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TRANSPORT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Summary of the main activities

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

1. The Transport Study Centre for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO) has devoted recent months to the following activities of the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO):

- The fourth Western Mediterranean Transport Ministers meeting;
- GTMO participation in the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) transport meeting;
- Eighth GTMO meeting of experts, in Barcelona.

I. FOURTH WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN TRANSPORT MINISTERS MEETING

2. Since its launch in 1995, GTMO (5+5) - the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO) - 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) and the European Commission Directorate-General for Energy and Transport, which has observer status. CETMO provides the secretariat.

3. Within this framework, the fourth GTMO (5+5) Western Mediterranean Transport Ministers meeting was held in Tunis on 2 March 2007. The ministers responsible for transport of Algeria, Libya, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia attended this fourth ministerial meeting, along with high-ranking representatives of France, Italy and Mauritania. Representatives of UMA and the European Commission also attended, as observers. CETMO took part in this event in its capacity as the secretariat of the Group.

4. This fourth meeting was made possible thanks to close cooperation between Tunisia and Spain, respectively the incoming and outgoing presidents. The meeting provided the opportunity to hand over the presidency to the Tunisian Minister of Transport, who will preside over the Group for the next two years.

5. Other objectives achieved included the official enlargement of the Group to 10 members, with the admission of three new countries (Libya, Malta and Mauritania), thus providing for the 5+5 structure (five countries from the Maghreb and five from the European Union) that already exists in other fields, and above all the adoption and signature of a Cooperation Protocol recognizing and institutionalizing the cooperation work done by the Group in the field of transport.

A. Results of cooperation in recent years

6. There was fruitful cooperation between the seven member countries of the Group, resulting in many activities. The knowledge of transport links in the Mediterranean region was improved as a result.

7. A number of databases (trade flow statistics, infrastructure and projects, regulations and socio-economic aspects) were set up and regularly updated in order to improve the development of transport in the region. The Group maintained contact between the countries of the Maghreb and the European Commission (acting as intermediary between the countries of the Maghreb and the European Commission). This made it possible for the first time for experts from the Maghreb to take part in research and development projects such as the Regulatory convergence to facilitate international transport in the Mediterranean (REG-MED) and Defining and Evaluating a Strategic Transport Infrastructure Network in the Western Mediterranean (DESTIN). The high point was the adoption and signature of a Cooperation Protocol in the Field of Transport in the Western Mediterranean, and of Conclusions, which describe the main thrust of work for the coming two years.

B. Cooperation Protocol in the Field of Transport in the Western Mediterranean

8. Thanks to the signing of the Protocol, the Group has strengthened its institutional structure and consolidated its 5+5 configuration for the future. The priority areas for work set out by the Protocol include the following:

- (a) Identifying a multimodal transport network for the region;
- (b) Seeking project funding mechanisms;
- (c) Improving transport conditions in order to encourage trade in the region;
- (d) Upgrading the region's transport companies;
- (e) Strengthening research and development in the transport sector in the Mediterranean.

9. The Protocol also calls for strengthening cooperation between GTMO and the European Commission as part of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership of the Barcelona Process.

C. Conclusions of the Ministerial Meeting

10. During the meeting, Spain handed over the Group's presidency to Tunisia. In the Conclusions, the ministers requested the Group of Experts and CETMO, in its capacity as secretariat, to develop and implement a programme of work in accordance with the cooperation priorities set out in the Protocol.

11. The member countries of GTMO decided to confirm CETMO as the reference centre for transport in the Mediterranean. The ministers invited the European Commission and UMA to join GTMO in closer cooperation and in developing Euro-Mediterranean policy. In the Protocol and Conclusions, the ministers reiterated their will to strengthen their relations through constructive dialogue and to give a new impetus to transport in the region as an essential driving force for development.

The texts of the Protocol and the Conclusions appear in the annex.

II. GTMO PARTICIPATION THROUGH ITS SECRETARIAT IN THE UMA TRANSPORT MEETING

12. CETMO, representing GTMO, took part in the UMA meeting held from 27 to 29 March 2007 in Skhirat, Morocco. Among the various conclusions of the meeting, two clearly reflecting a desire to cooperate with GTMO are worthy of note: a project for a Maghreb-European rail link for the transport of goods, and the implementation of the regional transport Cooperation Protocol concluded by the GTMO ministers of transport during the 2 March meeting in Tunis.

III. EIGHTH MEETING OF THE GTMO GROUP OF EXPERTS

13. The eighth meeting of the GTMO Group of Experts was held on 23 April 2007 in Barcelona, Spain, with the representatives of the GTMO countries (5+5) and a representative of UMA in attendance. Activities included revising the GTMO (5+5) work programme, preparing for the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum of the European Commission in order to give the most weight possible to the position of the countries of the subregion, and ratifying the proposed cooperation agreement between the UMA secretariat and GTMO (5+5).

Annexes: Cooperation Protocol of the fourth Western Mediterranean Transport Ministers meeting;

Conclusions of the fourth Western Mediterranean Transport Ministers meeting.

Annex I

COOPERATION PROTOCOL IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT IN THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN

1. Preamble

1. The Ministers responsible for transport in the countries of the Western Mediterranean, hereunder referred to as the Parties, in the presence of the European Commission as observer, considering:

- Their desire to maintain and strengthen the existing cooperation framework in the field of transport in the Western Mediterranean, launched in 1985 with the establishment of the Transport Study Centre for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO) and extended as from 1995 in the context of the meetings of the ministers of transport, in the spirit of the Barcelona Declaration;
- The conclusions reached by the meetings initiated at the European level (the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, the High-Level Group and the Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Transport Conference) and at the Maghreb level (Infrastructures Commission of the Arab Maghreb Union) for the development of transport in the Western Mediterranean; and,

Affirming their will to establish a framework for cooperation, so as to further the objectives of dialogue on transport policy and improve the effectiveness of actions undertaken in the field of transport within the broader framework of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation,

Have agreed on the following Cooperation Protocol:

2. Definition of the Region

2. Throughout this Protocol, the terms *Western Mediterranean* and *Region* refer to the territory of each of the following parties: Algeria, France, Italy, Libya, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia.

3. Objectives

3.1 The objective of this Protocol is to consolidate regional and international cooperation in the field of transport in the Western Mediterranean and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as adopted by the Barcelona Conference in November 1995.

3.2 This cooperation shall be set up in the context of the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO (5+5)), and shall make use of the institutional and technical cooperation structures already existing in the Region, such as the Transport Study Centre for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO).

4. Organization and operation of GTMO (5+5)

4.1 The members of GTMO (5+5) shall be the ministers responsible for transport of the countries of the Western Mediterranean, or their representatives. The European Commission, represented by the Directorate-General for Energy and Transport, shall have observer's status in the discussions and activities of GTMO (5+5). GTMO (5+5) shall have a presidency, which shall be held by one of the Group's members, and which shall be taken up in rotation.

4.2 The members of GTMO (5+5) shall meet at least once every two years to take stock of cooperation in the Region, review their priorities and hand over the presidency. The meeting of the GTMO (5+5) members shall be hosted by the country whose member will be serving as President for the next two years.

4.3 A Group of Experts, in which all GTMO (5+5) members shall be represented, shall meet at least once a year to:

- Propose priorities for cooperation in the field of transport in the Western Mediterranean and promote the development of initiatives for their identification and implementation;
- Ensure follow-up of transport-related activities developed and conducted in the framework of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, and ensure that the subregional priorities of the countries represented in GTMO (5+5) are taken into consideration;
- Present the members of GTMO (5+5), as an outcome of the above activities, with an annual report on the progress of the work aimed at addressing transport priorities in the Western Mediterranean.

4.4 The GTMO (5+5) presidency shall preside also over the Group of Experts. The GTMO (5+5) secretariat shall be ensured by CETMO.

4.5 The costs of participation by each party in the meetings of members of GTMO (5+5) and the meetings of the Group of Experts shall be borne by each of the parties, in the framework and within the limits of their available budgets. The Spanish Ministry of Development shall fund the operating budget of the GTMO (5+5) secretariat.

5. Priority areas for cooperation

5.1 The objective of cooperation shall be to establish a stable framework for dialogue, exchange of experience and the promotion of initiatives aimed at:

- Defining and developing a multimodal transport network in the Western Mediterranean, emphasizing interconnection with the Trans-European Networks and with the networks of neighbouring countries;
- Approaching financing partners to seek advantageous means of funding infrastructures in the Region;

- Facilitating trade and transport in the Region, emphasizing the transport chain in its entirety;
- Assisting in the implementation of the recommendations adopted at the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Marrakech;
- Upgrading companies involved in transport, with a view to establishing a Euro-Mediterranean free trade zone;
- Establishing a databank and methods allowing for the regular identification of priorities in the Region on the basis of current CETMO activities;
- Developing research in the field of transport in the Region by involving Euro-Mediterranean university networks and ensuring participation by the countries of the Maghreb in community research programmes;
- Identifying studies appropriate for the development of transport in the Region and seeking funding for their implementation;
- Strengthening transport safety and security in the Region.

5.2 The priorities for cooperation shall take into account sustainable development objectives in the field of transport. The priorities agreed for cooperation shall be the subject of regular review at the meetings of GTMO (5+5). Such priorities shall be set on the basis of information exchanged by the parties and the studies concerning the Region.

6. Framework for promotion of initiatives

The parties undertake to provide institutional support to develop all agreed initiatives and jointly to seek the funding required for the implementation of initiatives agreed within GTMO (5+5).

7. Exchange of information

The parties, while respecting their own legal frameworks, shall make available to the Group of Experts and the GTMO (5+5) secretariat whatever information is necessary to help set priorities in the Region. This shall include in particular data on socio-economic aspects, infrastructures and goods and passenger flows, as well as information on the legal, regulatory and institutional framework. Protocols shall be established, if necessary, to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided.

8. Framework for participation by the transport sector

The parties intend to provide for maximum involvement by encouraging the administrations, agencies, associations and private operators concerned - at both national and international level - to take part in all the activities undertaken in the framework of GTMO (5+5).

9. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The parties undertake to foster Euro-Mediterranean development and cooperation in the transport field, in particular so as to ensure greater effectiveness of the initiatives taken by the European Commission through the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum, the European Neighbourhood Policy and bilateral, regional and other cooperation programmes and mechanisms. The parties shall make available to this Forum the results of subregional initiatives carried out in the framework of GTMO (5+5).

10. Other provisions

Cooperation shall be based on a voluntary commitment, and shall continue until the objectives of this initiative have been achieved. This Protocol contains no obligations governed by international law.

Annex II

GROUP OF TRANSPORT MINISTERS OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN (GTMO (5+5))

Fourth Conference of Ministers responsible for Transport of the Countries of the Western Mediterranean

Tunis, 2 March 2007

CONCLUSIONS

The Ministers responsible for transport of the countries of the Western Mediterranean, meeting in Tunis on 2 March 2007, in the presence of the European Commission as observer, within the framework of the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO (5+5)) and further to the meetings already held respectively in Paris and Rabat in 1995 and in Madrid in 1997, and in the spirit of the Tunis Declaration of the First Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the 5+5 Dialogue, held on 5 and 6 December 2003;

Welcoming:

1. The holding of this conference of the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean and the strengthening thus provided to cooperation in the field of transport in the Western Mediterranean;
2. The extension of the Group of Transport Ministers of the Western Mediterranean (GTMO (5+5)) to include the Ministers responsible for transport of Libya, Malta and Mauritania;

Considering:

1. The prospects opened up by the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the association agreements and the European Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union for regional and subregional cooperation;
2. The clear will of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union jointly to develop transport infrastructures and services on the southern shore of the Mediterranean and to coordinate their activities with the European countries of the region;
3. The five-year work programme adopted during the summit marking the tenth anniversary of the Barcelona Euro-Mediterranean Partnership;
4. The conclusions of the first Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Marrakech on 15 December 2005, in particular the initiative to draw up a regional plan of action for transport for the next five years, in order to implement the recommendations of the Blue Paper on transport in the Mediterranean and of the final report of the High-Level Group on the extension of the Trans-European Transport Networks to neighbouring countries and regions;

5. The Communication from the European Commission on the extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries;
6. The work coordinated by the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forums and the conclusions of the studies carried out by the European Commission for the development of transport in the Mediterranean;
7. The conclusions of the high-level meeting of GTMO, held in Madrid in 2002;
8. The activities carried out by GTMO between 1997 and 2006;

Reaffirming:

The importance of GTMO (5+5) as the ideal framework for coordination and cooperation in the field of transport in the Western Mediterranean and as a structure to assist in consolidation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership;

Further welcoming:

1. The excellent work accomplished by the Spanish presidency of GTMO between January 1997 and March 2007;
2. The revitalization of the GTMO (5+5) conferences thanks to the willingness of the Tunisian Ministry of Transport, like its counterparts, to assume the presidency of GTMO (5+5), in application of the principle of a rotating presidency;
3. The activities of GTMO, as summed up in the report on GTMO activities between 1997 and 2006, and the success in implementing its objectives, including:
 - The Regulatory convergence to facilitate international transport in the Mediterranean (REG-MED), funded by the European Commission, that made it possible to draw up a complete diagnosis of trade barriers in the region and recommendations for facilitating international transport of goods in the Western Mediterranean;
 - The Defining and Evaluating a Strategic Transport Infrastructure Network in the Western Mediterranean project (DESTIN), co-funded by the European Commission, which made a substantial contribution to improving knowledge of the transport sector in the region, and made it possible to develop methodologies for use in defining and evaluating a strategic transport network in the Western Mediterranean;
4. The support for this work provided by national experts;
5. The participation of experts and partners from the Maghreb in other activities, including research, funded or co-funded by the European Commission;

Thanking:

1. The Spanish Ministry of Development and the Transport Study Centre for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO) for funding the secretariat work for GTMO since the most recent meeting of the ministers, and for their commitment to providing such a contribution;
2. The Tunisian Ministry of Transport for the steps and measures taken to help ensure the success of this conference, and for the hospitality it has shown to all participating delegations;

Decide:

1. To continue working within the GTMO (5+5) cooperation framework and to adopt the attached Cooperation Protocol in the Field of Transport in the Western Mediterranean;
2. To consolidate cooperation with the European Commission, for which GTMO (5+5) participation in all transport-related work of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is required, in particular with regard to the Regional Transport Action Plan and the follow-up to development of the Mediterranean Transport Infrastructure Network and the extension of the major trans-European transport corridors to neighbouring countries, so as to foster, in both cases, an approach that is more useful to the Maghreb countries and the Western Mediterranean;
3. To strengthen their cooperation with the initiatives and projects of the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum;
4. To explore funding possibilities for studies and for the implementation of the projects required for integration in the region, with a view to establishing the Euro-Mediterranean free trade area, and to propose that GTMO (5+5) cooperate with the European Investment Bank (EIB) in following up the EIB's transport-related activities in the region;
5. To propose that CETMO, which provides the GTMO (5+5) secretariat, "host" the submission, follow-up and updating of information and data from the various Euro-Mediterranean projects (paragraph 12.5 of the Blue Paper);
6. To strengthen CETMO as an observatory for transport in the Western Mediterranean, especially in the field of databases, including that of the Access project, of trade models and other methodologies required for knowledge and analysis of transport in the region, and in its role as a documentation centre;
7. To continue working to facilitate transport, paying special attention to sea lanes and intermodal interoperability, taking into account in particular the results achieved in the Regulatory convergence to facilitate international transport in the Mediterranean (REG-MED) and taking into consideration the specificities of the three new members of GTMO (5+5);
8. To continue to work toward the definition of a strategic multimodal network for the region, taking into account in particular the work and methodologies developed in the Defining and Evaluating a Strategic Transport Infrastructure Network in the Western Mediterranean (DESTIN) project, concentrating on needs assessment and project prioritization, taking into consideration the specificities of the three new members of GTMO (5+5);

9. To promote the development of transport logistics in the Maghreb and of the private sector active in this field and the upgrading of transport companies of the Maghreb;
10. To meet again in 2009 to assess the implementation of the decisions taken, and to hand over the presidency to Italy, which will be responsible for the invitation to and organization of the conference;
11. To strengthen cooperation activities of GTMO (5+5) by holding periodic meetings of high-ranking officials and experts for the implementation of a detailed work programme;

Invite:

1. The European Commission:
 - To become more involved in the work of GTMO (5+5) and to join that body, in accordance with the official procedure adopted for this purpose;
 - To consider fields of cooperation with GTMO (5+5), and to associate it in its work as a cooperation body in the Western Mediterranean;
 - To facilitate the participation of GTMO (5+5) in the Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum and its initiatives and projects, in particular the Regional Transport Action Plan, and in the follow-up to development of the Mediterranean Transport Infrastructure Network and the extension of the trans-European transport corridors to neighbouring countries;
 - To consider the proposal for CETMO to “host” the submission, follow-up and updating of information and data from the various Euro-Mediterranean projects (paragraph 12.5 of the Blue Paper);
2. The secretariat of the Arab Maghreb Union to take part in the work of GTMO (5+5) and to join that body, in accordance with the official procedure adopted for this purpose;

Assign the task:

1. To the Tunisian presidency of GTMO (5+5), of presenting its conclusions to the European Commissioners, in order to facilitate their implementation;
2. To CETMO, of continuing to provide the secretariat for GTMO (5+5);
3. To the national Group of Experts and the secretariat, of implementing the conclusions of this meeting, and ensuring its follow-up, along with that of the development of cooperation in the region in the field of transport.
