

TRANSIT POSITION IN THE NORTH-SOUTH INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT CORRIDOR OF AZERBAIJAN**Orujlu A.***Azerbaijan State University of Economics**Doctor of Philosophy*<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10817420>**Abstract**

After an 11-year break, the next continental project that will strengthen the status of Azerbaijan as a transit country has been launched, and now the first practical steps are being taken to launch the "North-South" international transport corridor. On April 20 of this year, the foundation of the railway bridge over the Astara river, which will allow connecting the railways of Azerbaijan and Iran, was laid. By the end of 2016, it is planned to complete the construction of the railway bridge over the Astara river and the 8.3 km road from the Astara station to the border, the 1.7 km line on the Iranian side and the transshipment terminal.

Keywords: north-south corridor, international transport, continental project, economic reform.

The construction of the 82-meter bridge and the 8.3 km road should be regarded as a BIG STEP for the operation of the "North-South" international transport corridor that will connect the continents. Azerbaijan has waited exactly 11 years for the construction of this 8.3 km road, and finally, Baku can once again celebrate the important role it played in the realization of a project of global importance. On the other hand, the bridge built in Astara has symbolic importance. This bridge is a very important progress in the direction of turning Azerbaijan into an "Asia-Europe bridge" using its favorable geographical and geopolitical position. At the same time, this is a demonstration of Azerbaijan's great experience in the implementation of integration projects and its ability to act as a locomotive[6].

The most important strategic goals for Azerbaijan at the moment, as it has been until now, are prevention of existing risks that may hinder the operation of international transport corridors passing through the country by conducting the correct geopolitical policy, maintaining the trend of integration and cooperation in relation to these projects, and putting on the agenda opportunities that will benefit all interested parties. bringing and encouraging. It should be noted that in 2005, Baku joined the "Agreement on the North-South International Transport Corridor".

The "North-South" international transport corridor will create conditions for the access of European countries, Russia, Central Asia and the Caucasus regions to the Persian Gulf and India, and the intensification of trade relations with the Black Sea ports of the Caspian countries. This corridor will allow to increase railway transport between Europe - South Asia - Middle East, and, accordingly, the railway's income from both local and transit transport. The Western route of the "North-South" international transport corridor (Astrakhan-Makhachgala (Russia) - Samur - Astara (Azerbaijan) - Astara - Rasht - Ghazvin (Iran)) is the most optimal in terms of the strategic goal and objectives of this corridor. But it is the cheapest and the fastest. It should be understood that the full operation of the Western route, which requires less resources, has been delayed for 11 years[2,8].

"Intercontinental bridge" status is very important from the point of view of Azerbaijan's perspective and its position at the global level. This role of Azerbaijan has the potential to create new guarantees for the stable development of the country against the background of increasing geopolitical risks and the strengthening of competition and conflict tendencies on a global scale. In addition to the economic benefit, the special consideration and proper assessment of these points must be taken into account in planning in the medium and long term[5,9].

It should also be taken into account that the implementation of the international transport corridors, especially the "North-South" transport corridor project, has created grounds for protecting Azerbaijan, which is located in a very complex geopolitical space, from the ever-increasing global competition of world powers, or for reducing the negative impact of these processes. In this regard, as we mentioned at the beginning, Azerbaijan should consider the launch of transport corridors passing through the country as strategic goals and make maximum efforts to keep its important role on the agenda[3].

In the future, cargoes transported from Southeast Asian countries will enter the port of Mumbai in India, and from there the ports of Chabahar and Bandar-Abbas in Iran. Cargo from these ports will be transported by train to Russia and Europe via the Qazvin-Rasht-Astara (Iran)-Astara (Azerbaijan) railway. As is known, Iran and Azerbaijan act as transit countries in this project. By the way, the executive director of Iran's Transport Infrastructure Construction and Development State Company, Khairullah Khademi, said in his statement last month that 70 percent of the technical issues were agreed upon in the negotiations with Russia to continue the construction of the Rasht-Astara railway. According to him, a document was signed with Russia on the schedule of financing the construction of the road, increasing the possibility of cargo transportation, construction of stations, operating rules [1].

It should be noted that currently, grain products and forest materials, oil and oil products, mineral fertilizers, cement, chemical products, etc. are sent to Iran

from the opposite direction. is transported. The full capacity of the corridor will lead to a significant increase in the transit revenues of Azerbaijan in the future. According to experts, our country will earn 2.5-3 billion dollars a year from transportation of transit cargo. By the way, the deputy head of Iran's Presidential Administration, Mohammad Jamshidi, said in an interview with ISNA news agency that the income of the "North-South" International Transport Corridor will be equal to the income from oil sales. According to him, the annual income of the corridor will reach 20 billion dollars[4,7].

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