

9TH MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR PAN-EUROPEAN CORRIDOR X

**GRAZ, AUSTRIA
15 JUNE 2007**

Minutes

Item 1: Welcome address by the host Austrian Ministry of Transport Innovation and Technology

1. Mr. Adeslberger representative from the Austrian Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology and Chairman of Corridor IV, welcomed the participants in Graz.

Item 2: Opening address by the Chairman of the Committee

2. The Chairman, Mr. Patsiavos welcomed the participants and expressed his sincere thanks to Mr. Adelsberger for his kind assistance to organize this meeting. He informed the participants about the following issues:
 - A proposal of its Rules of Procedure and its Action Plan for the improvement of border crossings along the Pan European Corridor X was finalized at the fifth meeting of the Working Group on the previous day and should be approved by the Steering Committee.
 - The European Commission has already issued the Communication on the extension of the main trans-European transport axes to the neighboring countries and regions. The Commission is working with the Council to organize the next steps, so as to proceed further with the neighboring countries.
 - An electronic consultation between the various Chairs and Secretariats of the Corridors has been initiated in line with the guidelines issued by DG TREN. The objective of this initiative is the improvement and strengthening of the existing coordination framework, taking into account, the prevailing cooperation modalities, the political situation and the trans-border traffic. In this framework, different workshops have been created, one of which dealing with the “strengthening of cooperation and monitoring is chaired by Mr. Patsiavos.
 - An agreement on the establishment of a high performance railway network in South East Europe, signed on May 4th, 2006, by the Ministers of Transport of South East European Cooperation Process. This Agreement includes a considerable section of Corridor X.

Item 3: Approval of the Agenda

3. The provisional agenda was adopted.

Item 4: Adoption of the Minutes of the 8th meeting of the Committee (Corfu, 15.06.2006)

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

Item 5: 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: Briefing by the European Commission (DG TREN)

5. Mr. Begeot from DG TREN presented the Communication issued by the Commission on the extension of the main trans-European transport axes to the neighboring countries and regions. The Commission proposes:
 - The adoption of 5 major trans-national axes (motorways of the sea, northern, central, south eastern and south western axis)
 - The promotion of 20 “horizontal” measures (border crossing procedures, compatible new technologies, safety and security, interoperability etc.)
 - The elaboration of an efficient coordination framework to ensure strong commitment and joint ownership. A possible coordination framework could include ministerial meetings, regional steering groups and secretariats to provide administrative and technical support.
6. He informed that on the 7th of June 2007 the Council gave a positive opinion on the Commission’s Communication [COM(2007)32final] and that the Commission intends to start soon exploratory talks with all the neighbouring countries and it will make recommendations and proposals on how to implement the policy and coordination framework in 2008.
7. He added that the next Coordinators meeting of the Pan-European Corridors and Areas is scheduled for October 2007 at the earliest.
8. He stressed out that the priority from the Commission is given to Railways and the target is an Addendum relevant to the one for air transport, for the promotion of interoperability and the market opening, initially of freight railway transport operation.
9. He mentioned that a Common Rail Network Statement is underway for the EU and the goal is to achieve a relevant statement for the Western Balkans on the basis of the SEE Core Network.
10. Mr. Patsiavos noticed that the revitalization of the railways is, apart from the Corridors Committees, the goal of other initiatives like the SEECP.

11. Mr. Begeot stressed the need for close cooperation between Corridor X structures and the SEETO, since Corridor X is the first priority for the region.

Item 6: Activity Report – The progress of works since the 8th 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 Corfu, in June 2006.

Item 7: 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 the activities related to the Corridor development by each national delegation

13. Mr. Miltiadou, from the Technical Secretariat, presented the general status of Corridor X. He indicated the progress made on problematic road and rail links since 2001. He also pointed out the progress made on border crossing stations of Corridor X.
14. Mr. Adelsberger, from Austria and Chairman of Corridor IV, presented the general status on Austrian sections of Pan-European Corridor X. He also argued about the importance of the direct rail connection between Graz and Zagreb, along with branch A of the Corridor.
15. Mr. Princic from Slovenia stated that for the development of the section Zagreb – Maribor – Graz there should be a relevant agreement between the involved countries (Austria, Croatia and Slovenia).
16. Mr. Nagy, from Croatia presented the general status on Croatian sections of Pan-European Corridor X. He informed the participants about the transport development strategy and the progress made on the road and rail network.
17. 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 is intended to be included in the TEN-T priority projects after 2010.
18. Mr. Delivanov from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia informed the participants about the progress made concerning the preparatory actions for the motorway construction between Kumanovo and Tabanovce and between Demir Kapija and Smokvica.
19. Mr. Popov from Bulgaria informed that Branch C (road and rail) in Bulgaria is included in the Transport Operational Program. Details concerning the type of intervention and time plans will be submitted to the Technical Secretariat.

20. Mrs. Vitou representative from the Greek Railway Organization informed on the progress made on the main railway axis. On the section Thessaloniki-Polycastro 2/3rds of the works have been completed. Concerning the section Florina – Niki modernization works have been completed.

Item 8: Relations of the Steering Committee with ARGE Korridor X

21. Mr. Patsiavos reminded to the participants that on the occasion of the 4th Meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X (20.12.2006) a representative of ARGE Korridor X informed the Chair and the present members of the Steering Committee on the structure and operation of this cooperation of the railway companies along the Corridor X (except Hungarian Railways and plus the German Railways) and asked for cooperation.
22. Mr. Patsiavos also mentioned that according to the Steering Committee's Rules of Procedure, a future cooperation of the Steering Committee, the official institution of Pan European Corridor X, and Arge Korridor X has to be included in the agenda of the Steering Committee and adopted unanimously. In any case, the cooperation with ARGE and any other third organization should serve the implementation of the MoU of Corridor X and be in line with our Rules of Procedure.
23. Mr. Wimroither, Head of ARGE Korridor X Market Task Force, presented the activities of ARGE Korridor X
24. Mrs. Kramer expressed her country's willingness to participate in the market projects that Mr. Wimroither mentioned and asked for some time to investigate the potential of the Hungarian Railways to participate in this cooperation.
25. Mrs. Vitou added that all the projects are very important and have positive results and will help the countries to their future works.
26. Mr. Adelsberger agreed and supported the comments that Mrs. Vitou made.
27. Mr. Begeot added that the case of ARGE Korridor X cooperation is very interesting and promising for the development of the railway product in the region.
28. Mr. Patsiavos concluded that, there should be continuous and direct communication with ARGE, and exchange of information on the actions and initiatives of this cooperation.

Item 9: Results of the 5th meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along Corridor X and approval of its Action Plan

29. Mr. Kounadis, Chairman of the Working Group, presented the results of the 5th meeting of the Working Group for adoption from the Steering Committee.
30. The results of the Working Group, the Action Plan and the Rules of Procedure of the Group were adopted.

Item 10: Review of the 3-years Greek Chairmanship

31. The Chairman of the Steering Committee made a review on the 3 years Greek Chairmanship held in the period February 2004 - June 2007.
32. He requested for the support of the countries for the approval of the mandate to the Greek Chairmanship to undertake the Chair of the Steering Committee for another period of 3 years.
33. The participants supported his proposal, so the Greek Chairmanship of the Steering Committee of Corridor X is extended until June 2010.

Item 11: Coordination of further activities

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

Item 12: Concluding remarks

35. After the kind proposal of Mr. Meelich, UNECE-TER Project Manager, the next meeting of the Steering Committee was decided to take place in Bratislava at the UNECE-TER headquarters in June 2008.

Presentations available at:

http://edessa.topo.auth.gr/X/Pres/New/9th_SC_Presentations.zip