

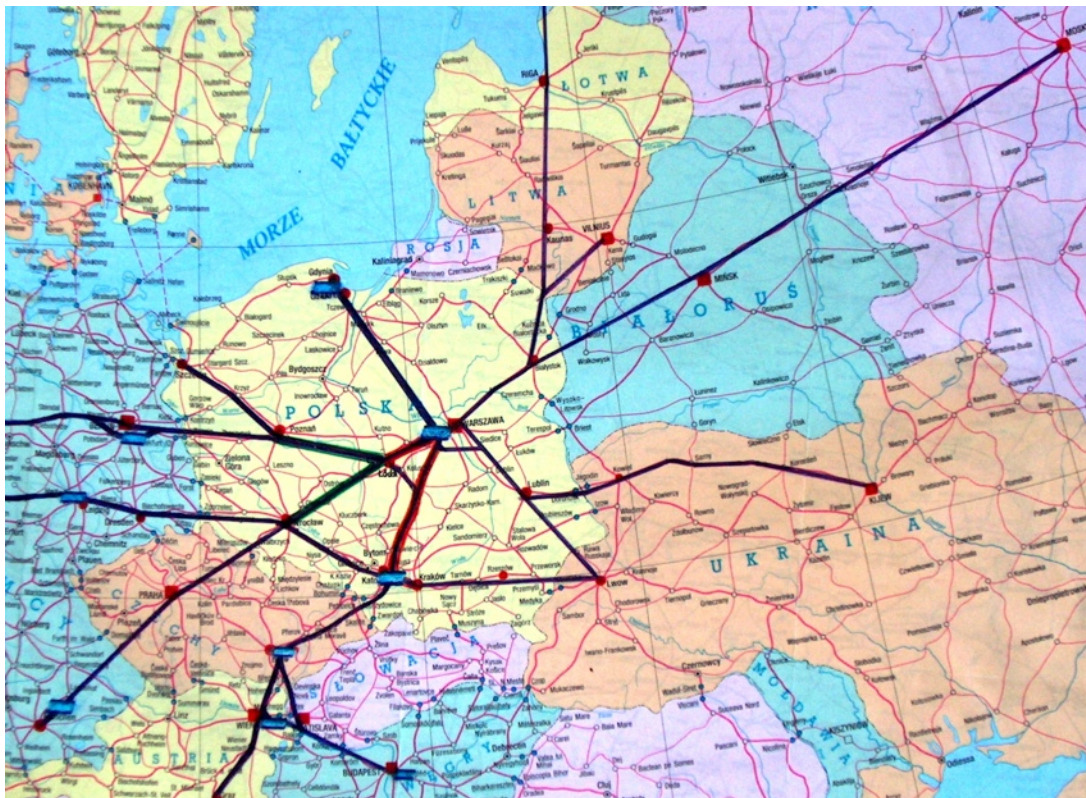
RAIL–AIR INTEGRATION: FROM COMPETITION TO COMPLEMENTARITY

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Abstract

High speed trains are becoming a convenient substitute for short-haul flights as well as long-distance motoring, to the benefit of the environment. However, they will not lessen the environmental impact of the growing long-distance air traffic. Indeed, the current economic expansion of China and India will bring Europe an unprecedented influx of air passengers and cargo from Asia [DG TREN expects the number of passengers to/from the Far East to grow from nearly 100m in 2017 to above 240m by 2025]. The crowded West European airports will not be able to cope with this flood, if only for environmental reasons. By 2020, at least one new mega-hub for 100 million passengers/year will be needed. This should be located in a poorly urbanized area where *two high speed rail lines* would intersect right under the mid-field terminal, enabling vertical transfer of air passengers to the trains. In Poland, the ideal place for such a mega-hub is on the plains less than 40 km west of Warsaw, where the *central trunk railway* CMK, built to high speed specifications 30 years ago, will get a northward extension (initially by 8 km, later to the port of Gdansk) to intersect with the *trans-European high speed railway* from Berlin to Warsaw (planned alongside the A2 motorway). The new high speed lines extending across the Polish flatlands will allow passengers arriving at the Central Poland Airport to reach most destinations in East-Central Europe within two hours (<600 km). At least two more airports in Poland should have high speed train stations under their terminals. Once this pattern is duplicated across Europe, the current air/rail competition will give way to air-rail complementarity. The obvious advantages of high speed rail over short-haul flights and inter-city motoring will ensure an all-round integration of Rail, Road and Air.

High Speed rail in Central & Eastern Europe in perspective



- ==== CMK upgraded (priority project) and first new HS line
- ==== first new HS line continued
- ==== major airports interconnected by HS rail