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TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (UNTER) PROJECT*

Report of activities implemented in 2006

Transmitted by the United Nations TER Project Central Office

Introduction

1. The TER Cooperation Trust Fund Agreement ensures the implementation of its main objectives by offering its framework and experience in reforming the railway and CT system in the member countries and increasing the quality of services according to new standards and to the changed transport conditions developing in Europe. The 17 member countries are: Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Additionally, five observer countries: Belarus, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Serbia and Montenegro participated in various TER actions.

* The UNECE Transport Division has submitted the present document after the official document deadline due to resource constraints.

Regional transport cooperation

2. For over a decade the Trans-European Railway (TER) Project provided the cooperation framework to Central and Eastern European countries with a view to promoting and implementing initiatives for an efficient international rail and combined transport system in those countries in accordance with the Pan-European infrastructure agreements.

In this context it is worthwhile recalling the main specific objectives of the Trans-European Railway:

To ensure the coordinated upgrading of infrastructure of the TER network to the AGC and AGTC standards.

To contribute to the modernization of rolling stock.

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

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

To coordinate the improvement of operation parameters and ameliorate the situation at the border crossings with a view to eliminating the bottlenecks in international rail transport.

To develop the cooperation among the member countries in the preparation of studies.

To promote the cooperation among the member countries in the field of combined transport.

To promote training activities for experts of the member countries.

3. Detailed information in relation to the above issues was presented at the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) session in 2005.

TER activities carried out in 2006

On 9-11 January, TER Project Manager attended ECMT – Railways meeting and UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport, which took place in Paris, France.

On 12-13 January, TER Project Manager attended the meeting of the Steering Committee of Pan-European Corridor IV as well as Steering Group Railways of the Pan-European Corridor IV in Vienna, Austria.

On 10 March, the Project Manager met Mr. Gyula Gaál, President-General Director of MÁV Zrt., Mr. István Heinczinger the Deputy General Director of MÁV Zrt. and Mr. Tamás Kozák President-General Director of MÁV Cargo ZRt. On the same day he also visited

Mr. Csaba Siklós, General Director of GYSEV. The topic of the discussion was how to ensure further activities of the TER PCO in Budapest.

On 17 March, the Project Manager paid a visit to Mr. Danail Nedialkov, Head of the Danube Commission secretariat to discuss further cooperation in inland navigation and railway.

On 21-22 March, the Project Manager participated and made a presentation on TER Border Crossing Facilitation at a Workshop on Rail Border Crossing Practices in South-Eastern Europe in Sofia, Bulgaria.

On 28-30 March, the Project Manager attended the 5th Preparatory Meeting for the International Conference on Facilitation of Railway Border Crossing in Warsaw, Poland.

On 3 April, the Project Manager met in Budapest Mr. Kocourek, Vice Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic to discuss the TEM-TER Master Plan and about Czech-Slovenian and Czech-Polish infrastructure projects.

On 19-21 April, the Project Manager attended the Workshop on trans-shipment infrastructure of Cierna nad Tisou Kosice, Slovakia.

4. Border crossing and adoption of measures in line with the EU policy and new regulation regarding new Schengen borders. The Workshop was organized by the Slovakian Ministry of Transport together with TER and with the assistance of the involved countries and representatives of border stations of Hungary Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, and Ukraine. The mitigating new problems arising in the border area of Cop-Zahony and Cierna nad Tisou were the main goals of the two meetings.

On 3 May, the Project Manager met in Budapest Éva Molnar, a World Bank consultant to discuss infrastructure projects in the Caucasus area establishing coherent Euro-Asian Transport links.

On 22 May, the Project Manager attended a meeting in Vienna, Austria on the Russian Federation/Italy Freight Corridor.

5. The Russian Federation interest in better railway connections to Italy was another important development. With the help of the Austrian Ministry of Transport a round table conference was organized on 22 May 2006 in Vienna, this enabled TER to provide additional information in inviting UIC, Rail Net Europe and representatives from the Ministries of the Czech Republic, Italy and Poland. The railway experts explained, inter alia, the principles of freight – RNE Corridor VII a new tool for infrastructure managers, also being discussed in a PEC VI Steering Committee Meeting in Graz.

On 29 May, the Project Manager attended a meeting in Győr, Hungary about interoperability and border control facilitation.

On 1-2 June, the Project Manager attended a meeting in Graz, Austria: Steering Committee Meeting, Corridor VI where a possible extension of Corridor VI to Italy was discussed.

On 8-9 June, the Project Manager attended a meeting in Kosice, Slovakia on border crossing and infrastructure project Baltic Sea – Black Sea, Szczecin–Constanta.

On 15 June, the Project Manager paid a visit to Mrs. Maria Kadlecikova, Head of Mission of FAO in Budapest and had discussions on administration matters and common interests in the Caucasus region.

On 19-21 June, the 1st Meeting of TER Group of Experts on TER Master Plan and the 22nd Session of the Steering Committee took place in Baden, Austria.

On 4-6 September, the 2nd Meeting of TER experts for the implementation of the TER Master Plan took place in Budapest, Hungary; the TEM and TER Master Plan, reflecting the priority transport infrastructure needs of 21 Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern European countries,¹ has been published.

6. The TEM and TER Master Plan has identified the backbone road and rail networks in those countries and elaborated a realistic investment strategy to gradually develop these networks.

7. Two experts groups, one for road and one for rail, with the support of external consultants, have consolidated and processed transport plans and priority needs of the respective countries. As many as 491 projects with an aggregate estimated cost of EUR 102 billion, have been evaluated and prioritized in the framework of the Master Plan.

8. The Master Plan, which was funded by the TEM and TER Projects' own budgets and by a contribution from the International Road Transport Union, provides a useful tool and framework for intergovernmental cooperation towards the coordinated development of coherent international transport infrastructure networks in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, and their integration into the pan-European networks. The EU High Level Group chaired by Ms. de Palacio explicitly acknowledged the TEM and TER Master Plan.

9. The next steps will be the implementation of the Master Plan and its monitoring, which would be among the most important tasks of the TEM and TER Projects in future. This includes, the collection of missing data; the regular update of the identified backbone networks; elaboration of annual progress reports on the implementation of the identified priority projects; the review of the strategy by 2008; and the presentation of projects to the international financial institutions with a view to seeking possible funding for their implementation.

On 13-15 September, the Project Manager attended the nineteenth session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) in Geneva, Switzerland.

¹ Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), Turkey and Ukraine.

On 20 September, the Project Manager attended a meeting on Freight Corridor Russia-Italy in Vienna, Austria.

Conclusions

10. All activities carried out in 2006 were in line with the Programme of Work, as well as with the Short-Term Strategy of TER, adopted by the TER Steering Committee in 2006 in Baden, Austria.

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

12. At the Governmental level, it is the only forum in the region approaching all the railway transport issues for a more rapid integration and at 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/AGTC standards in the region, as well as to improve the railway and combined transport services, the TER Project is a useful tool. Realization of the comprehensive programme of work with concrete outputs has led to a permanent increase in the TER membership.
