



**TRANS EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER)
PROJECT CENTRAL OFFICE**

**TRANS EUROPEAN RAILWAYS (TER)
Steering Committee Meeting
25th Session, 20 - 21 November 2008
Geneva, Switzerland**

ABRIDGED REPORT

1. The 25th Session of the TER Steering Committee was held on 20-21 November 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland.
2. The TER countries that participated in the meeting were: Austria, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Representatives of UNECE, TER PCO and international consultants on the TER Master Plan also attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached (ANNEX I).
3. Mrs. E. Molnar, Director of the UNECE Transport Division, welcomed the participants and confirmed the continuing UNECE support for the TER project. She further informed about the managerial changes in the UNECE and its Transport Division. Mr. M. Belka, the former Executive Secretary of the UNECE accepted the assignment in the International Monetary Fund. In order to further strengthen the collaboration between the UNECE Transport Division and the TER and TEM Projects, the team of 4 representatives of Transport Division, Ms. Tanase, Ms. Fouvez, Mr. Pesut and Mr. Cekota, was established to deal with these projects, that should inter alia contribute to the facilitation of railways development in the region and to the growing transport market share of railways. She also mentioned the forthcoming UNECE Commission session to be held in March/April 2009 in Vienna, in which the Foreign Ministers of the member countries would participate.

Adoption of the Agenda

4. The participants in the Steering Committee adopted the agenda of the session (ANNEX II).

Election of Officers

5. The participants in the Steering Committee elected as officers of the Steering Committee Mr. F. Hep (Chairman, Czech Republic) and Mr. M. Radl (Rapporteur, Austria).

Report of the Project Manager

6. The Project Manager presented his report on the activities carried out from the last session of the Steering Committee until now.
7. He informed the participants on the present position of the PCO in Bratislava and on the state of negotiations of the Agreement between the UNECE and the host country of the PCO.
8. The representatives of the Executing Agency and of the countries appreciated the successes achieved in this period of time particularly in the implementation of the TER Master Plan follow-up activities.

Revision of the TER Master Plan

9. The Project Manager and the consultant presented the main elements of the documents submitted for consideration to the Steering Committee under item 4 of the agenda.
10. The Steering Committee took note of the results of the first meeting of the TEM Master Plan Revision Coordination Group held on 21 April 2008 in Prague.
11. At the meeting, the Terms of Reference for the TEM and TER Master Plan Revision were prepared and the decision was taken to submit them to the First Joint Meeting of the TEM and TER Expert Groups on Revision of the Master Plan to be held in September 2008 for final approval. On the basis of the comments delivered at that Joint Meeting, the Final TOR were elaborated and distributed.
12. Mr.P.Pospisil, TER PCO consultant, informed the session about the outcomes of the First Joint Meeting of the TEM and TER Expert Groups on Revision of the Master Plan that took place on 2 – 3 September 2008 in Hallstatt, Austria.
13. The special Questionnaire on Revision of the TER Master Plan, approved at the First Joint Meeting in Hallstatt was distributed to the Master Plan Revision member countries. Until 15 November 2008, these Questionnaires were returned to the TER PCO filled in by Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey.
14. On request of Mr. M. Pesut, Mr. P. Pospisil, the consultant, presented the results of the preliminary analyses of the Questionnaires received. Responding to the question of the Turkish delegation, he clarified that all the new or updated projects would be presented on Templates 2B and 2C in the framework of the Revision Work Package #5, while the description of existing connections to ports and other intermodal nodes should be delivered in the framework of the Questionnaires.
15. The deadline of 15th January 2009 for returning the filled in Questionnaires to the TER PCO was established by the Committee.
16. Mr. H. Meelich, TER Project Manager, introduced the TER Master Plan Follow-up and Revision Action Plan for the year 2009, which assumed that the real work on the Revision will commence at the end of January 2009.
17. The Steering Committee expressed the position, that there is a need for more harmonization of construction of international railway corridors and asked the TEM and TER Master Plan Revision Coordination Group to put more emphasis on coordination of individual projects from the international point of view.
18. In the framework of the discussion, the representatives of Turkey expressed the view with respect to Revision Work Package #4, that the full conformity between international studies and the TER Backbone network may not be reached in every

case. They stated that the TER Project is an independent and unique international cooperation mechanism based on a network approach.

19. The representative of Croatia explained that, in addition to the delivered Master Plan Revision projects and the respective Templates, the country will submit the filled in Questionnaire and maps by the 15th January 2009, as decided by the Steering Committee.

Strengthening cooperation with selected subsidiary bodies of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC)

20. In the framework of this item of the agenda, the cooperation with two bodies of the ITC was dealt with, i.e. with the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) and with the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2). Mr. J. Cekota, as the Secretary of Inland Transport Committee's SC.2 and WP.5, presented to the session some proposals on activities related to the agenda of these UNECE bodies, which could be of interest for the TER Project, such as issue of border crossings, sustainable and healthy urban transport as well as high speed networks. In this connection, the Polish delegation proposed to take into account the hinterland connections to the seaports.

Possible cooperation with the OSCE

21. Based on the report of the Project Manager on the possible items of cooperation, the Steering Committee recommended him to establish the contact with the OSCE headquarters in order to commence and strengthen this cooperation.

Draft Programme of Work for 2009

22. The Project Manager outlined the main objectives included in the Programme of Work for 2009, which closely reflect these of the TER Masterplan Follow-up and Revision Action Plan. In this context, he underlined that the full implementation of the Programme would depend on the status of the international TER PCO staff.

Draft budget for 2009

23. The Project Manager presented a draft cost plan for 2009.
24. In the framework of the ensuing discussion, the Project Manager informed the participants on the situation of payments of contributions due by the countries according to the TER Trust Fund Agreement.
25. TER Project Manager also presented the status of the TER administration and financing in the light of the UN rules and procedures.
26. The Steering Committee approved the expenditures of the budget for 2009 provided that they would be covered by the incomes and reserves from 2008 and that all the participating countries would transfer their 2009 contributions to the Trust Fund. In the opposite case, the Steering Committee authorized the Project Manager to reduce the expenditures accordingly, informing the participating countries at the same time.

TER PCO Host Country Agreement, status of international personnel in PCO and other related issues (Consultants)

27. The Project Manager informed the Committee that the TER PCO in Bratislava is operating in accordance with the Agreement between the UNECE and the Slovak Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications signed in May 2007. At present, the discussions between the UNECE and the Ministry are underway in

order to clarify the details of the new version of the Agreement as requested by the Slovak Government. Nevertheless, the TER PCO in Bratislava is working without any obstacles, having very good working conditions.

28. The Bulgarian representative, Mrs. E. Genova informed the session about the intention of the Bulgarian Government to host the TER PCO after the termination of its mandate in Slovakia and in case that the Slovak Government would not express its wish to extend it. There is also a real possibility that the Deputy Project Manager will be made available by the Bulgarian Government early next year.

Other business

29. In the framework of this item of the agenda, the Turkish representatives presented comprehensive information on the high speed railway lines development in Turkey. Based on priorities in transport sector adopted by the Government, the lines Ankara-Istanbul, Ankara-Konya and Ankara-Sivas are currently under construction. Furthermore, the Marmaray Project, connecting Europe and Asia in Istanbul is planned to be completed in 2011.

Adoption of the Report

30. The participants adopted the report with annexes.
31. The Steering Committee expressed its gratitude to the UNECE for hosting the session.