

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

**CORFU, GREECE  
15 JUNE 2006**

**Draft minutes**

**Item 1: Opening address by the Chairman of the Steering Committee**

1. Mr. Patsiavos, Chairman of the Steering Committee, cordially welcomed the participants in Corfu for the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee for Pan-European Corridor X, and wished them a pleasant stay.
2. He reminded that at the last meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along the Corridor, in Athens, last November, a final text of the Protocol on Cross-Border Cooperation along Corridor X has been agreed.
3. He expressed his satisfaction for the signing of the Protocol the day after, since that is a very important step for the elimination of delays at border crossings and the increase of the overall efficiency of the Corridor.
4. He commented that such initiatives make the Corridor more attractive to major new investments, as well as to larger traffic volumes and expressed his belief that this Protocol can be applied to other Pan European Corridors as well, since the border crossings issue is a common problem, which needs coordinated actions for solving it.
5. He explained that the purpose of the meeting, was the discussion of the progress of the works of the 3 years' Work Programme, as well as the activities related to the Corridor development (progress of construction works, studies etc.).

6. He added that there was also chance to discuss the next steps for the implementation of the Protocol on cooperation on border crossings along Corridor X.
7. He then stood on another important issue, the extension of the main trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and the way forward. He mentioned that the High Level Group on the extension of the major Trans European transport axes released its final report in November 2005 and that a large section of Pan European Corridor X was included within the South Eastern priority axis of this Group.
8. At the time being a relevant Communication by the Commission was expected. Mr. Thielmann, acting Director of DG TREN for Trans-European Networks was not present, but he would attend the Ministerial Meeting the day after. Therefore, there would be chance to hear from the Commission about the latest developments and the prospects for this issue.
9. He also informed the participants that on May 4<sup>th</sup> 2006, the Ministers of Transport of South East European Cooperation Process (SEECF) signed an Agreement on the establishment of a high performance railway network in South East Europe, in the presence of their Prime Ministers and Heads of States. This Agreement includes a considerable section of Corridor X.
10. Finally he informed the participants about the detailed programme of the Ministerial Meeting and the signing ceremony of the Protocol on cooperation on border crossings.

## **Item 2: Approval of the agenda**

11. Since there was no DG TREN representative in the meeting, Mr. Patsiavos proposed that in Item 4 of the provisional Agenda only to have a short discussion, if necessary.

12. He also proposed, if there was need for linguistic changes in the protocol, those to be discussed before the Agenda Item 5.

13. There were no objections on that, so the agenda was adopted.

**Item 3: Adoption of the Minutes of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee and of the Minutes of the of the Joint Meeting of the Steering Committee and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along the Pan European Corridor X**

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

**Item 4: Extension of the main trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions and the way forward: Briefing by the European Commission (DG TREN), position of the Chair and the Technical Secretariat of Corridor X and discussion**

15. Mr. Patsiavos informed the participants about the position of the Greek Chair and the Technical Secretariat of Corridor X on the Extension of the main trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions and the way forward report of the HLG.

16. He stated that the Chair and the Technical Secretariat of Corridor X are in total alignment with the five identified axes, as well as with the horizontal priorities dealt within the report of the High Level Group.

17. He added that financing of the axes could comprise national funds, E.U. structural funds, international financing institutions funds, and also donors and private sector involvement is welcome.

18. Furthermore, he supported that a more binding document is necessary for a strong coordination framework and the Energy Community Treaty could be extended to the transport sector.
19. He declared that the Chair and the Technical Secretariat strongly believe that the structure of the authorities responsible for implementing an Action Plan per axis, stemming from a Treaty or any other form of binding document should incorporate the existing structures of the Pan European Corridors and that for each Priority Axis a Steering Group, a Regulatory/ Administrative Unit and Sectorial Technical Secretariats should be established.
20. Finally, he referred to the letter sent by the Chair and the Technical Secretariat of Corridor X to Mr. Thielmann in the framework of the public consultation of the Commission, as well as to the detailed proposal for the mechanism for the implementation of the five Priority Axes (see documents delivered during the meeting).

**Item 5: Activity report – The progress of works on the 3 years’ Work Programme since the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Steering Committee**

21. Prof. Taxiltaris presented the Activity Report of the Technical Secretariat (see attached document).
22. Mr. Adelsberger reminded that in January 2006 a joint meeting of the Steering Committees of Corridors IV, VII and X took place, and that was not mentioned in the Technical Secretariat’s presentation.
23. Prof. Taxiltaris clarified that the joint meeting of the Steering Committees of the three Corridors was an important event and that was not mentioned in his presentation since he was informing the participants on the Technical Secretariat’s activities.

**Item 6: Status of Corridor X: Presentation of the general status of Corridor X by the Technical Secretariat and of the status of Corridor X in each participating country and activities related to the Corridor development (i.e. progress of construction works, studies, financing, cross border improvements, etc) by each national delegation**

24. Mr. Miltiadou presented the State of play of Corridor X (see attached document).
25. Mr. Rasbash, General Manager of SEETO, confirmed that Corridor X is the most important Corridor in the region and the Core Network of South Eastern Europe and that indeed a number of projects that Mr. Miltiadou mentioned in his presentation are included in the list of priority projects for 2006-2010.
26. He expressed his satisfaction for being invited to the meeting and the intention of SEETO to establish cooperation with all the Technical Secretariats of the Corridors in the area.
27. He also announced the organisation of extensive data collection process and he pointed out the need for traffic flows data.
28. Finally, he welcomed the initiative to sign a protocol for cooperation on border crossings along Corridor X and he expressed his concern to make it operational and his interest to follow its implementation.
29. Prof Taxiltaris replied that the Working Group constituted by the Protocol will work on making it operational.
30. Furthermore, concerning traffic flows he reminded the forecasting exercises of the Technical Secretariat, the REBI Study and the TIR Study.
31. Mr. Adelsberger announced the arrangement of a trip by a demonstration train from Vienna to Istanbul and Ankara in mid September 2006, on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting

in Ankara and his will to invite the Steering Committees and the Technical Secretariats of the Corridors to this trip, in order to observe the delays at border crossings. (42-43 hours trip, including 4-5 hours of delays at border crossings).

32. Mr. Nestic from the Serbian Ministry of Capital Investments claimed that data collection is a very difficult task and that priority should be given to the implementation of the Protocol on cooperation on border crossings along Corridor X.
33. Mr. Patsiavos clarified that border crossings issue is of top priority of the Technical Secretariat's work.
34. Mr. Stratiev supported that during the current Steering Committee meeting should be discussing border crossings' issues and not for infrastructure and traffic volumes.
35. Mr. Patsiavos answered that border crossings issues are being examined in the framework of the special Working Group established for this task, and that the Protocol for signing is the result of the work of the Working Group.
36. Prof. Taxiltaris clarified that the Technical Secretariat is assigned to monitor the development of the Corridor among the other activities defined by the Work Programme approved by the Steering Committee.
37. He added that the protocol text has been the main activity of the Secretariat for the last year and that the initiative for the constitution of a Working Group for cooperation on border crossings was based on the results of the special study of the Secretariat, which had been presented in the 5<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee meeting.
38. Mr. Patsiavos gave the floor to the delegations to present the development of Corridor X in each country.

39. Mr. Adelsberger presented the development on the Austrian parts of Corridor X (see attached document).
40. He then raised the issue of coordination of the activities of the Steering Committee of Corridor X and the “ARGE Korridor X” railway group.
41. Prof. Taxiltaris asked to be informed about the legal status of the “ARGE Korridor X” railway group.
42. Mr. Patsiavos added that in order to invite “ARGE Korridor X” railway group to the Steering Committee meetings there is need to have a preparatory meeting or establish communication.
43. Mrs. Vitou from the Greek Railways Organisation informed the participants that her organisation does not participate in the works of “ARGE Korridor X” railway group, despite the fact that it signed the agreement of establishment.
44. Mr. Princic supported Mr. Adelsberger’s position to establish cooperation with “ARGE Korridor X” railway group, since it works also towards the development of Corridor X. He proposed that the Steering Committee contacts the ARGE group for clarifications or each participating country asks their railway organizations for details.
45. Prof. Taxiltaris supported the proposal of Mr. Princic, that the Steering Committee contacts the ARGE group directly, asking for written information prior to a bilateral meeting (Chair of Corridor X – Chair of ARGE group).
46. Mr. Patsiavos agreed and added that after those contacts, the participants will be informed.
47. Mrs. Vitou proposed that the Greek Railways Organisation undertakes the exploratory contact with “ARGE Korridor X” railway group.

48. The participants agreed.
49. Mr. Princic presented the development of Corridor X in Slovenia (see attached document). He emphasized on the on-going motorway construction to be completed by 2010 on the Main Axis and by 2013 on Branch A of Corridor X, and also on the expected completion of the capital overhaul and the upgrade of Ljubljana – Zidani Most and Maribor – Zidani Most railway lines. Finally, he mentioned that the planned investments on Rail Corridor X in Slovenia by 2020 are estimated at 10,8 billions of euros.
50. Mr. Nagy presented the status of the Croatian part of Corridor X (see attached document).
51. He informed the participants that the motorway section Zupanja – Lipovac is open to traffic in June 2006 (cost 1,22 millions of euros). On Branch A the Macelj – Krapina section will be constructed in motorway profile under concession by April 2007 (cost 491 millions of euros).
52. Finally, concerning the railway network he mentioned that 1,8 billions of euros is planned to be invested in the period 2006 – 2010, out of which 377 millions of euros will be invested on Corridor X lines.
53. Mr. Liapis, Greek Minister of Transport and Communications, entered the meeting room and addressed cordial salutation to the participants, wishing successful results to the works of the meeting.
54. Mrs. Kramer presented the progress concerning the Hungarian parts of Corridor X and said that the M5 motorway has been fully constructed up to the border of Serbia (last section Szeged – Roszke).

55. She also mentioned that two road border crossings operate on the Hungarian-Serbian border, the recently constructed one for the motorway traffic and the old one for the rest of the traffic.
56. Mr. Nestic took the floor to inform the Committee about the evolutions on Corridor X in Serbia.
57. He informed the participants that in Serbia a concession agreement is under examination for the Horgos – Novi Sad – Belgrade road section.
58. He also announced that two loans, one of 80 millions of euros and one of 60 millions of euros, have been approved by the EIB and the EBRD for infrastructure development and rolling stock modernization of Serbian Railways.
59. Mrs. Gligorovska presented the progress concerning the parts of Corridor X in F.Y.R. of Macedonia.
60. She mentioned that on road Corridor X, since 1998, 59km of motorways have been constructed in her country and announced the intention of her government to propose three road sections for financing by the Instrument for Pre Accession (Tabanovce – Kumanovo, Demir Kapija – Smokvica and Veles – Prilep) and two of them for HiPERB financial assistance (Tabanovce – Kumanovo, Demir Kapija – Smokvica).
61. 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).
62. Concerning the railways he informed the participants about the full electrification of the line from Sofia to the Serbian border.

63. Finally, he invited the Steering Committee and the Working Group to visit the border crossing at Dimitrovgrad in Autumn 2006.
64. Mr. Princic commented that bilateral cooperation always gives positive results, also proved by his country's cooperation with Austria and Hungary.
65. Mr. Adelsberger proposed to organise the next Steering Committee meeting in Graz, so would have the chance to visit a joint border crossing between Slovenia and Hungary, even if it is not a Corridor X border crossing.
66. The participants agreed with Mr. Adelsberger's proposal.
67. Mrs. Vitou informed that the Greek line of rail Corridor X has been electrified and works for the upgrade of the line for speeds of 160km/h are on-going.
68. Mr. Patsiavos informed that no improvements took place on road Corridor X in Greece during 2005.
69. Finally, he 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, as soon as possible.

**Item 7: Agreement on the establishment of a high performance railway network in South East Europe signed on the 4<sup>th</sup> May 2006, in the framework of the SEEC**

70. Mrs. Raftopoulou informed the participants that on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2006 an agreement on the establishment of a high performance railway network in South East Europe has been signed, in the framework of the South East Europe Cooperation Process.

71. The concept of the Agreement, being made from scratch thanks to the endeavors of our officials, is based on four main lines of actions:
- the elimination of delays at border crossings, by improving railway and border crossing infrastructure and introducing gradually customs and passport controls on board the train.
  - the use of modern rolling stock, which will offer much better services both to passengers and freight operations.
  - the minor interventions in the rail infrastructure, which could result in considerable travel time savings.
  - the big investments in rail infrastructure, according to the national plans of each country, with time horizon up to 2020.
72. She then stressed that significant results can be achieved, even by applying only the first three lines of actions, the cost of which is much less than the big investments in rail infrastructure and that the objective should always be the attraction of more passengers and freight, in order to improve the current situation and achieve the economic viability of the railways.
73. Furthermore she added that other countries could join the Agreement, and already some countries (Czech Republic and Syria) have declared their interest for the initiative.
74. Regarding the practical issues of this Agreement, it was decided unanimously that Bulgaria will act as the depository of the Agreement and Greece will undertake the Chairmanship of the Steering Committee for the first two years. During that period preparatory and technical work such as the collection and elaboration of the necessary data, the creation of a database and a GIS and the definition of the relevant projects will be necessary.
75. The Chairmanship of the Steering Committee will be undertaken by Mrs. Koutrouba, Managing Director of the new operation company of the Greek railways “TRENOSÉ”, and there is intention to establish and finance a Technical Secretariat for the support of the Steering Committee.

**Item 8: Coordination of further activities of the Steering Committee and the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings**

76. Prof. Taxiltaris presented the further activities of the Technical Secretariat.

77. Apart from the standard activities of the Technical Secretariat (see attached document) he put emphasis to the participation of the Technical Secretariat in the forthcoming technical meetings (July 2006) with national delegations and representatives of the International Financial Institutions in Belgrade and Skopje, for the inclusion of projects on Corridor X in Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in the Hellenic Plan for the Economic Reconstruction of the Balkans.

78. Mr. Patsiavos continued with the issue of the organisation of the Working Group on border crossing, established by the relevant Protocol and the decision on the Chairmanship of the Working Group.

79. He proposed Mr. Kounadis from the Hellenic Ministry of Economy and Finance to be the Chairman for the first three years, in order to ensure the continuation and the efficiency of works.

80. There were no objections to his proposal.

81. He then congratulated Mr. Kounadis for his election as the first Chairman of the Working Group, wished him good luck and gave the floor to Mr. Kounadis to say a few words for the Work Programme of the Working Group.

82. Mr. Kounadis thanked the participants for their decision and accepted it with honour, stating that there is a lot of work ahead.

83. He also asked the delegations to nominate their representatives in the Working Group by mid September 2006, and proposed to organise the next meeting of the Working Group in

Athens in the end of September – beginning of October 2006, in order to define the rules of procedures of the Group and the further activities.

84. Mr. Patsiavos summarized the time schedule decided:

- By mid September 2006 → The delegations should nominate a national coordinator to participate in the Working Group.
- In mid September – early October 2006 → Organisation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X in Athens.
- In mid September 2006 → Participation in the demonstration train trip from Vienna to Ankara, combined with a visit to the joint cross border station at the Serbian – Bulgarian borders.
- By first week of October 2006 → The Technical Secretariat will send the questionnaires of the new survey to the members of the Steering Committee.
- By end of January 2007 → The delegations should submit required information (questionnaires) to the Technical Secretariat.
- In March 2007 → Organisation of the 9<sup>th</sup> Steering Committee Meeting in Graz, combined with a visit to a joint cross border station at the Slovenian – Hungarian borders.

#### **Item 9: Other business**

85. Mr. Rasbash stated that intermodality is a crucial issue, which needs to be examined in the South East Europe, since it is of high importance for the European Commission.

86. Mr. Patsiavos informed that the IMONODE project dealt with intermodality along Corridor X and the region of South East Europe and has been finalised last year and has been presented in the joint meeting of the Steering Committees of Corridor IV, VII and X in Vienna in January 2006.

87. He proposed to include a special Item in the Agenda of the next Steering Committee meeting to discuss intermodality aspects along Corridor X.

88. Finally, some linguistic corrections were made on the protocol text.

89. 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.

90. He emphasised that the procedure initiated for the improvement of border crossings resulted in the Agreement that would be signed the day after, which proves the political will to further promote our initiative.

### **Attachments**

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