

Competitiveness of long-distance passenger rail in the Danube Region



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Historical background of railways in the Danube Region



- Railways played a significant role in individual mobility and freight transport in earlier days
- Especially since launching construction of high-performing motorways, the importance of railways decreased
- This imbalance is currently reflected e.g. in high-quality motorways and comparably poor rail infrastructure
- Most recently, there have been political indications to further focus on rail again

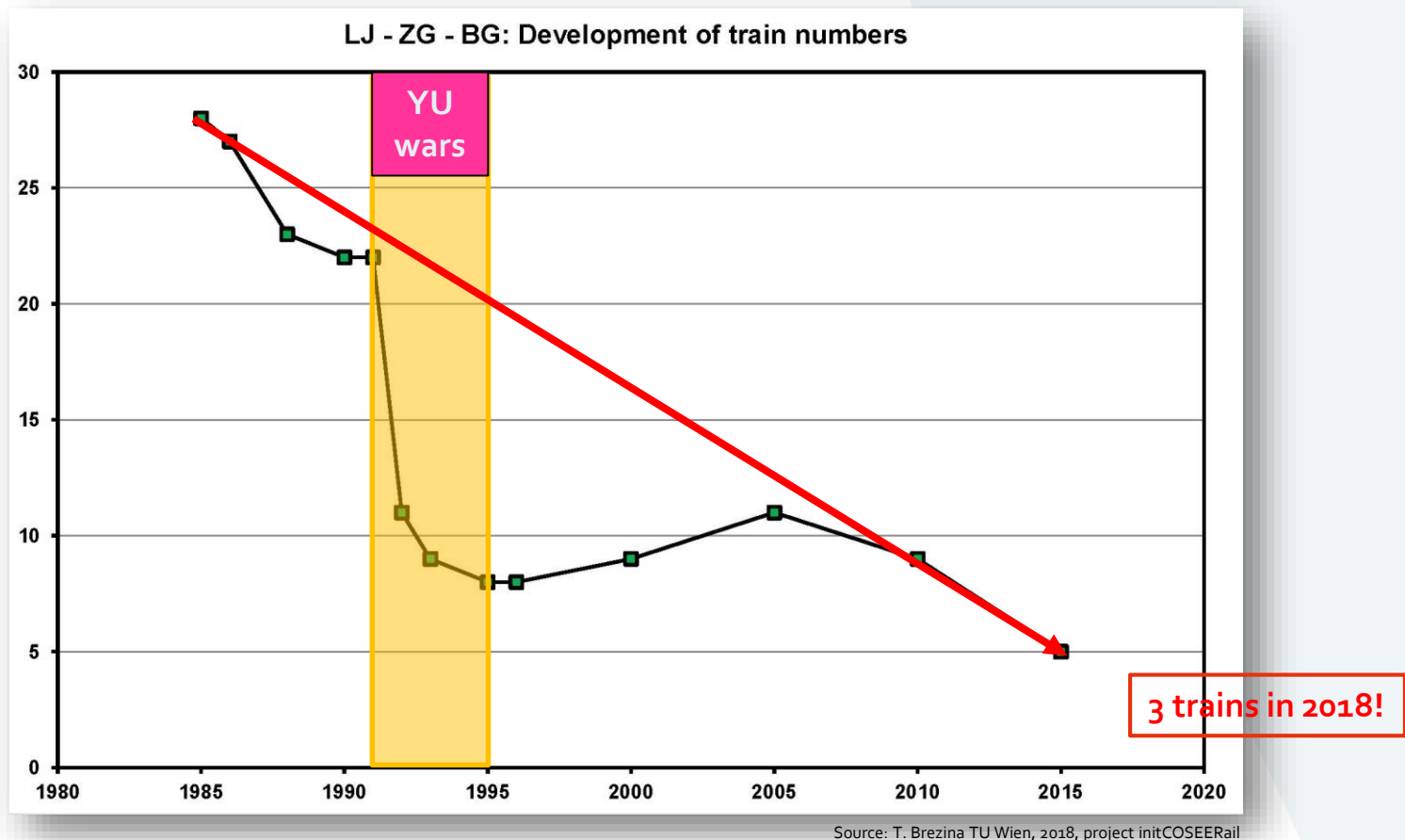
Project *initCOSEERail*

- Danube Strategic Project Fund (DSPF), 2018
- Universities and stakeholders in AT, HR, BiH, IT (Project Lead: TU Wien)
- Examined the development of rail supply (passenger and freight) in CEE during the last decades quantitatively and qualitatively on following sections:
 - **Ljubljana – Zagreb – Beograd**
 - **Zagreb – Banja Luka – Doboj – Sarajevo**
 - Ogulin – Knin (HR)
 - Doboj – Tuzla (BiH)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnmfV0fMwL8>

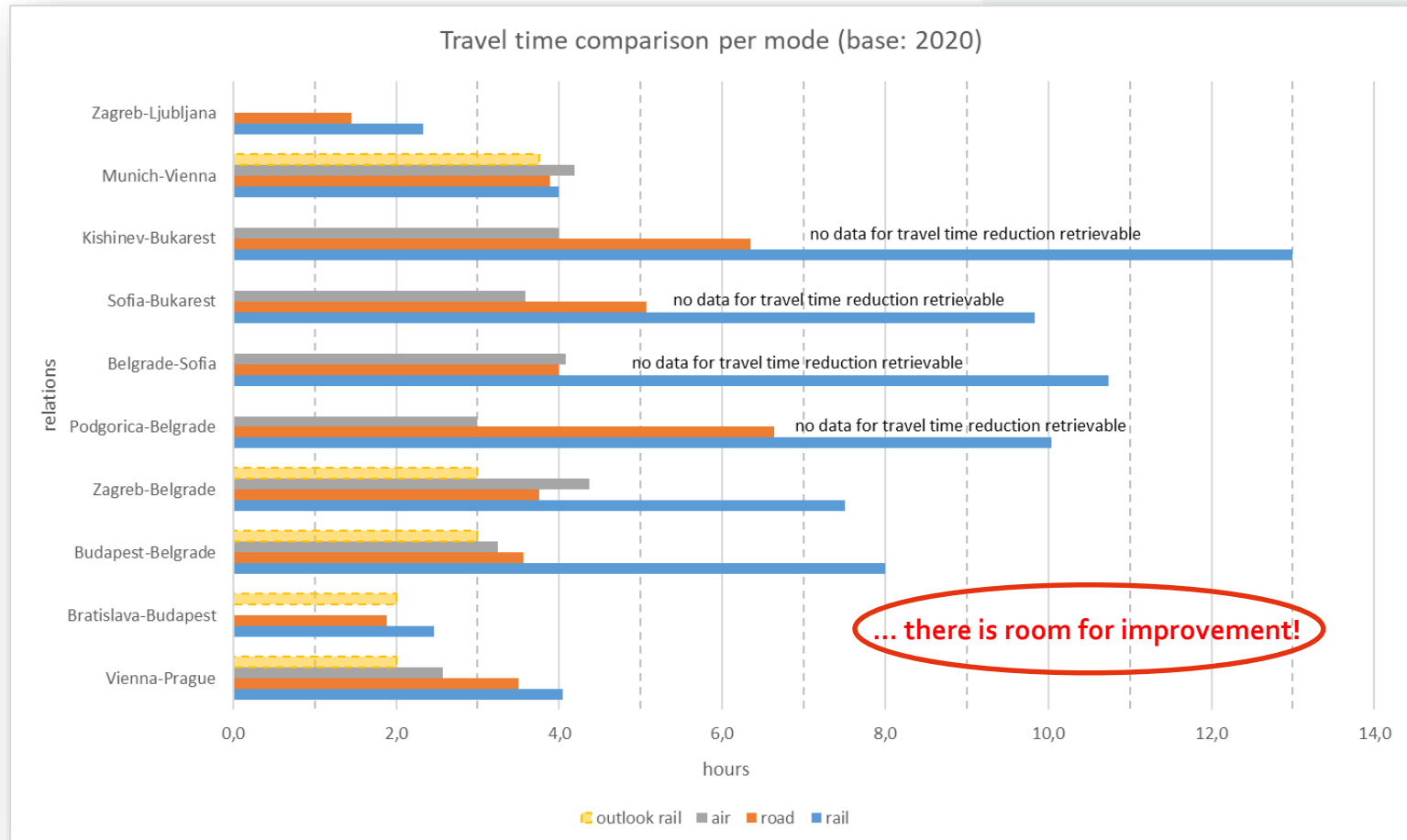
Excerpt of *initCOSEERail's* main findings

- Number of direct trains running on Ljubljana – Zagreb – Belgrade section dropped from 28 to 5 between 1985 and 2015
 - Zagreb – Sarajevo: 6 trains in 1985/86 → 1 train in 2015
- Average commercial speed Ljubljana – Zagreb – Belgrade decreased from >70 km/h down to <65 km/h between 1985/86 and 2015
 - Zagreb – Sarajevo: commercial speed from >80 km/h to <60 km/h
- Project's conclusions:
 - Development of rail has been and still is trending in negative direction
 - Ongoing downward spiral of low quality/offer <-> low demand

Development of train numbers Ljubljana-Zagreb-Belgrade corridor



Assessing rail's competitiveness based on 2020 timetable



Source: rome2rio.com, own elaboration

There are some major rail projects in the DR planned/ongoing...

Excerpt, list of project and DR countries is not exhaustive

DE	AT	CZ	SRB	HU	SK
München-Mühldorf-Freilassing	Koralmtunnel Semmering Base Tunnel	Prerov-Ostrava	Belgrade-Budapest	Upgrade Budapest-Wien	Upgrade Bratislava-Budapest
Würzburg-Nürnberg	Upgrade Marchegger Ast	Praha-Brno	Belgrade-Niš	Budapest-Belgrade	Upgrade Bratislava-Devinska Nova Ves
Dresden-Praha	Upgrade Nordbahn	Praha-Dresden	Belgrade-Bar		
	Upgrade Wien-Budapest		Niš-Dimitrovgrad		

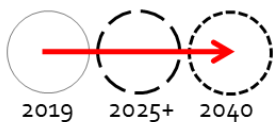
Possible development of travel times from Wien Hauptbahnhof

large-scale infrastructure developments and reduction of waiting times at borders implied

ratio travel time train to travel
 time car



development of travel time

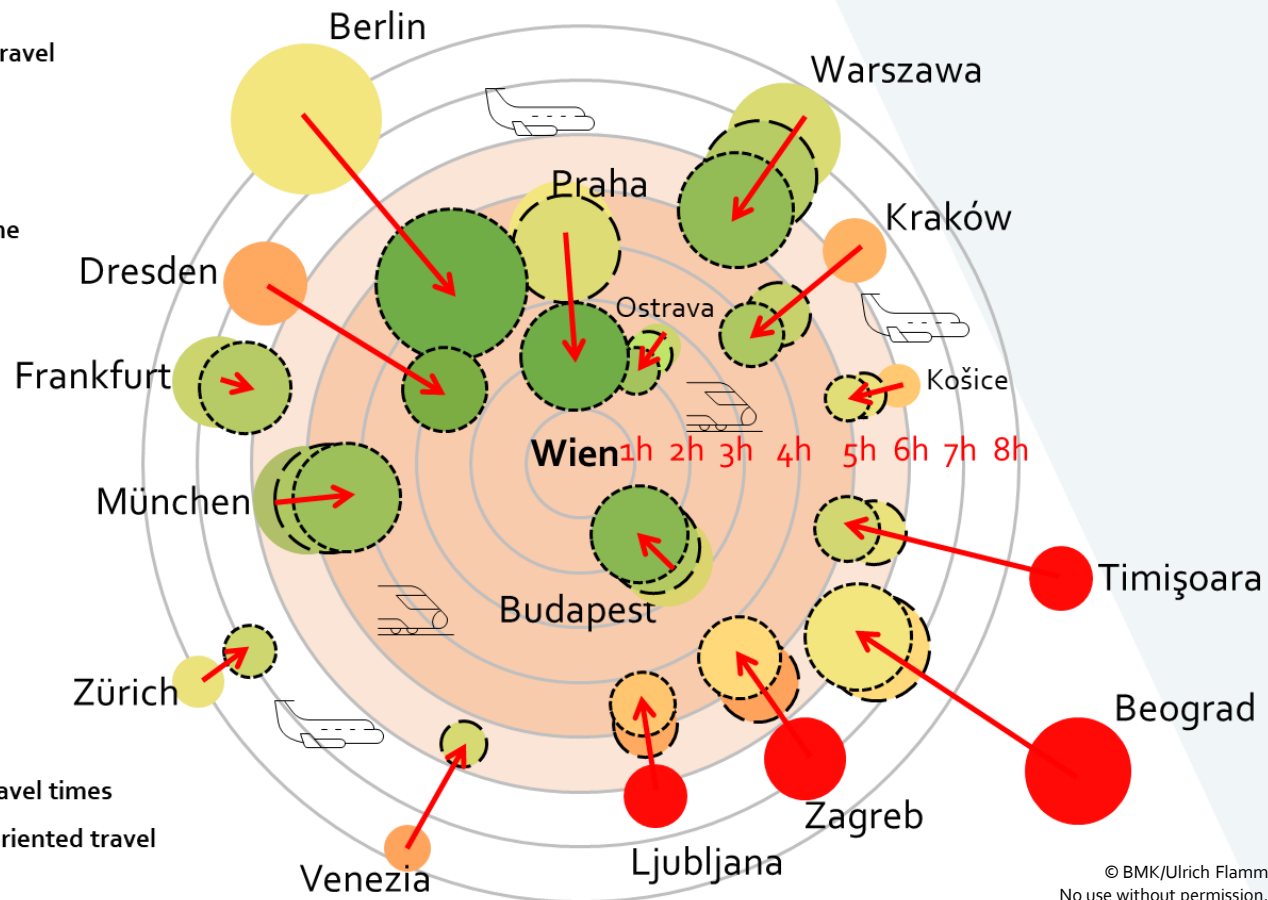


destination's population



rail-oriented travel times

rather flight-oriented travel
 times



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Conclusions

- Railway's competitiveness against other modes can be considered as suboptimal in the Danube Region due to neglect and focussing investments on other modes
- Possible ways of regaining rail's significance:
 - Rail investments need to be put on high political agenda again
 - Interconnecting aspects of infrastructure development with coordinated and seamless cross-border supply
 - E.g. PSO in passenger transport
 - Related to AWB RFC in freight transport
 - Border crossing processes need to be facilitated and accelerated
 - Balanced incorporation of external costs into overall users' transport costs

Thank you!

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