

**5TH MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF
BORDER CROSSINGS ALONG THE PAN EUROPEAN CORRIDOR X**

**GRAZ, AUSTRIA
14 JUNE 2007**

Draft Minutes

**Item 1: Welcome address by the host Austrian Ministry of Transport,
Innovation and Technology and by the Chairman of the Steering
Committee for Pan-European Corridor X**

1. Mr. Adelsberger representative from the Austrian Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology and Chairman of Corridor IV, welcomed all the participating countries and wished them a good stay in Graz.
2. Mr. Adelsberger also mentioned the very nice experience of the 8th Meeting of the Steering Committee in Corfu, one year ago, where he proposed to host the 5th Meeting of the Working Group for Border Crossings in Graz.
3. Mr. Patsiavos, Chairman of the Steering Committee of the Pan European Corridor X, took the floor and expressed his sincere thanks to the Austrian Ministry of Transport for his kind invitation to host the 5th Meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along the Pan-European Corridor X in Graz.
4. He thanked Mr. Adelsberger for his kind assistance to organize the meetings. Then he welcomed the participants and expressed his sincere hope for a fruitful discussion with tangible results.
5. Mr. Patsiavos reminded to the participants that at the fourth meeting of the Working Group in Athens, a provisional Action Plan was presented by the Technical Secretariat for adoption. At that meeting, it was agreed from the involved countries to send their amendments by the end of January 2007, in order to have a final document for approval by the Steering Committee at its 9th meeting. He informed that only one country had sent its comments, which didn't cause any change in the document.
6. He emphasized that the adoption of the Action Plan is the main tool for the implementation of the Protocol and this can only be achieved with close cooperation and coordination of the involved countries with the Chairman and the Technical Secretariat of the Working Group.
7. As Chairman of the Steering Committee of Pan European Corridor X, he also expressed his full support and his sincere hope that the endeavors of the Working Group will have fruitful results.

Item 2: Opening address by the Chairman of the Working Group

8. Mr. Kounadis, Chairman of the Working Group, welcomed all the participants and expressed his thanks to the Austrian Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology for hosting the 5th Meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossing along the Pan-European Corridor X in Graz.
9. He stressed out the importance for the works of the Working Group of the presence of the Commission's representative and also the need for the participation at the meetings of customs and other authorities present at border stations.
10. He then referred in detail to the items included in the agenda of the meeting and put emphasis on the presentation of the results of the cross border questionnaire-based survey and the exploitation of its results towards the implementation of the agreed Action Plan of the Working Group.
11. He noticed the absence of representative from Serbia, the country with the bigger number of cross border stations along Corridor X.

Item 3: Approval of the Agenda

12. There were no objections on the provisional Agenda, which was considered as adopted.

Item 4: Adoption of the Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Working Group (Athens – Greece, 20.12.2006)

13. The draft minutes of the last Working Group meeting of 20 December 2006 were adopted.

Item 5: Activity report – The progress of works since the 4th meeting of the Working Group

14. Mr. Kounadis presented the Activity Report of the Technical Secretariat of the Working Group for border crossing. He informed the participants about the progress of works made since the last Working Group meeting concerning the Rules of Procedure and the Action Plan.
15. He informed the Working Group about the new versions of the Rules of Procedure and Action Plan which were formulated by the Technical Secretariat following the comments of the participants of the 4th meeting in Athens.

16. Mr. Kounadis informed the participants that concerning the Action Plan, comments had been received only from Serbia without causing any change to the text.
17. Mr. Kounadis also informed the participants about the progress made on the questionnaire-based survey included in the Action Plan.
18. The Chairman also mentioned that Serbia and Croatia have not yet submitted their contribution to the questionnaire survey.
19. Prof. Taxiltaris took the floor and informed the participants that the Action Plan initially defined has been proved optimistic Action Plan for the short term and it should be revised during the meeting.
20. Prof. Taxiltaris asked Croatia and Serbia to fill the questionnaires and send them to the Technical Secretariat by the 15th of July 2007, so the Secretariat would be able to exploit the full data and perform the appropriate analysis.
21. He added that by December 2007 the development of the common time measurement tool should be completed, as well as the definition of the target groups for training. The time measurement tool should be approved by the Working Group in the next meeting of the Working Group in December 2007, in order to perform the pilot measurements in early 2008.
22. Mr. Begeot from DG TREN noted the importance of data collection for the implementation of the Action Plan, which is difficult and should be gathered in a specific format. He asked the representatives of the involved countries to provide the data to the Secretariat and suggested intensive cooperation between the Secretariat and the involved countries, as well as with the SEETO.
23. Mr. Zvonimir Nagy from Croatia confirmed that his country's authorities are willing to cooperate and provide the data needed for the implementation of the Action Plan until 15th of July 2007.

Item 6: Status of Corridor X border crossings: Presentation of the general status of the border crossings along Corridor X by the Technical Secretariat (Results of the survey) and of the improvements on border crossing facilities and procedures by each national delegation.

24. Mr. Miltiadou from the Technical Secretariat presented the first results of the survey on border crossings along the Corridor X.
25. Prof. Taxiltaris informed the participants that the results presented were subject of a qualitative analysis of incomplete data; however the final output will not vary much of what was presented in the meeting.
26. Ms. Bozoudi from the Stability Pact proposed that the private sector could assist the data collection process.

27. Prof. Taxiltaris stated that all synergies are welcomed and confirmed the intention of the Technical Secretariat to cooperate more intensively with the SEETO.
28. Mr. Devic from SEETO expressed the willingness of SEETO to closely cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of Corridor X.
29. Mr. Begeot stated that for the Commission the ultimate goal is the establishment of a treaty for the railways in the Western Balkans.
30. Then a discussion on the change of locomotives procedure took place.
31. Mr. Popov from Bulgaria presented the improvements on border crossing facilities and procedures taking place at the Bulgarian/ Serbian cross border station Dimitrovgrad – Dragoman.
32. Mrs. Stoyanova from the Bulgarian Customs Administration presented the improvements on border crossing facilities and procedures taking place at the cross border station Kalotina.
33. Mr. Raptis from the Greek Customs Administration made a short presentation to the Working Group regarding the Time Measurement Exercise at the border crossing stations of Evzoni and Bogorodica. He informed the Working Group, that two Working Groups of Customs Experts were created to deal with the procedural details of the exercise. The exercise was fulfilled by the Customs Administrations of FYROM and Greece. The elaboration of the results of the exercise is under way and the final report will also be submitted to the European Commission.
34. Mr. Raptis also mentioned the two initiatives of the Greek Customs Administration on the national level concerning the Evzoni and the Niki Border Stations. The first initiative concerns the increase on the number of staff at Evzoni Border Station and the second initiative the transfer of the Niki Border Station to new modern Customs premises by the end of 2008.

Item 7: Coordination of further activities

35. Mr. Kounadis summarized the actions to be done before the next meeting of the Working Group in December:
 - Composition of a letter with the results of the meeting to the Serbian member of the Steering Committee for Pan-European Corridor X
 - By July 15th 2007: Submission of data by Serbia and Croatia. A relevant letter will be sent to the Serbian member of the Working Group
 - Analysis of the information collected
 - Development of the common time measurement tool
 - Definition of the target groups for training activities

Item 8: Other Business

36. The next meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossing along the Pan-European Corridor X was decided to take place in December 2007.

Presentations available at:

http://edessa.topo.auth.gr/X/Pres/New/5th_WG_Presentations.zip