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**Working Party on Rail Transport**

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

**Report on activities implemented in the first half of 2004**

**Introduction**

The TER Co-operation 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. The 16 member countries are: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Georgia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Additionally, five observer countries: Belarus, FYROM, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Serbia and Montenegro participated in various TER actions.

**Regional transport co-operation**

For 15 years, the Trans-European Railway (TER) Project has 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.

**In this content, it is worthwhile to recall the main specific objectives of the Trans-European Railway:**

- I. To ensure the coordinated upgrading of infrastructure of the TER network to the AGC and AGTC standards.
- II. To contribute to the modernization of rolling stock.
- III. To help participating Governments in improving rail efficiency and the adaptation of the railway organization to market-oriented management.
- IV. To develop a database on the railway and combined transport system in the region.
- V. 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.
- VI. To develop cooperation among member countries in the preparation of studies.
- VII. To promote cooperation among member countries in the field of combined transport.
- VIII. To promote training activities for experts of the member countries.

Detailed information in relation to the above issues was presented at the SC.2 meeting in 2003.

**TER short term strategy**

Based on the good experience obtained in many areas, TER is implementing the short-term strategy in order to achieve a more rapid progress in carrying out its tasks as well as in ensuring the integration of TER into the European transport system.

This strategy has as its main objective the integration of TER in the new European transport environment as well as strengthening the cooperation with the EU. It should ensure the incorporation of the Project into the European transport system, secure the institutional role for TER Project implementation within the European infrastructure development plans, develop closer cooperation between TER and other related initiatives and projects, apply on a larger scale the inter-modal concept, as well as supplementary development and operational plans between TER, TEM and other components of the European networks, take the leading role in the region in the development of the Freight Villages' concept as a supplementary component of the railway network and, last but not least, achieve a higher level of political support from the Governments of the member countries in the implementation of projects in the railway and combined transport sectors in the region.

Within this strategy, the paramount objective is the carrying out of a Master Plan on the most important railway and combined transport projects available for implementation in the TER region. By the end of 2004, its results would be available to all interested in this field.

On 10-11 February 2004, the meeting of TER experts involved in the implementation of the TER Master Plan took place in Budapest. The actions foreseen for carrying out this important objective were assessed and adequate decisions taken.

#### **TER activities carried out in the first half of 2004**

- On 11-12 February, the special session of the TER Steering Committee which endorsed the guidelines for the identification and assessment of railway projects took place in Budapest, Hungary. These would be examined by consultants and proposed to be included in the TER Master Plan.
- On 25-26 March, TER was co-organizer, together with the European Federation of Inland Ports (EFIP), the TINA Office and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lower Bavaria, of the Seminar on multimodal transport developments railway – inland waterways along Corridor VII. The Seminar held in Passau, Germany was highly appreciated by the representatives of the Ministries of Transport, railway companies, port authorities, consultants, businessmen, investors, etc. participating in the meeting.
- On 28-30 April 2004, TER, UIC, CER and European Commission – TAIEX Office organized in Paris the Workshop on Regionalization of Passenger Services.

The experience of CEEC in shaping the legal framework for public passenger service in accordance with the EU law, current regulatory framework for public passenger service in the Community legislation, concept of public service, enlargement of the EU and the new opportunities for the rail sector, quality of railway services, charging the use of infrastructure and calculation of the infrastructure charge, liberalization of the railway market were among the hot debated issues. By the number of the participants, transport sectors represented, the number of countries and, last but not least, the high professional performance of the speakers, the workshop was appreciated as one of the most successful Seminars organized recently in Europe.

- On 12-14 May, the TER Working Party on Infrastructure Developments and Technical Operations (WP1) took place in Innsbruck, Austria. The need for modernization of railway infrastructure and adequate funding of works was recognized.

An exchange of views on the request of UNECE-ITC to organize a Seminar on the phased approach to transport infrastructure developments in TER countries was discussed. It was agreed to hold such a Seminar in the near future. Also, discussions on the future Seminar on facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport, the status of the TER network, restructuring railway companies etc. took place.

- On 9 June, the third meeting of the Co-ordination Group for the elaboration of the TEM and TER Master Plans which reviewed the work done in this field took place in Geneva.

- On 28-30 June, the TER Working Party on Economic, Financial and Management Matters (WP2) took place in Milan, Italy.

An exchange of views on important issues like the measures adopted by the TER member countries in line with the market-oriented management of railways, experience in concluding Public Service Contracts, open competition among railway operators and legislation available, quality of services, promotion of a new image of the railway stations and their integration in town planning was achieved.

The conclusions from studies carried out by consultants on the modernization of railway stations in CEEC, as well as the discussions held with Societa Grandi Stazioni S.p.a. and the visit of the Milan Central Station under modernization were highly appreciated by the participants.

- On 1-2 July, the nineteenth session of the TER Steering Committee took place in Milan, Italy.

The TER Programme of Work and budget for 2004, as well as the Financial Report for 2003 were unanimously approved.

The involvement of TER in secretarial work on Pan-European Corridor VI and Matters arising from the UNECE-ITC sixty-sixth session were discussed and pertinent decisions were taken. It was approved that the new strategic objectives of the UNECE-ITC be incorporated in the TER Programme of Work for the new cycle 2006-2010. It was agreed that TER PCO would support the activity of TER countries in relation to the developments on various Pan-European Corridors including Corridor VI.

Issues related to TER-PCO staff were also discussed, UNECE being requested to take the necessary steps in this field to ensure further the implementation of the TER objectives in 2005 and beyond this date.

### **Conclusions**

All the activities developed in 2004 were in line with the Programmes of Work, as well as the Short Term Strategy of TER previously adopted by the TER Steering Committees.

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