



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

**TRANS EUROPEAN RAILWAYS (TER)
Steering Committee Meeting
24th Session, 11 December 2007
Vienna, Austria,**

REPORT

1. The 24th Session of the TER Steering Committee took place on 11 December 2007 in Vienna, Austria.
2. The participating TER countries that attended the meeting were: Austria, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Representatives of UNECE, TER PCO and international consultants on TER Master Plan also attended the meeting. The list of participant is attached (Annex I).
3. The Representative of the Executing Agency welcomed the participants and conveyed greetings for success from Mrs. Eva Molnar Director of Transport Division UNECE. He also introduced Mr. Constantinos Alexopoulos who covers the position of Regional Advisor on temporarily basis, responsible inter alia in backstopping TER Project activities.

Election of Officers

4. The participants of the Steering Committee elected as officers of the Steering Committee Mr. K. Kulesza (Poland) Chairman and Mr. M. Radl (Austria) Rapporteur.
Adoption of the Agenda
5. The participants of the Steering Committee adopted the agenda of the session (ANNEX II).

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 relocation of the PCO from Budapest to Bratislava, the negotiation of the Agreement between the UNECE and the host country of the PCO (Slovakia) as well as on the situation of the international personnel and local staff.
8. The representative of the Executing Agency and of the countries outlined the successes obtained in this period of time particularly in the implementation of the TER Master Plan follow up activities.

Functioning of the TER PCO, status of International Personnel in PCO

9. The Project Manager informed the Steering Committee on the status of the TER PCO functioning in full operational capacity since the 1 October 2007 following the kind assignment of local staff to the PCO from the Slovak Government as stipulated in the host country agreement signed by the Slovak Minister of Transport and UNECE Executive Secretary. An official ceremony was held in Bratislava on 15 May 2007. The Steering

Committee expressed warm appreciation for the kind offer of the Slovak Government and in particular for the efforts of Mr. Barek ensuring the continuity of functioning of TER PCO.

10. The representative of Austria informed the session on his country's readiness to extend the assignment of Mr. Helmut Meelich for another two years as TER Project Manager, which has been officially communicated to the Executing Agency.
11. The Steering Committee expressed its gratitude to the Austrian government for its kind offer supporting the prolongation of the mandate of the Project Manager for 2008 and 2009.
12. Taking into account that no other TER country has proposed candidates for the post of the Project Manager and Deputy Project Manager in the PCO and that 2008- 2009 Program of Work of the TER project is demanding and extremely important for all TER member countries, the Steering Committee requested the Executing Agency to accept the assignment of Mr. Meelich and ensure that all necessary administrative procedures be made so as to allow an uninterrupted continuation of Mr. Meelich's work as TER Project Manager and smooth development of TER Project in future.
13. In round the table discussion among participating TER national coordinators all sides stressed the importance that appropriate efforts be made for ensuring the succession of Mr. Meelich in the future.

TER Master Plan

14. The Project Manager and the consultant presented the main elements of the documents submitted for consideration to the Steering Committee under this task point 4 (a, b, c, d) of the agenda.
15. The Steering Committee approved the final version of the rail part of the Integrated Report on the comparison of TER backbone network vis-a-vis EU trans European- Transport Network (rail), HLG priority axes and the legal commitments of the EU new member countries according to their Accession Treaties, including the amended pages 3, 46, 47, 53, 55 and 80 as proposed by the representative of Turkey referring to Turkish part. UNECE and the TER PCO were requested to publish the Final Report and communicate it to any interested body provided as appropriate.
16. The Steering Committee accepted the recommendations of the third and fourth meetings of the TER group of experts on Master Plan, and decided the following:
 - a. Approved the progress report for 2007 of implementation of TER Master Plan priority projects along the backbone network prepared by the consultant on the basis of countries inputs;
 - b. This report, together with that of 2006, would constitute a basic element for the revision of the Master Plan in 2008 – 2009.
 - c. Additional information would need to be provided by involved countries according to the provisions and relevant methodology described in the final TOR of the Master Plan revision;
 - d. Accepted the Report of the Comparison of TER backbone network vis a vis OSJD priority railway corridors, the AGC and AGTC lines. The final maps and the Comparison Report should be sent by PCO to the TER countries for further comments and inputs within two (2) months from the date sent;
 - e. Further data for the elaboration of the Master Plan revision should be provided in due time by the countries involved upon request in accordance with the provisions and methodology of the final TOR;
 - f. Endorsed the information provided by Professor Tsamboulas and Mr. Lupescu as well as the proposed TOR for the revision of the Master Plan as adequately reflecting the main tasks and objectives of this work;
 - g. Asked TER PCO (in collaboration with TEM PCO)and the Executing Agency to finalize the TOR, circulate it to TER member countries for comments within two months from the moment sent, and after that, taking into account these comments, to finalize it and start its implementation.

Draft Program of Work 2008

17. The Project Manager and the representative of the Executing Agency outlined the main objectives included in the Program of Works 2008. They also presented aspects related to the cooperation of TER project with other International fora in the transport sector.
18. Participants underlined the importance of extending the cooperation between TER and similar railway organizations on subjects like transfer of know-how and expertise in project management, organization of a meeting for updating TER database, prepare contribution to EU Green Paper on Urban Transport etc.

19. Representative of the Czech Republic offer to host the meeting on interoperability of the conventional railway system (Directive 2001/16/EC) and particularly on the conditions concerning achievement of conformity with the directive interfere of the design, construction, upgrading, renewal, operation and maintenance of the rail system, provided the meeting could be organized under the new UN regulations.
20. Regarding the review of the TER database it was proposed to use the services of Mr. R. Galbenu, within the revision of the Master Plan, as to continue this operation which stopped in 2003.
21. It was also suggested that it would be appropriate to organize a training course on the project management.
22. The Project Manager underlined the beneficial effect for the project to increase cooperation with CER, UIC, OSJD etc.
23. The Steering Committee approved the Program of work of TER for 2008 (ANNEX III).
24. Following presentation by the representative of the Executing Agency on the results of the Euro Asian Transport Links project and its follow up activities, in which the importance of such activity as well as the magnitude of the forthcoming developments of the trade and transport flows was stressed, the Steering Committee was engaged in a discussion on the ways of the TER project involvement with it.
25. Taking into account that the development of inland Euro Asian Transport Links is for the benefit of all European countries and in particular for TER countries, the Steering Committee agreed that TER project should be involved in the development of these links.
26. It requested the PCO in cooperation with the Executing Agency to examine ways and means of TER future involvement with the development of Euro Asian Links and prepare proposals to be considered by the next Steering Committee meeting.

Financial Issues

27. The Project Manager presented a draft budget for 2007 outlining the context in which it was prepared. During the discussions representatives of several countries underlined the need of saving some funds for the following years.
28. In this respect it was requested and approved the reduction of total net expenditure by 20% except IT budget item, as to correspond to an amount of no more than 200,000 USD.
29. The Project Manager informed the participants on the situation of payments of contributions due by the countries according to the TER Trust Fund Agreement having in mind that many countries have still not covered their obligation. The participants expressed their dissatisfaction vis a vis this situation. They asked the Executive Agency and the Project Manager to use every opportunity in order to ask such countries to fulfil this obligation as soon as possible including sending adequate letters.
30. TER Project Manager and the UNECE representative outlined the status of TER administration and financial situation of the TER Project operation in relation with the UN changed rules and procedures. The countries expressed serious dissatisfaction with the present situation. In this regard, a copy of the letter to Mr Belka Executive Secretary, UNECE, signed by Mr Kurt Nemeč, Chairman of the 47 session of the TEM Steering Committee was circulated and discussed. Further more the Steering Committee took note of the additional information provided on the results of the meeting between TER and TEM Project Managers and the UNECE Transport Division with the UNECE Executive Office and UNOG staff held in Geneva on 31 October 2007.
31. The Steering Committee requested its Chairman in cooperation with the PCO to send a similar letter to Mr. Belka in informing him that TER Project is also facing the same problems, as those indicated for TEM, and ask him to ensure faster and more efficient backstopping of the TER Project from the UNECE.
32. It also requested the Project Manager and the Executing Agency to keep national coordinators informed on the outcome and report to it at its next session.
33. TER PCO informed the participants on the concrete needs in terms of IT equipment taking into consideration the relocation of the office and age of the existing equipment. The participants agreed on the need to purchase modern and efficient IT equipment for the PCO.

Updating the annexes of the TER Trust Fund

34. Following the relocation of the TER PCO from Budapest to Bratislava and upon request of the Hungarian Government the Steering Committee decided to amend the relevant annexes of the TER Trust Fund Agreement (ANNEX V and ANNEX VII) to reflect the new situation.
35. In view of the existing rules and procedures, and subject to further verification with the UNECE legal office, the Steering Committee agreed that UNECE Secretariat address official letter to the TER member countries that were not present at the meeting (Greece, Italy.....) seeking for their consensus on the below decided amendment. If no reply is received by the Secretariat within 90 days of the communication the amendments enter in to force.

Adoption of the Report

36. The participants adopted the report with annexes
37. The Steering committee expressed its gratitude to the Austrian authorities for hosting the meeting