Introduction

• Post-communist heritage: the volume and state of infrastructure in Eastern Europe
• Geography - unique location; link between East and West
• Transport’s contribution to economy
• Transport is a heavily Covid-impacted sector of the economy → interesting subject for research
• Sector right now is ‘typical middle income’ – could enable progress?

1 Transport and Communications: A snapshot before the pandemic

1.1 Setting the field: Descriptive statistics

1.1.1 Modal specificities

• Road: Length of road network (total & density), separately express roads/highways, Vehicle-kms travelled, Private car ownership, Intercity coach services
• Rail: Length of rail network, Possibly separately light/urban/commuter rail → to be included under urban mobility, Rail services, Rail ridership
• Airports: Number of connections? Sea & inland ports: Length of inland water transport network Freight transport by mode. Number of logistics centres
• Urban mobility: Congestion indices
1.1.2 Emerging trends

- ICT. Fixed- and mobile-telephone subscriptions, Fixed- and mobile-broadband subscriptions, Population covered by mobile-cellular and mobile-broadband network, Bandwidth?, Households with a computer and with Internet access. Individuals using the Internet, Digital adoption index
- Emerging mobility, Electric mobility (EVs, Charging stations), Shared mobility, Vehicle automation, Micromobility, Mobility startup communities
- Online activities (possibly point to other chapters that might be covering the topics) E-shopping, Working from home, E-government, Tele-education, Tele-health

1.2 Infrastructure development and prevalence of EU funds

- Funding sources for infrastructure developments: EU funding, PPP etc.
- The role of infrastructure in EU cohesion policy: goals and priorities
- The volume of investments, Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T)
- National transport policies, project development and selection
- The effectiveness of infrastructure development

1.3 Public service provision and market regulation

- Urban public transport: transforming the “low income” transport mode into an alternative of car use
- Long distance transport services. Compliance with EU railway regulation, liberalisation in long-distance markets [case study: railway liberalisation, e.g. Leo Express - disruptor]
- Case study: local decision making/decentralisation in railway policy, in Poland [comparison with centralising efforts in other countries]
- Freight market liberalisation, growing share in trans-european freight market using wage advantages
- Air travel services: the low-cost airline boom and its contribution to intra-European labour force migration [Case study: Wizz Air]
2 Transport and Communications during the COVID-19 pandemic

2.1 Overview what happened in each country - factual events

Check potential overlaps with other chapters

- Closure of borders
- Air travel restrictions
- Lockdowns - restrictions on mobility
- Restrictions on public transport
- International travel restrictions, and their relaxation between countries of the region

2.2 Impact on general transport demand

- The perception of Covid and work from home in Eastern Europe
- Direct impact on transport modes
  - Changes in ridership (public transport, etc.)
  - Changes in traffic levels, emerging active modes
- Wider impacts
  - Causality issues between economic activity and transport → Link with other chapters?
  - ICT stats
  - Remote working
  - Online shopping
  - Decline in tourism
  - Decline in mobility and impact on transport sector
  - Decline in mobility and overall economic output

2.3 Public services and regulation

- Financial difficulties in urban public transport: loss of fare revenues + limited ability to raise taxes
- Financial difficulties in centrally provided (national) transport services (mainly rail and bus)
• Political economy and intergovernmental competition: sharing responsibilities in public service provision, bail-out mechanisms, tax revenue allocation
• Land use regulation: new debate on cycling infrastructure vs. road space allocation for car use and parking

2.4 Impact on liberalised transport markets
• Road freight industry: shortage of drivers, disruptions caused by border crossing restrictions
• Rail freight industry: maintaining competition when incumbent state operators often receive direct or hidden subsidies
• Urban freight: increase in deliveries
• Air transport industry: fight for financial survival, employment crisis, providing ad-hoc capacity for Governmental shipments
• Urban new mobility service providers - e.g. car sharing, ride sharing, e-scooter (Blinkee)

3 Long-term prospect after the pandemic

3.1 The aftermath of Covid-19
• Working from home, telecommuting and new remote working arrangements
• The COVID-19 impact – have changes (if any) in transport sectors been permanent?
• Spreading peak demand: will Covid-19 release major temporal and spatial bottlenecks in transport provision?
• Potential long-run effects of alternative working arrangements on urban spatial form, urban density.

3.2 The middle-income trap
• What is the role of transport and communications in escaping the middle income trap? (brief review of literature?) Transport and communications need to be enjoyable places to live and raise a family.
• Do long-term government strategies at different levels aspire to this ambition?
• What does vision for transport of the future look like in those countries - look at urban and inter-urban.
3.3 The prospects of infrastructure in EU transport and cohesion policies

- Macro-perspective: the region in the global network of trade and commerce
  
  1. The Belt and Road Initiative
  2. The Three Seas Initiative
  3. The evolution of the infrastructure network in CEE. Building vs. more efficient utilisation: What else should we build, are there missing links or returns to new developments are already diminishing?

- The role of infrastructure pricing in tackling transport externalities.
- Reliance on EU funding – raises the question whether this is sustainable or whether there is a way to diversify?

3.4 New transport technologies in historic cities

- Need to decouple the rising affluence from an increased car ownership and usage. Environmental considerations - policies associated with the ban of diesel (impact)?
- Electrification of transport (investments in the infrastructure) + ultimate source of the energy
- Digitisation: transport (efficiency of transport systems), services (reduction in demand), education (enabling use of digital)

4 Conclusions

- Summary of key findings
- Discussion on state of transport as a discipline (scientific and technical training) - availability of education, training, courses, etc. and perhaps include recommendations?