

10TH MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR PAN-EUROPEAN CORRIDOR X

BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA
28 NOVEMBER 2008

Draft Minutes

Item 1: Welcome and opening address by the Chairman of the Steering Committee

1. The Chairman, Mr. Patsiavos welcomed the participants and expressed his sincere thanks to Mr. Meelich, Project Manager of the TER Project, for his kind assistance to organize this meeting. He informed the participants about the following issues:
 - On the previous day the 7th meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along the Pan European Corridor X was held. A very important discussion took place concerning the implementation of the measurement tool in all border crossings of Corridor X. Given this evolution, the concern in the future should be its speedy enforcement in an efficient and coordinated way. The whole progress will be monitored by the Technical Secretariat.
 - The European Commission continues its policy for the extension of trans-European transport axes to the neighboring countries and regions. In the Balkan Area, it intends to upgrade the existing Memorandum of Understanding for the Western Balkan Core Network into a Treaty, which is going to be signed in the second half of 2009. For 2010 the revision of Trans-European Transport Network is foreseen.
 - Another important evolution is the South East Europe Transport Axis Cooperation (SEETAC) project proposal. This project concerns transnational cooperation among Ministries of Transport, Pan-European Corridors Steering Committees and Secretariats to develop the South East Europe Priority Transport Axis, in order to strengthen the institutional framework with European Commission. This co-operation aims at accelerating the completion of the TEN-T and improving the accessibility and cohesion of the South East Europe area. The inspirer and composer of the relevant SEETAC project proposal is Mr. Razza, Secretary of Pan-European Corridor V.
 - Moreover, on May 4th, 2006, the Ministers of Transport of South East European Cooperation Process - SEECP signed an Agreement on the establishment of a high performance railway network in South East Europe. This Agreement includes a considerable section of Corridor X. Four meetings of the relevant Steering Committee have already taken place under the Greek Chairmanship and now the Chair and Technical Secretariat are taken over by Bulgaria. A detailed database and a Geographic Information System have been developed for the SEECP

railway network. After assessment of the existing situation (physical and operational characteristics), the necessary interventions have been defined and formulated the Action Plan for the network. Finally, the priority connections have been defined and approved by the Steering Committee, with the aim to be promoted to various fora and International Financial Institutions.

2. He expressed his deep regret for the casualty of Mrs. Karin Alleweldt, who participated in the works of the Steering Committee for several years representing the European Economic and Social Committee.
3. The Committee kept a minute's silence in her memory.
4. He announced that the purpose of the meeting is the discussion of the progress of the works of the Work Programme and of the activities related to the Corridor development (progress of construction works, studies, etc.).
5. He then emphasized his satisfaction about Serbia's presence in the meeting and informed the participants that he had a very important meeting in Belgrade last September with the Deputy Minister Mr. Cvetanovic and the Assistant Minister Mr. Lasica, where they discussed ways for a more active participation of Serbia in the works of the Steering Committee and Working Group of Corridor X.
6. He also informed that in the meeting there will be presentation of the implementation progress of the Hellenic Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Balkans (Hi.P.E.R.B.) on Road Corridor X.
7. The information of changes that occurred in the structures of ARGE Korridor X will be asked by email to Mr. Wimroither, who wasn't present at the meeting.

Item 2: Approval of the Agenda

8. The provisional agenda was adopted.

Item 3: Adoption of the Minutes of the 9th meeting of the Committee (Graz, 15.06.2007)

9. One comment was made by the Hungarian representative, Mrs. Kramer, at point 17 in Item 7 of the draft Minutes. Point 17 is amended as follows: "Mrs. Kramer from Hungary informed the participants that the motorway section Budapest and Roszke has been constructed and given to traffic. For the railway section Budapest – Serbian borders there are plans for upgrading and it is intended to be included in the TEN-T priority projects after 2010."

Item 4: Evolutions on the implementation process of the new concept of Priority Axes in the framework of the extension of the main Trans-European transport axes to the neighboring countries and regions

10. Mr. Patsiavos informed the participants that the Commission is negotiating a Treaty to replace the existing Memorandum of Understanding for the Western Balkan Core Network, which is foreseen to be signed in the second half of 2009. Also for 2010 the revision of Trans-European Transport Network is foreseen.
11. He added that a discussion is on-going for new software developed to comprise the monitoring system of the Trans-European Transport Network, which was presented at the 11th Coordinators meeting in Brussels in October 2007.

Item 5: Activity Report – The progress of works since the 9th meeting of the Steering Committee

12. Prof. Taxiltaris, Secretary of Corridor X, presented the Activity Report of the Technical Secretariat since the last meeting of the Steering Committee, held in Graz, in June 2007 (*see presentation*).
13. Then Mr. Miltiadou, member of the Technical Secretariat, presented the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECP) High Performance Railway Network (*see presentation*).
14. Mr. Miltiadou continued with the presentation of the South East Europe Transport Axis Cooperation (SEETAC) project proposal (*see presentation*).
15. The participants expressed their interest in the project and asked if it was possible to receive more detailed information.
16. Prof. Taxiltaris responded that the Technical Secretariat will provide details on the project, and more specifically those details included in the final version of the project proposal.

Item 6: Status of Corridor X: Presentation of the activities activities related to the Corridor development (i.e. progress of construction works, studies, financing, cross borders improvements, etc.) by each national delegation

17. Mr. Kirnbauer, representative of Austria, informed that there were no new activities on Corridor X since the last meeting of the Steering Committee, but he stressed that for Austria the railway connection from Graz to Zagreb via Maribor is a very important issue.
18. Mr. Prinic, representative of Slovenia, stated that the data concerning the status of Corridor X in his country have been submitted to the Technical

Secretariat. Especially on Road Corridor X in Slovenia, only a subsection of 20km is missing between Ljubljana and Obrezje to be completed with a delay as it was initially planned to be completed in 2008.

19. Mr. Juricic, representative of Croatia, informed the participants that the entire Road Corridor X in Croatia is completed in motorway profile and that the Vc Corridor motorway will be opened to traffic next year.
20. He also informed that all the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA) funds have been elaborated. The reconstruction of Vinkovci – Tovarnik problematic link for speeds up to 160km/h, of total cost of 74mo€ is financed by the IPA.
21. He concluded that the application for IPA is in operation for the elaboration of feasibility and environmental studies for the railway network and the Zagreb station, which costs 58mo€
22. Mr. Radanovic, representative of Croatia, added that in the 2008 – 2011 Programme 350mo€ are dedicated to investments on Rail Corridor X, while the first priority is the section between Novska and Kutina east of Zagreb.
23. Mrs. Kramer from Hungary informed the participants that the motorway section Budapest and the Hungarian-Serbian borders has been constructed and given to traffic since 2005.
24. For the railway section between Budapest and Kelebia (Hungarian-Serbian borders) there are plans for reconstruction and doubling of the tracks for high speeds. A relevant application has been submitted to the TEN-T Commission this year for financing but failed. She asked the support of the Steering Committee of Corridor X in the effort to be included in the TEN-T priority projects after 2010.
25. Mr. Patsiavos agreed to support the project and asked for more detailed information in order catch up and to coordinate towards its promotion for financing.
26. Mr. Lasica, representative of Serbia, presented the state of play of the Serbian parts of Rail Corridor X. He mentioned that the commercial speed with out counting delays at the borders is around 50km/h, while if delays were taken into account the commercial speed is around 30km/h.
27. He informed the participants on the programme of the Serbian government for modernization of Corridor X lines by 2018 for speeds up to 160-200km/h, which needs investments of about 4,6bo€ in total. Especially for the line Sid (Croatian-Serbian borders) – Belgrade line the documentation has been completed, but for the Nis – Dimitrovgrad and Nis – Presevo lines only the projects have been defined (*see presentation*).
28. Mr. Nestic, representative of Serbia, presented the state of play of the Serbian parts of Road Corridor X. He informed that only the sector Orlovaca – Bubanj

Potok (12,8km) of the Belgrade bypass remain to complete the entire ring that will relief the Belgrade center from transit traffic.

29. He added that according to the new National Transport Strategy adopted in 2007, Corridor X is the main priority for the country, and especially the transformation of the entire Road Corridor in Serbia to a motorway, of which first priority is the southern part of the Corridor from Leskovac to the Serbian-FYROM borders (*see presentation*).
30. Prof. Taxiltaris asked whether the Serbian delegation had information concerning the modification of the financing scheme for the motorway project to be financed by the Hi.P.E.R.B. and the financing of Belgrade – Horgos motorway.
31. Mrs. Anastassopoulou, Counselor to the Deputy Minister of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for Hi.P.E.R.B., asked the Serbian delegation to provide the National Transport Strategy to the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
32. Mr. Lasica and Mr. Nestic responded that they had no more details on the financial scheme for Road Corridor X, but there is political commitment for the development of Corridor X, expressed also with the formulation of the National Council for Infrastructure consisted of the co-responsible Ministers.
33. Mr. Lasica also informed that there is a new tender procedure for the Belgrade – Horgos motorway, which will be a public project (not with concession system).
34. Mr. Patsiavos asked all the Serbian delegation and all the participants to provide all relevant information in written form to the Technical Secretariat by the end of December 2008.
35. Mrs. Kirkova, representative of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia informed the participants that the works of transformation of the existing road between Tabanovce and Kumanovo (7,6km) have started in October 2008 and their completion is foreseen in spring 2010. The project is financed by the World Bank.
36. Concerning the Demir Kapija – Smokvica motorway section, the official application to IPA was submitted in early October. Approval has been obtained from Greece for inclusion to Hi.P.E.R.B. and a pre-approval from the EIB. The construction works it is estimated to start in 2010. For the same project, the Fund for National and Regional Roads would procure within the next few days an international tender for the preparation of the Main Design, with estimated contract cost of 5-6mo€ financed by the State Budget.
37. Finally she added that all the road bridges in her country were reconstructed through the NATO 60mo€ financial assistance, including those along Corridor X.

38. After respective questions of Prof. Taxiltaris, Mrs. Kirkova added that concerning the Road Branch D section from Veles to Bitola there are upgrading works on-going and the transformation to a motorway is included in the Road Investment Plan of the country, but lacks documentation. Concerning the railway Corridor only maintenance works for upgrading some sections are taking place.
39. Mr. Popov, representative of Bulgaria, informed that the projects planned by Bulgaria for the Branch C (road and rail) were implemented. The road from Sofia to Kalotina has been upgraded to a two-lanes per direction road (width of 6m per direction, with no separation of the opposite flows). Also the railway track in Bulgaria has been modernized and electrified and the capacity is considered satisfactory.
40. Mrs. Vitou, representative from the Greek Railway Organization Subsidiary TRAINOSE, informed on the progress made on the main railway axis. On the section Thessaloniki – Polykastro the works have been completed, while for the section Polykastro – Eidomeni ERGOSE has procured a tender, and the works is foreseen to be completed in 2011. The modernization works on the section Florina – Niki were completed in the past.
41. Mr. Patsiavos informed the participants that the works for motorway construction on the Greek part of the Road Corridor X between Polykastro and Evzonoï will be procured in 2010. The completion of works is estimated for the year 2013.
42. Then Mr. Miltiadou presented the progress of implementation of the Hellenic Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Balkans (Hi.P.E.R.B.) on Road Corridor X in Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The total contribution of the Hellenic Republic to the road projects on Corridor X reaches 150mo€(see presentation).
43. Mrs. Anastassopoulou informed the participants that there is strong political commitment for the financing of the Hi.P.E.R.B. Projects on Road Corridor X and stated the active support of Greece into assisting the implementation of the projects.

Item 7: Results of the 7th meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X and approval of its further activities

44. Mr. Kounadis, Chairman of the Working Group, presented the results and decisions of the 7th meeting of the Working Group for adoption from the Steering Committee:
 - Composition of a letter by the Technical Secretariat to be signed by the Chairmen of the Steering Committee and the Working Group. This letter would be sent to the participating countries for the performance of time measurements at the border crossings.

- By December 31st 2008: Response of the participating countries for participation in the time measurements at the border crossings and proposition of potential dates for the execution of the exercise.
45. He highlighted the constructive participation of all the participants and the reactivation of the Serbian delegation.
 46. Mr. Patsiavos asked the participants to contribute towards the implementation of the Action Plan of the Working Group and to approve its decisions.
 47. The results and decisions of the Working Group were approved.

Item 8: Coordination of further activities

48. Prof. Taxiltaris presented the further activities of the Technical Secretariat.
49. He announced that the Technical Secretariat will launch new data collection process with the composition of a letter for preparation of national reports by each participating country. The letter is planned to be sent in April 2009, in order to collect the relevant information by the end of June and prepare the general state of play of the Corridor by September 2009. He then proposed to organize the next meetings of the Steering Committee and the Working Group in September 2009.
50. Mr. Patsiavos agreed and informed the Committee that there was interest expressed by two delegations to organize the next meetings of the Steering Committee and the Working Group. After the kind proposal of Mr. Dejan Lasica, Assistant Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Serbia, the next meetings was decided to take place in Belgrade in September 2009, while after the kind proposal of Mrs. Kramer, Ministerial Counselor at the Ministry of Transport, Telecommunications and Energy of Hungary, the immediately after meetings will be organized in Budapest in May or June 2010.

Item 9: Other business

51. Mr. Patsiavos stated that the Technical Secretariat will contact the ARGE Korridor X Manager Mr. Wimroither to be informed about the new structures of the cooperation and inform the members of the Committee accordingly.
52. Prof. Taxiltaris asked the Serbian delegation whether they had information about the Serbian Railways activities in the framework of ARGE, and especially the Market Project they lead titled "Cutting stops in Border Stations".
53. Mr. Nestic agreed to ask directly the Serbian Railways and inform the Technical Secretariat accordingly.

Presentations available at:

http://edessa.topo.auth.gr/X/Pres/New/10th_SC_Presentations.zip