

**SEVENTH MEETING
OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE PAN-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT
CORRIDOR X**

CAVTAT-DUBROVNIK, CROATIA

10 MARCH 2005

Draft minutes

Item 1: Welcome address by the Croatian Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development

1. Mr. Breglec, State Secretary for Transport of the Croatian Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development welcomed the participants, wishing to have a successful meeting and a pleasant stay in Cavtat.

2. After presenting the Croatian delegation he emphasized in the importance of Corridor X.

Item 2: Opening address by the Chairman of the Steering Committee

3. Mr. Patsiavos, Chairman of the Steering Committee, cordially thanked the host country for the organization of the meeting and the hospitality and wished fruitful outcome of the meeting.

4. He informed the participants about the two major activities, which concern Corridor X and took place since the previous meeting of the Steering Committee: the creation of the second High Level Group (HLG-2) and the establishment of Southeast Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO).
5. He also informed the participants about the organization of the 2nd Meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X in Belgrade on February 18th 2005.
6. Finally, he announced that the next meeting of the Coordinators Group of Corridors and Areas would take place on April 21st 2005, where issues concerning the work of the HLG-2 will be discussed with the Chairmen of the Pan-European Corridors.

Item 3: Approval of the agenda

7. Mr. Patsiavos proposed to slightly change the Agenda of the meeting, by adding an extra item after the DG TREN intervention in Item 5 of the provisional agenda, where the delegations could give brief information and comments on the HLG-2.
8. There were no objections on that, so the agenda was adopted.

Item 4: Adoption of the Minutes of the 6th meeting of the Steering Committee

9. There were no comments on the draft version of the minutes, so those were adopted as final.

Item 5: Briefing by the European Commission

10. Mr. Preston from DG TREN thanked the Croatian Ministry for the organization of the meeting and the hospitality and informed the participants about two major events: the MoU signing for the implementation of the Core Network in the Western Balkans and the creation of the HLG-2.

11. Concerning the MoU, that was signed in June 2004 in Luxemburg and commits the signatories to cooperate for the implementation of the Core Network in the Western Balkans. The Ministers will meet at least once a year. The assistance to the Ministers is to be provided by a Steering Committee, which consists of one representative and one Deputy Minister from each participating country. The Steering Committee will meet twice a year with participation of representatives of social bodies too, and it is to be supported by the SEETO, which is the Data Collection Agency and the Technical Secretariat of the Steering Committee.

12. He informed the participants that on the previous day (9.3.2005) the first informal meeting of the Steering Committee was held in Cavtat. The first formal meeting of the Steering Committee will take place in Tirana on April 26-27 2005, and the purpose of that meeting will be the election of the Chairman.

13. He finally announced that SEETO has been settled in Belgrade since December 2004.

14. Concerning the HLG-2, chaired by Mrs. Loyola de Palacio, Mr. Preston explained that its purpose is to define the relationship between EU and wider Europe, following the methodology of the successful Van-Miert HLG.

15. He added that he was not able to attend the meeting of the HLG-2 of 7.3.2005 so he didn't have any information to submit. But he added that there will be several meetings of the Groups and plenary sessions, in order to propose a plan by autumn 2005 to the Council Ministers, which will take the final decisions.
16. The floor was given to Mr. Adelsberger from Austria, who had been present to the meeting of the HLG-2 on 7.3.2005, and informed the participants about the Austrian position in favor of all Corridor X and the extension of the network of Corridors VII, IV and X, mentioning also the importance of Branch A (Graz – Zagreb).
17. Furthermore, he considered that the decisions taken in the HLG-2 meeting of 7.3.2005 do not correspond to the needs of the Balkans who suffered by the wars, which is after all the reason that Corridor X suffers by low demand. He added that if Corridor X is not prioritized, it will never recover to the pre-war situation.
18. Finally, he informed the participants that HLG-2 expects the reaction of the delegations within fourteen days after the meeting of 7.3.2005.
19. Mr. Patsiavos mentioned that the decision of HLG-2 isolates F.Y.R. of Macedonia and called for the comments of the delegations.
20. Mr. Preston clarified that the proposals are of the HLG-2 and not of the Commission.
21. Mrs. Kramer from Hungary, supported Mr. Adelsberger's and Mr. Patsiavos' positions and mentioned that Hungary had sent its proposals in December 2004 to all countries involved. She also remarked the deficiencies concerning Corridors V and VII and the importance to have support from all countries.

22. Mr. Adelsberger agreed with Mrs. Kramer's position.
23. Mrs. Gligorovska from F.Y.R. of Macedonia said that her country's proposal has been made with the support of Greece, Italy and the neighboring countries but the Commission didn't accept the proposals and just announced the results.
24. She asked the delegations if it is possible to compose a common letter of the Steering Committee to the EC and the HLG-2 for the importance of Corridor X.
25. Mr. Kosteas from the Greek Railways Organization expressed his surprise for the abandonment of south Corridor X and remarked that the Greek investments on the section to the borders with F.Y.R. of Macedonia will go to waste. He finally supported the proposal to compose a joint letter to the HLG-2.
26. Mrs. Palcic from Croatia remarked that traffic on Corridor X increases the last years and agreed with Mrs. Kramer's proposal.
27. Mr. Stratiev from Bulgaria fully supported the Austrian proposal and remarked that the HLG-2 is not aware of the increase of traffic, because the Committee had not submit traffic data and forecasts.
28. Prof. Taxiltaris, Scientific Coordinator of the Technical Secretariat of Corridor X, informed Mr. Stratiev that the Technical Secretariat had elaborated a forecast study and the Commission has the data, which also has earlier traffic forecasts for the Corridor by the TIRS and the REBIS studies.

29. Mr. Princic from Slovenia agreed with Greek and Austrian proposal and proposed that the Steering Committee strongly supported the entire Corridor with a joint decision letter.
30. Mrs. Gligorovska clarified that all participating countries supplied traffic data to the EC.
31. Mr. Preston asked Mr. Princic and Mr. Adesberger why their countries participate to the HLG-2 since they are EU member countries.
32. Mr. Adelsberger responded that the EU member countries participate with formal proposals.
33. Mr. Patsiavos confirmed that in practice the Commission asks the member states to react.
34. Prof. Taxiltaris expressed his satisfaction that almost 90% of the Corridor is included in HLG-2 proposal and he added that technical criteria as well as criteria for regional social and economic development should be used and that it is irrational and sad to neglect a whole country (F.Y.R.O.M.) and the southern Serbian area.
35. Mr. Kosteas mentioned that the basis should be the Helsinki and Crete Declarations. He added that from operational point of view Corridor X is absolutely necessary and asked the Chairman to compose an official letter to the HLG-2.
36. Mr. Adelsberger agreed with Prof. Taxiltaris not only to deal with demand but also think about development and economic prosperity by developing transport infrastructure and not only Corridors but a Network.

37. Mr. Preston agreed with Mr. Adelsberger position and explained that this is the reason why the Commission develops SEET Network.
38. Mr. Patsiavos concluded that all the ideas recorded will be comprised in a letter to the HLG-2 and asked the delegations to write relevant letters directly to the HLG-2.
39. Mr. Rasbash from SEETO took the floor and thanked the Technical Secretariat and the Croatian Ministry of Sea, Tourism, Transport and Development for the invitation. He informed the participants for the appositeness and activities of SEETO and that SEETO will prepare a five-year action plan to establish an internet-based GIS and will need data concerning Corridor X present and future demand.
40. He also informed the participants about the first informal meeting for SEETO, where a protocol for SEETO and the Steering Committee had been composed, and that will be approved in Tirana meeting on April 26-27 2005.
41. Mr. Rathery, Deputy Secretary General of ECMT, took the floor and informed the participants about the scope of the next day's 1st meeting of ECMT Task Force for South-East Europe.
42. Mr. Meelich, Project Manager of TER, informed the participants that TER is preparing a Master Plan, which will be presented in Vienna Steering Committee in April. He also referred to the established TER Database in Budapest, and raised the issue of overlapping of data collection and keeping.
43. Mr. Pesut from UN/ECE Transport Division spoke about SECI Project for border crossings and the Euro-Asian transport links.

44. Mr. Patsiavos remarked that Corridor X is the traditional route for transport operations in the region for more than three decades and that although it is one of the most developed in the region, certain interventions in problematic sections are needed in order to ensure the continuity and safety of transport in the entire Corridor X, as well as to contribute to the overall development of the area.

45. He added that, given the fact that it constitutes the “Core Corridor” in the Core Network of Western Balkans, Corridor X should be included in the priorities elaborated by the High Level Group.

Item 6: Activity report - The progress of works on the 3 years’ Work Programme since the 6th meeting of the Steering Committee

46. Prof. Taxiltaris presented the Activity Report of the Technical Secretariat (see attached document).

Item 7: General status of Corridor X

47. Mr. Miltiadou presented the State of play of Corridor X (see attached document).

Item 8: Status of Corridor X in each participating country and activities related to the Corridor development

48. Mr. Patsiavos gave the floor to the delegations.

49. Mr. Adelsberger informed the participants about the construction of tunnels, which are expected to be completed by the end of 2005. He also spoke about railway projects, which will be implemented in the period 2009-2015 and especially for a PPP project on the extension of Corridor X_A from Graz to Linz (see attached document).
50. Mr. Patsiavos asked Mr. Adelsberger to submit his intervention to the Technical Secretariat in written form, and also all the delegations to send their interventions by the end of April 2005.
51. Mr. Princic presented the progress on the motorways construction in Slovenia (see attached document).
52. Mrs. Palcic presented the status of the Croatian part of road Corridor X (see attached document). She emphasized on the annual increase of traffic (by 3.000PCUs) on some sections where annual average daily traffic reaches 30.000PCUs.
53. She also informed the Committee that Zupanja – Lipovac and Macelj – Krapina motorway sections will be constructed by the end of 2006 and 2007 respectively. Finally, she remarked the establishment of Integrated Border Management system at the cross border stations of Corridor X in Croatia.
54. Mr. Mlinaric presented the status of the Croatian part of rail Corridor X (see attached document).
55. Mr. Princic commenting Mrs. Palcic's presentation, clarified that there is no rail section of Branch A in Croatia.

56. Prof. Taxiltaris confirmed that in the formal definition of Corridor X (see MoU) rail Branch A has no parts in Croatia, contrary to the road Branch A which ends in Zagreb.
57. Mr. Adelsberger remarked that on TINA maps there is a footnote that Branch A could include Croatia in the future.
58. Mr. Rasbash remarked that road pricing is a very interesting issue and asked which is the percentage of tolled roads along Corridor X.
59. Prof. Taxiltaris agreed and said that most of the roads of Corridor X have tolls.
60. Mrs. Kramer presented the progress concerning the Hungarian parts of Corridor X and said that for the Szeged – Roszke section there is on-going negotiation with the concessionaire for speeding up the motorway construction process.
61. Mrs. Gligorovska presented the progress concerning the parts of Corridor X in F.Y.R. of Macedonia. She mentioned the discussion with the EIB for financing the motorway construction between Tabanovce and Kumanovo, and also the need for financing of D.Kapija – Smokvica motorway.
62. Prof. Taxiltaris commented that the transport operators avoid Corridor X due to the poor level of service and the high cost of the section D.Kapija – Smokvica (32km) and suggested that F.Y.R. of Macedonia reexamines the projects to make them realistic, in order to secure finance from EIB in a step by step motorway construction.

63. Mr. Stratiev presented the progress concerning the Bulgarian parts of Corridor X, emphasizing on the bilateral agreement for construction of a joint cross border station at Dimitrovgrad (Bulgarian/ Serbian border), which will drastically reduce delays.
64. He also mentioned the planned construction of motorway in Bulgaria by 2007, but there will be a gap due to difficulty to construct motorway and electrify the railway line on the Serbian part of Branch C cause of the landscape (investments needed amount to 255moEuros for motorway construction and 125moEuros for line electrification).
65. Mr. Kosteas presented the status of the Greek part of rail Corridor X (see attached document).
66. Mrs. Alleweldt from the European Economic and Social Committee suggested that the criteria for the development of transport infrastructure shouldn't only be transport volumes and international traffic but also economic and social development. She added that the region should be given the chance to integrate with the E.U.
67. She supported the Steering Committee's position to insist in the inclusion of all Corridor X in the HLG-2 projects and proposed to convene the next EESC seminar in Skopje in order to show the importance of not isolating F.Y.R. of Macedonia. She finally suggested the involvement of social partners in this undertaking.
68. Mr. Kauf from the International Road Federation presented the results of the IRF Congress held in Cavtat on March 7th-8th 2005. He also supported the HLG-2 practice to avoid "white elephant" projects.
69. Mr. Patsiavos said that IRF will be invited to the next Steering Committee meetings.

70. Mr. Kosteas proposed that UIC could be also invited, in order to have information about the railways perspectives and plans.

71. Mr. Patsiavos asked all the delegations to provide the Technical Secretariat with the latest information concerning the status of the Corridor in written form by fax or e-mail, the latest by the end of April, so as to include it in the database.

Item 9: Results of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along the Corridor

72. Mr. Patsiavos informed the participants that the Technical Secretariat had already prepared and delivered the minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings and gave the floor to Mr. Miltiadou from the Technical Secretariat to present the key points of that meeting and the timetable that had been agreed for the next steps to be taken.

73. Mr. Miltiadou presented the results of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along the Corridor:

- a. The process to lead to a Protocol signing;
- b. To include more aspects of Ministry of Transport responsibility in the Protocol text;
- c. The countries to examine the draft Protocol text and make proposals for revision, and also to define the signatory Ministries; and
- d. To organize the 3rd meeting of the Working Group together with an extra Steering Committee meeting next July, in order to agree on the Protocol text.

74. Mr. Rathery asked when will the protocol be signed and whether the Conference for Customs in South-East Europe is permanent or an initiative.
75. Mr. Patsiavos responded that the protocol will be signed by the end of the year and that the Conference for Customs in South-East Europe is an initiative, which could be continued.
76. Mr. Kosteas remarked that the police authorities should be involved for the improvement of border crossings.
77. Mr. Patsiavos informed that police authorities are already involved.
78. Mr. Barbalic from the Croatian Ministry of Finance – Customs Directorate presented the procedures taking place at cross borders and insisted on the harmonization of authorities and responsibilities in order to avoid double checks and legal gaps. He also emphasized on the training of staff, the technical equipment and the improvement of information systems.
79. Mr. Princic reported that in Slovenia, due to the fact that in 2007 the procedures at borders will be fully harmonized with the Schengen treaty, the Slovenian police authorities consider that they should not participate in the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings.
80. Mr. Patsiavos informed that Greece is also a Schengen country, but the police make efforts to facilitate the procedures at borders, and so that it is involved in the process of the Protocol preparation.

81. Mr. Pesut proposed that the Working Group exploits the UNECE International Conventions, and more specifically the “International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods” of 1982.

Item 10: Coordination of further activities

82. Prof. Taxiltaris presented the further activities of the Technical Secretariat (see attached document).

83. Mr. Patsiavos raised the issue of the next meeting of the Steering Committee, which has been agreed to be organized in mid July 2005 together with the 3rd Meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X, in order to approve the relevant Protocol. Since there was no offer he proposed to convene the meeting in Thessaloniki.

84. Furthermore, he summarized the main tasks undertaken:

- By the end of April 2005 → All delegations should provide the Secretariat with the latest information concerning the status of the Corridor, in written form by fax or e-mail.
- By 15th of June 2005 → The final approval of the countries on the text of the Protocol for the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X and definition of the authorised Ministers to sign the Protocol.
- By mid July 2005 → 8th Steering Committee Meeting together with the 3rd Meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X in Thessaloniki.
- By autumn 2005 → Ministerial Meeting for the sign of the Protocol on the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X.

Item 11: Other business

85. Mr. Patsiavos informed the Committee that a group named “ARGE Korridor X” participates in some meetings of the Corridors. This is a profit oriented group whose activities are outside the scope of work done within the Steering Committee of Corridor X. He also informed that he had respectively informed the Corridors and Areas Co-ordination Group in the last meeting held in Brussels in November 2004 on this issue.
86. Mrs. Gligorovska remarked that Item 49 of the draft minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossing along Corridor X (Belgrade 18.2.2005) should be erased.
87. Mr. Patsiavos agreed.
88. Mr. Adesberger, also Chairman of Corridor IV, informed that the next meeting of the Steering Committee for Pan-European Corridor IV will take place in Constanta – Romania on May 20-21 2005 and invited the Chair of Corridor X.
89. Mr. Patsiavos thanked for the invitation.
90. Closing the meeting Mr. Patsiavos thanked the delegations for their active participation and expressed his appreciation for the cooperative spirit and contribution to the completion of the works of the meeting.

Attachments

1. *Agenda of the meeting*
2. *List of Participants*
3. *Presentations by the Technical Secretariat (3)*
4. *Presentation by the Austrian Delegation (2)*
5. *Presentation by the Slovenian Delegation*
6. *Presentations by the Croatian Delegation (2)*
7. *Presentation by the Greek Delegation*