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TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER) PROJECT

Report on activities implemented in 2002

Introduction

The main objectives set out in the TER Trust Fund Agreement were fully endorsed by the 16 member countries: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey. Additionally four observer countries: Belarus, FYROM, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine participated at various TER actions.

UNECE as Executing Agency of the Project offered 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 co-operation with other international bodies and first of all with the European Commission and the EU member States increased continuously, proving to be beneficial both to the TER countries and those organizations and countries. As a matter of fact three members of the EU and 8 countries in accession to the EU are TER members. The international status of TER as a relevant partner in the transport field is well established.

Regional transport cooperation

Trans-European Railway (TER) Project provided the cooperation framework to Central and Eastern European countries with a view to promoting initiatives for implementing 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 developed by all European Governments under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

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

- I. To ensure the coordinated upgrading of infrastructure of the TER network to the AGC and AGTC standards.
- II. To contribute to the modernization of rolling stock.
- III. To help participating Governments in improving rail efficiency and the adaptation of the railway organization to market oriented management.
- IV. To develop a database on the railway and combined transport system in the region.
- V. 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.
- VI. To develop the cooperation among the member countries in the preparation of studies.
- VII. To promote the cooperation among the member countries in the field of combined transport.
- VIII. To promote training activities for experts of the member countries.

Detailed information in relation to the above issues were presented at the SC.2 meeting in 2001.

A new Short Term Strategy for TER

Based on the good experience obtained in many areas, TER developed a new strategy in the short term in order to achieve a more rapid progress in implementing its tasks as well as in ensuring the integration of TER into the European transport system.

This strategy has as a main objective the integration of TER in the new European transport environment as well as to strengthen the cooperation with the EU. It should ensure the incorporation of the Project into the European transport system, secure an institutional role for TER Project implementation within the European infrastructure development plans, develop closer cooperation between TER and other related initiatives and projects, apply on a larger scale the inter-modal concept as well as supplementary development and operational plans between TER, TEM and other components of the European networks, expand the application of the PPP concept in the TER countries and in general with the European private sector with a view to increasing the financial availabilities in the member countries, secure continuity of projects on the main links in the region irrespective of the possible changes in the membership and work on alternative links and connections, take the leading role in the region in the extension of TERFFs in the CEEC and development of Freight Villages concept as a supplementary component of the railway network and, last but not least, achieve a higher level of political support from the Governments of the member countries in the implementation of projects in the railway and combined transport sectors in the region.

The approval of this strategy by the TER countries demonstrated their determination to go forward in looking for solutions to the railway transport problems, to facilitating the integration of the CEEC transport system into the Pan-European system.

In accordance with this new strategy, under the UNECE framework and within the division of labour among EU, CEMT and UNECE in following-up the developments on the Pan-European Transport Corridors and Areas, the TER Project is ready to bring its contribution to the technical and legal monitoring process of the implementation of the Pan-European Corridors and Areas.

Recent TER activities concentrated on the following issues:

- Assessment of railway policy, investment, planning and financing of projects, management of human resources. A workshop was organized jointly by TER/PCO and the World Bank and co-sponsored by various other institutions. It took place on 5-6 March in Helsinki and on 7-8 March in Warsaw.
- Participation at the Steering Committee meetings of Pan-European corridors: corridor III, which took place on 8 and 9 April 2002 in Wroclaw, Poland, corridor X which was organized on 26 and 27 April in Thessaloniki and corridor IV organized on 18 July 2002 in Sofia, Bulgaria. There were examined issues related to the implementation of projects for lines belonging to the above Pan-European corridors as well as the contribution of TER to speeding up the process of modernization of infrastructure and increase of quality of services in the TER countries situated along these corridors.
- The session of WP.1 (Infrastructure matters) was organized in Brioni (Croatia) on 15-16 May. The participants supported the elaboration of the TER Master Plan and requested the Executing Agency to continue its efforts with a view to identifying the possibilities to finance the elaboration of the Master Plan.

The TER Master Plan is aiming at reviewing the priority of infrastructure needs in the region and the elaboration of an updated inventory of these needs and of a realistic plan for their implementation.

The TER Master Plan is among the first priorities of TER.

Detailed information on the discussions with representatives of the European Commission for the further cooperation of EC and ECE including TER and TEM in monitoring the developments on Pan-European corridors was provided. It is foreseen that TEM and TER Projects will play a more active role in the technical coordination of the Pan-European Corridors and Areas implementation process.

- Regarding TER database and Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping activities, they are in full development and given deep consideration, targeted towards a full implementation of TER data and maps processing and presentation in the GIS environment. These activities and the accumulated experience of the TER Project in monitoring developments on the railway networks in the region offer a valuable assistance for the implementation of the Pan-European railway

corridors development process in which the European Commission and ECE are closely cooperating.

- The session of the Steering Committee held on 18 June 2002 in Istanbul debated an amendment related to the functioning of the Steering Committee in the sense of improving its current work. Also the status of the personnel at the PCO was discussed.

The Steering Committee approved the Financial Report for 2001, the Programme of Work for 2002 and the budget for 2002.

The session of WP.2 (Financial and Management matters) took place from 19 to 21 June 2002 in Istanbul (Turkey). The main issues debated were: measures taken by railway companies for market oriented management, obstacles and deficiencies to the development of international combined transport in the region, promotion of a new image of railway stations and their integration in the town planning, measures for improving real estate management, railway safety measures, quality in rail transport (ISO Certificate) etc.

From the discussions resulted that, on most of the issues, progress could be recorded compared to the situation existing 4-5 years ago and measures for modernizing the railway transport were implemented.

- Workshop in Freight Village concept, marketing of combined transport services and promotion of CT operators was organized by TER/PCO with UIRR, Europlatforms, Eurochambers and Kombiverkehr between 17-19 July in Munich. The participants to the workshop supported the initiative of the UNECE, TER, TEM, Eurochambres and Europlatforms, to join their efforts and, in cooperation with EC DG REGIO – ISPA and DG TREN, to embark upon an integrated promotion of the FVs concept in the 10 ISPA countries and their CEE neighbours by organizing meetings for the transfer of know-how and sharing of experiences from the West.

The importance of the activity of combined transport as such was recognized by all. Measures for supporting this activity and elaboration of an adequate legislation to be implemented in the TER countries was considered of vital importance.

It was felt that a competitive railway environment should be put in place, creating a context in which the client will ultimately have the possibility to choose his traction supplier(s); in such environment, bi- or multimodal cooperation among railway companies in various fields may contribute to a more efficient railway activity in general and provide better results and profits for the sector. CT (road and rail) was appreciated as one of the major ways for increasing railway revenues.

- Transfer of know-how and technical information on modern rolling stock, railway equipment and technologies was achieved during the Seminar jointly organized on 18-20 September 2002 by TER/PCO with UIC, UEEIV and Federation of French Railway Industries (F.I.F.) in Strasbourg, France.

The latest solutions for railway transport needs, rail/road wagons, rail/road equipment, computerized signalling, consultancy in test planning and development of rolling stock, train air

conditioning, video supervision operations, rehabilitation of tracks and platforms etc. were presented by various companies. A crash test of a coach was also organized. The Seminar was highly appreciated by the participants from the TER countries.

- A Seminar on facilitation of border crossings procedures and review of measures taken in this field by the TER countries will be organized by TER in cooperation with UIC from 14 to 16 October 2002, in Venice, Italy. The meeting will be attended by representatives of the Ministries of Transport, of the Railways as well as Customs and Border crossing control authorities from the TER countries. This is a follow-up meeting for reporting the progress made since the last meeting held on 10-12 December 2001, in Karlovy Vary, Czech Republic.

In Venice important issues will be approached, like: new bi- or multilateral agreements concluded by countries from the region, in the field of execution of border control or rationalisation of procedures at border crossings, fields to be regulated via such agreements, development of contacts among state authorities in railway border crossings, stage of implementation of the proposals for facilitation of border crossings procedures in the border stations according to the studies elaborated within the framework of Action Border Crossing Programme financed by UIC, etc.

- With the support of UNECE, the TER Project is present on the UNECE web site (unece.org). TER provides the necessary materials to be included in the web site which will constantly be updated.

Conclusions

All activities developed in 2002 were in accordance with the Programme of Work as well as the Short Term Strategy of TER adopted by the TER Steering Committee in 2001 in Antalya, Turkey.

The strong support received from the Transport Division, its Director as well as the Regional Transport Adviser, Mr. M. Adamantiadis proved to be beneficial for the PCO work and the overall TER activities.

The continuation in 2003 and further on, of the direct support of the Transport Division and the Regional Transport Adviser is more and more helpful to our work, when all efforts are concentrated on the implementation of the TER Master Plan, participation in the monitoring process of developments on Pan-European corridors, TER Data base and GIS mapping activities and in general of all actions from the TER Short Term Strategy.

TER offers the advantage of gathering during its meetings both representatives of the Ministries of Transport and the Railways companies from the member countries. 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 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 realization of comprehensive programmes of work, with concrete outputs, lead to the permanent extension of the TER membership.

TER, only by continuing the expansion of its activities, by its commitment to be more involved in the international activities developed in other fora, by developing relations with the private sector for the transfer of know-how and obtaining additional financial resources and by increasing the countries' support in the implementation of actions with concrete results, will become more successful in bringing its contribution to the changing European transport environment. In this way, it could serve best the interests of the member countries and meet their expectations.
