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TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (UNTER) PROJECT

Report of activities implemented in 2007

Transmitted by the United Nations TER Project Central Office

1. The Programme of Work of the Inland Transport Committee for 2006-2010 adopted at its sixty-eight session (ECE/TRANS/166/Add.1, Item 2.5), requires the UNECE TER Project Office to report on annual progress on activities carried out within the TER project. The present document is submitted for consideration by the Working Party in compliance with that mandate.

I. **THE TER PROJECT CENTRAL OFFICE MOVED TO BRATISLAVA (SLOVAKIA)**

2. After being based in Budapest for more than 15 years, the TER Project Central Office (PCO) has moved to Bratislava. The new TER PCO was inaugurated on 15 May 2007 in a special ceremony held at the Mirbach Palace in Bratislava in the presence of the Minister of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications of the Slovak Republic, Mr. L'ubomír Vážny, and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Mr. Marek Belka., Executive Director of CER, Mr. Ludwig; Head of TINA Mr. Schwetz addressed the meeting.

“The Office could be inaugurated thanks to the strong commitment of the Slovak Government to the TER Project”, said Mr. Belka, who expressed gratitude to the Slovak Government for its generous contribution. Mr. Belka, also thanked the Government of Hungary who hosted the TER PCO for the last 15 years until the end of 2006.

3. The inauguration of the new TER PCO, located in the premises of the Slovak Ministry of Transport in Bratislava, also counted with the participation of Ambassadors, TER National Coordinators and other high level Officials from the Ministries of Transport of the participating countries.

4. The TER Project, which works under the auspices of the UNECE, brings together 17 Central, Eastern and South-eastern European as well as Caucasus countries, namely: Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Five more countries are participating in various TER activities as observers. These are: Belarus, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Serbia.

5. The main objective of the TER Project is to promote cooperation among the participating countries with a view to the coordinated development of their railway and combined transport infrastructure and to the facilitation of rail traffic in the region.

6. 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.

II. TER PROJECT, EFFICIENT TOOL FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION ON RAIL AND COMBINED TRANSPORT

7. 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.

8. The main specific objectives of the TER Project include:

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

(b) To contribute to the modernization of rolling stock.

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

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

(e) 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.

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

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

(h) To promote training activities for experts of the member countries.

9. Detailed information in relation to the above issues was presented at the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) session in 2006.

III. TER MASTER PLAN AND ITS FOLLOW-UP

10. The TER Project, in close cooperation with its sister Project TEM, has elaborated its Master Plan. TER Master Plan has identified the priority rail links in 21 Central, Eastern and South- Eastern European countries – the TER Master Plan Backbone network - and has evaluated and assigned priorities as many as 172 railway projects of an aggregate estimated cost of €2.5 billion, thus providing a realistic investment strategy for the development of rail and combined transport infrastructure in the participating countries.

11. In the framework of the TEM and TER efforts to elaborate their integrated Master Plan, two experts groups, one for road and one for rail, with the support of external consultants, have consolidated and processed road and rail transport plans and priority needs of the respective countries. As many as 491 projects with an aggregate estimated cost of €102 billion have been evaluated and prioritized in the framework of the TEM and TER Master Plan.

12. The TEM and TER Master Plan, reflecting the priority transport infrastructure needs of 21 Central, Eastern, and South-Eastern European countries, has been published in 2006. 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.

13. Implementation of Master Plan and its follow-up actions were among the most important tasks included in the TER Programme of Work for the new cycle 2006-2010, being an integral part of the TER Co-operation Trust Fund Agreement. Considering the important tasks assigned to the PCO in the next period in relation with the Master Plan, its follow up work and other activities of the TER Project, the Steering Committee agreed to make use of outside expertise by contracting two consultants to assist in the work.

14. TER PCO, in cooperation with TEM PCO, have elaborated an Integrated Report on Comparison of the TEM and TER Master Plan Backbone Networks and on the progress of

implementation of the Priority Projects in 2006. This report is in its final stage and will be made available soon.

15. Close monitoring of the implementation of TER Master Plan and regular adaptations of the networks would be required. In particular, it would require a coordinated and intensive follow-up work also, in close co-operation with other relevant international organizations or bodies concerned.

16. At its 23rd session held in Geneva, 16 November 2006, TER Steering Committee considered inter alia the outline of the TER Master Plan follow-up actions, stressed that monitoring of the implementation of the identified priority projects would be the most valuable for the follow-up work, and outlined a number of specific tasks to be assessed in the future by the TER Project. These include:

(a) Completion of the missing and/or insufficient data with the direct inputs from the countries, which did not provide data;

(b) Final update of the TER Master Plan Backbone network;

(c) Final assessment of the investment strategy before 2008 with a view of identification of the TER Backbone network shape in 2012, 2015, 2020;

(d) Monitoring the progress and implementation of technical standards for bringing TER Backbone network up to the required international level;

(e) Harmonization and coordination of the order of priority of projects in various countries for implementation across the borders;

(f) Comparison of the TER Master Plan backbone network vis-à-vis the OSJD priority corridors;

(g) Further assessment of current status of the backbone network with a view to supporting the presentation of the Master Plan backbone network shape by 2012-2015-2020;

(h) Organization of the reviewing process of the state of Master Plan in 2008.

IV. TER MASTER PLAN ONGOING WORK IN 2007

17. According to the TER Master Plan Follow-up Action Plan approved for 2007, with the help of external consultants and in cooperation with the secretariat, the following work is being carried out:

(a) Revision and updating of the TER Master Plan website;

(b) Comparison of the Master Plan TER Backbone network vis-à-vis OSJD priority corridors as well as the E-Rail and Combined transport networks (AGC-AGTC);

(c) Collection and processing of necessary data from concerned countries including new TER member countries, for the necessary update of the TER Master Plan, its GIS database and maps and the annual TER rail border crossing monitoring exercise in 2007;

(d) Preparation of the 2007 Progress report on the implementation of the priority project identified by the TER Master Plan, based on country inputs and uniform questionnaire;

(e) Annual TER border crossing monitoring exercise;

(f) Organization of the 3rd and 4th meetings of TER experts on the implementation of the Master Plan;

(g) Preparation, in cooperation with PCO, the UNECE and the experts from the concerned countries, the methodology and TOR for the Master Plan review in 2008.

V. OTHER TER ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT IN 2007

A. Cooperation with TER member countries:

(a) Visit of the Project Manager in Ankara and Istanbul, to attend the 150th Anniversary of TCDD Turkish Railways, addressing an opening speech in University of Istanbul presenting the latest result of the TER Master Plan and stressing the importance of developing Euro-Asian Transport Links, December 2006;

(b) Meeting of the Project Manager with Mr. Kocourek, Vice Minister of Transport, on issues of TER - Czech cooperation, January 2007;

(c) Meeting of the Project Manager with Mr. Székely, Director of Gysev, in Sopron, Hungary, and Mr. Felsmann, State Secretary of the Ministry of Transport Hungary on the implementation of a new Corridor E – Prague – Budapest via Sopron, January 2007;

(d) Participation of TER Project Manager in Railway Congress in Graz and discussion with Polish, Slovenian and Austrian Railway companies and ministries, on border crossing and cooperation with TER, January 2007;

(e) Meeting of the Project Manager with Mr. Fenyves from the Hungarian Railways MAV on cooperation with TER, February 2007;

(f) Participation of the Project Manager to the Sixth Preparatory Meeting for an International Conference on Facilitation of Railway Border Crossing in Warsaw, Poland organized by OSJD and UNECE, March 2007;

(g) Meeting of the Project Manager with Mr. Kocourek, Vice Minister of Transport of the Czech Republic in Brno, Czech Republic, on the TEM-TER Master Plan, and the Czech–Slovenian and Czech-Polish infrastructure projects and Railway Line High Priority Nr. 23, April 2007;

(h) Meeting of the Project Manager with Mr. Kellermann, Chair of WP.5 on the planned meeting “Transport infrastructure development in the context of Euro-Asian transport links – Experiences based on the implementation of TEM and TER projects”, Geneva, April 2007;

(i) Visit to TER PCO Mr. Kornienko, First Deputy Minister of Transport, Ukraine, on cooperation with TER, May 2007;

(j) Participation of the Project Manager to the Spatial Development Forum “Planning Infrastructure for Regional Development”, organized by the Central European Initiative in the framework of the A-B Landbridge Project (within and beyond the Adriatic-Baltic region), May 2007;

(k) Participation of the Project Manager to Project Manager to the preparatory meeting in Kosice, Slovakia, on border crossing and infrastructure project Baltic Sea – Black Sea, Szczecin–Constanta, preparing a rail “Conference Rail-Zil”, June 2007;

(l) Participation of the Project Manager to the session of the Steering Committee of Corridor X, Graz, Austria, June 2007;

(m) Meeting of the Project Manager in TER PCO with Mr. Alex Hoerhager, a EIB Bank consultant and head of new JASPERS office in Vienna on infrastructure projects in his area (CZ, SK, H, SLO), on strengthening the border station Cop as a main gate to the Euro-Asian Transport links, and on new financing methods such as PPP models in combination with EU funds, June 2007.

B. Participation in the work of the UNECE Transport Division:

(a) Participation of the Project Manager to the Sixty-ninth session of the Inland Transport Committee of the UNECE in Geneva, February 2007;

(b) Participation of the Project Manager to the Belarusian Transport Congress and National Workshop in Minsk, organized by the UNECE Transport Division on “Enhancing National Capacity for the Facilitation of Interregional Transport along the Euro-Asian Transport Links” and Technical visit to Brest railway marshalling yard and border crossing point organized by the Belarusian Ministry of Transport, May 2009.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

18. All activities carried out in 2007 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 and in Geneva Switzerland.

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

20. 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.
