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Strategic questions of a horizontal and cross-sectoral policy or regulatory nature: Project related activities - Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects

Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) projects

Submitted by the TEM Project Manager and TER Project Manager

I. Information on the Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) project development

A. Trans-European North-South Motorway project activities and achievements in 2023

1. The following tasks were included in TEM Programme of Work 2023:

(a) Strengthening capacities of TEM member states by attending the workshops and exchanging of knowledge and best practices in the following areas:

- TEM Backbone Network Supply
- Traffic demand on the TEM Backbone Network
- Safe and sustainable mobility
- Operationalisation of the road sector value delivery

(b) Preparation of high-quality deliverables/reports based on organized workshops with topics closely related to the areas mentioned above, and with active involvement of representatives of TEM member states.

(c) Increase effectiveness and efficiency of TEM Project, both for TEM member states and other countries, through an active cooperation with European and American partners based on experience and best practice sharing and cooperation.

2. The main TEM Project activities and achievements in 2023 were:

(a) Reports and publications

According to the TEM Strategic Plan and the decisions of TEM Steering Committee, following report were prepared in 2023:

Safe and sustainable mobility

TEM Strategy area and topic	C.1. Preparation of the contribution to the UN legal instruments based on the TEM Member Countries and international best practice
Title	Road Safety Audits and Road Safety Inspections. Analysis of the current practices and tools in the TEM region Countries and recommendations
Purpose and scope	<p>In various countries, road infrastructure planning, construction, and operation are subject to numerous legal regulations and additional instructions and recommendations, usually including a set of principles known as 'best practices.' Among these regulations and principles, requirements related to road safety play a crucial role. The general principles of these requirements can be categorised as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the requirements for vehicle traffic dynamics. • Ensuring visibility in various road situations. • Providing clear visual guidance for drivers and early recognition of lane-dividing elements. • Clarity of traffic rules at intersections and junctions. • Proper drainage to ensure good tire grip on road surfaces. • Psychological and psychophysical factors affecting road users and their impact on road element design, intersections, and junctions. • Effective, clear, unambiguous, and visible road signage. • A safe road environment. <p>In most countries, these general requirements are reflected in detailed road design regulations, guidelines, standards and instructions. Therefore, one should expect that the infrastructure designed by these regulations would create safe conditions for vehicle and pedestrian traffic. However, accident statistics indicate otherwise, suggesting that road infrastructure is a significant, direct, or indirect cause of road accidents.</p> <p>Road accidents are typically the result of the improper functioning of the 'human-road-vehicle-road environment' system rather than individual elements of this system. In this context, particular attention should be paid to the 'human' as road users, along with many factors influencing their decision-making processes and behaviour. Acknowledging the dominant role of humans in this system, it is also necessary to examine the role of road infrastructure as a cause of accidents and collisions.</p>

Safe and sustainable mobility

To address these challenges in 2016 the TEM Project issued the report regarding practices of its Member Countries in respect to the Road Safety Audit and Road Safety Inspection on the TEM Network.

The report aimed at the collection of the current at the time practices in the RSA and RSI to identify necessary steps forward to improve the road safety on the TEM road network as well as to assist TEM Member Countries to derive from their partner countries experiences.

The purpose of this report is to analyse what are the developments and improvements in the TEM region as well as in the UNECE region as a whole and to understand what might be the action that the international community may undertake for the sake of the road safety.

Status as for
31/12/2023

Approved by the Steering Committee and provided to the
Working Party SC1

(b) Contribution to the UNECE Working Parties

3. During 118th session of the Working Party on Road Transport (SC1) TEM Project Manager (Mr. Andrzej Maciejewski) gave a presentation on substantive progress of the TEM project since the last session. This included first of all works on the RSA/RSI report which was agreed during the previous session of the SC1.

4. Mr. Maciejewski presented improvements in the UNECE region based on the available data in terms of performing of the RSA and RSI. These analyses showed that although RSA and RSI practices are used more commonly and frequently, the overall development is rather moderate. This leads to the conclusion that there is a necessity for constant improvement in respect to the legislative and regulatory frameworks as well as within the enforcement and education practices. While there are plenty of mechanisms and international support to finance or co-finance implementation of road networks development or rehabilitation, there is a need to strengthen the efforts of the international community in respect to the globally recognized road safety related legislation and regulations. Currently areas of intervention as legislation, enforcement or education in terms of the Safe Roads pillar have more sub-regional standards. In many countries however they are usually implemented partially or to the particular projects only when the external fundings appears and the IFIs require road safety audits.

5. In order to harmonize Road Infrastructure Safety Management procedures and to set-up the level playing field in all TEM countries, an important step would be to find modalities to amend the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) to include Road Infrastructure Safety Management procedures. In this sense, importance of already proven RSA and RSI procedures will be recognized and basic procedures for the implementation of RSA/RSI will be harmonized not only on the TEM Backbone network, but actually in all countries that are contracting parties to AGR. It is recommended that amendments to the AGR will not only create the legal basis for formal implementation of the RSA and RSI procedures but will provide the necessary rationale for the use of the procedures in the road network life cycle as well as assistance in necessary minimum requirements for the procedures and their scope. Some countries in the UNECE region did not yet implement Road Infrastructure Safety Management procedures like RSA and RSI. Training and certification for safety personnel is not existent in some of them. Thus, further awareness

raising on all levels is still necessary to convince relevant decision makers and organisations of the usefulness of the procedures.

6. Taking into consideration the TEM Project contribution and expertise it has been recommended to use the TEM Project in collaboration with SC.1 as a capacity building vehicle on RSA and RSI for the UNECE region. Moreover in a few countries courses for the training of Auditors and Inspectors are not available at current state. Institutional aspects like who is offering courses, which institution is issuing certificates etc. can only be decided by those countries. Minimum standards for training courses are available. However, it is recommended that courses should contain a theoretical part and a practical part in which candidates have to conduct the RSA/RSI procedures themselves. Naturally, training courses should cover the latest developments and findings of research in regard of traffic safety issues. Hence, new technologies, like ITS, should be a topic within the courses. Establishing of RSA/RSI training courses under the TEM umbrella could be the one of the additional possibilities for boosting road safety capacities of TEM participating countries and knowledge sharing. The SC.1 welcomed the proposal and invited SC.1 members, with the assistance of the secretariat, to be involved in the further works for the next session.

B. TEM plans for 2024

7. As agreed during the TEM SC meeting (October 2023) and taking into consideration both current experiences of the TEM Project gained during implementation of the Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and multiannual legacy of the Project in the planning and monitoring of the TEM Backbone Network development it was decided to focus Project's works on both dimensions.

- The TEM Backbone Network dimension will provide up-to-date information and perhaps also forecasts in respect to the traffic demand and infrastructure supply in the TEM region. This, in consequence, will contribute to the purpose of the Project's creation which is support for the transport network integration.
- From another hand cooperation related to creating of recommendations and guidelines will continuously improve capacities and capabilities of TEM member states in increasing of effectiveness and efficiency of public services delivery by the road sector organisations and institutions.

8. Each dimension has been divided into strategic initiatives, which eventually are divided into particular projects and activities, i.e. reports, workshops, conferences. The work dimensions represent value and services the TEM Project provides to TEM member states (MS). The TEM MS participate in the Project to strengthen their economies by the regional cooperation and development of the road network in the north-south direction, therefore analyses envisaged under the Dimension I provide this value to TEM MS. Moreover, participation in the Project allows TEM MSs to benchmark their current capacities and capabilities with the neighbouring countries. The TEM Project provides therefore this kind of services under the Dimension II. The Strategic Initiatives reflect detailed outputs of this particular Strategic Plan. Level of activities defines how outputs will be achieved.

9. In detail in 2024 it is planned to:

- Prepare working document for the TEM Steering Committee in respect to the TEM Backbone Network and traffic data availability.
- Analyse the possibility of automation of the data collection process taking into consideration works undertaken by the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory.
- Continue cooperation with the American Highway Engineers Exchange Program.

C. Conclusions

10. TEM Project addresses priority topics for member states which lead to a more rapid integration of the transport infrastructure networks within North-South dimension. At the same time, TEM stipulates standardization of business processes in the road network management framework by improving those processes, common understanding of trends in transportation and challenges for infrastructure operators in terms of mobility. TEM enhances cooperation among the countries to ensure a higher quality of service along major motorway corridors.

II. Trans-European Railway (TER) Project

11. The Trans-European Railway (TER) Project represents specific platform for cooperation of member countries in the field of rail transport. At the intergovernmental level, the TER constitutes the regional platform dealing with the topics of common interest for rail transport and assisting in achieving higher standards of rail networks in the member countries.

12. Thirteen countries of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and the Caucasus (Armenia, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Türkiye) participate in the Project, with UNECE as its Executing Agency. The Russian Federation informed about the decision to terminate its participation in the TER project from 1 January 2024. The TER Cooperation Trust Fund Agreement, established in 1991 by UNECE, made the Project self-sustained, financed by direct contributions of the member countries and ensuring the achievement of its main goals, namely:

- Facilitate rail and multimodal transport development and integration of the TER region.
- Serve as a bridge between UN Member States and promote efficient performance of railway corridors.
- Promote sustainable development of the TER participating Governments through strengthening capacities on improvements of economic and environmental effects of rail projects.
- Become an advisor and promoter of efficient and innovative railway solutions.

13. To achieve these goals, the Project organizes meetings of decision-makers, TER National Coordinators, railway stakeholders and experts as well as workshops with the aim to facilitate the exchange of experience and best practices. The TER Project also works closely together with the UNECE bodies and other organizations.

14. The TER Project Central Office (PCO) is hosted by the Serbian Government in Belgrade. The Host Country Agreement is valid until the end of June 2024.

A. Project activities carried out during the reporting period

15. The 56th session of the TER Steering Committee was held on 15 June 2023 in Gdańsk, Poland, and online. On the second day, there was a workshop on railway accessibility to the seaports, as well as a site visit to the seaport of Gdańsk, the container terminal, and the area of Gdańsk Port Północny station, where the participants could see the results of a project implemented by Polish Railway Lines to improve railway accessibility to the seaport of Gdańsk. The 57th session was held on 14 November 2023 in Geneva, Switzerland, and online.

The decisions and main conclusions taken and approved are listed in the reports of these sessions, available on the UNECE website, in the TER PCO and at the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division.

16. To follow the implementation of the revised TER Master Plan, the Final Report of which was launched in 2011, the special monitoring mechanism was set up. Based on the respective data provided by the member countries, the TER PCO prepared annual summary reports on the results of the Master Plan Revision monitoring for the TER Steering Committee. The TER Backbone Network Annual Report 2023 was adopted by the TER Steering Committee. The document is based on data provided by the TER member countries for 2022 and publicly available data. In the report, there is information on the length of sections with different maximum train speeds, a map of the TER high-speed rail lines, as well as general information about axle loads, gauges, and signalling and telecommunication systems. The maps also visualise the status of the TER Backbone Network projects as of 1 January 2023, including ongoing projects and those completed by the end of 2022. There are also plans of particular TER member countries and the maps that present the number of tracks and their electrification. The TER Steering Committee decided that a report on the TER Backbone is prepared biannually.

17. The TER High Speed Master Plan is available on the UNECE website.

18. The online tool presenting TER data in GIS format is available on the UNECE website. This tool can be used for presenting updated information on AGC/AGTC network and parameters.

19. Ms Małgorzata Kopczyńska was elected TER Project Manager for 2024-2025.

B. TER plans for 2024 and beyond

20. The TER Steering Committee decided 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.

21. It is planned to hire a consultant for the completion of a study on the compliance of TER countries' infrastructure to the technical parameters identified in international legal agreements.

22. It is planned to organize, in May 2024, the workshop on the stress-test of rail asset to climate change hazards.

C. Conclusions

23. All activities carried out during the reporting period were in line with the Programme of Work of the TER Project for 2023.

24. In the reporting period, the Project strengthened its co-operation with major international organizations dealing with rail transport issues, and with other UNECE working bodies.

25. The Project represents useful tool for implementing the AGC and AGTC standards in the region and for improving the railway and combined transport services.

26. One of the crucial tasks of the TER Project, started in the reporting period represents the implementation of activities defined by the TER Project Strategy until 2025.