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Working Party on Rail Transport

(Fifty-third session, 6-8 October 1999,
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DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN CONVENTIONAL AND HIGH-SPEED
RAILWAY NETWORKS

Addendum 3

Transmitted by the Governments of Belgium, France, Luxembourg
and Switzerland, and by the Committee of the Organization for
Cooperation between Railways (OSZhd)

Note: The Working Party at its fifty-second session continued its consideration of a number of aspects relating to conventional and high-speed railways and examined information furnished by Governments and international organizations.

Please note that the distribution of documentation for the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) is no longer "restricted". Accordingly, the secretariat has adopted a new numbering system whereby all working documents other than reports and agendas will be numbered as follows: TRANS/SC.2/serial number. Reports, agendas, resolutions and major publications will retain their previous numbering system (e.g. TRANS/SC.2/189).

Considering that it would be useful to continue to collect data on the question, the Working Party requested Governments, the European Commission (EC), the International Union of Railways and the Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSZhd) to provide it with the necessary information on the development of (i) a European conventional railway network and (ii) a European high-speed railway network (including information on the complementarity between high-speed rail and air transport, regional development, regional transport and urban transport).

The Working Party may perhaps wish to consider the information transmitted by the Governments and international organizations which appears below.

BELGIUM

The Belgian high-speed railway network comprises three branches originating in Brussels: the west branch, which came into service on 14 December 1997, puts Paris at 1 h 25'. It also provides a TGV (EUROSTAR) link between Brussels and London.

As from 2005 the north branch will also link Brussels with Amsterdam via Antwerp station, and the east branch will link Brussels with Köln via the station of Liège Guillemins. These links require the following work to be carried out:

1. North branch (Brussels/frontier between Belgium and the Netherlands)

Project P6:

Adaptation of the existing line between Brussels and Antwerp for speeds of 160 km/h. Antwerpen Centraal Station will be converted on three levels, and two one-way tunnels for speeds of 90 km/h will be bored as far as Antwerpen Dam, thus ensuring a double exit from this station.

The work will be carried out in four phases:

1. Preparatory work to convert the temporary station, with three tracks with platforms and two access tracks on the west side; work began in January 1998;
2. Civil engineering work on the east side followed by track-laying on level +1, from mid-1998 to mid-2000;
3. Civil engineering work on the west side and completion of track-laying on level +1, from mid-2000 to mid-2002;
4. Completion of levels -1 and -2, from mid-2002 to the end of 2005.

Project P7:

From Antwerpen Dam to the frontier between Belgium and the Netherlands, construction of a new line along the E 19 motorway, for speeds of 300 km/h. The procedure for obtaining a construction permit has been initiated. Work is expected to begin at the end of 1999.

2. The east branch (Brussels/frontier between Belgium and Germany)

Project P3:

Addition of two further tracks to the existing double-track line for speeds of 200 km/h between Schaerbeek and Leuven. The speed through Leuven will be 160 km/h.

Beyond Leuven as far as Hélécine (limit of the region) a new line will be constructed for speeds of 300 km/h.

Project P4:

As an extension of project P3 the new line will be built along the E 40 motorway as far as Bierset where it will meet existing line 36 (Brussels-Liège). It will use this line for the Ans-Chenee section, which will see an improvement in results.

Liege Guillemins Station will be upgraded and developed as a TGV terminal. Speeds of entry to and departure from the station will be increased to 100 km/h and the entire railway infrastructure will be modernized. A new passenger building, designed by the Spanish architect, Santiago Calatrava, will also be built.

Project P5:

Construction of a new line from Chenee, at the exit from Liège, to close to the Belgian frontier with Germany. The line will pass through a 6.2 km tunnel at 180 km/h to meet the E 40 motorway, and will run alongside it as far as the existing line not far from the frontier. The speed on this new section will be 250 km/h.

The section of this branch between Brussels and Liège will be brought into service in 2002, including Liège's new station. All the civil engineering work sites are already operational between Leuven and Ans; the installation of equipment (tracks, catenaries, signals) may begin in 2000.

Between Schaerbeek and Leuven, problems of phasing to reduce rail traffic disturbances have meant that it has not been possible to start work on the section as a whole. Completion may be expected in 2004-2005.

For the sections beyond Liège (in the direction of Germany), successive planning permits are expected for May 1999 and early 2000 so that the first civil engineering work sites can open by the end of this year. Full entry into service for this part is scheduled for 2005.

N.B. Brussels Europe Terminal

The SNCB is currently studying the feasibility of a second TGV terminal to be constructed on the land owned in Schaerbeek Formation station (in fact, on the territory of the city of Brussels). The second terminal, envisaged by the year 2010, would constitute a multimodal transport node since it would not only link the main lines of the domestic network but would also serve the national airport of Zaventem which lies close by and the future RER network.

FRANCE

Mediterranean TGV

Work on the Mediterranean TGV is continuing between Valence and Nîmes and between Valence and Marseille and inauguration is planned for mid-2001.

Eastern European TGV

The plan for the financing of the first phase between Vaires (Paris region) and Baudrecourt (in Lorraine) was adopted on 29 January 1999. The detailed preliminary studies will begin in the near future now that the principal contractor has designated the project managers responsible for the execution of the studies and the work.

The inauguration of the first phase is scheduled for the end of 2005.

Rhine-Rhone TGV

On the basis of the draft project the Minister for Transport confirmed on 26 May 1998 that the preliminary studies would be initiated for the launching of the public inquiry concerning the "east" branch of the Rhine-Rhone TGV between Dijon and Mulhouse.

The public inquiry dossier should be ready for the end of 1999.

Lyon-Turin project

For the international portion of the project (Montmélian-Turin), the French and Italian Governments approved in October 1997 the launching of a 350 million franc study programme for 1998-2000. The study programme involves mainly identifying the main geological factors affecting the base tunnel, conducting in-depth traffic surveys and studying environmental problems.

As regards the international portion of the project (west of Montmélian), the Minister for Civil Engineering, Transport and Housing announced on 18 September 1998 the decisions taken to permit the continuation of the detailed preliminary studies. The agreement on the financing of the additional studies requested will be signed on 22 April 1999. RFF initiated the first studies in January, however, so as not to cause delays.

Southern Europe TGV

On 10 October 1995 the Governments of France and Spain signed an agreement in Madrid concerning the construction and operation of the international portion of a new high-speed railway line between France and Spain along the Mediterranean between Perpignan and Figueras.

The Intergovernmental Commission to monitor all matters relating to the construction and operation of the international portion on behalf of both States was officially established in Paris on 9 December 1998. The second meeting was held in Madrid on 30 March 1999.

The Commission set up several working groups to consider all existing studies, analyse them and validate the results so as to arrive at a definition of the project permitting the initiation of procedures and compliance with the planned schedule.

LUXEMBOURG

The Governments of France and Luxembourg have signed a high-speed agreement providing for daily services to the city of Luxembourg by four pairs of trains from the Eastern European TGV to and from Paris and Strasbourg. Possibilities for expediting the Luxembourg-Brussels rail link continue to be studied. The long-term aim is an improvement in the rail services between the three capitals of the European Union, namely, Strasbourg, Luxembourg and Brussels.

As regards the conventional network, regional and cross-border services were considerably reinforced in the 1990s. This additional service, along with adequate fare adjustments, is primarily intended for the commuters of the border regions who account for more than a quarter of the active population.

SWITZERLAND

The comments made in our 1998 reply to this question remain valid. It should also be mentioned that Switzerland is currently in negotiation with Italy concerning a convention to guarantee the capacities of the southern accesses to Switzerland's new Alpine rail axes. A bilateral convention with Germany as regards the northern accesses to the NLFA came into force last June. Negotiations with France are also in progress as regards Swiss links with the French high-speed network.

COMMITTEE OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN RAILWAYS (OSZhD)

(b) Work is in progress on the drafting of proposals for the creation of a rapid and very high-speed railway network in OSZhD member countries, to be completed in the first quarter of the year 2000.

The documentation includes:

Topological information and technical parameters for the operation of lines and rolling stock, broken down according to the stages of modernization or construction;

A timetable of train movements for the current period and the period following the increase in speeds and a reduction of stopping times at borders;

Information documents on the choice in each country of passenger rolling stock used for rapid and very high-speed services;

Recommendations concerning principles for the organization of railway traffic.

The documents cover members of OSZhD in Western Europe and points of exit to Asia on the territory of the Russian Federation.

The work carried out leads to the provisional conclusion that in general OSZhD member countries are anticipating the modernization of existing railway lines on which speeds can reach 160 or 200 km/h.
