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BETREFF **High Level Group Report on the extension of major axes of the TEN-T network to the neighbouring countries  
- Future methods of coordination and integration of existing structures**

AZ A 22/3234.2/1a  
DATUM Berlin, 14.03.2006

Dear Mr Thielmann,

during the 9th meeting of the Pan-European Transport Corridors and Areas Co-ordinators Group you requested written comments on possible Coordination modalities for the major transnational axes identified by the High Level Group. Stemming from experience in chairmanship and the secretariats for the Steering Committees for the Pan-European Transport Corridors II and III I am herewith sending you the following proposals.

The structure of the coordination methods has to be determined by the future tasks and subjects for international cooperation. In the past, steering committees for Pan-European corridors very much concentrated on infrastructure investments. However budgeting, planning and prioritisation of infrastructure is entirely within the sovereignty and competences of the corridor member states. Steering committees therefore never really steered but have been more or less information platforms at least when it comes to investments in infrastructure. It makes no sense to try and interfere with the sovereignty and competences of the states. This is even not possible inside the EU.



Furthermore the priority projects have already been defined for the major axes by the High Level Group. This leaves, very much like the TEN-T priority projects within the EU, only marginal room to discuss infrastructure prioritisation on international level.

In stead of addressing the upgrading of infrastructure, the international cooperation should focus on the horizontal priorities defined by the High Level Group. As stated in the Final Report, in many cases, obstacles and bottlenecks occur, especially at borders, due to the lack of policy and administrative interoperability and harmonisation. Policy harmonisation as well as technical and administrative integration together with safety and security questions and the removal of “non physical barriers” have been detected as crucial for the efficient operation of the selected priority axes and projects.

Any obstacles are resulting in counteraction to the economic benefits coming from the investment into the infrastructure often (co-)financed by international institutions. Removing them is a major task for international cooperation.

Experience shows, that formulations in the MoUs for the Pan European Corridors had been too weak to really making the corridor countries seek ways to solve problems. The MoUs are basically limited to the implementation of studies and mutual information. In the future, commitments and obligations of the countries involved therefore have to be fixed in a more binding manner. This can be done on the basis of the Final Report of the High Level Group in making this comprehensive display of necessary measures mandatory by an agreement. In the same time it is not a question of the kind of agreement. A MoU would work if it is properly formulated. Any kind of treaty, particularly if ratification would be necessary, might take years, if ever, to come into force.

Findings of the High Level Group have to be tailored to the specific situation in each axis, the development has to be monitored. Therefore secretariats will have to continue playing an important role as bodies of coherence, continuity and support in the future.



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Guided by the principle to achieve maximum results with very limited resources, the “international administration” of the major axes must not end in itself but be reduced to the absolute necessity.

Due to different conditions, objectives and interests I do not judge it target-oriented to institutionalise a constant committee with all the neighbour countries involved. Nor is it the right time to install a coordinator after not having even gained experience inside the EU. A coordinator might lack acceptance in axes widely covered by neighbour countries. Concluding I suggest the most suitable coordination modality as the following:

- An agreement/MoU defines the objectives for the axis (based on the HLG II Report)
- An international committee for each axis once/twice a year compares objectives and achievements
- A secretariat for each axis, assisting the implementation and doing a current monitoring, delivers the necessary data.

Yours sincerely

Jürgen Papajewski

Chairman of the Steering Committees for the Pan-European Transport Corridors II and III