



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

**TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER)
Steering Committee
57th session, 14 November 2023**

REPORT

The 57th session of the TER Steering Committee (SC) was held in a hybrid format, as a videoconference and in Geneva, on 14 November 2023.

PARTICIPATION

Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czechia, Poland, Slovenia, and Türkiye participated in the session. Representatives of the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division (the UNECE) and the TER Project Manager (PM) attended the meeting.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

The PM welcomed the members of the SC.

1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Agenda of the session (Annex 1) as submitted by the PM, was approved.

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The SC elected Mr Markus Radl (Chairman, AT) and Ms Małgorzata Kopczyńska (Rapporteur) as its officers.

3. REPORT OF THE MANAGEMENT

a) Implementation of the TER Programme of Work 2023

The SC was informed by the PM about the implementation of the Programme of Work 2023. The key outcomes are as follows:

- The TER Backbone Network Annual Report 2023 was adopted;
- The workshop on railway accessibility to seaports was organised on 16th June, 2023, including the site visit to the seaport of Gdańsk, container terminal, and the area of Gdańsk Port Północny station;
- Decision on the continuation of the study of TER infrastructure's compliance with the technical parameters in international legal agreements was taken; Terms of Reference for a consultant was adopted;
- Decision on exploration of the stress-test of rail assets to climate change risk was taken;
- The TER activities were presented at the 85th session of the Inland Transport Committee and the 36th session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5).

The PM informed the SC about recent activities of UNECE related to the railway transport:

- Inland Transport Committee; 21-24 February 2023
During this session, its participants noted the Ministerial Declaration on 'Harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions in the global fight against climate change', endorsed by twenty-nine ministers and other heads of delegations, as an important step towards achieving the climate targets of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.
The ITC expressed its support for TER's activities.
- Group of Experts on Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Inland Transport (WP.5/GE.3); 9-10 March 2023 and 30-31 October 2023
Highly substantive sessions, revealing the results of scientific research.
- Group of Experts on International Railway Passenger Hubs (SC.2/HUBS); 19-21 April 2023 and 13-15 September 2023
The group has finished its work, successfully fulfilling its mandate. The group proposed that the AGC be amended to implement the recommendations of its work. It was suggested that the identified railway passenger hubs could be included in the AGC/AGTC GIS tool. Additionally, it was proposed to start a Group of Experts on Passenger Information in Stations and Hubs. The SC was encourage to consider future involvement in this Group.
- Unified Railway Law; 10-12 July 2023 and 29 September 2023
The provisions of the Convention on the Contract for International Carriage of Goods by Rail have been finalised and submitted for the adoption of SC.2.

- Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5); 4-6 September 2023

The agenda covered a lot of interesting subjects, including multimodal transport corridor management and the critical role of inland transport in accelerating climate change mitigation. The WP.5 noted possible synergies between the TEM and TER programmes of work, and their influence on the operationalisation of Euro–Asian Transport Links in the framework of the Coordination Committee.

- Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24); 18-20 October, 2023

The WP.24 session involved a workshop - *Ways to create demand for intermodal transport and for analysing potential for modal shift*. The German Promotion Centre for Intermodal Transport (SGKV) presented a tool for simulating transport operations by road versus intermodal transport to understand how they compare in terms of carriage price, duration, and generation of greenhouse gases.

The amendments to the AGTC were submitted.

b) Proposal for the TER Programme of Work 2024

The programme of work for 2024, has been drafted in accordance with the TER Strategy 2025. The representative of the Czech Republic proposed that TER project be promoted at EU institutions and at InnoTrans and TRAKO. This proposal was included in the TER Programme of Work 2024 (Annex 2).

4. TER projects – new proposals

- a) Stress-test of rail asset to climate change hazards

Mr Łukasz Wyrowski provided information on the stress-test of rail assets to climate change hazards. To explore this subject, a possible workshop was proposed, immediately after the 58th TER Steering Committee session in spring 2024. Mr Wyrowski was requested to provide cost and time scope of the proposed project. He informed about the workshop on catalogue of measures on adaptation to climate change to be organised in cooperation with PIANC, PIARC, and UIC. TER was invited to be involved in the workshop and appoint its representatives to the task force on preparation to the workshop.

5. TER projects – ongoing and completed

- a) A study on the compliance of TER countries' infrastructure to the technical parameters identified in international legal agreements

As agreed during the 56th TER Steering Committee session, the terms of reference for the completion of the study were drafted and adopted by the TER National Coordinators. The SC will be informed as soon as the call for a consultant is announced on Inspira.

b) TER Backbone Network Annual Report 2023

The TER Backbone Network Annual Report for this year has been approved. The contract of the consultant was finalised, and the final instalment will be paid. The SC decided that the TER Backbone Network Report will be drafted biannually.

6. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

a) Status of TER Trust Fund Contributions and Expenditures 2023

The UNECE informed the SC that eleven member states had paid their contributions for 2023. A reminder to the member states that has not yet contributed has been sent. Total expenditure for 2023 was USD 63,376.

b) TER PCO host country agreement for 2024

The UNECE informed the TER SC that the Host Country Agreement with Serbia is valid until 21st June 2024. As stated before Poland is ready to consider hosting TER Project Central Office.

c) TER project management

TER SC expressed its appreciation on the work undertaken by the TER PM, and requested UNECE to contact the TER National Coordinator for Poland to explore the possibility for further engagement of Ms Kopczyńska as the TER project manager in 2024-2025.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

The UNECE informed that the Russian TER National Coordinator sent a letter informing about termination of the Russian Federation participation in the TER Project as of 1st January 2024.

8. ADOPTION OF MAIN DECISIONS

The TER SC:

- adopted the report of the TER PM on the implementation of the TER Programme of Work 2023;
- adopted the TER Programme of Work 2024 as submitted by the TER PM, with the additional point proposed by the representative of the Czech Republic to prepare the workshop in 2024 or 2025 at the EU institutions to promote TER Project as a unique platform of collaboration between EU member states, and EU candidate and neighbouring countries;

- appointed the TER PM to analyse the applications for a consultant for the completion of a study on the compliance of TER countries' infrastructure to the technical parameters identified in international legal agreements. To propose the best candidate of max three, based on the agreed criteria, for this task for the approval of the TER National Coordinators;
- appointed the representatives of TER Project in the task force for preparation of the workshop on catalogue of measures on adaptation to climate change – 2nd January 2024;
- decided to start preparation for the workshop on the stress-test of rail asset to climate change hazards, subject to further information from the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division;
- decided to draft TER Backbone Network Report biannually, preparing the next one based on data of 2023 and 2024;
- took note on the information provided by UNECE on contributions and expenditures of 2023;
- expressed its appreciation on the work undertaken by the TER PM, and requested UNECE to contact the TER National Coordinator for Poland to explore the possibility for further engagement of Ms Kopczyńska as the TER project manager in 2024-2025;
- was informed by the Russian TER National Coordinator on termination of the Russian Federation participation in the TER Project as of 1st January 2024.

The SC extended its gratitude to the Chairman for his excellent service. The report of the 57th TER SC session will be adopted via written procedure.

Annexes: 2