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TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER) PROJECT
Progress report

Transmitted by the TER Project Central Office

1. INTRODUCTION

The Trans-European Railway (TER) Project is a sub-regional co-operation framework established by the Governments of the Central and Eastern European countries with a view to developing 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.

The Project Central Office is in Budapest and it functions in accordance with the Agreement concluded between the Hungarian Government and the UN/ECE.

Co-operation of participating Governments is provided for and founded through a Trust Fund Agreement deposited with the UN/ECE. To this Agreement, with the latest Greece (on 15 December 1999), fifteen countries have formalized their membership so far. These are: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Turkey. In this respect, it is expected that also Italy and Latvia will formalize their membership soon. Additionally out of the following observer countries; Belarus, FYROM, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, at least a few will most likely accede too.

2. MAIN SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE TRANS – EUROPEAN RAILWAY

2.1. To ensure the co-ordinated upgrading of infrastructure standards of the TER network to the AGC and AGTC standards.

a. Important actions were carried out for establishing the TER network

The physical plant of the TER network generally exists. Nevertheless, due to the development in member countries and to the extension of the TER, it is updated annually. The main goal of updating is to have similar understanding on the important international railway network in the region among different international institutions, particularly when speaking about the Pan-European Transport corridors and on the TINA lines.

Having defined a network generally by already existing railway lines, the objective is to ensure its upgrading or modernization. Only short section or missing links on certain corridors are envisaged to be built.

TER considers that special attention should be given to the implementation of the decisions of the Pan-European Transport Conference (Helsinki, 1997) and particularly these regarding financing the modernization of the infrastructure in the TER countries in order to ensure the integration of the TER lines into the Pan-European Transport corridors.

In this respect, the TER Governments were pleased to see that most of the TER lines have been included in the Railway part of the Pan-European Corridors adopted at Helsinki. Moreover, almost all the lines included in the TINA network in countries concerned, are also TER lines.

b. In view of the fact that the present infrastructure standards are far below those indicated in the AGC and AGTC Agreements, an objective is therefore to upgrade, in several phases, the existing infrastructure to the level determined in these Agreements, according to the economic and financial possibilities of the Central and Eastern European countries. However, a set of technical and operation parameters, named TER Parameters have been adopted. They are applied in the short and medium term. Based on the TER Parameters already a number of studies are under implementation.

The TER parameters are:

Technical Standards for the TER Network

1.	Vehicle loading gauge:	UIC/B
2.	Minimum distance between track centres:	4.0 m
3.	Nominal minimum speed:	120 Km/h
4.	Authorised mass per axle:	
	- Locomotives (200 km/h):	22,5 t
	- Wagons: 120 km/h:	20 t
	140 km/h:	18 t
5.	Authorized mass per linear metre:	8t
6.	Test train (bridge design):	UIC 71

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| 7. | Minimum platform length in principal stations: | 250 m |
| 8. | Minimum useful siding length: | 500 m |

Operational parameters for the TER Network

1. Passenger transport

To establish the system of execution of border control procedures (police, customs) on the moving train with short stops at the frontier station for technical/administrative reasons if necessary.

2. Freight transport

a. To complete the system of common frontier stations in order to avoid the duplication of border controls.

b. To rationalize the control procedures at the existing common frontier stations.

c. To introduce the frontier control operations of block trains in terminals of neighbouring railways wherever possible.

3. Passenger and freight transport

To introduce the use of hauling vehicles in the territories of neighbouring TER countries wherever possible.

2.2. *The rolling stock, motive power, signalling and telecommunication equipment, European Rail Traffic Management System, track maintenance equipment, etc., in many cases do not meet today's standards. The objective is, therefore, to support modernization or replacement of it by new equipment. In order to exchange the relevant information between the TER countries and railway supply industry, a number of workshops were organized in the past few years.*

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

Following a Long Term Common Strategy for a sound economic and financial railway operation and management in the TER countries, adopted in 1993, in the year 1999 the permanent activity on restructuring railways and necessary follows up is taking place. On 1–3 February 1999 in cooperation with the International Union of Railways, the seminar on Implementation of the European Union Directives No. 91/440/EC, 95/18/EC and 95/19/EC was held where the activities and experiences were shared. During the meeting, the presentation of the activities by the European Commission (EC), European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), Community of European Railways (CER) International Union of Railways (UIC) as well as practical experiences of the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, and Romania, on the subject were introduced.

At the beginning of July, the seminar on User charges for Railway Infrastructure was organized with the participation of the representatives of EC, ECMT, CER, Railtrack and

Germany to shares the experiences with the responsible persons on the subject from the TER countries.

The activity was followed up by the Round Table and on Restructuring Railways and its Impact on Public Services in (Rail) Transport that took place on 13 - 15 December 1999, Brussels, Belgium.

In general, after each such event, the proceeding of the contributions is issued in order to compile the experiences and lay down the guidelines for future priority activities on a the particular matter.

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

In order to provide in time the necessary information for the elaboration of the pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, the TER countries agreed on the establishment of a TER Data Base System. In order to enable the member Governments to simplify the collection and control the data, as well as to have overview on the processing of data with limited availability, the restructuring process was agreed upon. With this, the transfer of the data collection in the EXCEL to the ACCESS format was completed. Within the restructuring process, the latest data (year 1998) from the Section I (Attachment II) are almost completed in the TER Databank.

In this respect, a Training Course on the Implementation of Restructured TER Databank on 1-4 March 1999 in Maribor, Slovenia and the visit of country data experts to the TER PCO for clarification of particular misunderstandings, during the first half of 2000, were organized for the improvement of quality of data. Up to date, around 85% of the data from section I are collected in the TER databank.

At the same time, the TER Network is indicated in the Geographic Information System (MapInfo). It is very likely that all the Section I data of the TER Databank would be available in the GIS during the year 2000.

TER is in a position to participate in the elaboration of studies with other companies, consultants etc. based on its own databank. Between the TER Project Central Office and the TINA Secretariat a co-operation agreement was concluded and realized.

2.5. To co-ordinate the improvement of operation railway parameters and to ameliorate the situation at border crossings in the TER countries with a view to eliminating the bottlenecks in international rail transport.

During the year 1998, the collection of the present operational data on rail border crossings was completed. Based on this on 7-9 June 2000 the TER country's border crossings experts at their Ad-Hoc Working Group discussed some specific matters that present main obstacles for fluent international rail transport. They underlined that the priority action would be focused on the improvement of the co-operation among the authorities responsible for border crossing procedures within the particular country as well with the authorities across the borders. For this, the consideration of appropriate legislation would be essential.

With the support of the TER Databank and contribution of the TER country's experts on bottlenecks, the identification and prioritization of the bottlenecks on the TER lines would be completed by the established Ad-Hoc Working Group on Bottlenecks.

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

The TER was and still is involved in the elaboration of several studies, and in particular in the following PHARE studies:

- Feasibility Study on the Development of Railway and Combined Transport on Corridor IV,
- Development of Railway and Combined Transport Linking the southern part of Corridor IX with Poland,
- Development of Branches on Corridor V,
- Improvement of Competitiveness of the Rail Transport in the CEEC's
- Extension of Trans-European Rail Freight Freeways to CEEC

The TER member countries agreed that the outcomes of the above studies are to be considered at the TER meetings and taken as initial information for specific follow-up activities within the TER. Among these the following are of the particular interest for TER:

- Extension of Trans – European Rail Freight Freeways to CEEC, for which the TER Steering Committee on its thirteenth session already established the Ad-Hoc Working group and countries have nominated their experts for this group. The first meeting will take place in the autumn of 2000.
- Additionally to the outputs of the study on Development of Railway and Combined Transport Linking the southern part of Corridor IX with Poland, the TER countries agreed to launch the study on the above-mentioned link by railway normal gauge line via Ukraine, that has not been considered by the PHARE study. The TER study would be completed at the end of 2000.
- The TER member countries considers the study on the Improvement of Competitiveness of the Rail Transport in the CEEC's of high importance for detailed consideration on the related TER meetings.

2.7. To promote co-operation among the member countries in the field of combined transport.

Several countries made some progress in developing combined transport on their territory. However, in this process they all encountered many difficulties, particularly in relation to the measures required for encouraging the expansion of the combined transport market or the financial survival of the combined transport operators.

The Conference on the possibilities and deficiencies for the Development of Combined Transport in the Trans European Railway (TER) Member Countries took place on 10 – 12 May 2000 in Ljubljana, Slovenia. The representatives of the European Commission, European Conference of Ministers of Transport, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, International Union of Rail Road Operators, Community of European Railways, European Intermodal Association and Kombiverkehr as well as of each TER member country presented their latest activities and obstacles within the development of Combined Transport.

The meeting recommend that, within further TER activities, border crossing and terminals for combined transport should be a matter of consideration for possible improvement.

2.8. To promote training activities for experts of the member countries.

Having in view the importance of preparing reliable feasibility studies for railway investments, according to the requirements of the International Financial Institutions, a comprehensive training programme for the TER countries' experts was drawn up, as follows:

- Training Course on "Railway Traffic Forecasting, Calculation, Analyses and Assessments Based on Exercise" on 14–16 July 1999 in Budapest, Hungary where the experiences for traffic forecasting in line with project preparation were introduced and discussed.
- Training Course on the Implementation of Restructured TER Databank on 1–4 March 1999 in Maribor, Slovenia, that is already mentioned under the appropriate subject of this Progress Report.

2.9. General

The TER member countries at the thirteenth session of the TER Steering Committee adopted the final version of the TER Trust Fund Agreement, by which they agreed on the Programme of Work for the period 2001–2005, for the extension of the contracts with the present PCO staff on an additional mandate and on the extension of the location of the PCO for the next period in Budapest, Hungary.

3. CONCLUSIONS

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

At the governmental level, it is the only forum in the region approaching all the railway transport issues concerning the faster integration and 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, TER Project is a useful tool. The realization of a comprehensive programme of work with concrete outputs, results in permanent extension of the TER membership.

June 2000
