between 1996 and 2010.
The *2013 TEN-T Regulation* provides for 2 elements to make up the European transport network: *the core network* and *the comprehensive* network. Both elements encompass all types of transport (rail or road for goods or passengers, inland waterways, short sea routes, ports, airports, etc.), on which specific components of transport infrastructure such as service areas, refueling stations, etc. were located.

The comprehensive transport network is planned with the aim of ensuring adequate accessibility and connectivity between all EU regions, and the deadline for completion is 2050.
The core transport network comprises the most important strategic links between European cities and is organized into nine administrative corridors, to be completed by 2030. The nine TEN-T corridors cover the most important long-distance transport flows and aim at the interoperability and interconnection of different modes of transport, thus also improving cross-border links (European Parliament and EU Council 2013).

The nine corridors that make up the TEN-T network are: North Sea-Adriatic Sea; North Sea – Baltic Sea, Mediterranean, Eastern/Eastern-Mediterranean; Scandinavian-Mediterranean; Rhine-Alps; Atlantic; North Sea-Mediterranean and Rhine-Danube (European Commission 2021).

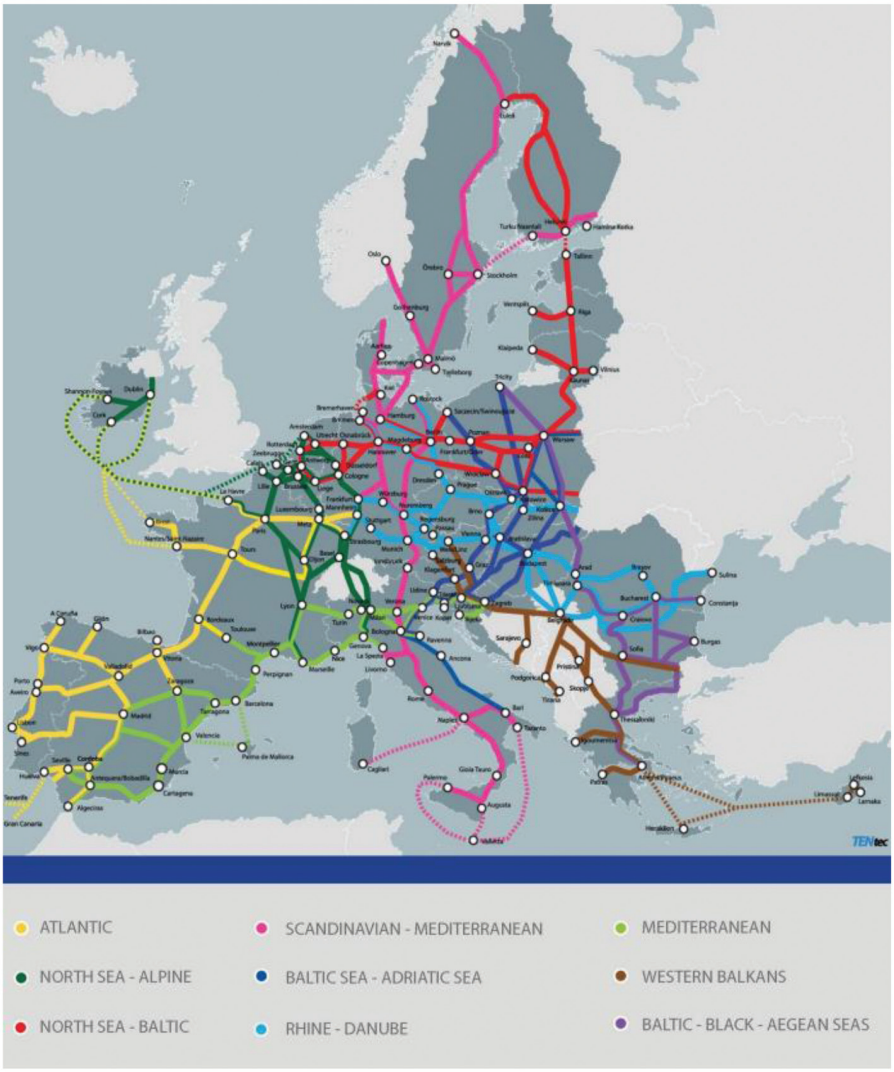

Figure 1 TEN-T network (European Commission 2021)

In the same regulation, two of the EU's priorities for the transport network refer to the development of an "*European Rail Traffic Management System*" (ERTMS), which aims to establish an unique signaling system for rail transport in the EU and the creation of "Motorways of the Sea" (MoS), that will increase the level of use of maritime transport for logistics supply.
The 2013 revision is important for the further evolution of the TEN-T as it involves the development of an integrated network with a two-level structure and related corridors. Since 2013, the construction and financing of the TEN-T have followed a common set of rules in all EU countries (Debyser and Polluveer 2023).

Projects for the development of TEN-T are financed by the EU through the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF), an institution created through Regulation 1316/2013, which intends to develop transport infrastructure by allocating funds from the EU budget (Champion, 2016). The CEF is the EU's most important instrument for financing energy, telecommunications, and transport projects. In the period 2014-2020, the budget allocated for the development of transport infrastructure was 22.4 billion euros (Luica, 2018), and for the period 2021-2027, this budget was 25.81 billion euros, of which 12.83 billion euros for general transport development projects, 11.29 billion euros for joint projects and 1.69 billion euros for military mobility. Other funds for the development of the European transport network come from the EU Member States' own sources, but also from European Structural and Investment Funds, such as those allocated under the programs initiated by InvestEU and the European Investment Bank (EIB) (Debyser and Polluveer 2023).

In December 2021, the European Commission presented an amendment to the 2013 TEN-T Regulation, calling for speeding up of projects to complement the existing transport infrastructure, ensuring the development of urban nodes and the realization of international rail connections. The proposal for the revision of the regulation was adopted on 13 December 2021, as part of the legislative package for the efficiency of transport and green mobility. This revision highlights the need for aligning the network at European level and to change infrastructure governance requirements. The new changes had the role of supporting projects related to the decarbonization of transport and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 90% by 2050, the completion of the TEN-T network in three stages instead of 2: the core network in 2030, the extended core network in 2040 and the comprehensive network in 2050. It also had the role of increasing the speed of train movements, the efficiency of cross-border operations, the increase in the number of transportation nodes and multimodal terminals for passengers, and the connection of large airports to rail transport (Debyser and Polluveer 2023).
In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the Commission adopted, on 27 July 2022, an amendment introducing several changes in the field of transport, the most important of which were the unification of the TEN-T network by using European standards on rail gauge and the connection with Ukraine and Moldova, by extending transport corridors (Council of the EU 2024).

In 2023, a new intention to revise the TEN-T Regulation was launched by the European Commission. This was necessary for the modification of the TEN-T maps, as a result of the enlargement of the Union and, implicitly, of the transport network, for the development of infrastructure in the Western Balkans (Wolters 2024).

The latest revision of the TEN-T Regulation was in June 2024 and it aims to build a sustainable, quality transport network that ensures connectivity within Europe, with no interruptions on transport routes, bottlenecks, or unfinished connections (Council of the EU 2024).

The development and importance of a military transport network in Europe

Military mobility is an essential concept for ensuring the security of citizens and the European territory. However, in order to ensure the movement of military personnel, equipment, and technique over long distances, including across borders, bridges, or through tunnels, the infrastructure must be appropriate to military requirements, and not to civilian purposes, for which it was originally created. Hence the need for additional or adaptation of the dual-use transport infrastructure. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, investments in military mobility were no longer a priority, and projects for the development of military transport infrastructure were underfunded or no longer carried out. Although cooperation between the EU and NATO has increased every year, investments in infrastructure and maintenance, which could have responded to the need for faster deployment of forces, have been disregarded.

In 2014, Russia's annexation of Crimea highlighted Europe's need to quickly bring forces from different areas to the Alliance's eastern flank. At the moment, the priorities of European leaders are to modernize and standardize infrastructure and bureaucratic procedures to facilitate interoperability and improve military functionality and readiness. The infrastructure network suffers from deficiencies in many European countries, especially in the East.

The main differences regarding the current transport infrastructure in Europe and military needs are determined by: delays in standardization, precarious investments since the economic crisis of 2008-2009, and the lack of digitalization. The current infrastructure must ensure the specific needs of military transport in a fast and safe way. Current military equipment and techniques are usually oversized and have lengths, heights, and widths greater than those of previous generations. Therefore, the height of tunnels, the capacity of bridges, and the width of railway trains must be modified or adapted to current needs. While many bridges on the main transport routes can bear the weight of current and even future generations of military equipment, bridges in rural areas cannot be taken into account for military transport

planning, even during exercises, due to their degree of deterioration. Also, eastern states, such as those in the Baltic Sea region, still have a different track gauge, of 1520 mm, compared to the 1435 mm, used in Western Europe. These differences cause delays and non-synchronization in the process of deployment of military forces. On the other hand, NATO intends that future generations of trailers, trucks, and tanks to be built with a weight exceeding 120 tons, being difficult to move even by air, which means that rail, road, or bridge transport will be very important from the point of view of military logistics.

In view of studies showing that the TEN-T network corresponds to approximately 93% of military needs (Brauss, Hodges and Lindley-French 2021), this could be a possible solution for the future of military transportation. Compared to the civilian transport network, the military one involves an intergovernmental approach, as it is both a military emergency and a political necessity.

For the development of projects on dual-use transport infrastructure, the European Commission provides financial support through the CEF, allocating a special budget for the development of military mobility in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) (for the 2021-2027 period, this budget is 1.69 billion euros). The EU provides funding only for dual-use projects. Any project that serves only military interests or only civilian interests must be financed by the interested states. Precisely for these reasons, part of the military infrastructure will be built outside the TEN-T framework (Bellomo 2023).

In the 2021 report of the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), the authors encourage the idea that NATO states, which are also EU members, submit projects for the development of civil-military transport infrastructure, as they could benefit from CEF funding. These initiatives play a key role in the development of projects that relate to the main supply routes and transport corridors positioned along the TEN-T (CEPA Task Group 2021).

In the paper "*The CEPA military mobility project: moving mountains for Europe's defense*" developed by specialists in the field, such as Heinrich Brauss, Ben Hodges and Julian Lindley-French, the authors refer to five possible scenarios according to which troops are deployed from the west to eastern Europe. The organization has aimed, through the development of these scenarios, to generate multiple recommendations for creating better military mobility in Europe. The main problems identified in the process of deployment of military forces in the European space consist of the need to develop and improve infrastructure, the implementation of clear and effective rules and regulations at the level of NATO member states, a strong command and control structure, the imposition of a common network of contact points on military mobility at NATO and EU level and the establishment of territorial command authorities, to facilitate the transit of military forces (Brauss, Hodges and Lindley-French 2021).

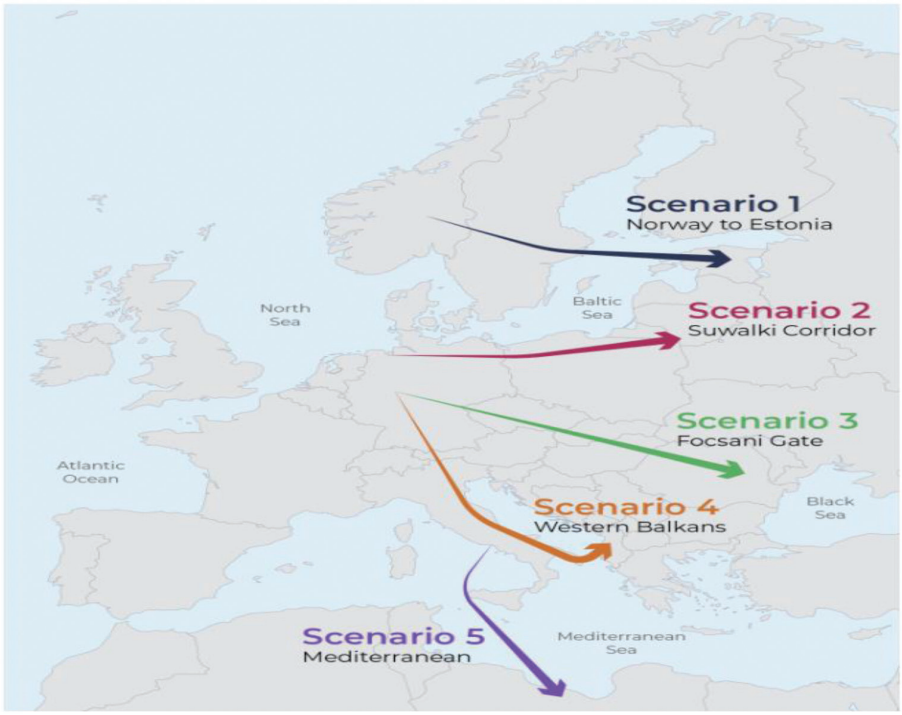

Figure 2 The CEPA military mobility workshop scenarios (Brauss, Hodges and Lindley-French 2021)

The five scenarios involving the development of military mobility are situated on the following routes: North Sea – Baltic Sea; Suwalki Corridor; Focșani Gate; Western Balkans; The Mediterranean area.

Scenario 1: North Sea – Baltic Sea: examines the movement of a defined package of NATO forces from Norway, through Sweden and across the Baltic Sea, to the Baltic States and Poland. This scenario overlaps with the North Sea – Baltic Sea corridor on the TEN-T network.

Scenario 2: Suwalki Corridor: involves identifying possibilities for the movement of military forces from Germany, through Poland, to the Baltic States, with a focus on the Suwalki corridor – a stretch of about 60 kilometers stretching between the Polish-Lithuanian border, between Belarus and Kaliningrad, which the allied forces would have to cross. A solution for transporting military troops to these regions would be the North Sea-Baltic Sea corridor on the TEN-T network.

Scenario 3: Focșani Gate: aims to test NATO's ability to strengthen its forces in the south-eastern region of Europe, mainly the forces that should cross the Carpathian Mountains and the usefulness of the Danube River for military transport to the Focșani Gate – an area suitable for maneuvers, which, however, allows opposing forces to penetrate the eastern gate and allow access to the Western Balkans. Although it has an important position from a strategic point of view, the Focșani Gate also highlights possible problems, such as the ability of the allied forces to reach the predetermined area, given the obsolete infrastructure and the influence that

Russia still exerts on some points of debarkation (POD) in the region. The TEN-T corridor that military troops could use for deployment in this region is the Rhine-Danube corridor.

Scenario 4: Western Balkans: involves the development of an operation under the aegis of the EU, supported by NATO, whose forces will be moved in Europe, to the Western Balkans, to restore order and counter Russia's actions of influence. The most relevant TEN-T corridor for this scenario is the Eastern Mediterranean corridor, which extends from the north of Thessaloniki (Greece) to Central Europe. *Scenario 5: Mediterranean Area:* is meant to test the logistics, technical, and military challenges for deploying forces from Europe to the Mediterranean Sea area, an area known for instability, prone to conflict and civil war in order to execute a peacekeeping mission (Brauss, Hodges, & Lindley-French, 2021). The deployment of forces in the Mediterranean area could be achieved using the same TEN-T corridor as in scenario 4: Western Balkans-East-Mediterranean.

Effects of the TEN-T network on the military transport network and vice versa

Considering the approximately 93% similarity between the two transport networks, we identify the need for the simultaneous development of the European transport network, which corresponds to the civil-military needs. Dual-use infrastructure is essential for military mobility, and investments in the development of transport infrastructure automatically contribute to military mobility.
The TEN-T network has developed continuously and still needs to be improved, modernized, or continued as a result of the enlargement of the European Union. On the other hand, from the point of view of military mobility, a new transport network cannot be built on which only the deployment of military forces can be achieved, adapted exclusively to the needs of military equipment and vehicles for several reasons: the costs would be enormous and unjustified, the time taken to carry out this project would exceed acceptable limits, and such a project is difficult to carry out at the moment, as the corridors would affect the urban planning already established at European level.

Precisely for these reasons, as early as 2014, when the issue of military mobility began to take shape, the decision was made to use the already existing trans-European transport network and adapt it to military needs. However, according to specialists' calculations, a fairly high level of this network could be used without problems for military mobility. Even so, there are some differences, determined by the different levels of infrastructure development between Western and Eastern states, which also affect the transport of military equipment and personnel. The main problems faced by the civil and military transport network are:

- The difference in the gauge of the railways between the Baltic States and other countries in Eastern and Western Europe. This difference results from

their positioning, for too long under Russian auspices.
- Different development of infrastructure in European countries. If in countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands, or Norway, the infrastructure is modernized and adapted to the current transport needs, with roads, railways, ports, or airports adapted to civil or military transport standards, in the Eastern European area the states still face poorly developed infrastructure, the lack of essential portions that would connect both domestically and international, blockages, and so on. For example, in some states, bridges are so old that can no longer allow access to cargo vehicles. That makes it impossible to use them and requires either consolidation or complete replacement

At the moment, the military transport network is developing according to the civilian transport network. The states are allocated European funds only for the development of dual-use projects. Although the level of similarity between the two networks is quite high, efforts are still needed to ensure that military transport is carried out smoothly and in the shortest time possible, through all existing civilian transport methods.
The authors consider that through the ideas stated up to this point, they have identified the current level of development of the link between the two types of transport networks. Next, regarding the importance of correlating dual-use mobility to improve security in the European space, they will formulate several ideas.

Firstly, European security is ensured, almost entirely, by expeditionary forces that can execute specific missions in times of peace, crisis, or conflict. These forces cannot be deployed at 100% if their deployment is hampered by the lack of infrastructure or its failure to adapt to military needs or bottlenecks along transport corridors.

Secondly, this correlation is important in order to simplify procedures and decongest the transport situation at the European level. Thus, by understanding both transport systems and the existence of a common database of civil-military transports, traffic blockages at the European level will be avoided, and any situation that could affect the rapid transport of troops and military equipment to certain areas of Europe, especially to the Eastern flank, will be deconflicted. Currently, European leaders are concerned with a TEN-T policy that ensures common standards between all European states and creates an infrastructure whose technical requirements eliminate the disparity between Western and Eastern European states. The military issue is very important in this situation, as the full security of the European space can be achieved only if the two systems: civilian and military, individually and together, perform the tasks for which they were constituted and can achieve a collaboration in a crisis or conflict situation, in order to give maximum efficiency.

Thirdly, dual-use mobility ensures a much higher quality of infrastructure in the European space. The under-development of transport capabilities is a significant problem, which should be taken into account when talking about modernizing

the European infrastructure and preparing it for military mobility. The weight-bearing capacity of roads and bridges, the height of tunnels, and the existence of highways are indicators of the functioning of transport infrastructure for military purposes. Whether it is military transport or civil transport of goods or people, the infrastructure must be built to the highest quality standards, in order to avoid accidents, and situations through which people's lives could be endangered. Thus, by building a transport network adapted to military needs, its quality will be very good, which will allow its use by civilian personnel in the best safety conditions.

For the third question for which this article would come up with an answer, regarding the measures that could support the increase in efficiency in ensuring complete coherence between the two types of transport networks, we can say that we have identified the following solutions:

- Promoting, at NATO and EU Member States level, projects regarding the development of dual-use transport infrastructure and civil-military collaboration. This measure would materialize if the states involved in the two PESCO projects, Military Mobility and the Network of Logistics Hubs in Europe, would be publicized through all official communication channels, so that more and more civilian actors, military, private companies, or even non-governmental organizations become aware of the need to modernize the transport infrastructure so that troops can move quickly to any point in the European area. Planning work meetings, conferences, online meetings or academic projects could be the solution to raise awareness of the need for rapid development in this field.
- Allocating additional funds for the development of the TEN-T network, with a focus on projects related to military mobility. This measure is mainly aimed at the states involved in the project, within NATO or the EU, and is an incentive for them to increase the budget allocated to transport. The states involved in the PESCO project on military mobility receive funding from the EU budget to develop dual-use infrastructure projects. However, the effort must also be supported at the national level, and in addition to the availability of funds, states must also have relevant, serious, and achievable initiatives, which must be approved annually by the EU. Despite the precarious financial situation, many states, especially those in Eastern Europe, need to provide their military forces with adequate and secure infrastructure. Precisely for these reasons, at the annual budget allocation, the Ministry of Transport must receive a considerably higher percentage, which will allow it to build efficient transit corridors.
- Creation, at the European level, of joint civil-military structures, which simplify cooperation, reduce decision-making times, and reduce bureaucratic procedures. This measure would result in the creation, at the EU level, of an additional structure, such as a command that would include both civilians and military personnel from EU and NATO member states, in which access to information for those involved would not be restricted, and they would be able to plan and monitor military transports in all European countries.

In view of the measures mentioned, we believe that they can be easily implemented in order to harmonize the inter-institutional approach at the national and international levels to the development of the dual-use transport network.
Although the TEN-T was originally created for civilian transport, it can easily cope with the process of military mobility, even if, in this regard, it must be helped by additional measures related to the adaptation and presentation of military transport needs. The military transport network must adapt to the TEN-T, not the other way around. If the current structure and level of development of the TEN-T does not correspond to military needs, Member States will have to allocate additional funds to support the development of military transport infrastructure. In view of the current threats, the length of the TEN-T corridors needs to be adjusted from a military perspective so that troops have easy access to Europe's eastern flank.

On the other hand, a positive aspect of the two networks is that the TEN-T network has already integrated all modes of transport, which facilitates the deployment of forces by any route, in any region. Thus, whether it aims to transport its troops by air, sea, or land, NATO or the EU have at their disposal the airports, ports, roads, or railways already built, positioned along the TEN-T corridors.

Conclusions

Transport at the European level is an intensely debated issue both from the point of view of European states and in the multinational framework. This is because the infrastructure requires modernization, new investments to adapt to current transport needs, which are much higher than 20 years ago, standardization of transport networks in all EU member states, and the elimination of bottlenecks or shortages that could prevent travel in certain European regions.
When it comes to military transport, the situation is much more complicated, since, in addition to civilian needs, the movement of military equipment, and personnel involves special security measures, adapting the infrastructure to the specifications of combat vehicles, ensuring the ability of the infrastructure to support the oversized technique and the speed of transport, so that the forces reach the landing point in the shortest time.

At present, much of the trans-European transport network can easily cope with military transport, in almost any region of Europe. The five scenarios envisaged by CEPA military analysts can be put into practice, if necessary, using the already existing TEN-T corridors. However, there are some limitations, caused by the lack of funds for infrastructure development, the existence of obsolete and unreliable transport networks, or the incompatibility of the existing network in the eastern states with the rest of the European network. If these problems are solved as soon as possible, then the applicability of the scenarios can be considered by European military leaders for the deployment of forces in order to ensure the security of European space.

Taking into account the information mentioned so far, we believe that the article responds to the proposed theme and presents the main common aspects of the TEN-T network and the military transport network, but also elements that can be improved, so that military transport can be fully integrated into the transport network already existing at European level, so as to overcome any syncope in the correlation between the two networks.

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