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TRANSPORT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

**TRANSPORT STUDY CENTRE FOR THE
WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (CETMO)**

Summary of main activities

**Transmitted by the Transport Study Centre for the
Western Mediterranean (CETMO)**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. At its twenty-first session (13-14 September 2007) the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics asked the representatives of CETMO to report on the results of the Centre's activities at its next session (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/42, para. 14).
2. The activities in which CETMO has taken part in recent months are of three main types:
 - (a) Participation in the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean - GTMO (5+5);
 - (b) Participation in the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum (Euromed Transport Forum);
 - (c) Other CETMO activities.

I. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO GTMO (5+5)

3. Brief background information: since its launch in 1995, GTMO (5+5) - the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean - has had the objective of promoting cooperation in transport in the western Mediterranean and of helping to strengthen the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The members of GTMO are the ministers responsible for transport of the 10 countries of the region (Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia); the European Commission Directorate-General for Energy and Transport and the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) have observer status. CETMO provides the secretariat.

A. High-level conference on extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the Mediterranean region

4. On 3 December 2007, the ministers of transport of the Mediterranean countries, and ministers (or representatives) of the countries of the European Union, the European Commission, various financial bodies and CETMO met in Lisbon for the official launch of work to extend trans-European transport networks to the Mediterranean countries.

5. The conference was organized in three sessions, addressing:

(a) Sustainability of transport in the Mediterranean region, with a presentation on the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean region and its implementation;

(b) Financing prospects for infrastructure in the Mediterranean and presentation of the Investment Fund, a financing tool for the European Neighbourhood Policy, with representatives of the World Bank and the European Investment Bank in attendance;

(c) Investment opportunities for the private sector.

6. Among the conclusions drawn from this meeting, the following are worthy of mention: participants' interest in extending the major trans-European axes to the Euro-Mediterranean region; the warm reception given to the Regional Transport Action Plan and the working group on infrastructure and regulations; also the consensus on the importance of adopting a memorandum of understanding between the countries concerned and the Commission.

7. On the sidelines of the conference, the GTMO (5+5) president, along with several ministers of the group, met the Vice-President of the European Commission, Jacques Barrot. CETMO took part in the meeting in its capacity as secretariat.

8. The aims of this meeting were on the one hand to present the GTMO (5+5) cooperation initiative to the European Commissioner, along with the works and studies that were in planning or under way, and on the other hand to secure the support of the European Commission. Various formulas for participation and cooperation with GTMO (5+5) were discussed on the basis of the conclusions and the memorandum of cooperation drawn up at the Tunis Conference.

9. Vice-President Barrot gave a very positive assessment of this kind of subregional cooperation initiative, and expressed his support for GTMO (5+5).

B. Working visits to the three new GTMO (5+5) members in January 2008

10. As announced in the programme of work adopted at the eighth meeting of experts, in Barcelona, CETMO in its capacity as the GTMO (5+5) secretariat paid working visits on 15, 22 and 28 January 2008 to Malta, Libya and Mauritania, which have recently joined the GTMO (5+5) cooperation initiative.

11. The objective of these visits was three-fold. First, they took the form of an institutional presentation of the GTMO (5+5) initiative for the representatives of the ministries of transport who were met by the secretariat. Second, they allowed the secretariat to learn more about the features of these countries' transport systems, and how they operated. Lastly, they served to identify areas of cooperation within GTMO (5+5) that transport professionals and ministerial representatives regarded as promising.

12. In general terms, the three countries were all interested in the biennial 2007-2009 GTMO (5+5) cooperation programme of work. The updating of the REG-MED and DESTIN studies - respectively a study offering system analysis and recommendations on transport system operations and a study defining and identifying strategic regional infrastructure as applied to these countries - was very warmly welcomed as the kind of initiative that served the interests of the transport sector in the region.

13. One point that was reiterated throughout the visits to the new member countries was the importance to be given to training, and the need to strengthen training in the field of transport. Some of the most promising ways forward involved training and twinning, with support from the rest of the Group's countries.

14. On the whole, the results of the visits were positive. The objectives were largely attained: the visits showed how the countries' transport systems operated and allowed the GTMO (5+5) cooperation initiative to be presented to all the ministries and bodies involved. The objectives of the GTMO (5+5) programme of work were transmitted to the management and technical staff of the various administrations, who were receptive and interested.

C. Ninth GTMO (5+5) meeting of experts

15. The GTMO (5+5) secretariat held the ninth GTMO (5+5) meeting of experts in Barcelona on 18 February 2008.

16. The meeting began by taking stock of cooperation within GTMO (5+5), specifically with a review of the various visits paid to new member countries and of the meeting between Mr. Barrot, the Commissioner for Transport of the European Union, and the GTMO (5+5) president, accompanied by the Portuguese, Moroccan and Libyan ministers of transport.

17. The discussion went on to cooperation in the western Mediterranean, with a progress report on the Euromed Transport Forum and the announcement of a new working group on infrastructure; a short discussion on the Union for the Mediterranean project; a review of salient points in transport in each of the member countries, specifically addressing the question of a

memorandum of understanding between UMA and GTMO (5+5) and its forthcoming signing by the GTMO president and the UMA Secretary-General; and presentations on the transport systems of Morocco, Libya, Italy and Mauritania by experts from each of those countries.

18. The meeting also presented an opportunity to review the terms of reference of the various studies planned under the GTMO (5+5) programme of work:

- (a) Conditions of transport for seasonal travel in the western Mediterranean;
- (b) The trans-Maghreb high-speed rail link (TGV);
- (c) Transport training requirements in the western Mediterranean;
- (d) Inventory of international transport agreements in the western Mediterranean region.

D. Signing of a memorandum of understanding between GTMO (5+5) and the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA)

19. On 15 April 2008 the Secretary-General of UMA, Mr. Ben Yahia, and the current president of GTMO (5+5) and Minister of Transport of Tunisia, Mr. Zouari, signed a memorandum of understanding in Tunis.

20. The purpose of the memorandum is to establish cooperation in the field of transport between the two institutions, particularly for the following projects: modernization of the trans-Maghreb train linking Tunis, Algiers and Casablanca, and service improvements; a feasibility study of the trans-Maghreb high-speed rail link (TGV) via Tunis and Algiers; and the rapid implementation of the Maghreb Unity Motorway.

21. On 18 February 2008 the UMA secretariat signed an agreement with CETMO expressing their common desire to harmonize their work in transport in the region and to make documentation and information of use to the two institutions mutually available.

II. ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT AS PART OF THE EUROMED TRANSPORT FORUM

A. First meeting of the working group on infrastructure and regulations

22. On 12 and 13 November 2007, in Brussels, the first meeting of the working group on infrastructure and regulations was held. The group was established pursuant to the Regional Transport Action Plan for the Mediterranean adopted by the Euromed Transport Forum in May 2007.

23. The meeting of the working group was organized as part of the Euromed Transport Forum by the Directorate-General Energy and Transport and the EuropeAid Co-operation Office. Representatives of the ministries of transport of the countries in the Euromed Transport Forum took part, as did CETMO (serving in an expert capacity) and financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank and the World Bank, which considered the initiative very positive.

24. The meeting afforded an opportunity to discuss the transnational Mediterranean axes identified by the high-level group with a view to extending the major European transport axes to neighbouring countries and regions; to continue updating the list of projects surveyed by the high-level group; to identify possible financing arrangements; and to settle regulatory matters for land transport.

B. Meeting of the working group on maritime safety

25. CETMO took part in the fourth meeting of the working group on maritime safety, held in Brussels on 7 February 2008 as part of the Euromed Transport Forum.

26. The following took part in the meeting: representatives of the Mediterranean countries, of several European countries and of international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the Regional Marine Pollution Emergency Response Centre for the Mediterranean Sea (REMPEC), along with CETMO.

27. The main objective of the meeting was to assess the headway made by the SAFEMED project, along with the latest progress in maritime safety in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

28. In 2007 the SAFEMED project concentrated on training, analysis of maritime traffic flows for risk assessment, and the status of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (the MARPOL Convention). In 2008, its last year, the SAFEMED project will encourage the Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme, and will assess the implementation by countries of the IMDG and ISM codes.

29. The European Commission announced that it would follow up on SAFEMED through SAFEMED II, a three-year MEDA regional project funded by the European Union. Project activities will be grouped around vessel traffic monitoring systems (VTMS), port control, port security and the continuation of work to apply mandatory instruments to the national fleet and protect the marine environment.

C. Cooperation by CETMO with the European Commission in the application of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP) as part of the Euromed Transport Forum

30. CETMO participates in the working group assigned the task of boosting and monitoring RTAP development in cooperation with other organizations. The Euromed Transport Forum adopted RTAP, a compendium of activities needed in the Mediterranean region to improve transport operations, in May 2007. Among the activities planned, one concerns the promotion, coordination and assessment of the smooth running of RTAP.

31. CETMO is encouraging participation by and coordination among the countries of the Maghreb, and is helping to draw up a monitoring methodology for the entire Mediterranean. Specifically, it is setting up the new working group on land transport infrastructure and regulations.

III. OTHER ACTIVITIES BY CETMO

A. Interregional ports day

32. The first interregional ports day was held in Barcelona on 4 and 5 October 2007, under the title “On port policy, infrastructures and management in the regions of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa”. CETMO delivered a presentation entitled “For greater development of port policy, infrastructure and management in the western Mediterranean”.

33. An IEMed seminar, “From the cost of the No Maghreb to the North Africa Tiger: North Africa and Europe: Seeking and accepting interdependence”, was held on 22 and 23 November 2007 in Barcelona, at the *Institut Europeu de la Mediterrània*.

34. The seminar provided an opportunity to look closely at relations between Europe and North Africa, and on the other hand to raise certain points that are important for the successful interdependence between the north and the south, including the following questions:

(a) Are Europe’s political leaders prepared to take on such an ambitious plan with the countries of the Maghreb? Are they in a position to offer a comprehensive strategic partnership?

(b) Are the elites of the Maghreb countries prepared to conduct the reforms required for such a partnership and to take the risks involved?

(c) Are the countries on either side of the Mediterranean ready to make the qualitative leap proposed in Barcelona in 2005?

B. Inland Transport Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)

35. CETMO took part in the ECE Inland Transport Committee session in Geneva from 19 to 21 February 2008 and presented its programme of work along with an overview of its activities.

C. ECE Meeting on ports and land connections

36. On 18 April 2008 CETMO took part in a meeting in Geneva of the Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports, as part of the work carried out in ECE WP.5.

D. Working meeting between SECEG and SNED and the Director of the ECE Transport Division

37. On 11 June 2008 CETMO took part in a meeting in Geneva with the Moroccan and Spanish bodies studying the possibility of a fixed link in the Strait of Gibraltar. The aim of the meeting was to inform the ECE Transport Division of the progress they were making in their work.

E. First Meetings of the Mediterranean (*Entretiens de la Méditerranée*)

38. On 12 and 13 June 2008 the first Meetings of the Mediterranean (*Entretiens de la Méditerranée*) were held in Barcelona, with participants from countries north and south of the Mediterranean, including CETMO, which was invited to take part as an expert body.

39. The objective of these meetings is to provide a place for people to think and share ideas about Euro-Mediterranean integration: enhancing existing economic cooperation between Europe and the countries south of the Mediterranean as part of the Barcelona Process, through close cooperation between private economic operators on both sides of the Mediterranean in specific regional economic integration projects. During these meetings, discussions centred around four main areas: the financial space, agriculture, water and energy.
