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Trans-European Railway (TER) project

Information on the Trans-European Railway (TER) project development*

Submitted by the TER Project Manager

I. Objectives of the Project

1. The main target of the Trans-European Railway (TER) project is to improve the quality and efficiency of transport operations, to assist the integration process of European transport infrastructure systems and to develop a coherent and efficient international railway and combined transport system in accordance with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) pan-European infrastructure agreements.

2. Among the various goals of the TER project, the following may be emphasized: facilitation and development of coherent and efficient international railway and combined transport system among the Central and Eastern European countries (through the territories of the TER countries and between them and other European countries), contribution in absorbing an important part of congestion in Central and Eastern Europe and reduction of environmental and safety problems on major international railways of those countries.

II. TER development and activities in 2015

3. The Project Management main objectives for 2015 were:
- (a) Hiring a High Speed Railway consultant and start of the project;

* The present document was not edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

- (b) Increasing the number of TER members;
- (c) Re-settling TER Project Central Office (PCO) (preparation and finalization of the new Host Country Agreement with TER participating country);
- (d) Organization of two sessions of TER Steering Committee;
- (e) Organizing and preparing high level technical and administrative documentation – including the Programme of Work and cost plan for 2015–2016 for the Steering Committee sessions and technical workshops for TER member States;
- (f) Finalizing all pending administrative issues such as contracts of Project Management, contract of TER office.

4. The main achievements of TER project during 2015 were:

(a) High Speed Rail Master Plan: The process of hiring a High Speed Railway Consultant was completed. The Consultant contract and terms of Reference were elaborated and approved by the Steering Committee.

(b) Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL) Project: The TER project management participated in EATL meetings and distributed the EATL questionnaire/template to all relevant TER member States to ensure the collection of data from Eastern Europe. TER and EATL projects are two infrastructure projects where many synergies exist and should be exploited. The TER project management is working towards this target.

(c) Safety at Level Crossings: The TER project management worked closely with the Working Party on Road Transport and the Working Party on Rail Transport secretariats to identify areas of cooperation. The Group of Experts on Safety at Level Crossings discussed the possibility that TER undertakes the task of analysing and developing a risk assessment tool for level crossings. Furthermore, the future development of a database of level crossings — number, types, use, etc. — in the TER region was discussed, with the support of an external consultant. It was decided that both activities should be discussed further and a way forward agreed upon at the 2016–2017 Steering Committees for the project.

(d) Unified Railway Law: New documentation on the Unified Railway Law was elaborated by the Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law. The TER Project management actively participated at the Group's meetings.

(e) Promotion of TER project and attracting new member States: One of the main tasks of the Project Management is the promotion of TER activities and the attraction of new member States. In this framework, the project management team had successful negotiations with the representatives of Belarus and Kazakhstan. The participation of these States to the Project will be finalized in 2016.

(f) Administrative Issues: Making the TER office operational was another big challenge for the TER Project Management. In December 2014 UNECE asked member States to submit their candidature for hosting the TER PCO and the proposal from the Republic of Serbia was received in February 2015. During the Steering Committee session in Istanbul the representatives of Serbia confirmed their intention to host the PCO during 2016. This proposal was highly appreciated by the member States and the Project Management. The Steering Committee kindly asked the Serbian delegation to extend their proposal for two years (2016–2017). The Steering Committee approved the candidature of the Republic of Serbia and decided that the TER PCO for the period 2016–2017 will be located in Belgrade. Administrative procedures for the signature of TER Host Country Agreement between the Republic of Serbia and UNECE started during 2015 and was finalized in 2016.

III. Activities in 2016

5. The TER Steering Committee at the thirty-ninth TER Steering Committee session (24–25 November 2015, Geneva) adopted the following activities for implementation in the TER Programme of Work 2016:

(a) Connectivity

- integration into the Pan-European and Asian networks and corridors in full;
- cooperation with the European Union (EU), the Organization for Cooperation between Railways and the EATL project;
- cooperation in corridor management beyond the EU-borders;
- starting the activities on High Speed Master Plan project.

(b) Visibility

- a new TER web homepage should be developed with revised information;
- increasing the number of TER members; finalizing the Project joining process for Belarus and Kazakhstan;
- printing and circulating the TER Project brochure.

(c) Capacity-Building

- There are studies conducted within the Coordinating Council on Trans-Siberian Railway Transportation: e.g. Annual Transsib Digest. There are agreements reached with Korean and Chinese research centres, which can also provide the Project with the necessary information.

(d) Safety

- cooperation with UNECE in preparing a questionnaire to get an overview about all level crossings on the TER network and including an assessment of risk levels.

(e) Development

- implementation of the TER Master Plan revision and reporting on its implementation;
- TER data collection will be extended to non-TER participating countries (in future).

(f) Management

- opening the TER PCO in Belgrade;
- finalization of Project Management contracts;
- organization of two sessions of TER Steering Committee;
- organization of a TER technical workshop.

6. During the fortieth TER Steering Committee session (17 May 2016, Vienna) the following were discussed and agreed:

(a) The management focused its efforts on discussing and negotiating with the Governments of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Ukraine in order for these countries to become members of the project;

(b) Works on the High Speed Rail Master Plan started and the consultant reported the first results of his study based on methodology agreed;

- (c) The content of the TER brochure, as part of project's promotional activities, including its technical specifications and procurement that would finalize and print the brochure;
- (d) The TER backbone network is being revised and draft maps were prepared by the consultant that reflect the status of the network in 2016;
- (e) The TER Host Country Agreement with the Government of Serbia was finalized and the TER office in Belgrade was prepared by the Serbian authorities;
- (f) The contract of the TER project manager was finalized and the contract for the deputy project manager is being finalized.

7. On 18 and 19 October 2016, the annual TER workshop "High Speed Lines – from planning to commissioning" took place in Vienna. TER delegates had the opportunity to listen to a number of presentations made by high speed experts from the consulting and constructing industry, academia as well as railway undertakings. All stages of the development of high speed lines were presented and analysed including the initial concept, pre-feasibility and feasibility study, cost benefit analysis and construction phase. The TER delegates had the opportunity to present their national projects, share their experience and good practices.
