

THIRD MEETING
OF THE WORKING GROUP FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF BORDER CROSSINGS
ALONG THE PAN-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT CORRIDOR X

JOINT WITH EXTRA MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF
PAN-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT CORRIDOR X

ATHENS, GREECE

21 NOVEMBER 2005

Draft minutes

Item 1: Opening addresses by the Chair

1. Mr. Patsiavos, Chairman of the Steering Committee for Pan-European Corridor X, welcomed the participants, stressing out the goal of the meeting to conclude to a final version of the Protocol, in order to introduce it for signing by the authorized Ministers.

2. He then emphasised the importance of Corridor X for Southeast Europe and therefore his expectation to the inclusion of Corridor X in the priority action map to be delivered on November 30th 2006 by the High Level Group.

3. He also emphasised the importance of rapid progress on non-physical barriers in Corridor X, which will make the Corridor more efficient and more competitive and therefore to attract major new investments.
4. Mr. Kounadis, Coordinator of the Working Group for the Improvement of Border Crossings along the Pan-European Corridor X, welcomed all the participants, wishing a good stay and fruitful outcome, stressing out his satisfaction for the high participation.
5. He also thanked the participants for their reaction in submitting comments and proposals on the previous versions of the Protocol and he invited them to contribute to the finalization of the text of the Protocol during the meeting.

Item 2: Approval of the agenda

6. There was one change on the provisional agenda: Item 8 moved to item 3.

Item 8: Latest news of the High Level Group 2 works and discussion

7. Mr. Boerboom, DG-TREN, presented the latest information on the Core Network of Southeast Europe and the High Level Group chaired by former Commissioner Mrs. Loyola de Palacio.
8. He noted the lack of well defined priorities and soft measures on the Core Network plan (conclusion confirmed in the Annual meeting of 10.11.2005).

9. Concerning the High Level Group he informed the participants that there will be limited number of priority axes and a short list of priority projects depending on the type of agreement, international long distance traffic and transit traffic for 2020, etc.

10. He also mentioned the criteria for priority projects according to EU legislation, which are pre-selection, firm commitment for implementation and evaluation (safety, environment) and the categories of projects (start before 2010, longer term interest and projects of regional or national importance).

11. He then mentioned that border crossing procedures and customs are included in the horizontal priorities of DG TREN.

Item 3: Adoption of the minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Working Group for the improvement of border crossings along the Pan European Corridor X, held in Belgrade (18th February 2005)

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

Item 4: Progress concerning the implementation of the action plan for the improvement of border crossing procedures (agreed during the kick-off meeting)

13. Prof. Taxilatrix, Coordinator of the Technical Secretariat of Corridor X, presented the progress made according to the schedule decided during the 2nd meeting in the framework of the action plan decided during the kick-off meeting of the Working Group.

14. He also mentioned the participation of the Technical Secretariat in the 1st High Level meeting of the Trade and Transport Facilitation in Southeast Europe Programme of the World Bank on developing a common framework for regional cooperation held in Zagreb on June 17th 2005.

Item 5: Improvements on border crossing facilities and procedures taking place at the cross border stations of each country of Corridor X (delegations) since February 2005.

15. Mr. Prinic, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications of Slovenia, clarified that Slovenia agrees with the proposed protocol text and noted that the Protocol will be signed only by the Minister of Transport.

16. Then Mr. Adelsberger, Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria, mentioned the common border procedures followed and the good cooperation with Slovenia, and that only police controls take place between these two countries according to Schengen Treaty, to be moved to Slovenia/ Croatian borders after the extension of the Treaty in 2007).

17. Mrs. Kramer, Ministerial Counsellor in the Hungarian Ministry of Economy and Transport, took the floor providing information for the progress of the projects on Branch B of Corridor X and the development of the cross borders with Serbia – Montenegro.

18. Mr. Rakos, Counsellor in the Hungarian Ministry of Economy and Transport, presented the Hungarian projects into maps.

19. Mrs. Piteni from the Greek Ministry of Economy and Finance mentioned that the launched time measurement project in Bogorodica – Evzoni, which assesses the stage of organization

in order to define obstacles and deficiencies, could be pilot for other pair of stations as well.

20. Mr. Janoski, Head of Customs Administration of FYR of Macedonia, noted the progress on the new cross border station in Tabanovce and the agreement with Serbia – Montenegro for uniform methodology and approach and mutual improvement of the cross border procedures at all pairs of stations.

Item 6: Presentation of the draft Protocol and detailed discussion on the text of the draft Protocol and finalisation of the text

21. Mr. Liapis, Greek Minister of Transport and Communications, addressed cordial salutation to the participants, wishing successful results to the works of the meeting.
22. The Minister also assured the members of the Steering Committee of Corridor X for the firm will of the Greek government towards the improvement of the operational characteristics of Corridor X and especially of the cross border procedures.
23. Mr. Kounadis had the floor to present the draft version of the Protocol. He thanked the delegates for the comments they had submitted, and had been incorporated in the text under discussion, and called them to have an open and constructive discussion on the text.
24. He then presented the content of the Protocol in broad lines, pointing out the most significant aspects of its Articles and proposed to go through the text in detail, in order that the delegates make their comments and suggestions.

25. The electronic version of the text was revised at real-time (see attached file) and finalized after a very fruitful discussion.

Item 7: Preparation of the ministerial meeting for the signature of the Protocol and coordination of further activities

26. The participants agreed on the following schedule:

- a. The participants will send their comments on the revised text of the Protocol and the nomination of authorised Ministers for the Protocol signing to the Technical secretariat by December 21st 2005,
- b. The Technical Secretariat will finalise the Protocol text by January 11th 2006, and
- c. Organization of Ministerial Meeting in Spring 2006.

Item 9: Conclusions

27. Mr. Kounadis summarized the results and decisions of the meeting and thanked the participants for the very fruitful cooperation.

Item 10: Any other business

28. Mr. Patsiavos informed the participants that a common meeting of the Steering Committees of Pan-European Transport Corridors IV, VII and X will take place on 12.1.2006 in Vienna.

29. He also informed the delegations that the Technical Secretariat of the Steering Committee of Corridor X will prepare and perform a new questionnaire-based survey, in order to

prepare the state of play of Corridor X after the completion of year 2005 and be in position to present it to the next meeting of the Coordinators Group of Transport Corridors and Areas and the DG TREN.

Attachments

1. *Agenda of the meeting*
2. *List of Participants*
3. *Opening address by the Chairman of the Working Group*
4. *Presentation of the draft MoU by the Chairman of the Working Group*
5. *Agreed draft Protocol text*