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The EU financed transport projects and their impact to the regional development, military mobility and to the NATO in Lithuania: An Example of Rail Baltica project in Vilnius Region

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Abstract

The EU supports the transport infrastructure by its importance to regional development and military mobility. Rail Baltica is a strategically important project aimed at integrating the Baltic States' rail systems into the North Sea–Baltic Corridor of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T). Beyond enhancing connectivity, the project contributes to the development of sustainable and environmentally friendly rail infrastructure. Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 and the resulting changes in the regional security environment, Rail Baltica has also gained importance as a component of military transport and NATO logistics.

The Vilnius region plays a key role in the implementation of Rail Baltica in Lithuania. In addition to its transport and security functions, the project is expected to set standards for sustainability and ecological responsibility in large-scale infrastructure development including military mobility. This article examines the Rail Baltica project in Lithuania and its impact on regional development, using the Vilnius region as a case study.

The research focuses on how Rail Baltica influences regional development, and military mobility measured through the spatial distribution of value-creating enterprises. The study aims to identify whether a correlation exists between the distance to the nearest enterprise from the Rail Baltica railway and the density of enterprises per square kilometre. The methodology combines literature analysis with

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quantitative methods, including Pearson correlation and Tobler's First Law of Geography. The results reveal a statistically significant negative relationship: regions closer to Rail Baltica exhibit a higher concentration of enterprises. This indicates that proximity to the railway positively contributes to regional development and less to military mobility.

Keywords: Transport, Military Mobility, Lithuania, The EU, The NATO