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TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER) PROJECT  
PROGRESS REPORT

Transmitted by the TER Project Central Office

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Trans-European Railway (TER) Project is a sub-regional co-operation framework established by the Governments of the Central and Eastern European countries under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe with a view to developing an efficient international rail and combined transport system in those countries in accordance with the Pan-European infrastructure agreements, the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) for rail and the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) for combined transport.

The Project Central Office is in Budapest and it functions in accordance with the Agreement concluded between the Hungarian Government and the UN/ECE.

Co-operation of participating Governments is provided for and founded through a Trust Fund Agreement deposited with the UN/ECE. To this Agreement, with the latest Lithuania (on 23 October 1998), fourteen countries have formalised their membership so far. These are: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey. In this respect, it is expected that also Greece will formalise its membership, soon. Additionally out of the following six observer countries; Belarus, FYROM, Italy, Latvia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, some of them will most probably also accede.

## **MAIN SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE TRANS - EUROPEAN RAILWAY**

**I. To ensure the co-ordinated upgrading of infrastructure standards of the TER network to the AGC and AGTC standards.**

(b) Important actions were carried out for establishing the TER network

The physical plant of the TER network generally exists. Nevertheless, due to the development in member countries and to the extension of the TER, it is updated annually. The main goal of updating is to have similar understanding on the important international railway network in the region among different international institutions. Particularly when speaking about the Pan-European Transport corridors.

Having defined a network generally by already existing railway lines, the objective is to ensure its upgrading or modernization. Only short section or missing links on certain corridors are envisaged to be built.

TER considers that special attention should be given to the implementation of the decisions of the Pan-European Transport Conference

(Helsinki, 1997) and particularly these regarding financing the modernization of the infrastructure in the TER countries in order to ensure the integration of the TER lines into the Pan-European Transport corridors.

In this respect, the TER Governments were pleased to see that most of the TER lines have been included in the Railway part of the Pan-European Corridors adopted at Helsinki. Moreover, almost all the lines included in the TINA network in the countries concerned, are also TER lines.

- (c) In view of the fact that the present infrastructure standards are far below those indicated in the AGC and AGTC Agreements, an objective is therefore to upgrade, in several phases, the existing infrastructure to the level determined in these Agreements, according to the economic and financial possibilities of the Central and Eastern European countries. However, a set of technical and operation parameters, named TER Parameters have been adopted. They are applied in the short and medium term. Based on the TER parameters already a number of studies are under implementation.

The TER parameters are:

*Technical Standards for the TER Network*

1.	Vehicle loading gauge:	UIC/B
2.	Minimum distance between track centres:	4.0 m
3.	Nominal minimum speed:	120 Km/h
4.	Authorised mass per axle:	
	- Locomotives (200 km/h):	22.5 t
	- Wagons: 120 km/h:	20 t
	140 km/h:	18 t
5.	Authorised mass per linear metre:	8t
6.	Test train (bridge design):	UIC 71
7.	Minimum platform length in principal stations:	250 m
8.	Minimum useful siding length:	500 m

*Operational parameters for the TER Network*

1. Passenger transport

To establish the system of execution of border control procedures (police, customs) on the moving train with short stops at the frontier station for technical/administrative reasons if necessary.

2. Freight transport

a. To complete the system of common frontier stations in order to avoid the duplication of border controls.

b. To rationalize the control procedures at the existing common frontier stations.

c. To introduce the frontier control operations of block trains in terminals of neighbouring railways wherever possible.

3. Passenger and freight transport

To introduce the use of hauling vehicles in the territories of neighbouring TER countries wherever possible.

**II. The rolling stock, motive power, signalling and telecommunication equipment, European Rail Traffic Management System, track maintenance equipment, etc., in many cases do not meet today's standards. The objective is, therefore, to support modernization or replacement it by new equipment. In order to exchange the relevant information between the TER countries and the railway supply industry, a number of workshops were organised in the past few years.**

**III. To help participating Governments in improving rail efficiency and in the adaptation of the railway organisation to market oriented management.**

Following a Long Term Common Strategy for a sound economic and financial railway operation and management in the TER countries, adopted in 1993, in the year 1999 the permanent activity on restructuring railways and necessary follow-up is taking place. On 1-3 February 1999 in co-operation with the International Union of Railways, the Seminar on Implementation of the European Union Directives No. 91/440/EC, 95/18/EC and 95/19/EC took place where the activities and experiences were shared. At the meeting, the presentation of the activities by the European Commission (EC), European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), Community of European Railways (CER) International Union of Railways (UIC) as well as practical experiences of France, Italy, Germany, Romania, Poland and Czech Republic, on the subject were introduced.

At the beginning of July the Seminar on User Charges for Railway Infrastructure was organised with the participation of the representatives of EC, ECMT, CER, Railtrack and Germany for sharing the experiences with the responsible persons on the subject from the TER countries.

The activity would be completed with the Round Table and on Restructuring Railways in line with the Public Services, that would most likely take place in the last quarter of the year 1999.

**IV. To develop a database on the railway and combined transport system in the region.**

In order to provide in time the necessary information for the elaboration of the pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, the TER countries agreed on the establishment of a TER Database System. To enable the member Governments to simplify the collection and control the data, as well as to have overview on the processing of data with the limited availability, the restructuring process was agreed upon. With this, the transfer of the data collection in the EXCEL to the ACCESS format was completed. Within the restructuring process, the latest data (year 1998) from Section I (Attachment II) are almost completed in the TER Databank.

In this respect, a Training Course on the Implementation of the Restructured TER Databank on 1-4 March 1999 in Maribor, Slovenia was organized for TER member countries' data experts.

At the same time, the TER Network is indicated in the Geographic Information System (MapInfo). It is very likely that all the Section I data of the TER Databank would be available in the GIS during the year 2000.

TER is in a position to participate in the elaboration of studies with other companies, consultants etc. based on its own databank. Between the TER Project Central Office and the TINA Secretariat, a co-operation agreement was concluded and realised.

**V. To co-ordinate the improvement of operation railway parameters and to ameliorate the situation at the border crossings in the TER countries with a view of eliminating the bottlenecks in international rail transport.**

During the year 1998, the collection of the present operational data on rail border crossings was completed. Based on this in 1999 the TER country's border crossings experts would discuss some specifics that present main obstacles for fluent international rail transport. The elimination of that would be the topic of further Ad-Hoc meetings.

With the support of the TER Databank and contribution of the TER countries' experts on bottlenecks, the identification and prioritization of the bottlenecks on the TER lines, would be completed by the established Ad-Hoc Working Group on Bottlenecks.

**VI. To develop the co-operation among the member countries in the preparation of studies.**

The TER was and still is involved in the elaboration of several studies, and in particular in the following PHARE studies:

- S Feasibility Study on the Development of Railway and Combined transport on Corridor IV,
- S Development of Railway and Combined Transport Linking the southern part of Corridor IX with Poland,
- S Development of Branches on Corridor V
- Improvement of Competitiveness of the Rail Transport in the CEEC's
- Extension of Trans - European Rail Freight Freeways to CEEC.

**VII. To promote the co-operation among the member countries in the field of combined transport.**

Several countries made some progress in developing combined transport on their territory. However, in this process they all encountered many difficulties, particularly in relation to the measures required for encouraging the expansion of the combined transport market or the financial survival of the combined transport operators.

A Round Table on combined transport, in order to provide the member countries with reliable information in this field and to achieve a substantial transfer of know how from the EU countries, taking into consideration in particular new services in that field (international groupings, freight freeways) would be organised in the year 1999.

**VIII. To promote training activities for experts of the member countries.**

Having in view the importance of preparing reliable feasibility studies for railway investments, according to the requirements of the International Financial Institutions a comprehensive training programme for the TER countries' experts was drawn up, as follows:

- Round Table on the Management and Financing of the Railway Infrastructure Projects on 8-10 September 1998 in Budapest, Hungary, on which the structure and methodology for presentation of priority railway projects by Pan-European Corridors was agreed upon,
- Workshop - Training Course on "Macro-Economic Evaluation of Transport Infrastructure Investments" on 24-27 November 1998 in Budapest, Hungary, where theoretical background for project preparation with practical examples were presented and discussed.
- Training Course on "Railway Traffic Forecasting, Calculation, analyses and assessments based on exercise" on 14-16 July 1999 in Budapest, Hungary where the experiences for traffic forecasting in line with project preparation were introduced and discussed.

- Training Course on the Implementation of Restructured TER Databank on 1-4 March 1999 in Maribor, Slovenia, that is already mentioned under the appropriate subject of this Progress Report.

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

TER offers the advantage of gathering during its meetings both representatives of the Ministries of Transport and the Railway companies from the member countries.

At the governmental level, it is the only forum in the region approaching all the railway transport issues concerning the faster integration and higher standards of the railway network of the TER member countries into the Western European network. It also stimulates measures for harmonizing the legislation of the Central and Eastern European countries to the Western European standards in order to ensure a higher quality of services all along the corridors and higher profitability of the railway sector in their countries. In order to implement the AGC and AGTC standards in the region, as well as for improving the railway and combined transport services, the TER Project is a useful tool. The realisation of a comprehensive programme of work with concrete outputs, results in a permanent extension of the TER membership.

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