

# A Nourishing Network

Infrastructure Mega Corridors:  
a Way Out (or In) to the Crisis?

by Recommon.org

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■ In the last few months our lives have changed dramatically. Many of us lost their jobs while many others continued working under extreme conditions. ■ Inequality and social injustices have become increasingly visible features of the economic system and the society in which we live. ■

▣ The pandemic might have impacted everyone's life, but it has not affected everyone in the same way. Among the sectors that did not suffer, but rather benefited from the crisis, are online platforms such as Amazon and the likes. Those sectors have become the vehicles for the transfer from "real life" to a virtual dimension for our working, schooling, sporting and socialising. Fortunately, many have been questioning what the implications of all this would be; including what might happen to the data generated by our online lives; by whom and how is this data being treated; and what are the implications? This is a debate that we hope will remain open, seeing as it concerns aspects that are not contingent to the health crisis, but are instead key factors in the reorganization of "the extractivist society". A society that enables a few elites to extract more and more material and financial wealth from the territories and local communities that inhabit them, effectively expropriating them from the power to decide upon their own lives.

While most ongoing conversations center around the health crisis and the resulting recession, we want to bring attention to the systemic reorganization that is taking place as we speak. We are talking about a process that began before the pandemic, a new way of organizing large infrastructure according to the logics of mega-corridors, to reduce time and space, with the aim of continuously increasing profits on an increasing scale in the face of a slowdown in the growth of global trade. This process, which remains only partly visible, is highly energy-intensive and rooted in the fossil fuel economy, involving the construction of new high-speed railways for the transport of goods, port terminals, data centres and power stations, as well as new logistics centres covering hundreds of hectares. All this implies a radical and irreversible transformation of territories for the benefit of large private capital, where ports and production areas identified as "free trade", or "Special Economic Zones" (SEZs), all become interconnected.

What are the manifestations in Italy and Europe of this global capital agenda? How will it change the social, economic and productive structure of our country and the continent? What impact will it have on the climate and the environment, two central areas where failures and systemic contradictions are already very visible? The question is partly rhetorical: it is difficult to imagine a “globalization 2.0” which will accelerate production, transport and consumption of goods at an unprecedented speed while at the same time profoundly reduce the systemic impact on the environment and climate, an impact that goes far beyond proposed calculations of direct and indirect emissions generated.

Will the major infrastructure mega-corridors plan be challenged in the post-pandemic economic crisis or will the current crisis be an excuse to accelerate it? Will its overall impact be properly assessed? This remains doubtful, seeing as harmful impacts of the global infrastructure agenda are currently considered as the least of their problems by investors and policy makers dazzled by forecasts and data about the production, logistics and global trade that is starting again.

How does this infrastructure masterplan meet the needs of the millions of people who are already paying the highest costs of a profit-driven model at all costs? How does it meet the needs of communities that will be removed from their lands to make way for new mega infrastructure? How will it make our societies more resilient to the great droughts, typhoons, and increasingly heavy rains? How will it counteract the increasing cementing of the most densely populated areas and how will it enable everyone to have a roof over their heads?

We believe that it is high time to open up to such far-reaching questions.

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**Re:Common** is an Italian, not-for-profit organization. It conducts investigations and promotes campaigns against the dodgy economy and the devastation of the territories across the world caused by the indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources and large public and private infrastructure projects. [www.recommon.org](http://www.recommon.org)