



Promotion de l'Axe Ferroviaire de Marchandises
Scandinavie-Rhin-Rhône-Méditerranée Occidentale asbl

FERRMED CONSIDERATIONS TO THE “HIGH-LEVEL GROUP” REPORT ABOUT THE “EXTENSION OF THE MAIN TRAN- EUROPEAN TRANSPORT AXES TO THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AND REGIONS”

1. PRESENTATION OF FERRMED PROJECT

FERRMED is a non-profit association which was officially founded in Brussels on the 5th of August 2004. It is an association of multi-sectoral character initiated by the private sector in order to promote the freight railway axis Scandinavia- Rhine – Rhone – Western Mediterranean. The main trunk of the Axis begins in Stockholm, crosses the Öresund and Fehmarn straits, connects, in a fan-shaped manner, all the sea ports of the Western Baltic Sea and the North Sea, together with the United Kingdom, it unites the major river ports; from Duisburg it passes through the Rhine and Rhone valleys – goes from one to another in Luxembourg and Metz – it goes along the western Mediterranean coast from Marseille and Genoa until Algeciras and it interconnects the most important East-West axes of European Union.

The fundamental objectives of the association are the following:

- 1.1. Promote the development of rail infrastructures for transport of goods on the major trunk as well as on the principal interconnection axis.
- 1.2. Stimulate the improvement of exploitation systems and the free market on the freight railway network within the EU.
- 1.3. Promote new utilization procedures of infrastructures in order to optimise the rail freight transport and the intermodal/ combined freight transport using railways.

2. STRUCTURE OF THE CONNECTION OF THE BASIC EUROPEAN NETWORK WITH THE NEIGHBOUR COUNTRIES AND REGIONS.

The High-Level Group has planned 5 important interconnection axes with neighbour countries and regions:

- 2.1. Highways of the Sea
- 2.2. Northern Axis
- 2.3. Central Axis
- 2.4. South-East Axis
- 2.5. South-West Axis

3. FERRMED CONSIDERATIONS CONCERNING THE PROJECT OF INTERCONNECTION OF "IMPORTANT AXES".

3.1. HIGHWAYS OF THE SEA

The highways of the sea have to cover mostly two fundamental objectives:

- Interconnection of EU ports and those of neighbouring countries.
- Interconnection with the important intercontinental roads.

In order to make this entirely feasible it is necessary to:

- 1) Link the ports correctly with their hinterland so they will have the greatest possible impact.
- 2) Dispose of several alternatives for the transport of goods from the continent towards the different maritime port fronts while encouraging inland waterways and freight rail lines dedicated, in preference, to freight transport.

3.2. IMPORTANT LAND AXES

In order to make the freight rail transport with neighbouring countries and regions the most cost-efficient, 4 key aspects have to be fulfilled:

- Dispose of lines exclusively for, or preferentially dedicated to, freight transport, with the loading gauge of GB1 and able to receive trains 1.500 meters long.
- Guarantee maximal intermodality and interoperability.
- Unite the great zones of economic and logistic activity of the EU with the major intercontinental, maritime, river and land roads (including aerial roads).
- Interconnect the important maritime and inland waterway fronts.

3.3. PROPOSITIONS OF MODIFICATIONS TO THE REPORT

From the point of view of railway freight transport and taking into account the considerations presented in the points 3.1. and 3.2., we solicit the introduction of the following modifications to the report of the High-Level Group :

- 1) Extend the multimodal connection Berlin-Warsaw-Minsk-Moscow-Trans-Siberian (proposition concerning the Northern Axis) in the west until Duisburg, using a line preferentially dedicated to freight (enlacing the trans-European axis number 5), in order to link, in a



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convenient manner, the port front of the North Sea with Eastern Europe.

- 2) Extend the multimodal connection Dresden-Katowice-Lviv-Kiev (proposition concerning the “Central Axis”) towards east until Metz through a line preferentially dedicated to freight (enlacing the trans-European axes number 4 and 28) in order to reinforce the objectives underlined in the previous paragraph.
- 3) Modernise the conventional line with exclusivity or preference for freight traffic on the entire length of the FERRMED axis from Stockholm until Algeciras (equipped with loading gauge GB1 and the possibility of using trains 1.500 meters long).

This implies that sections of the FERRMED axis which are still not included in the priority trans-European network should be included:

- a) Section Duisburg - Bremen (enlacing the trans-European Axis number 5 and 20) in order to interconnect the ports of the Baltic Sea and those of the North Sea with the major inland ports.
- b) Section Koblenz – Luxembourg - Metz - Dijon (enlacing the trans-European axis number 4, 5, 24 and 28), in order to link the major inland ports of the Rhine, Meuse, Moselle, Seine, Marne, Saone and Rhone.
- c) On the « South-West Axis » incorporate the section Avignon – Marseille and extend the trans-European axis number 3, through the Mediterranean coast since Tarragona until Algeciras, passing through all the intermediary ports.

With these modifications the Highways of the Sea and the Northern, Central and South-West Axes would be exceptionally reinforced; the interconnection between the Transeuropean Axis number 6 “Lyon-Turin-Budapest-Kiev” and its prolongation from Barcelona to Madrid and Lisbon would be facilitated and the interrelation of the basic trans-European network with the neighbour countries and regions would be importantly promoted (see the chart with modifications in ANNEXE 1).

4. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS PRESENTED BY THE HIGH-LEVEL GROUP

4.1. Do the five main transport axes highlighted in the High-Level group (HLG) report, in your view, represent the main axes for international

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traffic and what would you add/ delete, if given the opportunity and why?

We understand that the 5 axes defined are clearly important ones for the trade with neighbour countries and the Highways of the Sea, but we consider that it is necessary to incorporate the Major FERRMED Axis which we describe below.

Besides we consider that some of the axes are not developed enough in order to guarantee the growth of the traffic of goods with the neighbour countries and important intercontinental roads.

In this sense we wish to brighten the following points:

- 1) Highways of the Sea.
The hinterlands do not conveniently interconnect and their offer is not sufficiently diversified. If they were interconnected conveniently it would have for consequence multiplication of traffic on the "Highways of the Sea".
- 2) Northern and Central Axes
These axes are not linked in a convenient manner with the port front of the North Sea.
- 3) South-Western Axis
 - This axis does not take into account the connection of the port front of the Mediterranean corridor in Spain with the centre of Europe.
 - As a consequence of the previous point, the "Short Sea Shipping" with North Africa is not facilitated and the important role these ports might be playing in the intercontinental traffic with Asia is not taken into account.
- 4) In general, for the four land axes, railway lines of important capacity dedicated preferentially to freight traffic are not considered.
- 5) Incorporate the Major FERRMED Axis
In order to reinforce in a convenient manner the interlink with important maritime roads, the "Short Sea Shipping" and the neighbour countries it is fundamental to take into account the Major FERRMED Axis (see the chart Annexe 2), which structures correctly the interconnection between the highways of the Sea and the Northern, Central and South-West axes.



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The Major FERRMED axis, on its entire length, from Scandinavia until the North of Africa, uniting the major maritime and inland port fronts (with a zone of influence over 54% of EU population and 66% of EU-25 GDP), covers perfectly this objective. Besides it has the advantage, for the railway freight transport, of not crossing any important mountain chain (it circumvents the French Central Massif and the Alps and it crosses the Eastern Pyrenees at a point close to the sea which allows a passage of trains 1.500 meters long and until 3.600 tons).

(See modifications solicited in the part number 3.3 of this Memorandum).

4.2. The HLG report outlines a number of measures, on so called horizontal issues, are these the most important ones and do the recommendations made by the Group help to solve the problems?

Among the « horizontal measures » the suggested actions which we consider as the most important are:

- Ensure intermodality of the axes of Highways of the Sea.
- Guarantee the interoperability of railway systems:
 - Through the elimination of technical and organisational incompatibilities at border crossings.
 - Through encouragement of unification of the tract width on the entire EU railway network (change of track width of major lines on the Iberian Peninsula, starting with the Mediterranean corridor).
 - Through the acceleration of implementation of a unified railway management system (ERTMS).
 - Through homogenisation of the labour legislation in the railway sector.
- Reinforce measures which aim to improve the security of land traffic.
- Take into account environmental constraints and constraints of economies of energy.

We consider that the majority suggestions made by the Group, do in fact help to solve the existing difficulties. However it would be more convenient to establish action priorities per concept and per axis.



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4.3. Financing transport investments is a headache. How can the implementation of these axis and horizontal measures be best financed. What could be the role of the private sector and the user charges?

The most important is to establish action plans according to the socio-economic cost-efficiency (the goal is to reinforce, for example, the existing railway axes which unite industrialised regions and logistic zones of first importance, where the socio-economic impact is much more important and the investment return is quicker). In any case, when it comes to railway infrastructures, it is necessary to consider amortization periods of around 50 years.

As a priority, investments should be done on axes and interconnections where the results appear to be the most cost-efficient (meaning in zones where the real and potential demand is most important) and where there are further possibilities of development.

It is on the axes and the most important connections from the socio-economic point of view that there is a possibility of private sector participation by the means of "Public-private-partnerships" (PPP's).

As the liberalisation process of railway infrastructures progresses, the private sector may, and has to, play an important role by the means of operator companies.

In order to obtain involvement of private sector and of users, it is of first importance that organizations who manage railway infrastructures offer competitive prices to operating companies. Freight trains should not pay for service they do not require (such as passenger installations, maintenance of high voltage lines, etc.). Neither should the users be charged for management inefficiencies.

It is also fundamental that the costs linked to externalities should be charged in a convenient manner to all transport modes, so that the taxes linked to the use of railways would be more advantageous than the taxes linked to road transport.



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4.4. For the implementation and coordination of the recommended actions, the report calls for either a memorandum of understanding or an international agreement – do these help to achieve the objectives? If not, how would you ensure the implementation and coordination of the actions?

In order to implement Group's recommendations we consider it necessary to establish a Secretariat for each axis or region which would be charged of fixing priorities, coordinating and initiating relevant action lines.

The coordination between these secretariats and the one which concerns the major axes of the Trans-European Network is very important especially when these axes link several Interconnection axes with neighbour countries or the large maritime roads (as it is the case of FERRMED for example).

Besides it is necessary that the European Railway Agency, in addition to implementation of ERTMS, initiates common standards on the most important freight transport axes, concerning aspects such as: the loading gauge GB1, length of trains, width of lines, labour legislation, etc., in order to facilitate the interoperability and the efficiency of the service (the standards suggested by FERRMED could be the most adequate ones).

4.5. The Group has envisaged integrating the existing agreements and memoranda of understanding into a coherent framework. Should an international treaty be envisaged for this?

There should probably be several treaties according to the different zones of influence or interrelation with priority axes.

At the first glance it appears most coherent to consider to the following three agreements:

- Western Mediterranean zone
- Eastern Mediterranean zone
- CIS zone



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5. COLLABORATION OFFER

From the association FERRMED, we put ourselves at the disposal of the « High-Level Group » in order to give you any supplementary information you should require as well as to participate in possible analysis' groups which might be created on subjects of infrastructures, exploitation and new utilisation methods of the trans-European network and in particular the network which links the major maritime and river port fronts.

ANNEXE 1.- Graphic representation of modifications to the Important Axes suggested by FERRMED.

ANNEXE 2.- Scheme of the Major FERRMED axis suggested as “The Sixth Axis”.

ANNEXE 3.- Considerations of CIERVAL - Confederación de Organizaciones Empresariales de la Comunidad Valenciana – FERRMED full member, to the “High-Level Group” report .

ANNEXE 1 Graphic representation of modifications to the Important Axes suggested by FERRMED.



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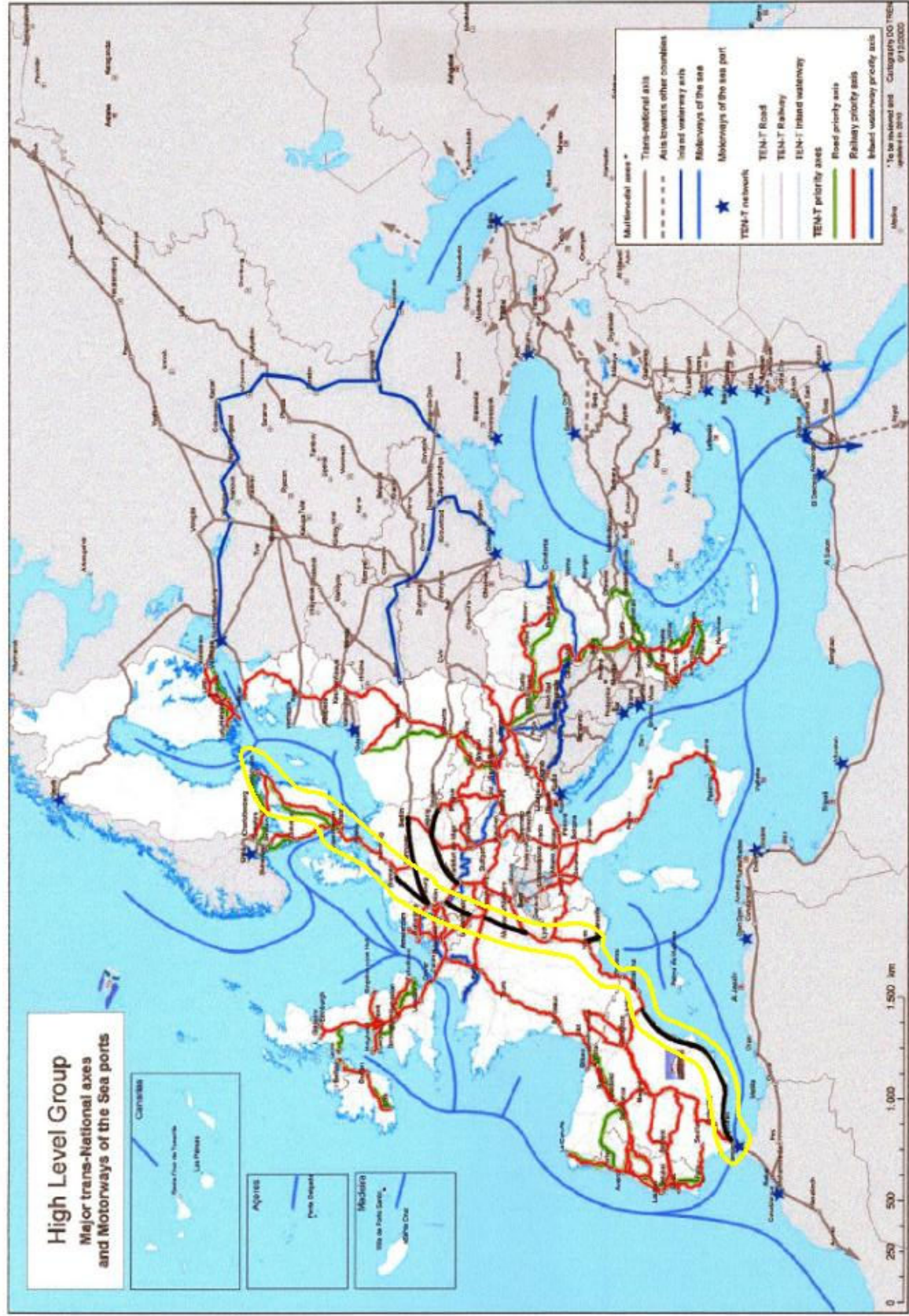


Figure 4 – Motorways of the Sea ports in the neighbouring countries

Modifications proposed in the axes by FERRMED

ANNEXE 2
Scheme of the major FERRMED Axis





ANNEXE 3

Considerations of CIERVAL - Confederación de Organizaciones Empresariales de la Comunidad Valenciana – FERRMED full member, to the “High-Level Group” report.