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**TRANS EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER)  
PROJECT CENTRAL OFFICE**

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**TRANS EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER)  
Steering Committee  
48th session, 28 November 2019  
Geneva, Switzerland**

**REPORT**

The 48th session of the TER Steering Committee was held on 28 November 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland.

**PARTICIPATION**

The countries that participated in the session were: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Slovenia. Representatives of the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division, Mr. G. I. Bessonov, the TER Project Manager and the UNECE/TER Consultants also attended the session. List of participants is attached (Annex 1).

**OPENING OF THE SESSION**

The TER Project Manager welcomed the members of the Steering Committee in Geneva and opened the session.

**1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Due to necessity of attending a meeting of the ITC UNECE Bureau as the ITC Vice-Chairman, Mr. Jerzy Kleniewski (Poland) kindly requested that the session started with the matter of the High Speed Rail Master Plan. The Agenda of the session (Annex 2). was approved as amended.

## **2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

The participants in the Steering Committee elected as its officers Mr. Igor Princic (Chairman, Slovenia) and Mr. Petr Pospisil (Rapporteur, on behalf of the Czech Republic).

## **3. REPORT OF THE PROJECT MANAGERS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK**

The Polish National Coordinator expressed his opinion on the draft High Speed Rail Master Plan, emphasizing that unfortunately the work done so far didn't contain any recommendations, conclusions, or ideas. What had been presented was a set of widely known information on high speed rail system, based mainly on UIC sources. In his opinion the draft in present form and substance cannot be recommended to national decision makers.

### ***a. TER Network and the Pan European Transport Corridors, Euro-Asian Transport Corridors and corridors of neighbouring regions;***

1. The Project Manager summarized the results achieved by the Project in the reporting period from the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee. He also informed the participants about the TER involvement in the UNECE activities including the participation in the WP.5 and SC.2 sessions, about the finalization of the TER promotion brochure, elaboration of the High Speed Master Plan and the 2018 TER Backbone Network Annual Report as well as about the PCO's efforts to attract countries neighbouring the TER region to participate in the Project, which inter alia resulted in the serious interest in membership expressed by Albania. In this connection, the Committee requested the Project Manager to prepare the letter addressed to the Albanian Ministry for Transport, inviting the country to join the TER Project
2. The Steering Committee appreciated the efforts of the Project Manager and took note of his report.

### ***b. High Speed Rail Master Plan;***

3. Mr. J. Raczynski, the UNECE/TER Consultant for elaboration of the second phase of the TER High Speed Rail Master Plan study, presented the draft of the document.
4. Following the discussion on this topic, it was decided that the work was a good basis, but didn't meet all the requirements of

ToR. This must be amended and corrected. The Polish side dissented, highlighting the poor quality of work, lack of recommendations for decision makers, the excessive focus on countries from outside the TER region, and the excess of copy-paste work. In conclusion, the Polish side voted to cancel the contract of the Consultant. The Steering Committee noted that the document was not as yet complete and requested the Consultant to send the current version of the HSR Master Plan to the National Coordinators, PCO and UNECE by e-mail by 6 December 2019 at the latest. The National Coordinators will then send their comments to the Consultant by 10 January 2020. Consequently, the Committee also extended the deadline for the delivery of the updated final version of the HSR Master Plan to 17 February 2020. The final version is supposed to be adopted at the next session of the Steering Committee.

5. Regarding the payment for the work done so far, the Polish representative expressed the opinion that the payment should be made only after the whole work is successfully completed. Upon further discussion the Steering Committee decided to pay the first invoice submitted by the Consultant and to re-evaluate the payment of the second invoice following the sending of national comments in January 2020.

***c. Programme of Work 2018;***

6. The Project Manager informed the Committee about the status of implementation of the TER Programme of Work for 2019. In this connection, he also briefly summarized the outcomes of the TER Workshop on HSR held on 25. April this year in Brno (Czech Republic). Ms. M. Kopczynska informed the Committee about Polish activities within the UNECE ITC Expert Group on Benchmarking Transport Infrastructure Construction Costs (EG BTICC) and about her duties as a railway data coordinator of the Expert Group – suggesting cooperation between EG BTICC and TER, for the benefit of both. The Steering Committee expressed no objection to sharing the data collected by the Group.

***d. TER Financial Report 2018;***

7. The Steering Committee adopted the Report on 2018 TER Trust Fund Contributions and Expenditures, submitted by the UNECE representative, Mr. F. Dionori, according to which the TER Trust Fund balance at the end of 2018 amounted to USD 1,011,720 and the net TER Project's expenditures in the same year to USD 70,279.
8. Based on the UNECE confirmation that Romania settled in July 2019 its Trust Fund contributions for 2018 and 2019 and also on the fact that the country in 2014 and 2015 did not participate in the activities of the Project, the Steering Committee took the

decision to write off the past Romanian Trust Fund contributions for 2014 and 2015. The contributions for 2016 and 2017 are still open.

**e. Programme of Work 2020**

9. The draft of the TER Project Programme of Work for the year 2020 was introduced to the Committee by the Project Manager (Annex 3).
10. In the framework of this agenda item, Mr. M. Dagan (expert of the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division) presented the present and future GIS applications in the transport sphere being developed by UNECE.
11. Following the discussion on the GIS, the Steering Committee discussed the possibility of initiating dedicated projects/studies to be elaborated in the framework of the TER Programme of Work in the coming years. The agreed projects to be reviewed were:
  - Study on compliance of TER countries' infrastructure to technical parameters identified in international legal agreements (proposed by Bosnia and Herzegovina);
  - Study on development of the ETCS Level 2 (proposed by Bosnia and Herzegovina);
  - Study on locomotives' pool operation and development in the TER countries (proposed by Bosnia and Herzegovina);
  - New rail transport concept reflecting the recent international market needs (proposed by Slovakia);
  - Study on development of intermodal centers including the identification of missing ones (proposed by Poland);
  - Project related to GIS (proposed by UNECE Sustainable Transport Division).
12. The Steering Committee asked the proponents of these studies to prepare terms of reference for the respective individual projects and to send them to the members of the Committee in advance before the next SC session. In this connection, the UNECE agreed to share the TOR for the HSR Masterplan to be used as template document for these purposes.
13. The Steering Committee further decided to include in the 2020 Programme of Work the project related to GIS and the study on compliance of TER countries' infrastructure to technical parameters identified in international legal agreements and assign the amount of USD 35,000 to each of them in addition to the TER strategy document that was already included in the Programme of Work. The TORs for

these two programme items will be examined by the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the Steering Committee.

14. The Steering Committee approved the TER Project Programme of Work for the year 2020 as amended in accordance with the above outcomes of the discussion.

**f. Budget 2020**

15. The Steering Committee discussed the draft 2020 result-based budget submitted by the Project Manager and approved it as amended in line with the decisions taken in the framework of the Programme of Work 2020.

**g. and h. TER Monitoring the implementation of the TER Master Plan in 2019 and 2019 Status of the TER Backbone Network**

16. The Steering Committee examined the final draft TER Backbone Network Annual Report 2019, summing up the previous two reports on TER Status and on the TER Master Plan Implementation and sent to the UNECE and National Coordinators in advance on 20 September 2019. Consequently, the Steering Committee set the deadline for final comments to it by 15 December 2019. The Report will be then finalized taking into account the comments received and made available at the UNECE/TER website.

17. In order to prepare the 2020 Annual Report, the National Coordinators were requested to provide the TER PCO with the necessary data for 2020 by the end of May 2020, making use of the respective templates to be sent to them by the PCO by 30 April 2020.

18. The UNECE was requested to prepare in close co-operation with the TER PCO the TOR for services of the Consultant to assist it in the implementation of the Project's Programme of Work in 2020, including the elaboration of the TER Backbone Network Annual Report 2020. On the basis of these TOR, the TER PCO and UNECE will commence the selection process of the Consultant from January 2020.

**4. DECISIONS ON PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**a. Host country agreement with Serbia for 2019 – 2020**

19. The Steering Committee expressed its thanks to the Serbian Government for continuous hosting the TER Project Central Office in Belgrade. In this connection, it asked the Project Manager to take steps aimed at ensuring the transfer of the TER archives and IT equipment used by Mr. A Zimmer D.Sc. within his mandate of the Deputy Project Manager, from Vienna to the PCO in Belgrade.

#### ***b. TER Managers' contracts***

20. The Steering Committee extended its sincere thanks to Mr. A. Zimmer for his great contributions to the Project in the course of the years when he was serving as the TER Deputy Project Manager.
21. The Steering Committee approved Ms. M. Kopczynska as the acting Deputy Project Manager, welcomed her in this position and wished her lot of success and personal satisfaction in holding this challenging post. Should another Government propose a second Deputy Project Manager, such a proposal would be welcome by the Committee.
22. Taking into account the fact that the present contract of the Project Manager terminates in 2021, while that of his Deputy in 2022, the Steering Committee requested that the Government of the Russian Federation may wish to consider extending the contract of Mr. G. Bessonov for one more year, which would align the duration of both contracts.

#### ***c. TER Cost Plan 2019 Budget – statement***

23. The UNECE representative informed the Steering Committee about the current status of the TER budget for 2019, manifesting the sound financial position of the TER Project.

#### ***d. Status of TER Trust Fund Contributions***

24. According to the UNECE information, all the member countries fulfilled their 2019 obligations towards the TER Trust Fund including Lithuania. The UNECE will send letters to the participating Governments to remind them about the contributions to the Fund in 2020.

### **5. OTHER BUSINESS**

25. The 49th session of the Steering Committee will be held in spring 2020 in Russian Federation; the exact date will be communicated to the National Coordinators, TER PCO and the UNECE well in advance. No location has been fixed for the 50th session of the Steering Committee. National Coordinators were asked to consider hosting the event as an alternative to the PCO office in Belgrade or at the UN in Geneva. Proposals would be discussed at the 49th session of the Steering Committee. UNECE confirmed that, due to renovation works at the Palais, it is unlikely that a room will be available in Geneva but that a request would be made.
26. The representative of the UNECE informed the Steering Committee about the decision of the Government of Lithuania to leave the TER Project. The Steering Committee expressed

its regret of this decision and requested the Project Manager to contact the respective Lithuanian authorities and make efforts to convince them to change that decision.

27. The Steering Committee took decision to change the format of the mid-year sessions in such a way that its first day should be devoted to the agenda itself, the first half of the second day to site visit and/or to the TER workshop and the second half of the day to the elaboration and approval of the report.

28. The report on the 48th session of the Steering Committee was approved.

29. The Steering Committee extended its thanks to the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division for its hosting of the session, to the Project Manager for its perfect organization and to the Chairman and Rapporteur for their able performances.

## **6. ADOPTION OF MAIN DECISIONS**

### ***Item 1. Adoption of Agenda***

- Agenda of the session was approved as amended.

### ***Item 2. Election of Officers***

- Mr. Igor Princic (Chairman, Slovenia) and Mr. Petr Pospisil (Rapporteur, on behalf of the Czech Republic) were elected as officers.

### ***Item 3.a. TER Network and the Pan European Transport Corridors, Euro-Asian Transport Corridors and corridors of neighbouring regions;***

- The Project Manager will prepare the letter to be sent to the Albanian Ministry for Transport, inviting the country to join the TER Project

### ***Item 3.b. High Speed Rail Master Plan;***

- The Steering Committee decided to refuse the draft of the HSR Master Plan and as a consequence to extend the deadline for the delivery of the HSR Master Plan to 17 February 2020, based on the comments of the countries to be delivered to Mr. Raczynski by 10 January 2020. For this purpose, he will send the final version of the HSR study to all the National Coordinators by e-mail by 6 December 2019 at the latest.

- The Steering Committee decided to pay the first instalment of the contract.

#### ***Item 3.c. Programme of Work for 2019***

- The Steering Committee expressed no objections to sharing the data collected by the Group of Experts on benchmarking transport infrastructure costs.

#### ***Item 3.d. TER Financial Report 2018;***

- The Steering Committee adopted the final Report on 2018 TER Trust Fund Contributions and Expenditures.
- The decision was taken to write off the past Romanian Trust Fund contributions for 2014 and 2015, since in these years the country did not participate in the activities of the Project.

#### ***Item 3.e. Programme of Work 2020***

- The Steering Committee approved the TER Project Programme of Work for the year 2020 as amended.
- The Steering Committee accepted the idea of preparing 6 studies listed in the report in the coming years. It asked the proponents of the studies to prepare terms of reference for the individual projects and to share them with the Steering Committee well before the next SC session.
- Based on the presentation of the UNECE expert, Mr. M. Dagan, the Steering Committee decided to include in this Programme the project related to GIS and the study on compliance of TSI subsystem infrastructure and assign the amount of USD 35,000 to each of them. The TOR for these studies will be prepared by the UNECE and Bosnia and Herzegovina and submitted to the next Steering Committee session.
- UNECE agreed to share the TOR for the Masterplan as a template document to be used by the proponents.

#### ***Item 3.f. Budget 2020***

- The Steering Committee approved the budget as amended in line with the above decisions related to the Programme of Work.

#### ***Items 3.g. and 3.h. TER Monitoring the implementation of the TER Master Plan in 2019 and 2019 Status of the TER Backbone Network***

- The decision was taken to replace both these items by only one dealing with the TER Backbone Network Annual Report.
- The Steering Committee set the deadline for final comments to the 2019 Annual Report at 15 December 2019.
- In order to prepare the 2020 Annual Report, the National Coordinators were requested to provide the TER PCO with the necessary data for 2020 by the end of May 2020, making use of the respective templates to be sent to them by the end of April next year.
- The UNECE was requested to prepare in close co-operation with the TER PCO the TOR for services of the Consultant to assist it in the implementation of the TER Programme of Work in 2020, including the elaboration of the TER Backbone Network Annual Report 2020. On the basis of these TOR, the TER PCO and UNECE will commence the selection process of the Consultant from January 2020.

***Item 4.a. Host country agreement with Serbia for 2019 – 2020***

- The Steering Committee thanked the Government of Serbia for continuing to host the TER PCO.
- The Project Manager was requested to take steps aimed at ensuring the transfer of the TER archives and IT equipment from Vienna to the PCO in Belgrade.

***Item 4.b. TER Managers' contracts***

- The Steering Committee welcomed Ms. M. Kopczynska as the acting Deputy Project Manager and at the same time expressed its gratitude to Mr. A. Zimmer for his great involvement in the Project.
- The Steering Committee reiterated that if another Government was to propose a second Deputy Project Manager this would be welcomed.
- The Steering Committee would also greatly appreciate, following a potential proposal by the Russian Federation, the extension of the present contract of Mr. G.I. Bessonov for one more year in order to align the duration of the Project Manager's and Deputy's contracts.

**7. OTHER BUSINESS**

- The Steering Committee was informed by the UNECE of the decision of Lithuania to leave the Project. It requested the Project Manager to contact the respective Lithuanian authorities and try to convince them to revise that decision.
- The Steering Committee decided to change the format of the mid-year session. The first day of the session should be devoted to the discussions in the agenda of the SC, the first half of the second day to site visit and/or to the TER workshop and then the second half of the day, to the elaboration of the report.
- The 49th session of the Steering Committee will be held in Russian Federation in the spring months of 2020. The exact date will be communicated by the Russian Federation in due course.

Annexes: 3