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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Trans-European Railway (TER) project

Information on the Trans-European Railway (TER) project development

Submitted by the TER Project Manager

I. Objectives of the Project

1. The main target of the Trans-European Railway (TER) project is to improve the quality and efficiency of transport operations, to assist the integration process of European transport infrastructure systems, and to develop a coherent and efficient international railway and combined transport system in accordance with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) pan-European infrastructure agreements.
2. Among the various goals of TER is the facilitation and development of coherent and efficient international railway and combined transport system among the Central and Eastern European countries and through the territories of the countries participating in the project, as well as between them and other European countries. The contribution in absorbing of an important part of congestion in the Central and Eastern Europe and in the reduction of environmental and safety problems on major international railways of those countries.

II. TER developments in 2014–2015

3. The new TER project Management, Mr. Gennady I. Bessonov and Mr. Andreas C. Zimmer, as elected at the Steering Committee Sessions in 2013, began their duties on 1 January 2014.

4. The Project Managers main objectives for 2014 were:
 - (a) Revitalization of TER activities by introducing a results based Programme of Work which would address member States needs and desires and would deliver concrete outputs and tangible results;
 - (b) Strengthening cooperation with UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) and Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) to ensure the creation of synergies, the development of concrete project proposals and activities on intermodal issues and avoid overlaps;
 - (c) Organizing and preparing high level technical and administrative documentation — including the Programme of Work and cost plan for 2014–2015 for the Steering Committee sessions and technical workshops for TER member States;
 - (d) Finalizing all pending administrative issues such as contracts of Project Managers, contract of TER office, procurement of office equipment.
5. The main achievements of TER project during 2014 were:
 - (a) High Speed Rail Master Plan: TER project Managers and a consultant worked closely with the secretariat of SC.2 in preparing a common methodology for the master plan of the high-speed network in UNECE and TER regions. The revised — common methodology includes, among other activities, the development of a tool that will provide added value to Governments and will help them prioritize corridors on which they should develop high-speed lines and evaluate the cost-benefit of each option. Furthermore, the Terms of Reference of the consultant who will help the TER project to deliver this challenging task were prepared.
 - (b) Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL) Project: The EATL Group of Experts had the challenging task of facilitating the coordination of integrated time schedules and tariffs along the Euro-Asian transport links. The experts agreed that such a demanding and complex task should be prepared and performed in cooperation with different partners so as to minimize efforts and time, TER project managers participated in EATL meetings and agreed to distribute the EATL questionnaire/template to all relevant TER member States as to ensure collection of data from Eastern Europe. In addition the two projects cooperated in analysing the expected cargo and passenger flows between Europe and Asia. TER and EATL projects are two infrastructure projects where many synergies exist and should be exploited. TER project managers are working towards this direction.
 - (c) Safety at Level Crossings: The TER project managers worked closely with the Working Party on Road Transport and SC.2 to identify areas of cooperation. The Group of Experts on Safety at Level Crossings discussed the utility of TER as undertaking the task of analysing and developing a risk assessment tool for level crossings. Furthermore the development of a database of level crossings — number, types, use, etc. — in the TER region was discussed, with the support from an external consultant. Both activities should be further discussed and agreed upon at the 2015 Steering Committee of the project.
 - (d) Unified Railway Law: The unification of the two existing rail regimes, Convention concerning International Transport by Rail (COTIF) and Agreement on International Railway Freight Transportation (SMGS) agreement and the preparation of a single and international railway regime is of interest to TER countries. Such a regime would further increase railway efficiency and would, therefore, facilitate TER member States' exports and imports and increase competitiveness of their respective railway undertakings. TER project managers participated in the meetings of Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law with the objective to provide input, to inform TER member

States of the developments, and also to allow TER member States to be the first signatories and ratify the new convention when ready.

(e) Promotion of TER project/attracting new member States: One of the main tasks of the Project Managers is the promotion of TER activities and the attraction of new member States. In this framework and based on the Steering Committee's decision, project managers started negotiations and contacts with several Governments of strategic importance for the project. First attempts include Belarus, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Italy.

(f) Administrative Issues: Making the TER office operational was another challenge for TER project Managers. During 2014 they managed to renew all office equipment making office operations more efficient and are, thus ready to support all new challenging tasks and activities. Furthermore a consultant was hired to (i) assist in the organization of, participate in and elaborate documents for the TER sessions, meetings and workshops contained in its 2014 Programme of Work, (ii) assist the TER Project Central Office (PCO) in implementing the TER Master Plan Revision follow-up and monitoring the respective activities; (iii) assist the TER PCO in promoting the outputs and outcomes of the activities of the TER Programme of Work.

III. Activities in 2015

6. The TER project management at the thirty-seventh TER Steering Committee session (Geneva, 24–25 November 2014) proposed the following activities for implementation in the TER Programme of Work 2015:

(a) Connectivity

- integration into the Pan-European and Asian networks and corridors in full;
- cooperation with EU, OSJD and the EATL project;
- cooperation in corridor management beyond the EU-borders;
- harmonisation of the High Speed network in TER region, hiring of a consultant, start of the project.

(b) Visibility

- new TER web homepage with revised information;
- increasing the number of TER members, decide which countries should be contacted and possibly visited.

(c) Capacity-Building

- examine possibilities to prepare, in cooperation with EATL project, a comprehensive study on cargo flows between Asia and Europe by all modes of transport.

(d) Safety

- cooperation with UNECE in preparing a questionnaire to get an overview about all level crossings on the TER network and including risk levels assessment.

(e) Development

- implementation of the TER Master Plan revision and reporting on its implementation;

- TER data collection will be extended to non-TER participating countries (future prospects).
- (f) Management
- re-settlement of TER PCO (preparation and finalization of the new Host Country Agreement with TER participating country);
- preparation of the new Trust Fund Agreement for TER project;
- organization of two sessions of TER Steering Committee;
- organization of a TER workshop in Istanbul.

IV. Thirty-eighth session of the TER Steering Committee

7. The thirty-eighth session of the TER Steering Committee took place in Istanbul, Turkey on the 28 April 2015. The most important conclusions of the Steering Committee can be summarized as follows:

(a) The PCO was also requested to continue its work on strengthening the connectivity of the TER network by making use of established contacts with the European Commission, OSJD and the EATL Project.

(b) The Steering Committee considered the document prepared by the secretariat on consultant ToR who will work on the development of the TER High Speed Master Plan. The Steering Committee decided that this document requires further review and additional comments should be sent to the secretariat not later than 5 May 2015. The PCO should provide necessary coordination between the Steering Committee members in order to ensure that the best candidate for this position would be selected.

(c) On the promotion of TER and relevant activities the TER PCO should prepare a new draft of the TER brochure based on comments received by the countries, make it more concise, complement it with the respective diagrams, maps and figures and submit the final draft one month before the thirty-ninth session of Steering Committee for approval at the session.

(d) The Steering Committee mandated the PCO to start activities for pre-feasibility studies of selected rail corridors. This task should also include work towards the harmonization of basic interoperability parameters along these corridors.

(e) The session requested the PCO to continue cooperation with the UNECE secretariat on ports hinterland connections and on possible contribution of the TER Project to its work.

(f) The Committee confirmed that the deadline of 31 May 2015 for reports (3 templates):

- (i) on the implementation of the Master Plan during 2014;
- (ii) on possible changes on the status of the TER backbone network since 1 January 2015; and
- (iii) on relevant TER maps which were distributed by the PCO, should be kept.

(g) The Committee took also note of the proposal received by the Government of Serbia to host the TER office for one year. The Committee expressed its gratitude to the Government of Serbia for this kind offer and approved its proposal.

(h) The Steering Committee was informed by the UNECE secretariat and the representative of Austria on the status of the TER Deputy Manager's contract. The Steering

Committee recognized the difficulties exist and also the fact that Deputy Project Manager works all this time for the project without having an official contract.

(i) The Committee took note of the report of the UNECE representative on TER Trust Fund Contributions and Expenditures in 2014, according to which the financial situation of the Project was found very sound.
