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Third Annual Activity Report of Coordinators on Trans-European Transport Network Priority Projects

2008

These reports only represent the opinion of the European coordinators and do not prejudge the official position of the European Commission.

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ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

2007 – 2008

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PRIORITY PROJECT 1

Berlin-Verona/Milan-Bologna-Naples-Messina-Palermo rail link

Brussels

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SUMMARY

The second year of activity ended in July 2007 with two major events: the **signature of a Memorandum of Understanding** by the Austrian Minister of Transport, Mr. Faymann, and the Italian Minister for Infrastructure, Mr. Di Pietro (Annex), in presence of the German Minister for Transport, Mr. Tiefensee, who assured German support, and the **joint submission** by Austria and Italy of a co financing request for the financial perspectives 2007-2013[1].

The third year of activity of the European Coordinator has been marked by two other milestones: the **Decision of the European Commission to grant a subvention** of 903 million € for the Brenner Base Tunnel and its northern and southern access routes and the **start of the approval procedure** for the final project of the Brenner Base Tunnel in Austria and in Italy.

The European Commission, after obtaining approval of the European Parliament and the Member States, adopted its Decision for the multi-annual planning 2007-2013 on 19 February 2008. The TEN-T budget has been concentrated on cross-border sections and on bottlenecks situated on the priority projects. This approach creates the highest leverage and avoids spending too small amounts on a too high number of projects.

The Decision to reserve an important part of the TEN-T budget for the Brenner Base Tunnel is putting a key element in place for launching this project successfully within these financial perspectives. However, the project of the Brenner Base Tunnel depends on a number of decisions being taken: the completion of the approval procedure including the Environmental Impact Assessment and the completion of a financial model for the entire project. These Decisions will lead to the issuing of the building permit. This is expected to happen in early 2009. A major step was made in March 2008 when BBT SE handed in the final project for approval in Rome and Vienna.

Aside these milestones being reached, priority project 1, the 'Berlin-Verona/Milan-Bologna-Naples-Messina-Palermo rail link', is steadily going ahead in all three Member States involved. Germany is investing heavily in one of its major bottlenecks that remain today, a high speed link between Berlin and Munich, crossing the Thüringer Wald. Austria is investing in the Inn Valley, thereby creating the necessary capacity for the north-south and east-west traffic that uses the same infrastructure here. And Italy will be achieving, still in 2008, the doubling of the Verona-Bologna railway line and will be close to finishing the works for a high-speed and high-capacity line from Milano via Bologna to Firenze, thereby creating a new back-bone for rail traffic between Torino and Napoli. All three Member States are thus investing billions in achieving this priority project.

But, in order to link these national networks north and south of the Alps, the crucial central section of the Brenner Base Tunnel and its access routes remains the centrepiece of the project. This confirms the choice of the European Commission to concentrate its interventions on the cross-border and bottleneck sections.

In this respect, the coordinator decided to maintain a high level of attention to the Munich-Verona section.

The coordinator attended all meetings of the Intergovernmental Commission Austria-Italy on the Brenner Base Tunnel and presented at each occasion a very clear list of points that remain to be done until the moment when the project will be reaching full maturity, ie completion of the EIA procedure, completion of the financial model and issuing of the building permit. This decision depends notably on the progress of the EIA procedure. If this calendar will be met, the coordinator will issue an additional intermediate report at the beginning of 2009.

The coordinator has kept and will continue to keep close contact with both governments in order to guarantee the financing of the Brenner Base Tunnel and the access routes.

Furthermore, the coordinator has been visiting in person the ongoing works and intensifying contacts with the regions, the local mayors and the elected representatives, in order to ensure a direct dialogue and to obtain information on the project from first hand.

Last but certainly not least, the coordinator has followed up on the works of the Brenner Corridor Platform, put in place on his request in May 2007. In particular, the coordinator obtained full support from the

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/coordinators/index_en.htm

Ministers of Transport, the Presidents of the Regions and the Presidents of the Railway undertakings for elaborating a new Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022. This challenging exercise shall be concluded end 2008. It will propose measures for optimising the transfer from road to rail along the existing rail link Munich-Verona until 2022, preparing for the optimal use of the new rail infrastructure thereafter, integrating aspects regarding interoperability, logistics and freight corridors and thus combating air pollution and noise. The coordinator will discuss the Action Plan with all stakeholders in the oncoming months in order to propose it for signature by the Austrian, German and Italian Minister of Transport, as well as the Presidents of the Regions from Munich to Verona and the railway companies concerned. This signature could take place early 2009 when the Decision to build the Brenner Base Tunnel will be taken.

1. MUNICH-VERONA

1.1. Brenner Base Tunnel

As mentioned in the second annual activity report, the Brenner Base Tunnel is foreseen **to be realised between 2010 and 2022 at a cost of 6 billion €** (2006 figures, without correction for inflation and without financing costs). This scenario is unchanged at the moment and takes into account a certain amount of risks. On basis of the final project that was submitted to both governments in March 2008, further detailed risk assessment is underway and will be included into the Decision process upon final approval of the project which is expected to take place in early 2009. The coordinator welcomed the detailed charts that were submitted to the CIG on its 1 July 2008 meeting.

The **approval procedure for the Brenner Base Tunnel** is running since March 2008. At that moment, BBT SE, responsible for the preparation of all studies and works leading up to the building of the base tunnel itself, submitted the final project for the approval procedure to the Austrian and Italian authorities. This procedure includes the environmental impact assessment and will run until the middle of December 2008.

Early 2009, both governments can then take the decision to launch the construction of the main tunnel, for which the financial model needs to be finalised in the oncoming months. Upon that moment, it will be of utmost importance to verify that **the following conditions are respected**: (1) completed EIA procedure; (2) firm and realistic commitments on the completion of the northern and southern access routes allowing maximal use of the new tunnel infrastructure; (2) interoperability for the Brenner Base Tunnel and for the access routes from Munich to Verona, including a coordinated management of the infrastructure for the whole section Munich-Verona, once the tunnel will be put into service, in order to guarantee optimal use of the infrastructure; (4) financial guarantees from the Member States involved.

The European Commission decided on 19 February 2008 to reserve **786 million € for both studies and works for the Brenner Base Tunnel**. The individual Decisions related to this co financing are under way and will be formalised according to the foreseen procedures. The TEN-T Executive Agency will manage these Decisions throughout the financial perspectives 2007-2013.

1.2. Pilot tunnels

Meanwhile, the work on the pilot tunnels is ongoing on Italian side. These works started back in September 2007 and the President of Italy, Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, launched the tunnelling machine in Aicha on 5 May 2008. Also the works on the pilot tunnel in Mauls are ongoing.

On the contrary, the pilot tunnels on Austrian side have been included in the ongoing environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the main tunnel. In Italy, the EIA procedure for the pilot tunnels was concluded, therefore the works started in 2007. In Austria, the EIA for the pilot tunnels was not yet realised. A decision was taken in spring 2008 to undertake one single EIA procedure for both the pilot tunnels and the base tunnel. This decision should allow a full respect of the European and Austrian environmental legislation.

1.3. Intergovernmental Commission Austria-Italy

The intergovernmental Commission Austria-Italy is presided in turn by both Member States. In 2008, the presidency lies with Italy. This important Commission is presided by Mr. Fagiolo on behalf of Italy and by Mr. Weissenburger on behalf of Austria. It deals with all important decisions related to this cross-border project. At the last meeting of the **intergovernmental Commission on 1 July 2008,** a number of important aspects have been dealt with.

The local administration of the Province of Bolzano presented on the basis of the analysis and studies worked out by BBT-SE an **important improvement for the main tunnel**, which will be imbedded in the ongoing procedure: the access tunnel Vizze/Pfitsch will no longer be planned; instead, the Mauls access will be used for a second, diagonal access to the new 'multi-functional station' (MultiFunktionsStelle, MFS) Trens situated south of the former MFS Vizze/Pfitsch. This will constitute a better solution from a (hydro)geological point of view and will eliminate the impact upon the Vizze/Pfitsch valley. The basis of this improvement was the relocation of the MFS Steinach to the south in a better geological regime; called now MFS St. Jodok. BBT SE also reported on the works of an international task group it has formed with experts to find out the most convenient and low risk approach for the tender of the main tunnel.

At the same meeting, it was concluded that the bilateral Treaty in place does constitute the basis for the construction of the base tunnel. BBT SE will see its statutes modified in order to continue its function as project promoter on behalf of both Member States. BBT SE will also seek to set up a single functional headquarter as soon as possible.

Other important discussions took place at the Intergovernmental Commission of 14 May 2008 concerning the **comparability of the traffic studies** for the Brenner Base Tunnel, the Lyon-Torino base tunnel and the Basel railway node. Analysis has been undertaken to allow the data for these different projects to be compared.

Furthermore, presentations have been made on 14 May and on 1 July on the ongoing work on the **financial model**, in particular regarding the possibility of realising a Public-Private Partnership. A decision is expected to be taken during autumn 2008.

1.4. Access routes

The European coordinator continued to stress the **need to realise the access routes** until the moment the Brenner Base Tunnel will be completed. This principle has been agreed upon by all three Member States at the summit in Vienna on 10 July 2007.

The northern access is progressing swiftly insofar as the works on the Kundl/Radfeld-Baumkirchen section in the Inn Valley are concerned. Austria is investing heavily in works that are carried out under often very complex conditions, taking into account the limited space available in the Inn Valley, forcing the new railway tracks into tunnels under the highway, the Inn River or into the mountains. This section will create additional capacity on the Munich-Verona section upon completion in 2012, as the north-south and east-west rail traffic, which for the moment is using the same two track infrastructure, will dispose of these new two tracks. The European Commission decided to reserve **58.3 million €** for works on this section.

ÖBB also actively pursues the initial studies for the further Austrian section between Kundl-Radfeld and the German border. Here, an **increased cooperation between Germany and Austria for the cross-border section between Kufstein and Rosenheim needs to be put in place**, in order to timely determine the necessary construction measures on this section.

Germany has in the past years modernised the existing sections between Munich and the Austrian border. These often technical measures have increased the capacity of the existing tracks. Some further minor measures are under preparation and can still increase capacity on the existing tracks. First studies by DB AG show that, in line with the actual growth rate, especially of the unaccompanied combined rail traffic, the **present capacity still available will be fully absorbed by 2010** and by 2012/13 if small additional measures are put in place.

This leads to the conclusion that **studies for the northern access need to be undertaken as soon as possible**, in order to allow for a timely construction of the northern access until the moment of completion of the Brenner Base Tunnel. At this moment, Germany is undertaking a revision of its infrastructure investment plan at federal level. This revision will offer the basis for the further studies and works on the northern access to the Brenner on German territory.

For the moment, priority project 1, Berlin-Palermo, and **priority project 17**, Paris-Bratislava, are still using the same infrastructure between Munich and Rosenheim. It is foreseen since long that in the future, the railway axis Paris-Bratislava will be conducted from Munich via Mühldorf and Freilassing to Salzburg. This new alignment would free up capacities for the railway axis Berlin-Palermo between Munich and Rosenheim.

Still within Germany, no progress has been made regarding the so-called **'Truderinger Kurve'** that would allow to directly connect the container terminal of Munich Riem to the Brenner corridor. The construction of this small missing link would have immediate positive effects: a time gain of 20 to 30 minutes, reduced costs because of a reduction in operations and an increase in capacity in the very dense Munich area. This small infrastructural measure should be realised as soon as possible and independent from the construction of the Brenner Base Tunnel.

The southern access is progressing well. RFI and the Provinces of Bolzano, Trento and Verona cooperate closely with the Italian state to achieve the southern access. The southern access has been split into several sections of which four were defined as **'priority sections'** as they constitute bottlenecks on the southern access and therefore need to be realised prior to the other three sections, which were defined as 'complementary sections'. In spring 2008, the largest of these complementary sections, south of Bolzano, between Branzoll and Salurn (Trento), has been definitely redefined as a priority section. The result is that almost all of the southern access is now defined as 'priority section'.

Detailed studies are ongoing at the moment for each of these 'priority sections' and can be finalised in 2010/11. The start of the works for the four original priority sections is foreseen for early 2013. These are the access to the node of Verona, the bypasses of Rovereto-Trento and of Bolzano and the section Ponte Gardena-Fortezza. The construction of the more recent Branzoll-Trento priority section will start in 2015. The preliminary studies of the section Branzoll – Salurn are ongoing and have been already presented to the public. The European Commission decided to reserve **58.81 million €** for both studies and works for the southern access.

The Italian authorities, former Minister Di Pietro and actual Minister of Transport, Mr. Matteoli, as well as the President of RFI, Mr. Moretti, have at several occasions assured their full implication in this project. This implication is evidenced by the **important progress made on PP 1 in Italy** (see under chapter 2.2).

The realization of all priority sections on the southern access is essential for an **increased modal shift** along this route. It will allow a large number of freight trains to use the route, bypassing the cities of Bolzano, Trento and Rovereto. Moreover, the additional tracks will benefit the regional passenger transport system which is foreseen to increase.

All these works will also allow to include the full interoperability of the future line and hence the installation of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS). This is another clear condition for the proper functioning of the new infrastructure.

Discussions have taken place to align work on **corridor B**, one of the six freight corridors put forward by Mr. Vinck, European coordinator for ERTMS and interoperability aspects, and PP 1. Corridor B runs all the way from Stockholm to Napoli and coincides with PP 1 from Nürnberg up to Napoli. These discussions should be pursued as there is a need to pay more attention to freight flows. For the moment, the main freight flows by rail link the northern harbors (Antwerpen, Rotterdam, Bremerhaven, Hamburg) with the rest of Europe. These so-called **'Hinterlandverbindungen'** are running short of capacity. Freight corridors A, B and C and priority projects 1 and 24 are directly concerned by this. The future focus can be twofold: reorient part of the traffic through the Mediterranean harbors, which then need to be streamlined for allowing a good intermodality with rail, and a reinforced freight oriented network, which should coincide with the TEN-T network.

2. BERLIN-PALERMO

2.1. Berlin-Munich

Germany is very engaged in realising its sections of this priority project. Berlin-Halle/Leipzig and Nürnberg-München have already been put into service. Furthermore, the German authorities have taken a firm commitment to realise the **missing link between Halle/Leipzig and Nürnberg**. This important bottleneck consist partly of a new high-speed line between Halle/Leipzig and Ebensfeld (north of Nürnberg) and of an upgraded line between Ebensfeld and Nürnberg.

The new high-speed line will be realised until 2015 between Halle/Leipzig and Erfurt and until 2017 between Erfurt and Ebensfeld. This important bottleneck between Berlin and Munich will then be gone. EU support from the ERDF budget is flowing into this project for the Länder that are eligible. Furthermore, the Commission decided to grant **58 million €** TEN-T support for the section

Halle/Leipzig-Erfurt section. This evidences the fact that PP 1 is progressing swiftly on German territory.

Concerning the completion of all PP1 infrastructure in Germany, apart from the northern access to the base tunnel, there are two more points that need to be highlighted, which are the **nodes of Nürnberg and Munich**. In Nürnberg, north-south and east-west traffic is crossing. Passenger traffic, but in particular also freight traffic. Therefore, DB AG has been pointing at the need to bring some relief to the bottleneck of Nürnberg by constructing the so-called 'Güterzugumfahrung Fürth' which would not only have a local effect, on the contrary, it will mainly serve the long-distance unaccompanied freight transport, both across the Brenner and towards the new Member States of the EU.

The Munich node has been analyzed in the framework of a Conference held in Munich on 20 April 2007. In recent meetings in Berlin with DB AG and the federal Ministry of Transport, this subject has been taken up again.

2.2. Verona-Palermo

The Italian sections south of Verona are progressing very well. The section **Verona-Bologna** will be completed still this year. During a specific on site visit, the European coordinator witnessed the swift progress, traveling along the line from Roma up to the Po river, visiting works between Firenze, Bologna and the Po river. The whole section Verona-Bologna will be **double track until the end of 2008**. This will allow increasing the modal shift on the Italian territory to a large extent. RFI is actively pursuing this by creating additional terminal capacity, also south of Verona.

The coordinator also welcomes the progress on the **Milano-Bologna-Firenze** sections. Most of these sections have been completed and will enter into service in 2009. Spectacular underground bypasses of the cities of Bologna and Firenze are under construction and will allow further time gains and increase the modal shift. The section between Firenze and Roma will be adapted for ERTMS. The section Roma-Napoli was put into service already in 2006.

This progress shows that **Italy is well on track** to realise very important sections of PP 1 in the near future. These efforts cannot be underestimated. The Commission granted support for these sections in the two previous financial perspectives.

3. BRENNER CORRIDOR PLATFORM

The European coordinator set up a so-called Brenner Corridor Platform in 2007. This Brenner Corridor Platform met at very regular intervals during the past activity year 2007-2008. The three Member States (Austria, Germany, Italy), the five regions (Bavaria, Tirol, Alto Adige, Trento, Verona) and the railway companies involved are represented in the Platform. **The Platform shall guarantee an integrated approach for the Brenner Corridor, including road and rail, going beyond the mere development of the infrastructure project and putting into place a strong cooperation between all partners involved.**

This integrated approach should offer a solution for the exponential increase of road traffic, leading to bottlenecks and congestion, **which cannot be dissociated from the respect of environmental standards**, such as the air quality and noise standards. Therefore, the Platform will come forward with short, middle and long term proposals, ranging from infrastructural improvements, management of train slots, handling at terminals, interoperability issues, to policy proposals.

At the meeting of the Brenner Corridor Platform in November 2007, a range of important decisions were taken: creation of working parties, analysis of the Brenner Action plan 2005 and the formulation of a new Action Plan 2008-2022.

Furthermore, an exchange between the Brenner Corridor Platform and various Commission services took place on 13 June 2008 in Brussels. This exchange mainly served to inform the Platform of the Community legislation and new initiatives in areas such as railway policy or environmental policy. Particular attention was devoted to the Community logistics action plan, the setting up of rail oriented corridors, rail interoperability standards, vehicle legislation and environmental legislation. The discussion focused on how the Platform could take into account these developments and be in line with such policy developments.

3.1. Working parties

The Brenner Corridor Platform decided to rally existing working groups to the work of the Platform. This allowed avoiding duplication of work and continuation of existing efforts. When necessary, new working groups have been up.
The following working groups were set up: rail infrastructure, rail capacity and rail slots, road capacity, terminals, ERTMS and interoperability, accompanying measures, cross-financing, rail freight and passenger traffic.
Regarding **rail infrastructure**, the existing **trilateral working party Austria-Germany-Italy**, presided by Dr. Adelsberger of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria, took over this working field as it has been one of the working parties installed on grounds of the Brenner Action Plan 2005. This working group has been very active to discuss traffic forecasts and infrastructure planning over the past year. Discussions focused on the comparability of data for different infrastructural projects. The cooperation with the Brenner Corridor Platform allowed cross-fertilising with other domains such as terminals and interoperability. Contacts with the regions and the railway companies have been increased as well. The trilateral working party is following up on the step by step process of timely realisation of the access routes and the Brenner Base Tunnel in order to cope with the actual transport demand. It can also be instrumental in the monitoring of the realisation of this infrastructure.
Regarding **rail capacity and rail slots**, the existing **RailNetEurope (RNE) Korridor C04 (Brenner)**, presided by Dr. Ludwig of DB AG, has been asked to take over this working field and to cooperate with the Brenner Corridor Platform on these aspects. RNE Brenner has been undertaking within its responsibilities a first study on the capacity of the actual line. It is undertaking a further study on the capacity of the future line. The work done by RNE Brenner so far has been very useful in shedding a factual light on the present capacities.
Moreover, RNE Brenner has been usefully working on a range of **interoperability issues**, notably those aspects that allow a smooth cooperation between the infrastructure managers and the freight forwarding railway companies. Some other aspects of interoperability, such as **ERTMS**, are on the contrary not covered by RNE Brenner but rather by the trilateral working party infrastructure. The trilateral working party will continue to discuss this aspect.
The **road capacity** working group has not progressed according to the initial planning and will deliver results later in 2008. Studies are under way to determine the maximum road capacity and possible bottlenecks and should also lead to formulate proposals for cooperation between road and rail along the corridor. It is worth mentioning in this place that the **Alpine Convention**, and more precisely its traffic protocol, does not allow increasing road capacity.
A new working party on **terminals** has been convening several times in the past year, under the presidency of Mr. Sondermann of KombiConsult. The working party has been cooperating closely with the Member State authorities, the regions and the railway companies to draft a report on the short and middle term planning for all terminals that have a transport relation along the Brenner corridor. This fact finding report will be useful for future activities in this area, guaranteeing that there will be sufficient capacity available to handle the modal shift that is foreseen to be realised in the oncoming years.
A further new working party on **accompanying measures** has been set up and is meeting regularly under the presidency of Dr. Satzinger of the Tirol government. A report has been produced, presenting a very wide range of measures that are intended to realise the modal shift that should guarantee the full use of the future infrastructure.
Specific attention has been devoted to one of the accompanying measures: **cross-financing**. A working party, presided by Mr. Schimanofsky from the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria, has been set up. By signing a Memorandum of Understanding on 10 July 2007, Austria and Italy have committed themselves to fully use the mark-up possibility for cross-financing the Brenner Base Tunnel. This will include a 25% mark-up for the section Innsbruck-Fortezza and 15% mark-ups in the Inn Valley and the Fortezza-Affi section. For the moment, only Austria introduced an application with the European Commission for a 25% mark-up on the Brenner pass itself. This mark-up has been approved by the Eurovignette Committee in spring 2008. Further applications still have to follow. **A full use of these possibilities offered by Directive 2006/38/CE is crucial for the completion of the financing model of the Brenner Base Tunnel.**

3.2. Brenner Action Plan

The Brenner Corridor Platform decided to analyse the results of the **Brenner Action Plan 2005**. This action plan was set up in 2002 under the Greek Presidency of the EU, in close cooperation between Austria, Germany and Italy. This analysis should allow building upon existing results and efforts. It appeared that the underlying assumptions and statements were outdated in 2008. Furthermore, only one of the three working groups that were installed at the time, the trilateral working party

infrastructure, was still in function. There is an urgent need to update the Action Plan 2005 that was focusing on the development of combined transport. Instead, the Brenner Corridor Platform has a larger scope: it aims at a modal shift and takes all aspects related to the Brenner Corridor into account.
Nevertheless, a number of issues have been progressing significantly thanks to the Action Plan 2005. Notably the effort of the Commission to co-finance the **BRAVO project** within the 6th Framework Program for Research has contributed to tackle a range of issues that were identified by the Action Plan 2005. This project, carefully managed by KombiConsult and in close cooperation with railway undertakings and other partners, delivered impressive results. The unaccompanied combined transport increased by over 50% in the 2003-2007 project period.
These conclusions led the Brenner Corridor Platform to decide that a new Action Plan is necessary. The Plan should run from end 2008 till 2022, date of completion of the tunnel. It should clearly define individual actions, determine who is responsible for carrying out each action, until which date and how the monitoring of each action will be guaranteed. The **Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022 contains over 80 actions** and was presented at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission Austria-Italy of 1 July 2008.

3.3. Next steps

The next meeting of the Brenner Corridor Platform is scheduled for 3 and 4 September 2008. The Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022 and the reports of the working parties will be discussed and decisions will be taken how to continue the work of the Brenner Corridor Platform for the oncoming year. It will be essential to further analyse the impact of the individual measures. These measures are now regrouped by theme. They will also be regrouped according to their realisation in time and their contribution to the goals of modal shift and environmental impact.
This should allow the European coordinator to **consult all parties** involved on the Action Plan and all individual measures, which will allow to significantly contributing to the objectives of modal shift and environmental impact.

The European coordinator will propose the Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022 for signature to all involved parties: Member States, regional authorities and railway companies. This signature could take place early 2009, at the moment that the final decision for building of the Brenner Base Tunnel will be taken.

4. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Also in the past year, the European coordinator has been actively pursuing the **communication on this priority project** at several occasions. Like during the first two years of activity, the coordinator has met the Ministers of Austria, Germany and Italy, several regional authorities, such as the Presidents of Bavaria, Tirol, Alto Adige and Trento, as well as the Presidents of DB AG, ÖBB and RFI.

The cooperation with the governments, the regions and the railway undertakings alike has been positive, systematic and with a high level of mutual trust. The efforts of the European Commission through the coordinating activities have been highly valued. Equally, the cooperation with BBT SE has continued in a very positive way, in particular with regard to the preparation of the meetings of the Intergovernmental Commission and of the Brenner Corridor Platform. Moreover, BBT SE has been instrumental in the visits of the Coordinator in Austria and Italy.

The European coordinator continued his regular visits to the central section of the corridor between Munich and Verona. Regular meetings with the mayors concerned and with the press have been continued offering the opportunity to obtain information from first hand. The coordinator also attended several public conferences (Amsterdam, Munich).

The European coordinator also presented his work at a meeting with the TRAN Committee in the European Parliament in November 2007. The lively exchange was highly valued by the Members of the TRAN Committee.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above activity report, the coordinator puts forward the following conclusions and recommendations:

- Two crucial steps have been taken which guarantee the progress of the project:

- The Commission decided on 19 February 2008 to grant 960 million € to priority project 1, Berlin-Palermo, of which 903 are reserved for the Brenner Base Tunnel and the northern and southern access routes. Given the importance of launching the Brenner Base Tunnel for the priority project 'Berlin-Palermo', the Commission Decision is of crucial importance.

- The final project has been handed over for approval by BBT SE to both Member States in March 2008. This launched the environmental impact assessment and should allow both Member States to decide on the construction of the base tunnel itself early 2009.

- The aforementioned conditions when deciding the construction of the base tunnel should be respected: (1) completed EIA procedure; (2) firm and realistic commitments on the completion of the northern and southern access routes allowing maximal use of the new tunnel infrastructure; (2) interoperability for the Brenner Base Tunnel and for the access routes from Munich to Verona, including a coordinated management of the infrastructure for the whole section Munich-Verona, once the tunnel will be put into service, in order to guarantee optimal use of the infrastructure; (4) financial guarantees from the Member States involved.

- The Brenner Corridor Platform has formulated a first draft for a Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022, comprising over 80 measures that should allow optimising the use of the new rail infrastructure. Short, middle and long term actions will need to be further defined, deciding who will be responsible for each individual measure, including a target date and monitoring process. This action plan should be signed by all parties involved at the moment the decision for the construction of the base tunnel is taken. The Brenner Action Plan 2009-2022, elaborated by the Brenner Corridor Platform, will offer a coherent approach to the whole corridor, integrating the environmental objectives and offering answers to modal split questions.

If the decision to build the base tunnel will be taken early 2009, the coordinator will evaluate the need to publish an intermediate report in order to communicate in a transparent way his evaluation of the decisions taken.

Annex: **Map of PP 1**

RAPPORT ANNUEL

2007 - 2008

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PROJET PRIORITAIRE 3

Axe ferroviaire à grande vitesse du sud-ouest de l'Europe

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1. INTRODUCTION

L'axe ferroviaire à grande vitesse du sud-ouest de l'Europe (Projet Prioritaire n°3), représente un élément fondamental pour garantir la continuité du réseau ferroviaire transeuropéen. Il doit permettre des connexions ferroviaires entre la péninsule ibérique (Portugal et Espagne) et le reste de l'Europe, sans rupture de charge due à la différence d'écartement entre ces réseaux, cette rupture de charge étant très pénalisante pour le transport ferroviaire, notamment de fret[1]. En qualité de coordonnateur européen et conformément à ma lettre de mission, je suis tenu à rédiger chaque année, à l'attention de la Commission, du Parlement européen et du Conseil, un rapport sur l'avancement du projet prioritaire - "Axe ferroviaire à grande vitesse du sud-ouest de l'Europe" - dont j'ai la charge. Les deux premiers rapports qui ont été publiés en 2006 et 2007[2] identifiaient aussi bien les progrès accomplis dans la mise en œuvre des projets composant cet axe que les questions qui restent en suspens ou les difficultés qui sont susceptibles de retarder sa mise en œuvre ou de compromettre une utilisation optimale de cette infrastructure. Ces interrogations méritaient des réponses – de la part des Etats membres, des gestionnaires de réseau et des opérateurs - qui, jusqu'à présent, n'ont pas été toutes clairement apportées.

Le présent rapport se veut un guide afin non seulement de fournir, à l'ensemble des parties intéressées, un état des lieux des branches qui composent l'axe prioritaire n°3 (PP3), mais également de provoquer une réflexion plus large sur la problématique de ce projet et sur les mesures appropriées qu'il conviendrait de prendre pour répondre aux questions qui restent toujours en suspens.

2. ETAT DES LIEUX

Comme indiqué plus haut, les rapports 2006 et 2007 ont déjà largement apporté des informations précises sur le projet en question3. Il me semble néanmoins utile de résumer l'état des lieux des deux branches et d'identifier – à ce stade – où se trouvent les points critiques.

2.1. Branche Atlantique

La branche Atlantique du projet en question peut-être divisé en plusieurs tronçons qui se trouvent à des stades de planification très différents.

i. Tours-Angoulême-Bordeaux

Le projet de ligne à grande vitesse (LGV) entre Tours et Bordeaux se trouve encore au stade des études. Fin février 2008, les procédures en vue de l'attribution du contrat de concession de la construction et d'exploitation de la ligne (une première en France) ont été lancées. Trois groupements avaient ainsi été retenus dès novembre 2007 et sont conduits par les principaux groupes de BTP français Bouygues, Eiffage et Vinci. Le choix final devrait intervenir à la mi-2009, en même temps que la Déclaration d'Utilité Publique (DUP). Les travaux devraient commencer en 2010 et s'achever vers 2016.

Il faut noter que les travaux sur le nœud de Bordeaux se déroulent conformément au calendrier prévisionnel et le remplacement de l'actuelle "passerelle Eiffel" (à deux voies) par un nouveau pont (à quatre voies) est intervenu début mai 2008. La nouvelle infrastructure ne sera totalement en service qu'à

1 Si certains trains de voyageurs sont dotés d'essieux adaptables aux différents écartements (et peuvent donc rouler sur les deux réseaux) ce n'est pas le cas pour le fret. Trois solutions sont possibles : le changement d'essieux, le transbordement des marchandises d'un wagon à essieu à écartement UIC à un wagon à écartement ibérique (large) ou encore le transbordement avant la frontière des marchandises dans des camions. On estime que 5 à 10% des passages de poids lourds à la frontière franco-espagnole d'Irun concernent ce type de trafic qui pourrait être évité en grande partie si les deux réseaux étaient interopérables.

2 Pour un historique complet du projet, voir les deux premiers rapports annuels couvrant les périodes 2005-2006 et 2006-2007, disponibles à l'adresse suivante: http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/coordinators/index_fr.htm.

3 Les caractéristiques des différents projets concernant cette infrastructure et les estimations de coût sont détaillées dans les rapports 2006 et 2007.

la fin du premier semestre 2009 et elle permettra de fluidifier le trafic à l'intérieur d'un des nœuds ferroviaires les plus congestionnés de France.

ii. Bordeaux-Dax

La future liaison Dax-Bordeaux a fait l'objet d'une procédure de "débat public" entre fin août et fin décembre 2006. Trois options de tracés (plus l'option « zéro ») avaient été proposées et le choix retenu est celui du tracé le plus oriental, permettant une utilisation commune d'une partie de l'infrastructure avec la future ligne à grande vitesse **Bordeaux-Toulouse**. Il est prévu que la DUP ait lieu en 2011, avec un début des travaux vers 2013, la mise en service intervenant aux alentours de 2020, ce qui est conforme avec les dates indiquées dans la décision sur les orientations communautaires en matière de réseaux transeuropéens de transport.

La réalisation de cette section reste cependant subordonnée **à la possibilité d'utiliser le réseau espagnol à écartement UIC afin de développer des services de fret** sur longue distance, le fret étant la principale justification pour la réalisation de ligne[1]. **Cette inconnue pourrait ainsi peser lourd dans le choix final des autorités françaises**.

iii. Dax-Vitoria/Bilbao

Il s'agit d'une des parties du projet les plus complexes. Sur le plan technique, la ligne traverse, en alternance des zones très densément peuplées et des zones semi-montagneuses à l'orographie particulièrement difficile. Au niveau des acteurs, **l'ADIF** (le gestionnaire d'infrastructure espagnol), **RFF** (le gestionnaire français) et **ETS**[2] (qui dépend du gouvernement de la région autonome du Pays Basque) se partagent la responsabilité des différentes sections. La section transfrontalière - non encore formellement définie – étant supervisée par une **Commission Intergouvernementale** nouvellement crée qui s'appuiera sur le **GEIE Vitoria-Dax**[3], déjà existant. Le nombre d'acteurs impliqués sur une section de projet de moins de 200 km est ainsi impressionnant.

Il est désormais certain que la mise en service de cette partie de la branche Atlantique sera en décalage de plusieurs années par rapport aux prévisions. En ce qui concerne d'une part la section (Vitoria)-Bergara-Irun, la décision sur les orientations RTE indiquait l'année 2010. La mise en service devrait plutôt avoir lieu aux alentours de 2013. Pour ce qui est de la **section transfrontalière Irun-Hendaye-Dax, le décalage** pourrait être encore plus important. Les sections entre Vitoria et Bilbao sont néanmoins déjà en construction ou en préparation, sous la responsabilité de l'ADIF, alors que la réalisation du tronçon entre Bergara et Irun vient juste de commencer[4].

Si l'ensemble des parties prenantes considère – à juste titre – que cette section doit être "mixte" afin de permettre à la fois le passage des trains de voyageurs, mais aussi des trains de fret à longue distance, l'infrastructure en construction doit pleinement tenir compte de ces objectifs de même que le modèle d'exploitation choisi pour la future ligne. Le projet, tel qu'il semble se dessiner, ressemble cependant de plus en plus à une infrastructure de transport avant **tout dédiée au transport de voyageurs interrégional ne laissant qu'une place limitée au transport de fret international**. Suivant un souhait exprimé par les autorités de la Navarre et soutenu par le gouvernement espagnol, il existe, par ailleurs, un projet visant à adjoindre au **"Y" Basque** un nouvelle branche vers Pampelune, le transformant ainsi en **"X" basco-navarrais.** La section du projet, Bergara - Ezkio/Itaso, une trentaine de kilomètres environ, serait ainsi intéressée par des courants de trafic plus importants que dans le projet initial. Il faudrait ainsi analyser en priorité les conséquences que cette nouvelle branche pourrait avoir en termes d'allocation de sillons sur le projet **France-Espagne**, notamment pour le transport de fret.

L'important décalage qui existe entre la réalisation du projet en Espagne et en France rend ainsi nécessaire – ici encore plus qu'ailleurs – **qu'une coordination exemplaire soit mise en place**, afin qu'il

1 La ligne existante est loin d'avoir atteint un niveau de saturation et ses caractéristiques géométriques sont plutôt bonnes, même si l'armement de la voie, le système de signalisation et d'électrification ne sont pas des plus récents.

2 ETS = Euskal Trenbide Sarea est l'entité dépendant du gouvernement de la région autonome du Pays Basque qui a la responsabilité du financement et de la réalisation de l'infrastructure du tronçon entre Bergara et Irun. Le projet géré par ETS requiert néanmoins l'approbation du ministère du Fomento et de l'ADIF.

3 Lui-même sous la responsabilité de l'ADIF et de RFF.

4 Le lancement des "appels à projets" a eu lieu à la fin 2007, les premiers chantiers ont démarré au printemps 2008.

n'y ait plus d'incertitudes concernant les caractéristiques techniques de la ligne[1] (notamment entre Vitoria et la frontière française), la planification précise de chaque tronçon et pour vérifier qu'il existe bien une convergence de vues en ce qui concerne la future utilisation de l'infrastructure et la place qui pourrait être réservée à chaque typologie de trafic (voyageurs courte/moyenne distance, voyageurs longue distance et grande vitesse, fret).

iv. Vitoria-Valladolid-Madrid

La ligne Valladolid-Madrid a été mise en service en décembre 2007 (ce qui a permis une réduction sensible du temps de parcours) et les tronçons vers Burgos et Vitoria sont en construction ou en planification avancée.

2.2. Points à retenir concernant la branche Atlantique.

1 – il existe un **décalage significatif** dans la planification du projet en France et en Espagne.

2 – des changements sont intervenus (ou pourraient intervenir) dans la définition de certains tronçons composant cette branche, de sorte que **les caractéristiques du projet et les conditions d'utilisation de la ligne pourraient en être affectées**. La cohérence des projets français avec ceux espagnols pourrait ne pas être assurée.

3- il ne semble pas y avoir – à ce jour – **une vision partagée de l'utilisation de l'infrastructure**, depuis Bordeaux jusqu'à Vitoria.

4- en ce qui concerne le tronçon transfrontalier **Irun**-**Dax**, même si celui-ci fait partie du périmètre du GEIE Vitoria-Dax, **il n'existe pas de structure commune**, à l'instar de ce qui existe pour le projet Lyon-Turin avec LTF[2] ou pour le projet Perpignan-Figueras avec TP Ferro, qui **ait l'entière responsabilité de réaliser ou de superviser les études relatives à cette section transfrontalière**. Ces études continuent d'être réalisées par l'ADIF pour les tronçons situés en Espagne et RFF pour les tronçons en France. En termes d'efficacité et de cohérence du projet, cette situation n'apparaît pas comme optimale.

2.3. Pistes de réflexion (I).

La branche Atlantique est caractérisée par une réalisation par phases qui s'échelonnera sur une vingtaine d'années, entre le début des travaux sur la ligne Madrid-Valladolid et la mise en service de la section Bordeaux-Dax, escomptée aux alentours de 2020. Il est difficile, dans ce contexte, de pouvoir la considérer comme **un unique projet** : il s'agit plutôt de la juxtaposition de plusieurs projets, qui apparaissent réalisés **indépendamment l'un de l'autre**. Si l'on veut que la branche Atlantique du PP3 réponde aux besoins futurs en matière de transport de voyageurs ou de marchandises, il est ainsi nécessaire d'assurer la cohérence de cet ensemble de projets.

A ce stade la priorité est de nature politique : il s'agit de faire en sorte que les deux Etats membres intéressés par ce projet **s'accordent sur ce à quoi cette nouvelle infrastructure sera destinée**. Si les priorités devaient être différentes d'un côté des Pyrénées par rapport à l'autre (ici le fret, de l'autre côté le transport de voyageurs sur le plan régional) **c'est la politique de mobilité dans les Pyrénées et en particulier le souhait exprimé** – non seulement par les Etats membres, les régions mais aussi par la Commission - **de favoriser le rééquilibrage modal pour les marchandises, qui pourrait être remise en question**[3].

Dans cette optique, j'avais émis le souhait qu'une Commission Intergouvernementale (CIG) soit mise en place afin de pouvoir *monitorer* aussi bien la section internationale Dax-Vitoria que ses accès immédiats.

1 A titre d'exemple, pour le transport de fret, les questions des rampes, du nombre des évitements, leur positionnement et leur longueur sont essentielles. Les contraintes liées à la mise en place d'une autoroute ferroviaire sont encore plus importantes.

2 Lyon-Turin Ferroviaire

3 Le problème d'interopérabilité (différence d'écartement) rend cette problématique encore plus essentielle dans le cas présent.

Je crois cependant que son rôle pourrait être encore plus ambitieux. Elle devrait être une instance permettant aux deux gouvernements d'échanger des bonnes pratiques, des informations sur leur planification respective et fournir aux ministères compétents les éléments nécessaires pour développer – en commun – une politique afin de rendre le transport ferroviaire performant et compétitif par rapport aux autres modes (route – avion – bateau).

En réponse à ma demande initiale, les deux gouvernements se sont engagés lors du sommet franco-espagnol du 10 janvier 2008 à mettre en place cette CIG – pour l'instant limitée à la seule section internationale Dax-Vitoria: si je ne peux que me féliciter de cet accord, je constate qu'au bout de six mois, cela ne s'est pas concrétisé de façon opérationnelle. J'ajoute qu'au-delà des Etats membres, la Commission européenne – en tant que bayeur de fond important – devrait avoir un rôle d'observateur actif au sein de cette CIG telle que je l'imagine. Le vice-Président Barrot – lorsqu'il était encore en charge des transports - a d'ailleurs mis l'accent sur ce rôle que joue la Commission, dans le cadre des réseaux transeuropéens de transport, lors du Conseil Informel Transports de Brdo qui s'est tenu le 6 mai dernier[1].

Je suis ainsi convaincu que si l'on souhaite rendre attractif le transport ferroviaire, à travers des infrastructures performantes, on ne peut pas avoir une vision qui se borne à un tronçon de ligne : **il est essentiel d'avoir une vision de réseau**. C'est la raison pour laquelle, je plaide pour que cette CIG puisse avoir un droit de regard sur une plus grande échelle. Il me semble absolument essentiel que la France et l'Espagne développent une vision en commun de l'utilisation[2] qu'ils veulent faire de cet axe, déclaré prioritaire au niveau européen. Ceci est d'autant plus nécessaire que la planification des différents tronçons est étalée sur une période plus longue. **Cette réflexion s'applique aussi bien à la branche Atlantique qu'à son pendant Méditerranéen**.

2.4. Branche Méditerranée.

Dans ce cas également, les tronçons qui composent cette branche se trouvent à des stades de développement très différents. L'axe Nîmes-Montpellier-Barcelone, est certainement plus avancé que la branche Atlantique et il semble très prometteur pour le transport de fret sur longue distance, grâce au dynamisme de la Catalogne et en particulier du port de Barcelone, dont l'augmentation de trafic est tout à fait remarquable[3]. Toutefois, **cet axe ferroviaire ne pourra pas répondre dans l'immédiat à l'augmentation de la demande potentielle de transport par rail** et il restera vraisemblablement handicapé par des contraintes liées à l'infrastructure au moins jusqu'en 2013. La situation, en détail est la suivante:

i. **Nîmes-Montpellier.**

Le choix du concessionnaire, en vue de la réalisation du contournement – à priorité fret – Nîmes-Montpellier prévu initialement début 2008, pourrait n'intervenir que début 2010 (avec deux ans de retard supplémentaires) compte tenu des difficultés inhérentes au financement du projet. **La mise en service est prévue en 2014**. Dans le cadre du "Grenelle de l'Environnement" que présidait le ministre d'Etat Jean-Louis Borloo, le projet a été considéré comme l'une des priorités puisque cette section est l'une des plus congestionnées de l'ensemble de cette branche. La France a déclaré à l'occasion du séminaire intergouvernemental franco-espagnol qui s'est tenu à Saragosse, le 27 juin dernier, que la question du financement (qui associe également la région Languedoc-Roussillon) avait été résolue.

ii. **Montpellier – Perpignan.**

La réalisation de la section Montpellier-Perpignan n'apparaît pas – à ce stade - comme une priorité immédiate pour la France, même si une procédure de "débat public" (Loi Barnier) devrait néanmoins avoir lieu entre avril et juillet 2009. Le choix du type de ligne n'est pas encore arrêté (LGV – LGV + fret) – et cela – tant que la démonstration que du trafic supplémentaire est généré par la nouvelle interconnexion transfrontalière avec l'Espagne à écartement UIC n'aura pas été faite. Compte-tenu des vicissitudes rencontrées dans la réalisation de la liaison Barcelone-Perpignan, la montée en puissance de cet itinéraire, pour les trafics de voyageurs et de marchandises pourrait être décalée dans le temps (voir

1 M. Barrot soulignait dans l'introduction du document de travail distribué à l'occasion de ce Conseil informel : "At European level, the Commission will step up its efforts to encourage Member States to coordinate their infrastructure policies, with a view to exchanging best practices and identifying early obstacles to funding and solving cross border constraints. It will continue to rely on the work of the European coordinators who, by their dedication, have played a major role in advancing the priority projects".

2 Une telle approche doit permettre de concilier – au mieux - les différents types de besoins qui pourrait apparaître antagonistes (le fret sur longue distance contre le transport de voyageurs local par exemple).

3 Le port de Barcelone a connu une augmentation très significative de son trafic entre 2003 et 2007, passant de 31 MT à 51 MT. Pour l'année écoulée le trafic de conteneurs s'est établi à plus de 2.5 millions de TEUs soit approximativement 25 MT.

points suivants) et cet horizon pourrait être relativement lointain. Si la capacité actuelle de la ligne apparaît suffisante tant que la totalité de la liaison Barcelone-Perpignan n'est pas devenue pleinement opérationnelle, tout retard ultérieur dans la planification de cette section – dont la mise en service était prévue en 2015[1] – risquerait de pénaliser le développement du transport ferroviaire de fret mais aussi de voyageurs sur cet axe. Il faut noter, cependant, que le financement de cette ligne n'est pour l'instant pas assuré.

iii. Perpignan –Figueras (section concédée).

La partie concédée à TP Ferro Perpignan-Figueras est quasiment terminée. Elle sera achevée, conformément au cahier des charges, au plus tard le 17 février 2009. Le concessionnaire a non seulement réussi à respecter les délais, mais aussi les coûts, ce qui mérite d'être souligné. Il ne s'agira cependant pas d'une mise en service, mais – à ce stade - d'une simple "*réception provisoire*". En effet compte tenu de la situation des accès sud (voir ci-après), il n'est pas possible de réaliser tous les essais nécessaires.

L'utilisation de cette nouvelle infrastructure – qui bénéficie – encore faut-il le rappeler – d'un soutien communautaire de plus de 170 M€ sur la période 1995-2009, risque d'être fortement handicapée – au moins jusqu'en 2012 - par les problèmes d'accès. Une telle situation – au-delà des problèmes financiers auxquels TP Ferro se trouvera confronté et qui devront être résolus avec les Etats membres – est très dommageable pour l'image et la crédibilité même de la politique des réseaux transeuropéens[2]**. La coordination des différents projets (la section concédée et les accès au sud) apparaît ainsi comme non optimale**. Il est très regrettable que ces retards n'aient pas été communiqués plus tôt, ce qui aurait vraisemblablement permis de prendre, plus en amont, les mesures d'accompagnement pour mieux faire face à cette situation.

Dans ce contexte, je constate que l'existence d'une Commission Intergouvernementale, dont la responsabilité était strictement limitée au seul tronçon transfrontalier, n'a pas permis d'éviter une telle situation.

iv. Figueras-Barcelone

Si la majeure partie de l'infrastructure (plateforme ferroviaire) entre Barcelone et Gérone est en place, la traversée de Gérone et la connexion vers Figueras à la ligne concédée à TP Ferro ont accumulé un certain retard. Pour y faire face, l'ADIF et le ministère des Transports (*Fomento)* ont prévu de mettre en place – dans un effort louable – des solutions transitoires qui devraient être opérationnelles à l'horizon 2010/2011, dans l'attente que l'infrastructure de la ligne nouvelle soit complétée. Elles concernent essentiellement les travaux de mise à écartement UIC de la ligne existante au droit de Gérone et la création d'un nouveau raccordement entre cette ligne et le tronçon concédé à TP Ferro. Le tableau suivant donne un aperçu de la complexité de la connexion entre Perpignan et Barcelone (150 km) – au cours de cette période transitoire qui se décompose de la façon suivante:

Section	Perpignan – Le Soler	Le Soler - Figueras	Nouveau raccord. Figueras et traversée Gérone	Gérone-Mollet	Mollet-Barcelona Sants	Mollet - Port
Utilisation	mixte	mixte	mixte	mixte	voyageurs	fret
Alimentation	1.500 V	25.000 V	3.000 V	25.000 V	3.000 V	3.000 V
Signalisation	KVB	ERTMS	ASFA	ERTMS	ASFA	ASFA
Nota	RFF	Concession TP Ferro	Double écartement prévu sur ligne historique	Ligne nouvelle	*Cambiador* + écart. large	double écartement

1 Décision n°884/2004 sur les Orientations en matière de développement du réseau transeuropéen de Transport

2 Cette situation pourrait également avoir un impact négatif sur le développement de futurs Partenariats Public Privé (PPP).

En ce qui concerne cette section particulièrement importante pour assurer la continuité du réseau à écartement UIC, les constatations et recommandations suivantes peuvent être faites:

1 - **Les retards enregistrés à la sortie de Barcelone et entre Gérone et Figueras pénalisent ainsi fortement la productivité de cet axe majeur du réseau transeuropéen de transport**. Il semble difficile de tabler sur un service (même minimum) utilisant le tunnel avant fin 2010/début 2011, il faut donc sérieusement envisager le fait que la concession (y compris le tunnel resteront totalement inutilisés au moins pendant quasiment deux ans. Le raccordement de Figueras représente sans nul doute le point le plus critique.

2 - Compte tenu de ce qui précède et des caractéristiques du matériel roulant – trains à grande vitesse - prévu pour être utilisé sur cette relation, **il apparaît peu probable que des connexions directes depuis la France puissent aller au-delà de Figueras** (extrémité sud du tronçon concédé) **de même que les trains venant d'Espagne devraient être limités à Perpignan**, compte tenu de incompatibilité entre le système d'alimentation de la ligne existante Perpignan-Nîmes et ces mêmes convois.

3 – Aussi, dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de solutions transitoires, **la possibilité de prolonger jusqu'à Barcelone Sants (en équipant la ligne historique d'un troisième rail) mériterait d'être étudiée**: elle pourrait permettre d'envisager dès fin 2010-2011 (moyennant la disponibilité de rames tricourant) des services directs depuis Barcelone vers Montpellier – Marseille – Lyon ou encore Paris, sans rupture de charge à Perpignan.

4 – Pour le fret, le choix des caractéristiques techniques de la nouvelle infrastructure aura une incidence majeure et pourrait ne pas être sans conséquence sur la performance du service offert. Les pentes (plusieurs tronçons, à la fois sur la section concédéé à TP Ferro et sur la ligne vers Barcelone présentent de pentes à 18 pour 1000) de même que le faible nombre d'évitements ne faciliteront pas le service de fret. Enfin, la question du matériel roulant utilisable pour ce service (quelles locomotives?) reste entièrement ouverte, même si la solution de facilité, qui s'affranchit des électrifications, plaide pour l'utilisation d'engins diesels[1].

v. Barcelone-Madrid

La totalité de la ligne Madrid-Barcelone (à l'exception de l'entrée dans cette dernière ville) est en service depuis la fin du mois de février 2008. Je me félicite de ce résultat d'autant plus que cette ligne représente une réponse forte aux attentes en matière de développement durable qui s'est traduite par une augmentation significative – en quelques mois seulement – de la part de marché du rail sur cet axe, au détriment de la route et du transport aérien.

Dans le contexte économique mondial actuel, qui voit un renchérissement du coût des matières premières, les services voyageurs à grande vitesse jouent et joueront encore plus à l'avenir, un rôle clé dans le cadre de la mobilité des personnes. Je constate – il s'agit d'une tendance que l'on retrouve pour l'ensemble du réseau transeuropéen - qu'il est toujours plus facile et rapide de réaliser une ligne à vocation domestique qu'une ligne vouée principalement au trafic international.

1 Entre la commande, la livraison et la mise en service opérationnel de matériel de traction il se passe, en moyenne, 4 années.

2.5. Points à retenir concernant la branche Méditerranée

1 – il existe comme, pour la branche Atlantique, des divergences importantes dans la planification des sections qui composent cet axe, en France et en Espagne. Dans ce cas également, **la planification française accuse un certain décalage par rapport à la réalisation des projets en Espagne**;

2 – l'impact du décalage qui existe entre la réalisation des tronçons français et ceux espagnols devrait ainsi être évalué, notamment sur trois aspects essentiels:

- **l'interopérabilité** :

- **la possibilité pour la ligne existante** (Nîmes-Montpellier-Perpignan) **d'absorber la croissance du trafic escomptée sur cet axe** (jusqu'à quand? – avec quelles contraintes?). S'il semble que la France se soit engagée à garantir à offrir les sillons nécessaires pour la desserte de la liaison Perpignan-Figueras-Barcelone, il n'en demeure pas moins que cette situation pourrait ne pas être longtemps tenable;

– **il est par ailleurs urgent de vérifier si les caractéristiques techniques de l'ensemble de cette nouvelle infrastructure sont pleinement compatibles pour son utilisation pour le transport de fret**.

3 – **la priorité immédiate concerne la gestion des les retards rencontrés au sud de Figueras** qui isolent - de facto – le tronçon concédé à TP Ferro du reste du réseau espagnol à écartement UIC. Si les solutions transitoires - en cours d'évaluation – représentent un effort louable de la part de l'ADIF, **il y aura nécessairement un décalage entre la fin des travaux sur le tronçon concédé et la mise en service de ces solutions transitoires**;

4 - indépendamment des conséquences opérationnelles (moins de trafic) et des retombées financières corollaires (perte de revenus pour le concessionnaire, mais aussi pour les autres gestionnaires d'infrastructure ADIF et RFF), **c'est l'image des réseaux transeuropéens qui est écornée**;

5 - une CIG existe déjà. Elle est limitée à la section transfrontalière et son utilité, pour gérer cette situation s'est révélée très faible voire nulle.

2.6. Pistes de réflexion (II).

Les propositions que j'avance dans le présent document reflètent, à la fois, la situation constatée sur le terrain et l'évolution possible du système de transport en Europe et dans les Pyrénées en particulier.
J'étais convaincu - dès le début de ma mission - de l'importance que les deux branches Atlantique et Méditerranée de ce projet prioritaire pouvaient jouer, non seulement pour le transport de voyageurs, mais aussi – et surtout – pour le transport de fret. Je suis encore plus persuadé que la finalité de ces infrastructures sera essentiellement tournée vers le transport de fret. Deux arguments plaident fortement pour cette vision. Le transport routier qui domine dans le transport de marchandises entre la France et la péninsule ibérique a longtemps bénéficié de carburant bon marché, et de droits de passage sur les infrastructures inférieurs à ce qui se pratique ailleurs en Europe[1] risque de perdre cet avantage compétitif du fait de la possible application de la directive "Eurovignette", notamment sur des zones sensibles comme les Pyrénées et compte tenu d'un renchérissement durable des matières premières et en premier lieu du pétrole.

En second lieu, le transport routier ne peut – seul – répondre au besoin de transport généré – par exemple – par un port comme celui de Barcelone qui ambitionne de devenir une porte d'entrée majeure, en Méditerranée, pour les trafics conteneurisés en provenance d'extrême Orient. Afin de croître et rentabiliser les importants investissements en cours, ce port doit obligatoirement étendre son "*hinterland*" (sa zone de chalandise) mais il ne pourra le faire que s'il dispose – en plus de la route – d'infrastructures ferroviaires leur permettant de transférer des quantités importantes de marchandises sur d'autres plateformes logistiques ou les centres de consommation finaux des marchandises. Sans une telle infrastructure, les ambitions de Barcelone – mais d'autres acteurs économiques importants du sud de l'Europe- pourraient être sérieusement contrariées.

1 Je fais référence ici à la gratuité de certaines autoroutes ou routes nationales à grand débit.

Si l'on n'arrivait pas à utiliser ces deux branches pour développer le transport de fret par rail, d'aucuns estiment que la solution passe par la réalisation d'une nouvelle traversée Pyrénéenne - qui figure d'ailleurs comme un projet prioritaire dans les réseaux transeuropéens de transport (PP16). Si l'idée de réaliser ce projet est des plus louables – et les gouvernements français et espagnol se sont engagés à lancer les études y afférant lors du séminaire intergouvernemental du 27 juin 2008, cela ne doit pas se faire au détriment de la réalisation – prioritaire – des deux branches Atlantique et Méditerranée. Si le développement de celles-ci devait être négligé, cela pourrait avoir des conséquences très dommageables pour le système de transport "transpyrénéen" dans son ensemble. **L'hypothèse de réaliser une nouvelle traversée – qui serait dédiée exclusivement ou quasi exclusivement au fret - ne doit ainsi pas être vue comme le prétexte pour évincer le fret sur les branches Atlantique et Méditerranée du PP3**. En premier lieu, il n'a de sens que si l'on commence à renforcer le fret ferroviaire sur ces deux branches alors que celui-ci ne représente pour le moment un part très réduite dans les échanges entre la péninsule ibérique et le reste de l'Union. Par ailleurs, dans la meilleure des hypothèses, compte tenu des procédures, des contraintes financières et techniques, il est peu probable qu'un tel projet puisse être opérationnel avant 25 ou 30 ans – l'expérience des traversées alpines, nous a enseigné à être patients. **25 ou 30 ans c'est beaucoup trop tard pour faire face aux défis du transport (congestion – pollution – augmentation du coût du transport) qui se présentent à nous, dès aujourd'hui**.

2.7. Liaison Espagne-Portugal

Le 23 novembre 2007, une réunion à haut niveau s'est tenue à Bruxelles avec les délégations portugaise, espagnole et française, pour examiner la situation générale et l'avancement des différentes branches du projet prioritaire n° 3.

Concernant le tronçon entre le Portugal et l'Espagne, les deux délégations ont assuré que les travaux avançaient selon le calendrier et le budget prévus.

La délégation portugaise a notamment confirmé que l'évaluation des incidences sur l'environnement (EIE) pour toutes les branches situées au Portugal avait bien avancé, suivant le calendrier prévu. Chaque tronçon a été préparé séparément pour former le projet global, en coopération avec la partie espagnole et les entreprises de construction.

La délégation espagnole a indiqué que si la ligne à grande vitesse servirait effectivement pour le transport de voyageurs, elle faciliterait également le transport de marchandises entre l'Europe et la péninsule ibérique, jusqu'au Portugal. Lorsqu'il a été souligné que la continuité du réseau de transport de marchandises n'était actuellement pas assurée, la délégation a expliqué que le passage des lignes classiques aux lignes à grande vitesse se ferait progressivement, dans un avenir proche.

Pour la partie portugaise de la liaison, des rapports plus détaillés ont confirmé l'avancement des travaux entre Porto et Lisbonne et entre Lisbonne et Caia, à la frontière espagnole. En particulier, au début du mois de juin, le premier appel d'offres pour un partenariat public-privé (PPP) a été lancé pour la ligne à double voie et à grande vitesse qui reliera Poceirao à Caia. Cette nouvelle ligne garantira un temps de parcours entre Lisbonne et Madrid d'environ 2 h 45. Le transport de marchandises sera possible, dans la limite de 1 000 tonnes.

D'une durée de 40 ans, la concession prévoira notamment la construction de la ligne classique entre Évora et Caia (comprise dans le projet prioritaire n° 16), ainsi que de la nouvelle gare d'Évora. L'investissement total pour la ligne entre Poceirao et Caia a finalement été évalué à quelque 1,45 Mrd EUR, soit une baisse d'environ 15 % par rapport aux chiffres de 2007.

L'évaluation des incidences sur l'environnement pour la concession de construction de la ligne Poceirao - Lisbonne, y compris la construction d'un nouveau pont sur le Tage, est terminée. Elle a été transmise pour examen aux autorités chargées de l'environnement. L'appel d'offres relatif à cette concession devrait être lancé avant la fin de l'année 2008, conformément aux prévisions. La ligne Lisbonne - Madrid doit être mise en service en 2013. Trois PPP supplémentaires devraient être lancés en 2009 pour la ligne à

grande vitesse, de voyageurs uniquement, entre Lisbonne et Porto, et pour le système de signalisation. La mise en service de la ligne est prévue pour 2015.

La délégation espagnole a fait état d'une bonne coopération entre les deux pays. Aucun retard n'est prévu.

Pour la gare de Cáceres, l'AVEP (entreprise commune hispano-portugaise) a lancé deux études concernant, d'une part, l'accessibilité de la gare et, d'autre part, l'incidence environnementale de la conception et de la localisation précise de la gare, pour les voyageurs et pour les marchandises. Les études devraient être achevées avant octobre 2008 et le modèle commercial devrait être choisi avant la fin de l'année. En outre, le site de la gare de fret dans les environs de Madrid n'a pas encore été décidé, tandis que pour les voyageurs le ministère estime que la création de quais à la gare d'Atocha ne posera aucun problème.

Le souterrain de Madrid prévu pour la circulation des trains de voyageurs entre le Portugal et le corridor atlantique a été planifié et l'EIE achevée. Les travaux doivent commencer avant la fin de l'année et la mise en service du tunnel est prévue pour 2012.

2.8. Pistes de réflexion (III)

Les travaux relatifs à la branche du projet prioritaire n° 3, Portugal-Espagne, progressent bien, conformément au calendrier et au budget. De fait, d'après les dernières informations, les coûts pour le Portugal seront inférieurs à ce qui était prévu.

Cependant, il conviendrait d'examiner davantage les éléments ci-dessous.

1) Certes, la ligne Lisbonne - Madrid sera mixte, mais sa capacité de transport de marchandises sera très limitée. En conséquence, elle pourrait ne pas être avantageuse sur le plan économique.

2) L'emplacement de la nouvelle gare de fret dans les environs de Madrid reste à déterminer.

3) Le nouvel aéroport de Lisbonne sera situé près d'Alcochete, à l'est de Lisbonne. La continuité de la liaison ferroviaire avec l'est et le sud du Portugal devra être assurée par des navettes entre Poceirao et l'aéroport, celui-ci n'étant pas situé sur la ligne à grande vitesse.

4) Le type de concession dans l'appel d'offres pour la partie espagnole de la ligne à grande vitesse n'a pas encore été arrêté. La mise en service de la ligne pourrait donc être retardée.

3. PROPOSITIONS.

Sur la base de ce qui précède, je souhaite soumettre aux Etats membres les propositions suivantes:

Je recommande que la CIG prévue pour la branche Atlantique soit opérationnelle sans tarder. Au-delà de ce vœux, il conviendrait que celle-ci (et celle qui existe déjà pour Perpignan-Figueras) **couvre non seulement les tronçons transfrontaliers, mais aussi les accès immédiats, afin de garantir la plus grande cohérence possible dans la planification, la construction et l'utilisation de ces infrastructures**. **Il s'agit de développer une vision commune de ce projet prioritaire qui n'existe pas à l'heure actuelle. Ceci implique que l'ensemble des parties prenantes au projet – y compris les régions qui participent directement à sa réalisation fassent partie de cette CIG**;

Compte tenu du temps nécessaire pour mettre en place une CIG, ou en changer les statuts, et afin d'éviter d'ultérieures des pertes de temps, on pourrait également réfléchir à la mise en place immédiate d'une structure plus légère sur la forme "d'**un groupe de contact" pour chacune des branches du projet, composé de l'ensemble des parties prenantes**. Ce groupe de contact – qui pourrait bénéficier du soutien de la Commission et du coordonnateur européen - aurait la responsabilité d'apporter des réponses – d'ici la fin de l'année 2008 - aux questions qui suivent:

– **Etablir un calendrier précis de mise en œuvre de chacun des projets qui** composent le PP3. Il s'agit d'une démarche essentielle, notamment si l'on veut privilégier le transfert modal sur ces axes, ce qui nécessite un bouleversement important de la chaîne logistique qui comprend des opérations – qui doivent être planifiées longtemps à l'avance et dont la durée peut difficilement être écourtée (achat de

matériel roulant interopérable par exemple). Les aspects financiers – à savoir la couverture financière pour la réalisation de ces infrastructures devraient également clarifiés.

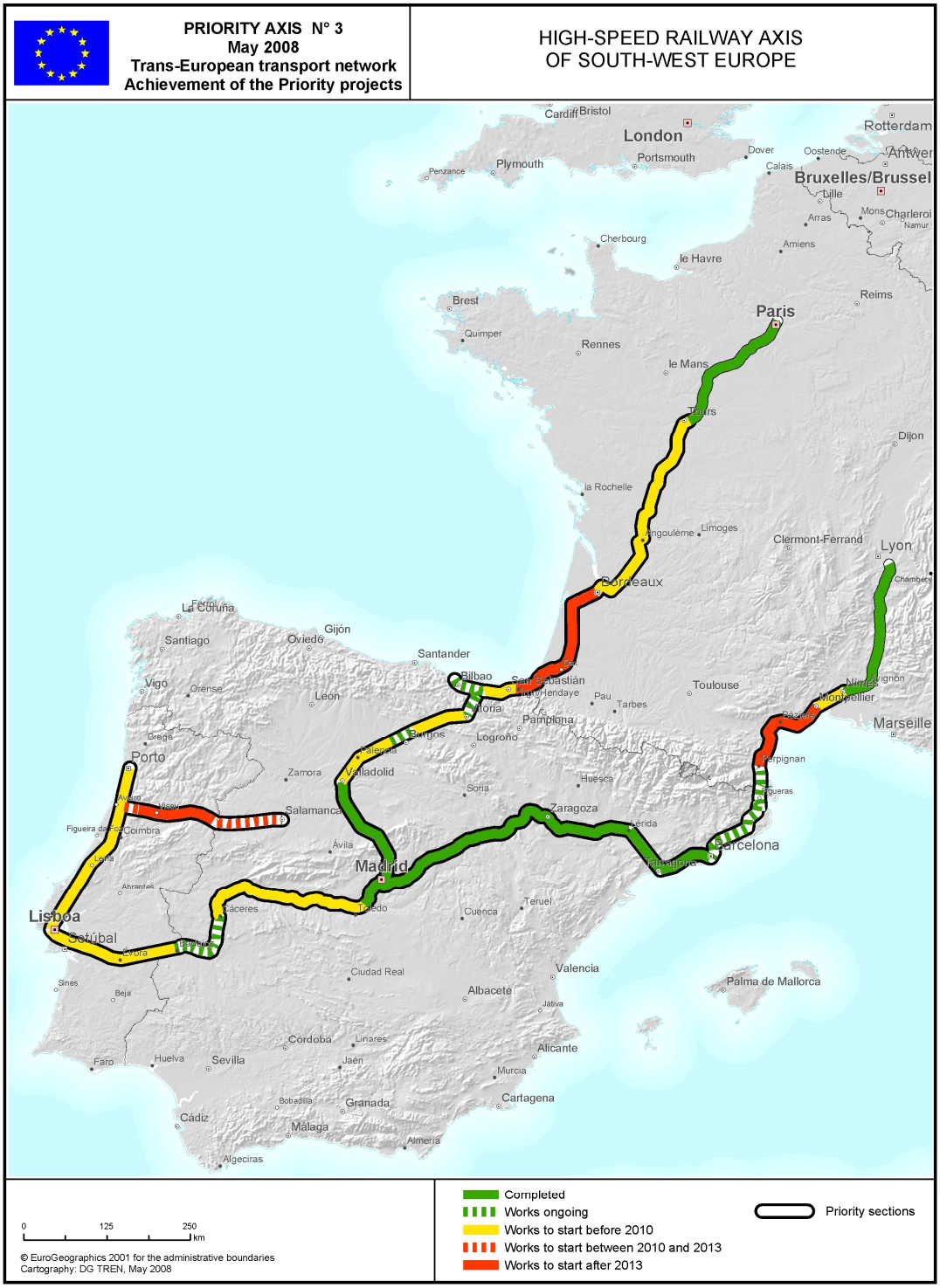
- Vérifier que la cohérence technique dans la réalisation des infrastructures qui composent le PP3 soit parfaitement assurée, afin de ne pas handicaper ou exclure certaines catégories de trafic, comme le fret en particulier.

– Pour le cas spécifique de la branche Méditerranée, il essentiel de pouvoir **définir la façon la plus appropriée pour faire face aux retards** qui affectent la connexion entre le tronçon concédé à TP Ferro et l'infrastructure à écartement UIC du réseau espagnol. Sachant que la situation transitoire doit durer au moins jusqu'en 2012, il convient que la l'Espagne et la France coordonnent au mieux les interventions nécessaires afin de garantir un niveau de service suffisant pour attirer et fidéliser, dès à présent, les nouveaux clients potentiels du rail.
Par ailleurs, les aspects relatifs à l'interopérabilité, sur le réseau de RFF dans le prolongement de la section concédée à TP Ferro, devraient également faire l'objet d'un suivi approprié afin d'assurer la continuité du réseau et du service de transport ferroviaire, voyageurs et fret, sans qu'il y ait rupture de charge ou toute autre contrainte pénalisante pour ce mode de transport.

- Pour le cas spécifique de la liaison Lisbonne-Porto, je recommande que l'évaluation de l'impact du changement de localisation de l'aéroport d'Ota – sur le projet - soit réalisée.

- Enfin d'une façon plus générale, la péninsule ibérique étant concernée par trois projets prioritaires imbriqués (PP3 – PP16 et PP19), pour garantir une meilleure efficacité dans la supervision de ces derniers un suivi en parallèle de ces trois projets identifiés ci-dessus, par le coordonnateur ou par la Commission devrait s'imposer.

Annexe: **Carte du PP3**



ANNUAL ACTIVITIY REPORT
2007 - 2008

LAURENS JAN BRINKHORST
EUROPEAN COORDINATOR

Priority Project No 6
Railway axis
Lyon-Trieste-Divača/Koper-Divača-Ljubljana-Budapest- Ukrainian border

Brussels, August 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

By Commission Decision of 5 July 2007, Laurens Jan Brinkhorst took on the function of European Coordinator for Priority Project 6. His mandate runs until July 2010.
Mr Laurens Jan Brinkhorst took over from Mrs. Loyola de Palacio, who passed away in December 2006. He has taken over her work as coordinator, fully sharing her analysis and the main priorities she set out for the project for the future. His work does not constitute a break with her work but continues it, of course adapting his mission to changing realities during his mandate.
He has adapted the distinction in four sections of the axis made by Mrs De Palacio, by singling out the Trieste – Divača (SI) section to reflect the importance of this cross border stretch. In next year's report he hopes to devote a separate section specifically to the cooperation between Slovenia and Hungary, if enough progress will be made on that section.
When taking up his functions, the coordinator immediately engaged in a round trip visiting all major stakeholders in France, Italy and Slovenia. He visited the works on the French side in the access tunnel of La Praz.
The coordinator has made full use of the momentum created by the common Franco-Italian and Italo-Slovenian submissions of July 2007 for funding under the TEN-T Multi Annual Programme 2007-2013. He has attended all meetings of the Intergovernmental Commissions, both the Franco-Italian and Italo-Slovenian. In addition, he has dedicated significant efforts to the improvement of the coordination around the historic line between Lyon and Turin.

2. THE PROJECT

The previous annual reports[1] give a comprehensive description of the priority project 6. For the coordinator it is the urgency of a policy of modal shift, of shifting road traffic to rail, which is the basic underlying reason for this project. The sensitive environment of the Alps and the unsustainable growth of road traffic make the realisation of the project an urgent one. The growing freight flows between east and west need to be accommodated in a way that is environmentally sustainable. Priority project 6 is the only east-west corridor south of the Alps.
Priority project 6 is a fundamental part of the new infrastructure that the European Union needs in order to be able to respond to the challenge of combining continued economic growth with the environmental commitments it has entered into.

For ease of reference this report distinguishes the following four sections along the project:

- Lyon – Turin
- Turin – Trieste
- Trieste – Divača
- Divača – Ljubljana – Budapest – Ukrainian border

3. LYON – TURIN

3.1. Progress on the French side

The works on the access tunnels and galleries of St Martin La Porte, Modane and La Praz are proceeding apace. The access tunnel of Modane with a length of 4.000 metres has been completed in November 2007,

[1] For a full history of the project please refer to the first two Annual Reports 2005-6 and 2006-7 available at http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/coordinators/index_en.htm

some 10 months ahead of schedule. The works in La Praz have reached a depth of 2.048 metres on a total depth of 2.572 metres, and in St Martin La Porte works are at 1.886 metres, on a total of 2.280 metres.

In addition in December 2007 the French minister of Ecology, sustainable development and planning announced the signature of the declaration of public interest of the common franco-italian part of the new railway line between Lyon and Turin.

From the beginning it was clear that a common structure was necessary to enable a coordinated approach on the base tunnel. For this reason Lyon Turin Ferroviaire, a 50-50% daughter of Réseau Ferré de France (RFF) and Rete Ferroviaria Italiana (RFI), was created in 2001 as promotor of the line.

The completion of the access routes to the base tunnel on the French side will need particular attention. It is estimated that their construction will cost some 4 billion €. The Region Rhone-Alpes has earmarked 1 billion € for the works, however clear commitments on financing of the remainder have not been made yet.

3.2. Base tunnel

The international tunnel will be constructed from the French and Italian entrances to the future structure. But excavation will also be undertaken from the base of each access tunnel. This will allow simultaneous tunnelling at several places and shorten the deadline for completion of the base tunnel by around seven years. Even before close out of the civil engineering phase, works will begin on installing the tunnel equipment, followed by preliminary commissioning tests. The base tunnel is foreseen to be realised between 2012 and 2023.

The European Commission has positively evaluated the common Franco-Italian submission of July 2007 under the Multi Annual Programme for Transeuropean Transport Networks 2007-2013. The Commission decided to reserve 671,8 million € for studies and works on the base tunnel for this period. For the financial decision to be taken, it is still necessary that the Italian authorities provide clarity on the final alignment of the Italian section of the base tunnel.

The base tunnel with a length of around 57 km will run between St. Jean de Maurienne and a place still to be determined in the Valley of Susa (see below).

3.3. Work of the Observatory

The work of the Observatory for the rail link Turin – Lyon started in December 2006 in response to opposition to the project by environmental groups, municipal authorities and citizens of the Valley of Susa. The task of the Observatory, chaired by M. Virano, was to involve all concerned parties – municipalities, region, province, railways, etc. – in a technical process during which all aspects linked to the new railway were evaluated.

The Observatory has been highly successful in establishing an inclusive process after a period of fierce confrontation. The Tavolo Istituzionale di Palazzo Chigi of 13 February 2008 gave the Observatory the mandate to end its work by the end of June 2008 and present its advice to the government on a possible alignment in the Valley of Susa.

The Observatory ended its activities according to schedule. This finalized a process during which 70 meetings of the Observatory were held and around 300 auditions were organized involving some 60 international experts.

In May and June 2008, the works gathered considerable pace with presentations by Lyon Turin Ferroviaire and Rete Ferroviaria Italiana on possible alignment in the Valley of Susa. These proposals fully respect the environmental sensitivity of the territory and make use of as much existing infrastructure as possible

According to the new proposed alignment the international tunnel would exit at Susa, where an international station will be built.

On 28th of June the Observatory published a paper with the points of agreement regarding the design of the new railway line and for a new transport policy for the territory. This paper is commonly called the Agreement of Pracatinat.

3.4. Tavolo Politico of 29 July 2008

The agreement of Pracatinat was presented at the Tavolo Istituzionale di Palazzo Chigi of 29 July. The Tavolo decided the following:

- set up a working group that will establish by the end of September which actions to undertake to upgrade local transport;
- initiate similar activities by the end of October to establish the necessary modal shift measures and upgrading of rail freight transport with the goal to alleviate the alpine roads from 100.000 trucks in 3 years;
- request the Franco – Italian Intergovernmental Commission to instruct Lyon Turin Ferroviaire to update the common application by France and Italy of July 2007 to the European Commission for TEN-T funding in line with the developments on the alignment on the Italian side;
- start the preliminary design procedures of the new line from the French border to Settimo Torinese.

Even though agreement on these conclusions was reached, the representatives of the municipalities have not signed up to the conclusions yet. The upcoming local elections in the Valley of Susa are certainly an important reason for that. Given the fact that this part is crucial for the whole project, the coordinator is of the opinion that this situation should not have a negative impact on the financing decision of the European Commission.

4. HISTORIC LINE BETWEEN LYON AND TURIN

The Coordinator has made improving the cooperation on the existing line between the Italian and French infrastructure managers and the rail operators a test case for cooperation on the new line. He is convinced that without rapid improvement in capacity of the line and without clear and unequivocal communication about works on the line and about future developments, it will be difficult to retain and gain anew a sufficient market share that would quickly make the new railway line an economically viable option.

For the new base tunnel to quickly become economically viable, it is vital that the full capacity of the historic line will quickly be used.

In September 2007 he asked French minister J.L. Borloo and State Secretary of the Italian Prime Minister, E. Letta, to nominate two representatives for a High Level Working Group (HLWG) on the existing line. Mr. A. Le Dortz and Mr. M. Virano, respectively, were nominated in November. The HLWG started meeting in December. The meetings of the HLWG have been extended to include the French and Italian infrastructure managers (RFF and RFI) and the railway operators on the line. In April 2008 agreement has been found by all involved on a common document from the infrastructure managers and a common document from the railway operators.

These common documents give for the first time clear indications on how the infrastructure managers will move forward on improving the existing line, on a development towards common management of the allocation of railway slots and generally, on other relevant issues that should be addressed by both companies together. Also the railway operators agree on the most urgent topics to be solved to enable them to satisfy their customer's needs.

It is clear to all involved that it is not a lack of demand for transport services that hampers increased use of the line. Rather it is a lack of clarity on common organisation, allocation of slots and, especially, an end date for the upgrading works on the French side of the line. This lack of clarity persists today. Operators cannot plan in advance and have to turn down customers wishing to use their services. In addition, for nearly all operators it is too onerous to buy the extra locomotives necessary on this difficult piece of railway infrastructure.

On the basis of the joint document of the infrastructure managers and of the railway operators, a mandate will be drawn up for the High Level Working Group. This mandate will include concrete dates for achievement of improvements in the exploitation of the historic line, as well as dates for implementation of more general measures to encourage better use of the line. Such measures can include prohibition to carry certain goods by road for instance.

4.1. Development of the Alpine Rolling Motorway

France and Italy have commonly started at the end of 2003 an experiment with a rolling motorway service (Autoroute Ferroviaire Alpine - AFA) of 175 km between Aiton (FR) and Orbassano near Turin through the Frejus Tunnel. The service is operated by a daughter company of SNCF and Trenitalia – Autostrada Ferroviaria Alpina.

Once the works on the Frejus tunnel will be finalised, it will allow for trucks of 4,03 metres of height to be transported via rail. It will then also be possible to increase the frequency of the service from 4 daily shuttles today to at least 10 shuttles.

The Italian and French governments have committed themselves to start with the definitive commercial service as from the 1st of January 2010. In November 2007, the French and Italian transport ministers therefore charged the Franco-Italian working group on the AFA to launch an international tender for the definitive service by July 2008.

5. TURIN – MILAN – TRIESTE SECTION

The sections along the Turin – Milan – Trieste part of the project are either in advanced stages of construction or of planning. Given the importance of realising the cross-border sections, the coordinator has concentrated most of his efforts on these sections, and not so much on the more purely national parts of the priority project.

Work on the upgrading and new construction of the rail lines between Turin and Trieste is proceeding. The Turin-Novara line has been finalised and is in operation, whereas work on the Novara-Milan section is continuing and set to be completed by 2009. The Milano – Treviglio section is in operation, this goes for the Padova – Venice section as well. The other sections are in advanced stages of planning.

6. TRIESTE – DIVAÇA

Currently there exists no credible rail alternative in the east – west direction on this part of the priority project. Its development is fundamental to enable a decrease in growth of freight traffic by road, and increasingly to capture a significant part of the traffic that is handled through the ports of Trieste and Koper.
Considerable progress has been made since July 2007 on the cross-border section between Italy and Slovenia. In that month both governments presented a common application under the 2007 – 2013 Multi Annual Programme for Transeuropean Networks – Transport. The application covers studies into the design, necessary preparatory works for approval procedures and environmental impact procedures. The Commission decided to allocate roughly 50 million € to these studies.

The Italian and Slovenian governments jointly set up an Intergovernmental Commission for the Trieste-Divaça section, which met for the first time in December 2007. Its second meeting was held on 30 June 2008.

During this second meeting the conclusion of the feasibility study, financed by INTERREG, into the alignment of this section was presented and commonly adopted.[1]
The coordinator is of the opinion that it is essential to establish a common Italo-Slovenian structure for the cross-border section between Trieste and Divaça. During the same meeting of the IGC of 30 June, both parties agreed to work towards the setting up of such a structure with the goal of creating the common company by the end of 2008, just as is the case for the Franco-Italian cross-border section. The coordinator welcomes the support that the President of LTF, P. Raulin, is lending both governments in setting up this structure.

7. DIVAÇA – LJUBLJANA – UKRAINIAN BORDER

Apart from the developments on the cross border Trieste – Divaça section, Slovenia is progressing with the preparatory works on the upgrading of the line between the port of Koper and Divaça. The upgrading of the

[1] See annex for the alignment

existing railway line between Koper and Divaça is set to start by the end of 2008. All necessary permits are in place and budgetary previsions have been made.

The Slovenian authorities have an extensive plan for upgrading the railway lines along the path of priority project 6. The authorities want to upgrade the lines to accommodate freight trains with speeds of 160 km/h and other trains up to 250 km/h. This extensive upgrading plan would mean investments of above 8 billion €.

The Slovenian authorities are considering several alternatives to realise these investments, among which the choice of a strategic private partner is seriously being considered. The support of the European Investment Bank has been asked by the Slovenian authorities and a financial study was completed. Even though the study has not been released, it appears that the EIB advocates a prudent approach and a progressive phasing in of upgrading to the network to accommodate higher speeds.

A meeting has taken place between the Slovenian and Hungarian ministers of Transport to discuss issues linked to the alignment in both countries that could impact on the section where the border will be crossed.

7.1. Developments in Hungary

In Hungary the first section ranging from Hodos to Boba will be upgraded to allow for traffic of 100-120 km/h speed; investment will be co-financed from the ISPA-fund (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession). The first part to Jajansenye-Zalalovo was completed in 2000, whereas the stretch to Boba is foreseen to be finished in 2010. From Boba on there are two alternatives:

- Boba – Székesfehérvár (114km, single track) which is a hilly route and speed increase along this line is costly. The preparation of the design is ongoing.

- Boba – Celldomolk – Gyor (82 km) linked to Gyor – Budapest which is the most upgraded railway line with speed possible to 160 km/h. Hungary intends to upgrade Celldomok – Gyor to 120 km/h by 2013, to be financed from the Cohesion Fund.

Between the Ukrainian border and Budapest the first section runs from Záhony to Nyíregyháza, after that two variants exist: Nyíregyháza – Miskolc and Miskolc – Budapest or Nyíregyháza – Debrecen – Szolnok – Budapest. The last route runs through the plains, whereas the first one crosses hilly sections and will be more costly to realise.

The coordinator intends to meet with the responsible Hungarian authorities as soon as possible in order to discuss the various alternatives. Due to a reshuffle in the Hungarian government a meeting it has not been possible to have a meeting until now, but a meeting is foreseen shortly.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

Useful progress has been made during the past year on several sections of the priority project. This goes especially for the cross-border section between Trieste and Divaça. The coordinator welcomes the joint decision of Italy and Slovenia to establish a common structure for this section, which will greatly facilitate the construction of the line between Trieste and Divaça.

Concerning the other cross-border section – the base tunnel between Lyon and Turin – progress is not aided by the absence of a definitive alignment on the Italian side of the base tunnel. The future of the project will largely be determined by political developments later this year in Italy which will lead to a final decision on the alignment. In this context, the full commitment of the new Italian government is required, also to secure the necessary financing in conjunction with the projects.

The coordinator intends to start a process, in the first instance between France and Italy, on possible policy measures to stimulate modal shift. This process should lead to the establishment of a common set of measures shifting freight traffic away from road to rail and fully use the historic line and create a good starting point for the new line.

8.1. Development towards sustainable transport infrastructure

The coordinator intends to devote more efforts to the section of PP6 through Slovenia and Hungary and hopes to be able to establish some form of institutionalised contact between the Slovenian and Hungarian authorities.

Some issues concerning alignment near the Slovenian – Hungarian border and on some sections of PP6 in Hungary need to be discussed and resolved quickly. After the upcoming elections in Slovenia and with the help of the Hungarian government, this will be an important priority for the coordinator.

Annex: **Map of PP6**

RAPPORT ANNUEL D'ACTIVITE
2007 - 2008

PÉTER BALÁZS
Coordonnateur européen

PROJET PRIORITAIRE No 17
Axe ferroviaire Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Vienne-Bratislava

Bruxelles
Août 2008

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Résumé

Le rapport d'activité 2006-2007 avait dressé un **constat positif** concernant l'avancement et les progrès du projet prioritaire 'Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Vienne-Bratislava'. Ce constat positif suivait la signature de plusieurs accords importants, des lancements de travaux et des mises en service, notamment celle du TGV Est européen[1].Le rapport d'activité 2007-2008 constate une **poursuite positive** des actions engagées et des résultats obtenus en 2006/7.

En premier lieu, cette année 2007-2008 a été marquée par la **programmation pluriannuelle 2007-2013**. La Commission européenne a lancé en mai 2007 un appel à propositions qui s'était clos le 20 juillet 2007. Suite aux évaluations, la Commission a publié sa proposition pour la programmation pluriannuelle le 19 novembre 2007. Après consultation du Parlement européen, qui a appuyé fortement la proposition, et après vote au Comité RTE-T par les Etats membres, qui ont donné un avis unanime en faveur de la proposition, la Commission a adopté le 19 février 2008 la décision sur la programmation pluriannuelle 2007-2013.

Cette programmation pluriannuelle a montré un choix délibéré de la Commission pour **concentrer les moyens disponibles sur les sections transfrontalières et des goulets d'étranglement**. Ceci est en parfait accord avec les recommandations formulées dans les rapports 2005-2006 et 2006-2007. Les moyens réservés pour le projet prioritaire 'Paris-Bratislava' seront distribués sur les trois sections transfrontalières pour un cofinancement à hauteur de 25%; les goulets d'étranglement sont desservis également, mais à des pourcentages plus réduits. En tout, 438.35 millions € sont réservés pour ce projet prioritaire. Cette programmation est en conformité avec les avancements concrets du projet prioritaire 'Paris-Bratislava' et les activités en cours.

Ceci confirme que le projet prioritaire 17, 'Paris-Bratislava' est un projet qui avance concrètement. Les Etats membres impliqués, la France, l'Allemagne, l'Autriche et la Slovaquie, ont consenti de grands efforts et poursuivent ces efforts pour réaliser ce projet. La mise en service du TGV Est européen, l'accord qui permet de lancer la section Stuttgart-Ulm ou encore le percement du tunnel sous le Wienerwald sont tous des exemples qui démontrent ces efforts consentis à dépens de grands investissements.

On peut donc conclure que les Etats membres donnent une suite concrète à la **déclaration d'intention adoptée par les quatre Ministres des Transports** français, allemand, autrichien et slovaque le 9 juin 2006 à Luxembourg. L'analyse qui suit dans ce rapport d'activité démontre par ailleurs que ce succès se base également sur l'implication directes des **collectivités territoriales** concernées par la ligne Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Vienne-Bratislava, ainsi que par **les autres acteurs** le long de cette ligne (les chambres de commerce, les sociétés de chemin de fer, des représentants des milieux industriels, des universités ou encore des associations militant pour la réalisation de cette ligne) qui ont signé une **déclaration de soutien**. La vaste liste des signataires de la déclaration de soutien montre très clairement que la construction de la ligne Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Vienne-Bratislava dans son intégralité dans les meilleurs délais est portée par une très forte volonté politique et économique au niveau local et régional le long de la ligne.

Toutefois, il convient de signaler très clairement que des problèmes subsistent qu'il faudra résoudre dans les années à venir. Il s'agit notamment de trouver un financement pour la **deuxième phase du TGV Est européen** et une approche globale pour la section transfrontalière **Munich-Salzbourg**. Ces problèmes sont réels mais surmontables et le coordonnateur estime que pour ces deux sections une volonté existe pour les résoudre.

En outre, il est vrai que plusieurs sections en travaux n'ont pas été retenues par la Commission européenne pour un cofinancement dans cette programmation pluriannuelle 2007-2013. Les raisons sont bien différentes pour chacune des sections non retenue, mais il faut se rendre à l'évidence que la Commission européenne, dû au budget RTE-T qui a été trop écourté par les Etats membres lors de la programmation de la période 2007-2013, a dû appliquer des critères de sélection très restrictives afin de maintenir une concentration élevée sur un nombre limité de projets. De cette façon, le taux d'intervention communautaire reste considérable et constitue un véritable effet de levier.

Néanmoins, on peut supposer que, moyennant un budget proche des 20 milliards proposés initialement par la Commission, le nombre de projets retenus, ainsi que le taux d'intervention aurait pu être encore plus élevé, contribuant davantage à la mise en place du RTE-T. L'exercice de la programmation pluriannuelle RTE-T en cours a démontré en tout cas qu'un budget RTE-T plus conséquent aurait pu être utilisé. Cette démonstration doit être prise en compte lors de l'exercice de programmation pour la période de financement 2014-2022. Et surtout l'effet de levier très direct du cofinancement communautaire et son incidence sur l'agenda de Lisbonne devraient inciter à augmenter ce budget.

Lors de cette année d'activité 2007-2008, le coordonnateur a participé au lancement de travaux (à Kehl) ou à des étapes importantes lors des travaux (tels que le percement du tunnel sous le Wienerwald), à des conférences et à de multiples rencontres. Il a également entretenu une correspondance régulière avec toutes les parties impliquées dans ce projet prioritaire afin de pouvoir suivre de près les développements et de transmettre son point de vue.

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/coordinators/index_fr.htm

1. SECTIONS TRANSFRONTALIERES

1.1. Gare centrale de Strasbourg - Pont de Kehl – Appenweier

- En ce qui concerne la section transfrontalière Strasbourg-Kehl-Appenweier, un traité bilatéral avait été signé le 14 mars 2006 entre la France et l'Allemagne. Depuis lors, ce traité a été ratifié par les deux Etats membres, les préparations ont progressées et les travaux pour le Pont de Kehl ont été lancés depuis mars 2008. Un début officiel des travaux a été célébré le 8 juillet 2008. Ce nouveau pont permettra une vitesse de 160 km/h et offrira des capacités accrues en vue de nouvelles offres internationales et régionales. Il contribuera également à faciliter la navigation sur le Rhin. La construction du pont s'achèvera en 2010.
- Lors de la période de progammation pluriannuelle 2007-2013, 26.95 millions € ont été réservés pour le pont de Kehl, la gare de Kehl et la section Kehl-Appenweier.
- Sur le territoire français, la section gare centrale de Strasbourg – Pont de Kehl est financée au titre de la première phase de la LGV Est européenne. Les travaux ont débuté en 2007.
- Sur le territoire allemand, cette section est incluse dans la programmation des infrastructures, hormis la courbe d'Appenweier, où cette section rejoint la ligne Bâle-Karlsruhe, pour laquelle la solution à adopter n'a pas encore été fixée. Il faudra surtout évaluer que la solution finale adoptée pour cette interconnexion offrira une solution satisfaisante pour la capacité future à long terme. Le coordonnateur a saisi le DB AG et le Ministère fédéral pour apporter une attention particulière à cette interconnexion.

1.2. Munich-Mühldorf-Freilassing-Salzbourg

- La section transfrontalière Munich-Salzbourg doit être analysée en deux parties : la section Freilassing-Salzbourg et la section Munich-Mühldorf-Freilassing.
- En ce qui concerne la section Freilassing-Salzbourg, la partie du côté allemand, gare de Freilassing – pont transfrontalier sur le Saalach, est en phase d'études. Les quelques autres kilomètres côté autrichien sont proches d'une finalisation des travaux. Cela donne donc une suite concrète au Traité bilatéral signé le 10 juillet 2007 entre le Ministre allemand des Transports, M. Tiefensee, et le Ministre autrichien des Transports, M. Faymann. Toute la section devrait être mise en service en 2013.
- Lors de la période de progammation pluriannuelle 2007-2013, 47.63 millions € sont réservés pour la section Freilassing-Salzburg.
- En ce qui concerne la section Munich-Mühldorf-Freilassing, le coordonnateur a rédigé au mois de février 2007 une analyse détaillée qui a été envoyée à toutes les parties impliquées. Cette analyse a mis en avant que la section entre Munich et Freilassing devrait être traitée dans son intégralité et que les travaux ne devraient donc pas se limiter à une partie de cette section, à savoir les relations entre la ville de Munich et la région de Mühldorf. Les retombées de ces investissements pour les trains internationaux seraient très réduites en l'absence d'une approche intégrale, et notamment d'électrification de la ligne. Un cofinancement communautaire ne produirait, dans cette hypothèse, que peu d'effet pour le PP 17 même.
- Cette approche intégrale n'a pas été adoptée par les autorités allemandes lors de la demande de cofinancement. La Commission a donc suivi l'avis du coordonnateur en ne pas accordant de subvention pour ces études et travaux.
- Le coordonnateur a entrepris les premières actions pour relancer cette section. Au-delà de l'exercice de programmation pluriannuelle 2007-2013 qui vient d'être décidée par la Commission européenne, il faudra entamer une nouvelle réflexion comment faire avancer cette section transfrontalière. A cette fin, le coordonnateur souligne le besoin de réunir tous les partenaires autour de la même table.
- Les analyses pour le projet prioritaire 17 coïncident, pour tout le sud-est de la Bavière, avec le projet prioritaire 1, 'Berlin-Palermo'. A cette fin, l'analyse concertée entre toutes les autorités concernées et rendue publique lors d'une Conférence tenue à Munich, le 20 avril 2007, constitue toujours un point de départ valable.
- Malgré les multiples interdépendances entre ces deux projets prioritaires qui doivent être pris en compte dans le cadre de la préparation des investissements dans l'infrastructure ferroviaire, le coordonnateur européen souligne que la nécessité de réaliser la section Munich-Salzburg est avant tout liée aux besoins propres à l'échelle internationale, nationale et régionale le long du PP 17. Pour cela, la nécessité d'avancer sur cette section n'est pas tributaire de la réalisation du tunnel de base du Brenner.
- La possibilité d'une interconnexion directe avec l'aéroport de Munich reste un point d'attention important. Le coordonnateur a mené plusieurs discussions sur ce sujet et espère pouvoir vouer une attention particulière à l'interconnexion des aéroports le long de cette

ligne ferroviaire lors de l'année qui suivra dans l'objectif de contribuer au transfert modal. En ce qui concerne l'aéroport de Munich, les différentes parties impliquées (Bund, Land, DB AG, Ville de Munich, aéroport de Munich) se rallient à une interconnexion via les deux sections que constituent le 'Walpertskirchner Spange' et le 'Erdinger Ringschluss'. Ces deux sections font partie de discussions plus larges comment réaliser l'interconnexion intermodale de cet aéroport à long terme.

1.3. Vienne-Bratislava

- Un accord bilatéral et une 'Lettre d'intention' qui fixent les modalités de la coopération transfrontalière concernant la section transfrontalière Vienne-Bratislava ont été signé le 11 juillet 2007 entre le Ministre slovaque des Transports, M. Važny, et le Ministre autrichien des Transports, M. Faymann. Des études sont en cours pour certaines parties qui se situent sur cette section, pour d'autres des travaux préparatoires ont commencés.
- Lors de la période de progammation pluriannuelle 2007-2013, 129.85 millions € sont réservés pour cette section. En ce qui concerne le cofinancement communautaire, le coordonnateur a toujours maintenu le fait que seuls les coûts directement liés à la réalisation de la ligne elle-même, c'est-à-dire la voirie ferroviaire ('Schienenanteil') peuvent être pris en compte. Les bâtiments de la nouvelle gare centrale de Vienne, parkings, rénovation du quartier etc ne devraient donc pas être cofinancés par l'Union européenne.
- L'accord bilatéral concerne la réalisation d'une liaison Vienne-Bratislava, qui partira de la nouvelle gare centrale de Vienne et reliera, via Schwechat, l'aéroport de Vienne, Petržalka et les gares de Filiálka et Predmestie. Une connexion avec l'aéroport de Bratislava est également prévue. Les travaux se réaliseront entre 2007 et 2015. La 'Lettre d'intention' prévoit une coopération pour la ligne ferroviaire entre Vienne et Bratislava par Marchegg et Devínska Nová Ves.
- Non seulement les deux villes de Bratislava et de Vienne seront mieux connectées entre elles par ces travaux. Au-delà des deux villes, il s'agit d'une meilleure connexion des anciens et des nouveaux Etats membres qui profiteront de cette ligne et des gains de temps considérables qui pourront être réalisés. Pour cela, il suffit de rappeler le gain de temps de 40 minutes, à travers la construction du Lainzer tunnel et de la nouvelle gare centrale de Vienne. Ces travaux progressent rapidement: le Lainzer tunnel se construit à bonne allure et les travaux de génie civil pourront se terminer déjà en 2009.
- Le rapport d'activité 2006-2007 avait analysé l'impact important de la résorption de ce goulet d'étranglement qui va accroître sensiblement l'attractivité de la ligne et contribuer directement au transfert modal, en créant des liaisons directes avec les aéroports et en gagnant des temps de parcours considérables.

2. GOULETS D'ETRANGLEMENT

2.1. Baudrecourt-Vendenheim

- Le 10 juin 2007, les 300 km de la première phase de la LGV Est européenne ont été mis en service. Des liaisons fréquentes entre Paris, l'Est de la France, le Luxembourg, la Suisse et l'Allemagne empruntent la nouvelle ligne à 320 km à l'heure. Néanmoins, à partir de Baudrecourt les TGV parcourent l'ancienne voirie, ce qui crée un véritable goulet d'étranglement en raison d'une utilisation très intense de la ligne existante où affluent trains (inter)nationaux, trains régionaux et trains de fret.
- Ces dernières 100 km entre Baudrecourt et Vendenheim près de Strasbourg constituent la deuxième phase de la TGV Est européenne qui permettra de gagner une demi-heure sur le trajet parcouru. En outre, la nouvelle ligne permettra de gagner des capacités qui manquent actuellement
- Le 24 janvier 2007, une première Convention de financement d'un montant de 94 million € a été signée par M. Perben, Ministre français des Transports, RFF et les collectivités territoriales concernées, afin de pouvoir engager les travaux préparatoires pour la deuxième

 d'un déplacement à Strasbourg, le Président de la République, M. Sarkozy, a déclaré que la deuxième phase se réalisera comme prévue pour 2014. Cet engagement a été repris à d'autres moments par le Premier Ministre et par le Ministre des Transports. Toutefois, un accord de financement n'a pas encore pu être trouvé.

- La Commission européenne a décidé de réserver 18 millions € pour la deuxième phase du TGV Est. Cette somme correspond à près de 20 % des 94 millions € de la Convention susmentionnée des travaux préparatoires de la deuxième phase.
- Le coordonnateur a commencé, suite aux élections du mois de mars 2008, de recontacter les collectivités locales, ainsi que RFF et l'état fédéral afin de pouvoir contribuer à la mise au point d'un accord pour le financement de l'ensemble des travaux de cette deuxième phase.
- Il est important que ce maillon manquant que constitue la deuxième phase soit réalisé dans les meilleurs délais possibles. Surtout le succès de la première phase, dont les taux d'occupation s'avèrent très élevés, devrait encourager à investir sur ces travaux importants et couteux. Surtout que la fréquence des liaisons Allemagne-France peut encore être renforcée considérablement. En outre, des liaisons directes entre des villes de province situées de part et d'autre de la frontière, supprimées suite à la mise en service de la première phase, pourraient être utilement améliorées, soit à travers des dessertes directes, soit à travers davantage de liaisons indirectes moyennant un maillage fort avec les trains régionaux.

2.2. Stuttgart-Ulm

- L'important goulet d'étranglement Stuttgart-Ulm, pour lequel un accord politique a été signé le 19 juillet 2007 entre M. Tiefensee, Ministre allemand des Transports, DB AG et les collectivités territoriales concernées, est en voie de préparation. Un accord détaillé sur le financement est attendu pour la fin de cet été ; les premiers travaux commenceront en 2009 ; le début des travaux des grands tunnels est prévu en 2010.
- La Commission européenne a décidé de réserver 215.92 millions € pour ce goulet d'étranglement. Suite à l'analyse du coordonnateur, qui a mis en avant la nécessité de réaliser la section Stuttgart-Ulm dans sa totalité, la Commission a décidé de suivre cette analyse et a accordé des subventions aux deux parties de la section Stuttgart-Ulm. 'Stuttgart 21' et 'Wendlingen-Ulm' constituent ensemble une nouvelle ligne à grande vitesse, comprenant d'importants tunnels à réaliser qui permettront de résorber les deux barrières physiques que constituent la montée depuis le vallon encaissé où se situe Stuttgart au plateau connu sous le nom « Filderebene » jusqu'au « Schwäbische Alb ».
- Ce projet, une fois réalisé dans sa totalité, permettra de gagner beaucoup de temps, de créer de nouvelles capacités, de contribuer au transfert modal à travers l'attractivité des nouvelles liaisons. Une nouvelle gare sera construite près de l'aéroport, permettant également une meilleure connexion avec d'autres lignes de chemin de fer. Les liaisons internationales profiteront de cette nouvelle section, mais également les dessertes régionales.
- Comme pour la nouvelle gare centrale de Vienne, tous les aspects locaux, tel que le réaménagement des transports urbains et la nouvelle gare, doivent être financés par les autorités locales, régionales et nationales; l'intervention communautaire se concentrera sur la réalisation de la ligne Paris-Bratislava; la section Stuttgart-Ulm fait partie de cette ligne et peut être cofinancée, mais sans ces aspects locaux.

2.3. St. Pölten-Vienne

- Le 3 septembre 2007, le coordonnateur européen a assisté au percement du tunnel sous le massif du Wienerwald. Par la suite, il a visité tous les travaux de génie civil entre Vienne et St.Pölten. Il s'est rendu à l'évidence que cette section progresse rapidement et que l'ÖBB pourra finaliser ces travaux jusqu'en 2013. Depuis, les tunnels du Tüllnerfeld, ainsi que la série de trois tunnels à vicinité de Perschling a bien progressé: les Steirschweiffeldtunnel (3.3 km) et Reiserbergtunnel (1.4 km) ont été percés et les travaux du Reingrubentunnel (2.8 km) ont été lancés le 29 mai 2008.
- Ce goulet d'étranglement sera donc résorbé, ce qui permettra d'accroître sensiblement la capacité de la ligne, d'augmenter la vitesse et de gagner un temps considérable sur cette brève distance, notamment grâce au tunnel sous le massif du Wienerwald.
- L'Autriche investit fortement dans ce projet, ainsi que dans les autres sections qui restent à finaliser entre Linz et St.Pölten, et a pris un engagement important qui contribue directement à la réalisation du PP 17, même si l'Union européenne ne cofinancera pas ces travaux lors de la période de programmation pluriannuelle 2007-2013. Par contre, un cofinancement a été accordé lors des périodes 1994-1999 et 2000-2006. En 2007-2008, des sections importantes ont été finalisées à Enns ('Umfahrung Enns', 10.8 km) et à Asten-Linz Kleinmünchen.

3. AUTRES SECTIONS

Les trois sections transfrontalières et les trois goulets d'étranglement constituent les priorités à réaliser, mises en avant par le coordonnateur dès son premier rapport annuel. Il reste quelques autres sections en Allemagne et en Autriche qui, même si moins prioritaires, doivent également être réalisées afin de pouvoir disposer d'une ligne 'Paris-Bratislava' intégrale.

3.1. Allemagne

La **traversée de Rastatt**, au sud de Karlsruhe, constitue un maillon manquant aussi bien pour le PP 17 que pour le PP 24, 'Rotterdam/Anvers – Genova/Lyon', ainsi que pour le trafic régional. Un permis de bâtir à été délivré depuis 1996, mais faute d'accord de financement, les travaux n'ont pas pu être entamés. La section est toujours prévue d'être finalisée jusqu'en 2015.

La section Neu-Ulm – Augsburg doit encore faire l'objet de discussions plus détaillées qui n'ont pas encore été entamées. Il n'y avait pas besoin de ce faire, aussi longtemps qu'une décision sur la section Stuttgart-Ulm n'était pas prise. Aujourd'hui, l'analyse peut être entamée, tout en sachant que l'infrastructure en place pourrait suffir encore longtemps pour répondre à la demande. Surtout, il faut souligner qu'une troisième voie a été réalisée entre Dinkelscherben et Augsburg pour des besoins de capacité régionale. En outre, la **gare de Neu-Ulm** a été modernisée dans son entièreté, libérant des terrains pour le développement urbain en réalisant une gare souterraine.

Finalement, la mise à quatre voies de la section Augsburg – Munich avance et sera réalisée pour la partie jusqu'à Mering jusqu'en 2008 et pour la partie jusqu'à Olching jusqu'en 2010. A ce moment, les trains pourront emprunter cette section à une vitesse de 230 km à l'heure, grâce à une séparation des trains de fret et régionaux et les trains (inter)nationaux. Pour cette section, un cofinancement a été accordé lors des périodes 1994-1999 et 2000-2006.

3.2. Autriche

La section Salzbourg-Linz est composée de différentes parties qui sont à des stades différents de leur développement. Il s'agit de réduire le temps de parcours de 75 à 64 minutes moyennant différentes mesures. Ces mesures ne sont pas critiques quant à la capacité de la ligne en ce moment.

Les travaux les plus importants ont été exécutés ces dernières années entre Linz et St.Pölten. Cette section est près de sa finalisation, à savoir une mise à quatre voies tout le long offrant ainsi une capacité accrue et une vitesse de 200 km/h.

4. ACTIVITES 2007-2008

Outre les activités décrites ci-dessus concernant la réalisation des infrastructure du projet prioritaire 'Paris-Bratislava', le coordonnateur a participé à un grand nombre d'autres activités pour faire avancer ce projet prioritaire.

Tout d'abord, il faut souligner les activités des deux associations principales qui militent activement pour le projet prioritaire 'Paris-Bratislava'. Il s'agit de l'association **« Initiative Magistrale pour l'Europe »**, réunissant les régions, les villes et les chambres de commerce. Cette « Initiative Magistrale », présidé par le Maire de Karlsruhe, M. Fenrich, a déjà réalisé par le passé des études qui ont permis d'appuyer une approche économique du projet en question. Elle a un groupe de travail permanent, **'Arbeitskreis**, qui se réunit 4 à 5 fois par an et qui permet un échange régulier sur les derniers développements autour du projet. Ces réunions ont eu lieu à Munich, Nancy, Salzbourg et Ulm dernièrement.

L'Initiative Magistrale pour l'Europe a publié un **atlas détaillé** en 2006, mettant un accent particulier sur l'interconnexion entre la nouvelle ligne 'Paris-Bratislava' et les désertes régionales et locales. Elle poursuit ces activités sur cette même voie en lançant une **étude en coopération avec SMA** à Zürich, focalisant sur l'optimisation de la déserte future le long de ce projet prioritaire et les interconnexions dans les villes desservies. Cette étude donnera certainement des résultats fort intéressants qui permettront de continuer une discussion bien fondée sur l'utilisation de l'infrastructure et l'impact sur les régions et villes parcourues.

Avec KLOK, un bureau d'études, et les chambres de commerce, l'Initiative Magistrale pour l'Europe a également approfondi des études sur l'utilisation de cet axe ferroviaire pour le transport de marchandises. Ces travaux se poursuivent à travers une analyse de l'**organisation logistique**, notamment les terminaux. Ces études et travaux de « l'Initiative Magistrale » donneront des résultats concrets à mettre en avant.

L´**Association TGV Est européen** est une autre association très active pour le projet prioritaire 17, Paris-Bratislava. Pendant ces trois années d'activité du coordonnateur, l'Association TGV Est européen a été présidée par l'ancien Maire de Strasbourg, Fabienne Keller. Sous son impulsion de nombreuses activités ont été organisées, réunissant les acteurs économiques, scientifiques, culturelles et touristiques autour du projet. Dans une perspective de continuation de l'excellente coopération avec l'Association TGV Est européen et pour pouvoir discuter du projet de la deuxième phase du TGV Est, le coordonnateur a rencontré récemment le nouveau Maire de Strasbourg, M. Ries.

Un soutien pour le projet a également été procuré par l'**UECC**, l'Union européenne des Chambres de Commerce, regroupant des chambres de commerce autour des bassins du Rhin, Main, Meuse. L'UECC a souligné le besoin de développer les infrastructures structurantes pour l'économie européenne afin de sauvegarder une mobilité nécessaire pour la croissance. Une réunion spécifique à Stuttgart était vouée à cette thématique, notamment en ce qui concerne le PP 17.
Finalement, il faut souligner le lancement d'une **liaison directe Paris-Munich**, le 9 décembre 2007. Cette liaison démontre les progrès réalisés sur cet axe ferroviaire. Toutefois, la desserte internationale le long de cet axe peut certainement encore être améliorée, aussi bien en fréquence, qu'en offre d'interconnexion pour rejoindre notamment tout l'est de la France en provenance de l'Allemagne et au-delà.

5. CONCLUSIONS ET RECOMMANDATIONS

Le projet prioritaire 17, 'Paris-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-Vienne-Bratislava' est un projet qui avance bien:

- Des sections importantes ont été mises en services: Paris-Baudrecourt, Appenweier-Karlsruhe-Stuttgart (hormis Rastatt), Linz-St.Pölten (hormis quelques sections autour d'Asten et d'Ybbs)
- Des sections importantes seront finalisées jusqu'en 2013, fin des perspectives financières en cours: Strasbourg-Kehl-Appenweier, Augsburg-Munich, Linz-St.Pölten-Vienne; d'autres seront bien avancées fin 2013, notamment Baudrecourt-Vendenheim et Vienne-Bratislava.
- Le goulet d'étranglement Stuttgart-Ulm, section la plus compliquée sur cette ligne, aura bien progressée et sera finalisée en 2020.

Cette ligne a donc l'opportunité d'être une réalité tangible à relativement courte échéance. Parcourant des régions d'un poids économique important, reliant de nombreuses grandes villes et donnant donc accès à près de 32 millions de citoyens.

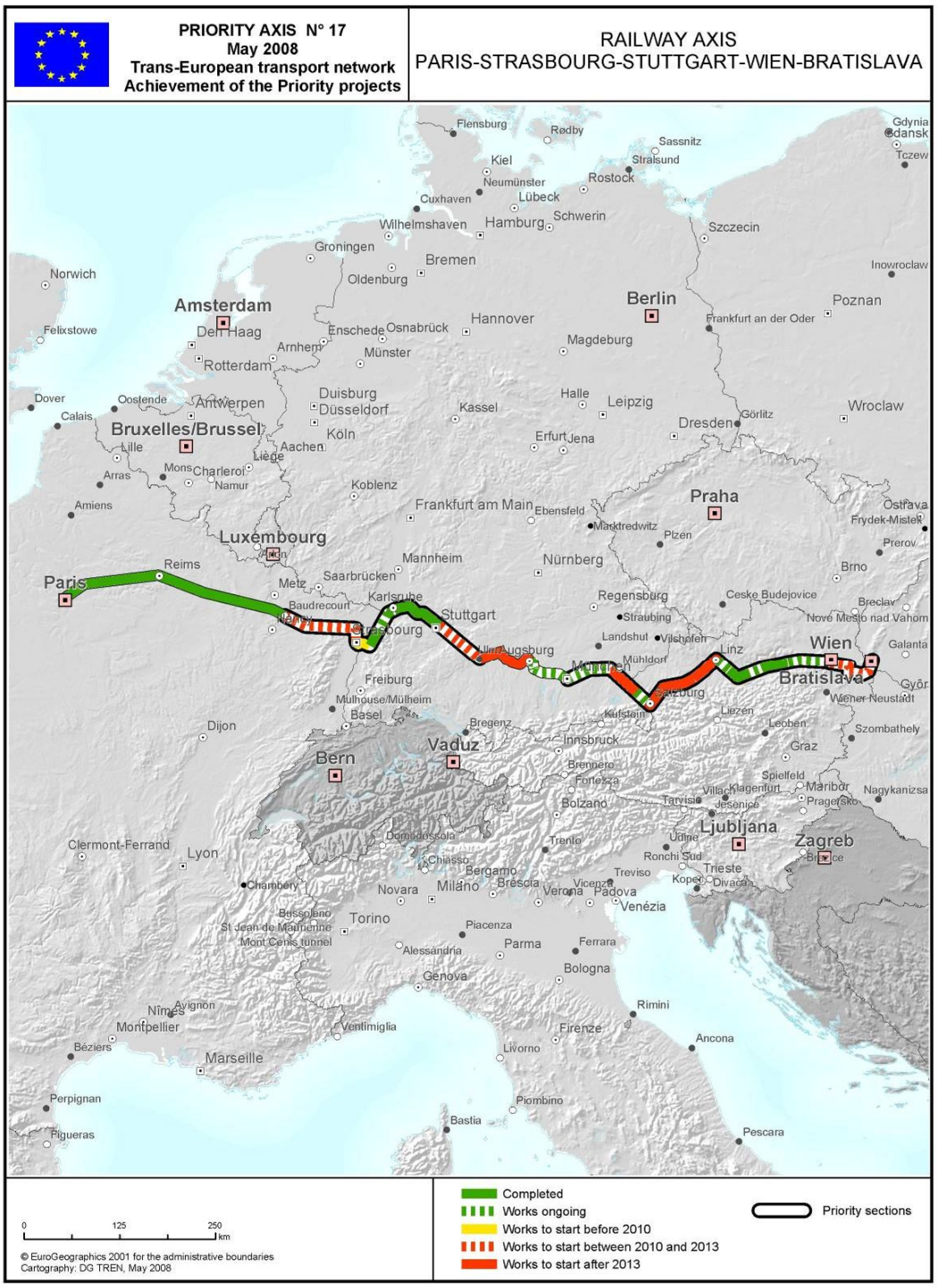
Toutefois, il y a des sections où la certitude que le calendrier sera respecté n'est pas assurée. Il s'agit notamment:

- De sécuriser une continuité des préparations, puis des travaux de la deuxième phase du TGV Est européen. Ceci implique la mise au point et la signature d'une Convention de financement.
- De clarifier l'approche pour la section Munich-Salzburg en réunissant toutes les parties impliquées afin de clarifier le financement et les phases de la réalisation de cette section.

En outre, le coordonnateur souhaite donner une suite à quelques champs d'activité qui méritent d'être approfondis. Il s'agit des aspects suivants:

- Intermodalité: vu les nombreux aéroports qui se situent le long de cet axe ferroviaire, le coordonnateur poursuit la possibilité de thématiser cette intermodalité.
- Cette intermodalité est également cruciale pour le transport de marchandises: les aspects de logistique, des terminaux, peuvent être approfondis. Dans ce cadre, il mérite de signaler que le PP 17 dispose de toute une série de terminaux situés le long de voies navigables.

Annexe: **Carte de PP17**



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

2007 - 2008

Karla Peijs
European Coordinator for Inland Waterways

Priority Project 18
Rhine/Meuse-Main-Danube

Priority Project 30
Seine-Scheldt

August 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 27th of September 2007 the Commission appointed Mrs. Karla Peijs as the European Coordinator for Inland Waterways. This report highlights the activities and meetings during the period from September 2007 to July 2008, mainly relevant to Trans-European Network for Transport Priority Projects 18 & 30, respectively on the Inland Waterways (IWT) Rhine/Meuse-Main-Danube and Seine-Scheldt, but also relevant to other inland navigation related activities and meetings.

Giving the importance of the Priority Projects, this Report has been designed to focus on activities relevant to these Projects and some to other activities in the domain of Inland Waterways Transport. Contents include the following Chapters:

Chapter 1 Introduction
Chapter 2 Priority Project 18: Rhine/Meuse-Main-Danube
Chapter 3 Priority Project 30: Seine-Scheldt
Chapter 4 Other Inland Waterways Corridors
Chapter 5 Conclusions and Preliminary Recommendations

Within each Chapter, specific problems and/or regional issues will be discussed as well as proposed approaches.

It is important to note that the Directorate General for Energy and Transport launched a call for proposals under the Multi Annual Programme of the Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) that closed on the 20th of July 2007. The submitted proposals have been evaluated in September 2007 and 11 projects concerning Inland Waterways have been retained for funding on the Decision taken by the Commission on 19th of February 2008. The relevant Decisions are underway and expected to be finalised during fall 2008.

2. PRIORITY PROJECT 18: RHINE/MEUSE-MAIN-DANUBE

2.1. Geography of the Priority Project: the Danube and its environmental specificities

Priority Project 18 encompasses approximately 3000 km of inland waterways connecting the North Sea with the Rhine-Meuse delta with the Black Sea at the Delta of the Danube. This corridor links the Rhine-Main Danube Canal through the extensive waterways systems of north-west Europe with the south-eastern European countries. It touches and crosses eight European Union countries, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria and the neighbouring countries of Croatia, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine.

This wide geographical coverage entails problems and needs which are quite different in nature in every region and country. It crosses highly developed and congested areas, like the Benelux, as well as rural and fast developing areas, like the south-eastern European countries. In both cases environmental, economic, structural and social needs vary significantly and national and local priorities do not always coincide.

In general the Coordinator has taken the approach of focusing on specific major problems and in contacting national and regional authorities as well as major groups of stakeholders in order to get a direct impression of the issues at stake and of the possible approach to be taken. In her visits to the National Authorities, she met not only with Transport Ministry representatives but, whenever possible, also with those of other Ministries like the Ministry of Environment, with the aim of having a global view of the situation not only on transport related issues but also on the environmental, social and economic aspects.

Once more due to the wide number of States involved and to the variety of problems, the Coordinator decided to focus her first year of activities on the Danube river navigability and the impact that inland waterways transport may have on its environmental specificity.

After the hearing and the appreciation by the Transport Committee of the European Parliament[1], the Coordinator intervened at the Ybbs Danube Symposium on Inland Waterway Transport[2], where Danube riparian countries signed a common Communiqué in support of the NAIADES Action Programme[3].

[1] The Hearing took place in Strasburg on July the 12th, 2007.
[2] Inland Waterway Transport Symposium. Ybbs Austria, September 13th – 14th 2007.
[3] NAIADES= Navigation and Inland Waterway Action and Development in Europe. Communication from the Commission, January 17th 2006.

The Coordinator clearly stated that while Inland Transport can and has to play an important role in providing necessary transport capacity, it is also mandatory that environmental, economical and social impacts of inland navigation be taken into account within the actual regional conditions.

This was highly valued by all stakeholders and fitted perfectly with the initiative taken in March 2007 through the joint efforts of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River[1], the Danube Commission[2] and the International Sava River Basin Commission[3]. Both supported what has been called the "Joint Statement on guiding principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin" (from now on "Joint Statement").

The Joint Statement declaration was initiated during spring 2007 and was signed by all three Commissions between December 2007 and January 2008. It calls for a common participation including all interested stakeholders when planning promotion of inland waterway transport and implementation of infrastructures needed to ensure sustainable and efficient navigation on the Danube River.

The Joint Statement has been drafted with the active participation of representatives from national and local authorities, the European Commission, groups of entrepreneurs and environmentalist and by experts from universities and private enterprises.

The Coordinator firmly supported the adoption of the Joint Statement when she met the ICPDR Commission Member States representatives at the occasion of their 10th Ordinary meeting in Vienna in December 2007.

This common approach on the impact of inland navigation not only aims to develop inland waterways transport, but also the evaluation of environmental, social and economical aspects of the initiative, has marked a change in the relations between authorities, environmental groups and entrepreneurial groups in different areas of the Danube.

With a view to consult widely, the Coordinator organised specific meetings with representatives of the stakeholders groups concerned. In November 2007 she received a delegation of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to discuss the overall approach to inland navigation and to listen to their position on different site developments.

The coordinator delivered speeches at various conferences meeting representatives of the European Barge Union (EBU), the Inland Ports and other Groups of interest, like the European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC).

While supporting this global approach, of combining inland waterways transport and protection of the environment, the Coordinator tackled more specific controversial situations in the Danube riparian States. In each case the approach has always been driven by the concept of listening to all parties and keeping a balanced approach.

2.2. Straubing-Vilshofen navigability in Bavaria

The 70 km Danube section, between the cities of Straubing and Vilshofen in Bavaria, on the one hand represents a major bottleneck for what is considered a sustainable and efficient inland navigation along the Danube; on the other hand, it is considered as the last free flowing section of the Danube River in central Europe and therefore in some ways a last example of the type of river habitat that has to be preserved against any human intervention.

These two mutually exclusive evaluations have been the basis for a very long controversy between those who claim a sustainable and consistent inland waterway throughout the year long and those who want to preserve what they regard as the last corner of wild Danube bio-diversity habitat in central Europe.

The German Federal Parliament voted in 2002 that no restriction to the free flowing river should be built in that section of the Danube. At the same time, within the Regional Planning Procedures a set of Variants

[1] International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, ICPDR Members include Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine and the European Commission

[2] Danube Commission (DC) Members are Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Serbia, Slovakia, Romania, Russia and Ukraine.

[3] International Sava River Basin Commission (ISRBC) Members are Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia

have been evaluated including: Variant A limited to river engineering works, Variants C/C2.80 requiring one weir, and Variant D2 requiring three weirs.

Substantially, Variant D2 has been dropped because of its enormous impact on the river habitat. Variant A, entailing the construction of groynes and spur dikes as well as maintenance dredging, can provide some improvement of the actual status of navigability. However the draught level at low water will be of 1.80 meters and for 185 days per year the draught depth will reach 2.50 meters. In this case the accident risk, due to narrows at the Mühlham bend will not be mitigated. The study claims that Variant C2.80 will provide a draught depth of 2.30 meters in low water conditions and a depth of more than 2.50 for 290 days per year.

Because the situation has come into a serious deadlock, the Federal Ministry of Transport, together with the State of Bavaria, submitted a Study proposal to the Trans European Network for Transport Call for Proposals in July 2007. This Study, independent from the Variants, but searching for an alternative that would be between those two, has been retained for financing by the European Commission.

The Coordinator visited the Federal Ministry of Transport and the Federal Ministry of Environment in January. Subsequently she paid a visit to Straubing in February where she had the opportunity of meeting firstly a wide variety of environmental groups, secondly the local and national entrepreneurs and then finally a selected group of personalities form the two sides.

After having listened to the concerns and the complaints of both sides, the Coordinator formulated the proposal of setting up a common Monitoring Group, between environmental and transport experts, who will follow closely the development of the study on the effect to the Danube habitat independently from the previously formulated proposals. In addition all those present agreed to include a thorough analysis of the alleviation to the overall regional environment due to the transfer of a certain quantity of freight from the regional highways to inland navigation. Professor Weiger of Bund Naturschutz, agreed to take part in such a Group if an overall analysis of the regional traffic would be included in the study and not only the two Variants would be taken into account.

This proposal, that follows logically the path set up by the Joint Statement and by the speech of the Coordinator in Ybbs, is now being evaluated by the relevant political bodies and the Coordinator informed personally the Bavaria Transport Minister on this approach.

The Coordinator, following the conclusions of the meetings in Straubing, proposed that a Monitoring Group be set up by the Ministry of Transport under the Chairmanship of a renowned expert. The Group will include specialists from the transport sector as well as from the environment sector. The aim of this Group would be to support the activities of the Ministry of Transport, not only in the evaluation of the impact on the river according to the solution chosen, but also, and even more significantly, to evaluate the importance of sustainable inland transport for overall regional traffic and therefore of the overall environmental impact due to the growing demand of freight transportation.

On the 14th of July, the Coordinator visited Berlin and met Mrs. Karin Roth, German State Secretary for Transport. Both agreed that the Monitoring Group will be included in the Study Decision in order to proceed with a global evaluation of the impact on the environment and on the transport system in the region.

2.3. Inland navigation in Romania: Calarasi-Braila navigability and Port of Bucharest

After the 1989 revolution, inland navigation in Romania has not been regarded as priority and has suffered from this. However, more recently, important studies for the restoration of efficient and consistent navigation conditions have been financed by the former ISPA[1] Programme.

The so-called ISPA I project in Romania is relevant to the feasibility study and the works needed in order to restore good navigability conditions between the ports of Calarasi and Braila. The flow of the river is diverting more and more through the Bala-Borcea branches instead of the main Danube branch. This means that ships have to sail some 100 km more when travelling from Calarasi and Constanta.

The Feasibility Study has been completed and the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the infrastructure construction has been accepted by the environment Ministry in Romania and delivered to the Commission, DG-REGIO, for approval. The proposed infrastructure works entail the construction of a bottom sill at the entrance of the Bala branch canal in order to transfer a substantial volume of water from the Bala-Borcea branches to flow into the main Danube branch. At present the situation is that, in low water conditions, 80% of the water flows into the Bala-Borcea branches. With this intervention, it has been

[1] ISPA= Instrument for Structural Policies for pre-Accession by DG-REGIO

calculated that the ratio will be reduced to 60%. Additional works are needed to protect side rims, blocking the flow into some side arms.

These measures have been heavily contested by environmental groups arguing that the bottom sill will have a strong negative effect on fish migrations, particularly on the habitat of the sturgeon. Additionally also the measures on the side canals are contested with the explanation that this measure will alter existing bio-diversity in the habitat.

A series of Workshops have been organised by DG-REGIO and by the Romanian authorities for the analysis of possible alternatives. Romanian authorities' adaptability, with the support of mainly ICPDR and of the Coordinator made it possible to reach a global agreement on setting up a Monitoring Group that will be in charge of analysing data and of assessing activities during the second phase of the project, i.e. during the construction phase. The definition of the tasks and of the activities of the Monitoring Group, have been mandated to ICPDR that has provided its proposal in February 2008.

The Romanian authorities have launched the tender for the construction phase in November 2007 and then in February 2008. However it has been declared void because all three applicants have been considered not eligible. The new version of the tender, including the Monitoring Group activities as drafted by ICPDR is about to be launched.

Although the contents of the tender have gained transparency and a better approach to the constructions, the resulting delays, may have a strong negative impact on the overall project because the ISPA budget period ends in 2010 and the time to develop all the works has reduced considerably.

Additionally it has to be noted that further works have to be performed in order to straighten out the EIA, acceptance of which is still pending.

In this context, the Coordinator visited Romania in order to promote a more global approach. The Coordinator met the Minister of Transport, his State Secretary and she discussed with the Director General possible inland navigation developments. The Coordinator visited Calarasi and travelled along the branch where infrastructures are foreseen.

The Coordinator also asked to visit the site where the construction of the port of Bucharest was planned in the 80s at the First of December village (actually one of the two planned ports). She was informed that the port and the canal infrastructures were completed for 70% since the early 90s. Now they have been completely abandoned and spoiled. Nevertheless, large infrastructures still exist including the port basin and the concrete rims of the canal up to the Danube River. The Coordinator was impressed by the important role that such a structure could play, if properly restored, in transporting large quantities of freight by barges now travelling by road from Constanta to Bucharest. She was informed that the area was assigned to the Ministry of Environment and that an initiative should start with the reassignment to the Ministry of Transport.

During the same visit, the Coordinator met the State Secretary for Environment and pledged for a restart of works for the opening of the Bucharest-Danube canal and for her support in promoting inland waterways transport with the aim of alleviating the overall environmental impact caused by the growth of road traffic between the port of Constanta and Bucharest.

Only a few days later, the Ministry of Environment gave back to the Ministry of Transport the responsibility over the area including the port and the Bucharest-Danube canal. This fact opens the possibility of launching a study to evaluate the feasibility, the advantages, and the costs if the canal is opened to inland navigation. Even more than in other cases, this canal would be useful for freight transportation but it could also be a good opportunity to boost the local economy through tourism and leisure navigation.

2.4. Bulgarian-Romania common Danube section

In February the Coordinator visited Bulgaria where she had a technical meeting with the State Secretary of Transport and her staff who explained the activities going on in Bulgaria concerning the Danube. The State Secretary explained the process to implement the River Information Services (RIS) from Vienna to Bulgaria. The plan is detailed but implementation has not yet started. The Coordinator was informed about the activities relevant to the construction of the bridge in Vidin and on the cooperation with Romanian authorities for the rehabilitation of navigation conditions along the common stretch of the river. It was mentioned that the two countries are evaluating the condition for setting up a common structure for the management of the activities involved.

During her May visit to Romania, the Coordinator was informed that there were still difficulties in setting up the common group of interest for the restoration works on the common Danube stretch as DG-REGIO proposed. For these activities 140 M€ are available, 70 assigned to Romania and 70 to Bulgaria. The two countries have set up a Working Group to identify the best structure for the Common Group of Interest. A solution is not expected before the end of 2008.

As far as Bulgaria is concerned, the Coordinator also met the Minister of Transport, who confirmed the strong commitment by his government to the development of inland navigation with the construction of inland ports and the connection to the maritime ports. The fleet in Bulgaria has similar problems as in Romania: barges are quite old and many of the skippers migrated towards the Rhine area where working conditions are much better. The Minister reiterated the commitment of Bulgaria towards the implementation of the NAIADES action programme and the RIS programme[1].

2.5. Austrian Danube navigability

The Austrian stretch of the Danube is characterised by three separate sections: the long stretch from the German border until Vienna, the Vienna crossing and the section between the capital and the Slovak border.

The first section does not require intervention as it is already well regulated and has consistent and reliable navigation conditions. The same can be said for the crossing of Vienna where infrastructural works have been performed in the past, constructing a second arm of the river for the protection of the town from recurrent flooding.

The section east of Vienna instead requires intervention for the restoration of the riverbed and for the removal of existing side protections and the improvement of groynes. The region is a natural park and is classified as NATURA 2000 area. The works are considered as a good example how to handle inland waterways infrastructures in a protected area.

After feasibility studies that have been submitted to a wide consultation and with the support of the environmental groups, a pilot project has been launched in order to perform these infrastructure works in selected areas in order to evaluate its impact and effectiveness.

The Coordinator visited Austria on several occasions, meeting the Transport State Secretary and other institutional representatives, intervening at the ICPDR annual Meeting and taking part at the latest transport meeting for the launch of the National Annual Programme for Transport.

Implementation of River Information Services (RIS) is very advanced and has been taken as a model also outside Europe, for instance in Egypt.

2.6. Slovak and Hungarian Danube navigability

The Coordinator has visited both countries and has met representatives of the Ministries of Transport as well as the Ministries of Environment.

In the Slovakian stretch of the Danube there are no major problems for the navigability, consider that the second lock in Gabcikovo, now closed since a few years, is under repair and is expected to be back in operation before the end of 2008. As soon as it is back in operation, further maintenance will be performed on the other lock. During her visit to Bratislava, the coordinator has been informed that both operations are due to be completed during 2009.

In Slovakia the navigability as well as the governing of waters is the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment. The Slovak Environment State Secretary has ensured the Coordinator that necessary measures will be undertaken to maintain proper navigability of the Danube.

Inland navigation activities are under evaluation for the river Vah from Zilina till the Danube to reduce the congestion on the relevant highway and railway corridors.

In the common stretch between the two countries the navigability conditions become critical due to the non-reliable water levels. In the late 80s, two locks and a relevant power plant were planned in Gabcikovo, in Slovakia and two locks and a power plant in Hungary near Nagymaros. While the Gabcikovo ones have

[1] RIS= River Information Services.

been built, the construction of the ones in Nagymaros was cancelled in the early 90s. Still the image of a lock in Nagymaros is associated with the past communist regime and all parties consider the lock unviable.

The Gabcikovo power plant has also generated a contentious situation between the two countries. During her visit to Budapest, the Coordinator has been informed about the creation of a common Study Group, between Slovakia and Hungary, for the solution of the water dispute.

Additionally, the Hungarian section of the Danube is characterised by low waters due to lack of maintenance and to the fluctuation of the river, resulting in low waters in many sites. A study has been launched for the analysis of the necessary interventions to ensure navigability and the maintenance of the riverbed.

2.7. Danube riparian States non-EU Members.

The coordinator met the State Secretaries of Croatia, Serbia, Moldavia and Ukraine during the Danube symposium held in Ybbs.

From those informal meetings the Coordinator retained a good view of the major issues at stake, in particular on the contentious dredging of the Bystroe Canal in the delta.

The intervention of the Coordinator at the April 2008 Economic Forum of the OSCE[1] in Prague was the second opportunity to inform and to meet representatives of these countries. The Coordinator also held meetings with representatives of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

Certainly the continuity of the Danube navigation, in particular in Serbia, is of outmost importance. However wider political considerations have to be taken into account and it has been decided to postpone visits and discussions with these countries to a later date.

3. PRIORITY PROJECT 30: SEINE-SCHELDT

This Priority Project stretches from the Seine in Conflans for 106 km in France and connects to the Lys River in Flanders. It concerns the construction of the Canal Seine North Europe that will ensure the connection between the north-western ports of France with the Meuse, Rhine and Scheldt rivers basins, while at the same time there will be consolidation works in rivers and canals in the southern part of Belgium.

The feasibility studies and the Environmental Impact Assessment have been performed as well as the public enquiry. At this stage the pending issue is the detailed financing of the construction and the definition of the toll that will be needed to complement the grants from the French government and from the concerned French regions and departments that have been confirmed at the beginning of July.

The Coordinator strongly encouraged the creation of the Intergovernmental Commission (CIG) between France, Wallonia and Flanders as well as the setting up of a European Economic Group of Interest (EEGI). The Parties are working on this and it is expected that CIG and the EEGI will be implemented before the end of 2008.

The Coordinator visited the Ministry of Transport of Wallonia and met the Transport Minister of Flanders. Both Belgian regional governments have confirmed their support for the project and their acceptance, in principle, of a toll for the new connection, whose definition will be one of the most important tasks of the CIG.

Studies and infrastructure works are included into the TEN-T multi annual programme of the European Commission. These will start by the end of 2008.

4. OTHER INLAND WATERWAYS CORRIDORS

The Coordinator focused her attention mainly on the issues relevant to the navigation issues impacting on the rivers included into the two TEN-T Priority Projects, however she was invited to discuss other cases like the Elbe in the Czech Republic and the Po in Italy.

[1] OSCE= Organisation for the Security and the Cooperation in Europe

4.1. Elbe and Oder rivers in Czech Republic

The Coordinator visited the State Secretary for Transport in the Czech Republic and was informed about the bottleneck on the river Elbe at Decin. The issue being that in order to have reliable and efficient navigation, the construction of a lock in Decin is foreseen that would ensure a draught of more than 2.5 meters. However the area is part of NATURA 2000 and the impact of a lock is considered as too destructive for the bio-diversity. The situation is grid locked and would deserve some attention in the near future to verify if there are alternatives to clear this bottleneck and connect the Czech Elbe to the German network.

During the meeting, the State Secretary informed the Coordinator on the intention to launch a study on the construction of a canal that will allow the connection of the rivers Elbe and Oder to the Danube. This project is still in its infancy and no feasibility study has yet been drafted.

4.2. Po river basin in Italy

In May, the European Parliament hosted an exhibition on the River Po and connected canals. This inland network is becoming more and more important since some private enterprises have initiated its use as intermodal transport between short sea shipping transport in the Adriatic Sea and the rail and road intermodal platforms in Mantova and in Cremona.

Considering the highly industrialised region of the Po valley, inland navigation on the Po canal could also be used to alleviate the heavy freight traffic between the Lombardy and Veneto regions.

4.3. Terneuzen bottleneck in the Netherlands

The connection between Priority Project 30 and the Western Scheldt is ensured by the canal that links Gent with the Dutch port of Terneuzen. Although it has not been included into the Project until now, the canal presents a bottleneck in that it would require a lock to ensure that there is enough capacity.

In order to further enhance the advantages that the Priority Project Seine-Scheldt can provide, it will be useful to evaluate the impact and the costs of such an infrastructure. Surely it should be a part of the project as the access to the Scheldt.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

In general terms, Inland Waterways have to be regarded as an opportunity not only to develop a most environmentally friendly mode of transport, but as a possibility for the development of the overall basin region from an environmental, economic, agricultural and tourist points of view.

Inland navigation is and will be a very important instrument in support of a wider strategy to develop an environmentally sustainable transport system in Europe.
Early recommendations for most urgent activities concern, on a general basis, support for the implementation of the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin and its transposition to other European river basins.

The implementation of the NAIADES Action Programme represents a priority for the development of the market, the refurbishing of the fleet, the creation of attractive working conditions linked to investing on human capital.
The Coordinator will engage in pursuing an efficient and sustainable inland navigation sector through the promotion of a modernised fleet and the creation of intermodal platforms that will integrate navigation with other modes of transport for greater mutual benefit.

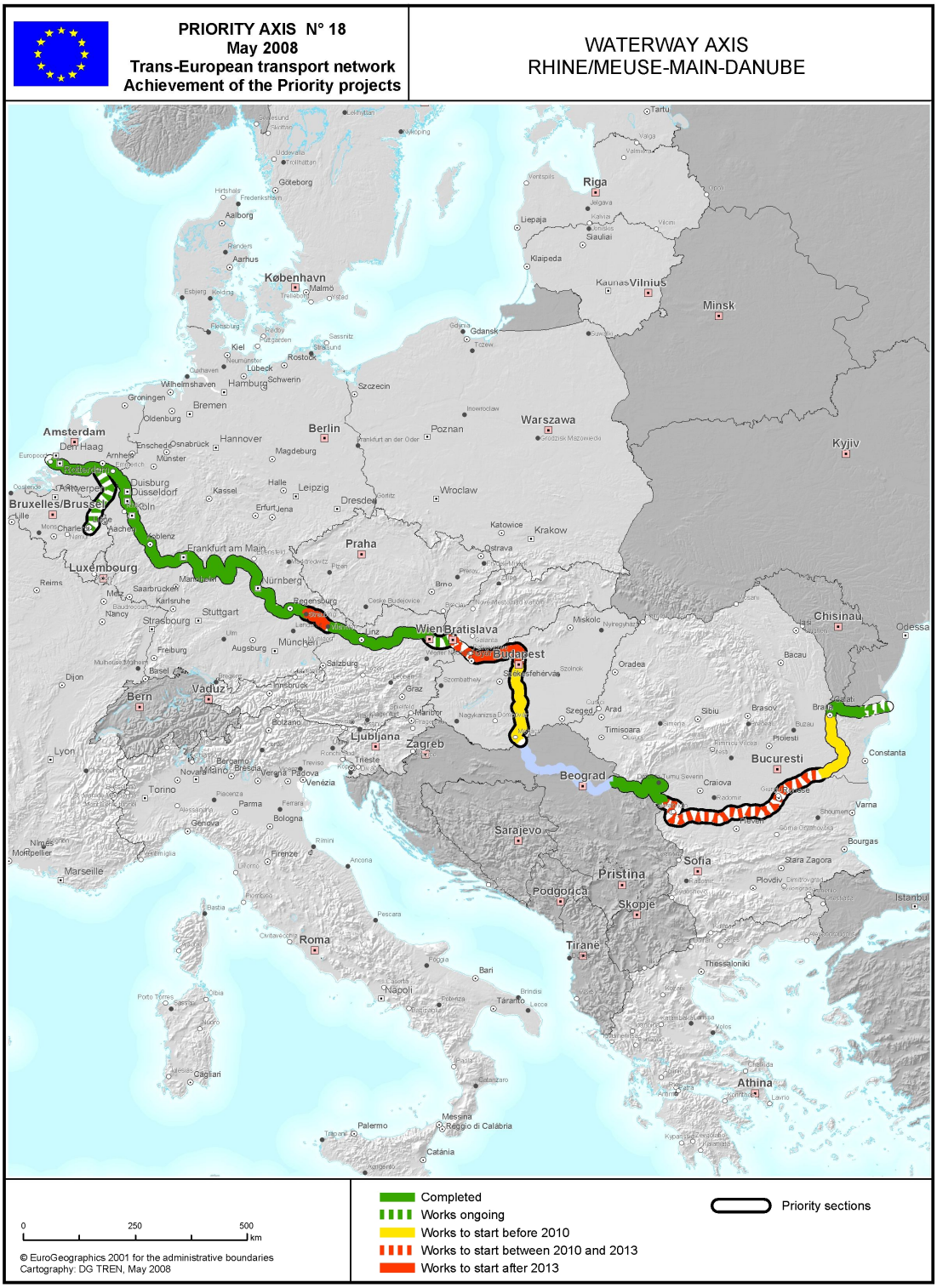
A sustainable inland navigation sector requires that safety and security are ensured using a well organised network of services like RIS services, on-line connection between all users, fire brigades and oil spill services.

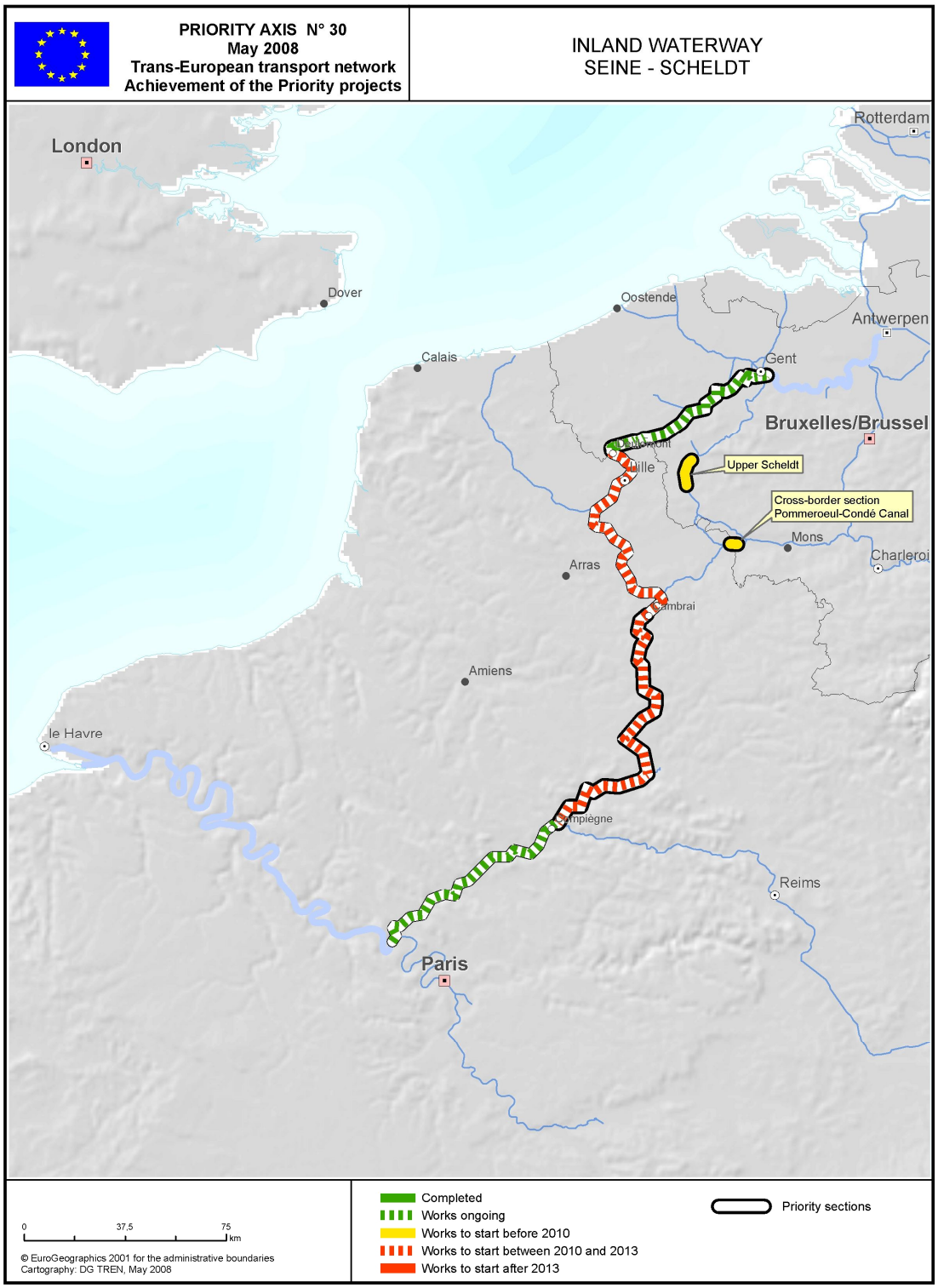
In addition, regions crossed by an efficient and sustainable inland navigation system will require hinterland connections that can produce benefits in terms of global environment, economic resources, tourism attraction and work post developments.

The Coordinator will focus her efforts on these issues during the next year, as well as on the continuation of the finding of solutions to more specific bottlenecks, as described in the previous chapters.

Annex

Maps of Priority Projects.




PRIORITY AXIS N° 30
May 2008
Trans-European transport network
Achievement of the Priority projects
INLAND WATERWAY
SEINE - SCHELDT
London
Dover
Calais
Oostende
Rotterdam
Antwerpen
Gent
Bruxelles/Brussel
Lille
Upper Scheldt
Cross-border section
Pommeroeul-Condé Canal
Mons
Charleroi
Arras
Cambrai
Amiens
le Havre
Compiègne
Reims
Paris
0
37,5
75
km
© EuroGeographics 2001 for the administrative boundaries
Cartography: DG TREN, May 2008
Completed
Works ongoing
Works to start before 2010
Works to start between 2010 and 2013
Works to start after 2013
Priority sections

ANNUAL REPORT

2007 - 2008

LUIS VALENTE DE OLIVEIRA
EUROPEAN COORDINATOR

Priority Project 21 - Motorways of the Sea

Fostering seamless transport in the European Union
Motorways of the Sea in the European logistics chain

September 2008

Disclaimer

The opinions expressed are those of the European coordinator, based on his findings in the first year of his tenure. His findings mainly reflect situations in countries that he has visited in this period: Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Slovenia and Greece. Not having been able to visit the UK, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, the Baltic States, Poland and the Black Sea region, he draws no conclusions on the situation there.

He does make recommendations of a general nature where his talks, including those with the European representative organisations, have convinced him that the issues addressed are common throughout Europe.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Motorways of the Sea form an integral part of the European transport infrastructure network. This realisation led the European Union to incorporate Motorways of the Sea expressly in the 2004 Community Guidelines for the development of the Trans European transport network. Motorways of the Sea have two clearly defined objectives: concentration of freight flows on sea-based logistical routes to reduce road congestion and/or improve access to peripheral and island regions and states.

The objectives of improving transport logistics and of cohesion are clear. The first objective has only gained in importance with endemic congestion now affecting nodes in every single Member State. The overriding climate goal of the European Union to achieve 20% less greenhouse gas emissions and the subsidiary goal of saving 20% of energy consumption by 2020 make the achievement of the first objective of the Motorways of the Sea more urgent.

The importance of Motorways of the Sea and the need to realise them needs no further explanation. However, the concept of Motorways of the Sea suffers from a lack of clarity among the players in the sector. This could explain in part why the results with their implementation so far are at best mitigated.

For this reason the Commission entrusted the coordination of the project to a European coordinator. Luís Valente de Oliveira took up this function with his nomination on 27 September 2007. In agreement with Vice-President Barrot, he decided to dedicate the first year of his tenure mainly on issues in the Mediterranean and on the Atlantic façade by meeting as many players in the sector as possible, to discover where possible implementation problems lie and what the sector and the Member States expect from the European Union in this field.

This report sets out the coordinator's main findings. It aims at describing the main factors that influence the sea leg of the transport chain in the European Union and its neighbouring countries. It tries to set out the likely developments affecting this part of the EU transport chain. It equally attempts at providing clarity in the concept of Motorways of the Sea.

Finally, the European coordinator addresses a number of key recommendations to the European Commission on the manner in which to ensure optimal development of Motorways of the Sea in the existing EU and national frameworks.

II LUBRICATION OF THE LOGISTICS CHAIN

Transporters will only choose a sea borne leg in their logistics chain if the maritime option is just as good as or better than the other modes. Competing with road is a tall order under the current circumstances, as road has the advantages of being flexible, at low cost compared to other modes and enabling door-to-door delivery. However, its environmental performance and endemic congestion on parts of European roads start to erode its competitive advantage.

Maritime transport intra EU and the other modes will only be really competitive if they are more environmentally friendly, quicker, more reliable, economically more attractive or safer. Apart from the cost and the environmental factors, the others do not depend on the sea leg of the transport chain. The interlocutors in the sector have assured the coordinator that 'the sea' is not the problem. The problems arise at the so-called 'breaking points' of the cargo: in ports, with documentation treatment, in forwarding cargo on either by road, rail or inland waterway or by pipeline.

Fundamental improvements in the efficiency and availability of other modes (maritime, inland waterways, railways, pipelines) are necessary to speed up the change from an unbalance of 75% road transport in the EU to a more balanced distribution between modes.

A number of conditions have to be met to enable this change, such as equitable infrastructure charging, incorporation of the 'polluter pays' principle, incentives to choose other modes and regulatory changes. One of the most pressing changes necessary to enable a shift from road to other modes seems to be a change in the mindset of all players in the transport logistics chain – railway companies, inland waterway transporters, road hauliers, forwarders, port management, shipping companies, Member States' different

authorities and so forth – the realisation that there is no other option for future logistics, but the option for co-modality.

Co-modality necessitates a transparent, no frills, easy to access and fully reliable informatics system. This e-system gathers and relays information from all operators in the logistics chain, such as customs, terminals, barge operators, rail operators, road hauliers, shippers, depots, inspection authorities, forwarders, insurance agents and port authority. Conditions for enrolling in the e-system should enable all logistics operators to participate. Such systems already exist in some places, these should be generalised and improved upon and enable inclusion of options of tracking and tracing of cargo.

a. Efficiency indicators – benchmarking

As far as maritime is concerned, the relative attractiveness of ports is a crucial part in the decision of transporters to choose for a sea borne leg. This goes both for the efficiency of ports and ports services themselves and for the fluidity of the hinterland connections. Not all shippers are confronted with the same problems; oil tankers, roro vessels, ropax vessels, container vessels, general cargo and bulk carriers all have their specific characteristics warranting some form of special treatment. However, the problems they all have in common concern port efficiency and hinterland connections.

Objective and transparent efficiency indicators for ports and for the hinterland connections have to be used in order to enable rational choices of freight destination. These indicators or benchmarks are equally necessary for the decision to give a Motorway of the Sea quality label or 'blue flag' to a shipping line or a port.

A whole range of benchmarking instruments already exists, for instance ISO, EFQM. Some quick thought should be given to a hierarchy of benchmarking instruments and choosing the most objective and practicable among these, at least for part of the indicators. It should be revised at regular intervals in order for developments in the market to be taken into account.

Concerning efficiency of ports and ports' services themselves, they will range from turn around time of ships, electronic treatment of port approach and further handling, customs' treatment, safety and security in ports, 'gate to gate' time, Teu/ha, Teu/metre of quay length, revenues/ha, costs/ha, existence of 'harbour master' figure, organisation of terminal operation/management, ease of procedures concerning pier/terminal expansion, existence of concessions for terminals, degree of independence of port management from the state (ownership structure), waiting times in port, distinction between EU and non EU cargo, flexible charging system - distinction in harbour charges between deep sea vessels and roro and other smaller vessels, possibilities of tracking and tracing cargo.

Special emphasis should be placed in this respect on the degree of independence of ports and whether or not parts of ports operations have been privatised. Privatised management and operation of terminals and different port services, have a demonstrable positive effect on efficiency. This allows maritime to better compete with road transport. All industry players in the sector agree that concessions in ports should be stimulated as it is the best tool to increase productivity.

The right balance between privatisation, safeguarding of fair competition and safeguarding of public interests, needs however to be fully ensured by the Member States in the interest of the long term economic and environmental interests of the European Union.

For Motorways of the Sea special attention should be given to the port's policy regarding vessels for short sea shipping serving the needs of Motorways of the Sea like roro, ropax and feedering vessels. Ports always prioritise deep sea vessels over short sea vessels. For feedering activities, short sea vessels or barges sometimes need to manoeuvre beside a deep sea vessel for two, three or more times, as deep sea vessels will always get priority for docking, space being at a premium. For this reason it is important to include in the indicators determining port's eligibility for a Motorways of the Sea quality label indicators on the policy of ports in relation to short sea activities. For instance: do ports reserve dedicated (parts of) quays for Motorways of the Sea traffic, do they have dedicated terminals or space for short sea activities, is there a distinction in harbour duties between deep sea and other vessels.

A last crucial indicator for Motorways of the Sea is the environmental performance of the vessels that are being deployed for its service. Allowances have to be made for the start-up time of a line, as no shipper will use its newest ships for a line that is just being developed. However, minimum criteria should be met also in the start-up time. Depending on the commercial success of the line, and therefore on the question whether a line retains its Motorways of the Sea status after the start-up period, better environmental performance should be guaranteed.

The Port of Rotterdam traditionally gives out concessions for 25 to 30 years. Its concession policy changed radically over the last years. Now future concessionaires have to live up to commitments they make, not only in terms productivity, but equally in modal shift percentages to be attained. The Port has integrated a "bonus/malus" system in its concession activities concerning modal shift – if a concessionaire improves on its stated modal shift goals it gets a reduction on the price, if it undershoots its targets it has to pay extra. This example should be replicated throughout the EU.

Regarding hinterland connections such indicators will vary from travel time to main destination areas, availability of railway slots, existence of dedicated freight corridors, and hierarchy of connections (road, railways and inland waterways), connection to and location of logistics platforms, exploitation and openness to third parties of logistics platforms.

Sensitive commercial information will not be made available through such a benchmarking exercise. The goal is to arrive at an objective picture of ports' performance and hinterland connections. Sensitive cost/revenues information will always be aggregated and used to arrive at certain orders of magnitude in the comparison between ports.

Benchmarking is a moving target and should thus be a dynamic exercise. After a first impulse at EU level for benchmarking for the purposes of Motorways of the Sea, benchmarking should be completely handed over to the appropriate independent benchmarking authorities.

b. Relative attractiveness of ports

With the coarsest of generalisations, and of course plenty of individual exceptions, a difference between the North and South of Europe in port and hinterland efficiency exists, according to all interlocutors. Port management and port services are generally found to be more efficient and reliable in the North than in the South. The degrees of privatisation and proneness to labour unrest also differ between North and South. Whereas all European ports need to improve efficiency and need better hinterland connections, according to all interlocutors the coordinator has met, the situation is particularly acute in Southern Europe.

There is also a big difference between big and secondary ports. Most of the growth and development perspectives are now at secondary ports, since the big ports suffer from congestion in relative terms and thus from loss of efficiency.

Member States in the south with plenty of development opportunities should fully exploit this competitive advantage for their secondary ports and equally improve the position of their big ports, by rendering port services and hinterland connections more efficient.

The better port efficiency and better hinterland connections in the North of continental Europe, especially good road infrastructure, absence of restrictions to use roads during parts of the week, good railway freight services and efficient use of inland waterways for shipping freight from roughly Antwerp, Rotterdam, Hamburg to final destinations, eternize the lopsided freight movements from the North to Central and South of Europe. For example, cargo from China often sails through Suez, the Mediterranean and the Atlantic to be transported from North European ports by inland transport to final destination in Central and Eastern Europe, Northern Italy and Turkey. This is now the best and quickest way of organising transport in Europe; however, looking at the map of the world it does not make a lot of sense.

In the Mediterranean there is at least place for four big (transhipment) ports – Piraeus/Thessaloniki, a cluster of ports in the North Adriatic (Trieste, Koper, Rijeka, Monfalcone and Venice), Genoa/Marseille and a Spanish group of ports (Barcelona, Valencia Algeciras). Also in the South of Europe, the port of Sines can be developed into transhipment port. The ports of Gioia Tauro and Marsaxlokk already mainly serve as transhipment ports. However in general, such big efficient ports do not yet exist in the Mediterranean. Enabling the development of such efficient ports has the advantage of avoiding a five day delay of ships having to sail through the Mediterranean to Northern European ports, with the ensuing loss of 5 days worth of bunker oil and the negative environmental and economic consequences.

European ports lagging behind in efficiency will only realise the opportunities the current climate offers them, if the Member States and the sector players concerned make haste with the realisation of better hinterland connections and with more efficient management of (operations in) ports.

c. Cooperation between ports

Just as important is the realisation that ports will have to cooperate on a number of issues, as they only stand to gain from cooperation. This is especially true for cooperation on infrastructure (connections to hinterland, to logistics platforms and choice of location of logistic platforms) and safety and security. It is too expensive for each port to develop its own hinterland connections, railway connections being a case in point. Cooperation on infrastructure and safety and security issues does not imply specialisation of ports. Competition between ports is of the essence, the market will decide where to direct what kind of cargo.

However, given the relentless increase in the size of ships, cooperation and some form of specialisation will naturally develop. Some ports have natural draught of 18 metres, some ports can increase draught at rather limited costs, and other ports can only accommodate smaller vessels without having to engage in expensive infrastructural works. For other ports deciding upon increasing draught is only interesting if there are very convincing economic reasons for it, like increasing draught in Kavala or Alexandropoulis to accommodate bigger oil tankers.

d) Infrastructure charging

Equitable infrastructure charging is a priority. Equitable infrastructure charging and internalisation of external costs is a precondition for arriving at a European logistics chain that is economically sensible and environmentally responsible.

The current infrastructure charging gives road transport a competitive advantage, of which the further logistics chain and the environment bear the negative consequences. In some Member States this is more obvious than in others.

In the absence of an equitable infrastructure charging system, other measures to enable a more balanced European transport system are necessary. These range from incentives to use other modes than road to more regulatory measures, such as interdictions to transport certain types of goods by road or to restrict driving hours on certain roads. Innovative thinking on the involvement of concessionaires of motorways in promoting modal shift would help, as would optimum use of the possibilities created under the Euro-vignette Directive, currently under revision.

As example on how governments can incite greening of transport, the Slovenian government has recently reached an agreement with the truckers' associations on a package of tax facilities to speed up the phasing in of Euro V and VI trucks. Slovenia will also introduce a German style GPS guided tolling system, which will make equitable infrastructure charging easier to implement.

e) Articulation of Motorways of the Sea with other modes

Apart from the fact that all players in all transport modes need to be flexible and active in accommodating co-modal transport logistics as it is the only possible way forward for EU transport. Some further findings on the different modes are added, gathered in the last six months.

Railways

In large parts of Europe, rail keeps losing ground to other modes, especially road. Rail is losing out on major volumes of cargo for a whole host of different reasons, ranging from lack of investments and lack of flexibility to practices that amount to active discouragement of considering the railway option. In addition, nearly everywhere in Europe passenger traffic is seen as a priority, both because of understandable public service reasons and in many Member States also because passenger traffic under the current circumstances is not a loss making activity, whereas cargo is. This picture cannot be generalised, even within Member States situations sometimes differ from region to region.

Freight forwarders and managers of logistics chains seek the maximum amount of flexibility in the slots they need to book to satisfy their clients. Railway companies, confronted with high fixed costs, seek commitments from their clients and need to be able to programme train movements with months in advance. These two positions are not easy to bring together. Only the development of an integrated logistics chain in Europe will gradually marry the need for flexibility of transporters with the need for security of revenues from the rail infrastructure managers. Here again full informatics treatment and timely information of the involved players is of the essence.

An example from Friuli Venezia Giulia may illustrate how active involvement of the Region, the port authority, the railways, shipping lines and other transporters can create an intelligent way of organising traffic; in this case traffic from Turkey to Trieste to Central Europe and back.

The different transporters have set up shipping lines from Turkish ports to Trieste using roro vessels. After loading their trucks, the truckers fly to Trieste in time to meet their trucks at the vessel and charge them on board a block train, where the truckers have a dedicated carriage. The block train arrives at Salzburg and the cargo moves on either by rail or by road to its final destination.

The Region confronted with endemic congestion and insecurity on its roads decided to fund 30% of the costs for this service. The benefits for the region are the development of Trieste port, benefits to the fragile environment and less insecurity on its roads. The benefits for the truckers are better working conditions.

NB. The successful lines operating on Turkey are more or less a direct consequence of the Balkan wars in the nineties. Land transport was no longer an option from and to Turkey. After the wars transporters were convinced of the convenience of the maritime / co-modal option.

In general, all interlocutors stressed the importance of block trains and good rail infrastructure in ports as important factors in realising performing Motorways of the Sea lines. The coordinator believes that presence of performing railway infrastructure in a port is a crucial indicator when benchmarking ports.

Inland waterways

Apart from the fact that all interlocutors stressed the need to quickly improve the situation on priority projects Seine-Schelde and the Danube, the coordinator was told that much better use can be made of inland waterways. Main conditions are upscaling of the sector, increase in the size of barges and modernisation of the logistics system that gets cargo from deep sea vessels into barges and to final destination. This is linked to general computerisation of the logistics chain in Europe.

The Port of Rotterdam, where 40% of arriving cargo is transported further to destinations in the Netherlands and Europe by inland waterways, claims that inland waterway transport could be seven times more effective than it currently is.

For the development of the Western Balkans and transport possibilities from and to the Black Sea and Central Europe, the navigability of some parts along the river Danube and the Sava River need addressing. This is done by European coordinator, Mrs. K. Peijs. The environmental sensitivities concerning works on some stretches of inland waterways, for instance on the Danube, mean that some improvements can be made quicker than others.

Road transport

Road transport is the competition for short sea shipping and for most other modes. As stated under the previous chapter, competing with road is a tall order. It makes short sea shipping into a sector with margins that are just as low as those in road transport. Roads' competitive advantage is starting to fray at the edges, because of its bad environmental performance and endemic congestion on parts of European roads.

The competitive advantage of road has increased over the last years by the last two enlargements of the European Union when qualified and cheaper labour has been added to the trucking personnel pool. Even though this is a transitional advantage, it is a reality for the other modes and further eats away at their margins.

Whereas some ports still need dedicated exits from motorways, or better road access in general, the coordinator does not believe there is place for European co-funding for such projects, apart from the ones possibly already earmarked for co-financing under the new Operational Programmes for 2007-2013.

Where support is warranted for the road sector, it is for better informatics treatment of the whole logistics chain, including the road leg as described above.

Oil pipelines

Consideration must be given to pipeline infrastructure. Transporting oil by road, where this is not necessary, unnecessarily adds to pollution and insecurity on roads. Pipeline infrastructure should be able to

accommodate Europe's demand for oil to the maximum possible, avoiding pollution and congestion by road transport.

Logistical platforms – inland terminals

The development of logistics platforms or inland terminals or dry ports, is essential in the creation of a fluid door-to-door logistics chain. They should be seen as complement to a scarce factor: space in ports. Ports and other players in the sector are well aware of this. Examples of logistics platforms being developed in close cooperation, or even by ports are:

Barcelona/Valencia	Saragossa
Barcelona	Toulouse
Trieste/Koper	Fernetti/Sezana
Koper	Beltinci - Budapest
Sines	Madrid
Rotterdam	Duisburg

The Slovenian port of Koper, managed as a PLC, is the leading partner in the development of its dry ports. Other dry ports are managed and operated by other players, not necessarily related to a given port. Ease of access and transparency in the allocation of capacity and services of the dry port should under any circumstances be guaranteed, or inefficiency will also hamper the development of these logistical platforms.

Avoiding empty miles

Transporting empty containers and other cargo recipients is a waste of money, time and scarce resources, including human health. It is so inefficient that one wonders why this should exist at all in the days of an abundance of information and communication technology. This is not just a problem in the EU, but a global problem.

For maritime transport, for instance, the environmental performance in terms of CO2 emissions is positive compared to road. However, it is only positive compared to full trucks if ships are filled to at least 60% of capacity. More and more empty containers are being shipped straight back from EU to Asia, as they badly lack container capacity. Filling them with low value cargo is no longer economical. In this context, it must be mentioned that trucks also transport their share of empty containers.

A performing informatics system, the realisation of all players in the logistics chain that a minimum of cooperation is in their long-term interest and the full enforcement of cabotage rules throughout Europe could help redress this situation. Although, empty miles may never be completely avoided considering differences in economic activities between regions and therefore in offer and demand for transport services, cooperation and better information can help reduce them.

Marketing Motorways of the Sea and ports

Motorways of the Sea and the whole concept of co-modality need vigorous marketing efforts. Trucking in many Member States consists mainly of small firms with less than 5 trucks. Such companies often do not have time to look for alternatives, or do not believe an alternative could ever work until they see a good example in practice. The same goes for other operators in the logistics chain.

Some ports, for instance the ports of Koper and Trieste, are very good at communication to their clients and open representative offices near to their main (prospective) clients. Other port's communication efforts are restricted to a yearly communication of the new harbour dues. This is neither in the interest of ports nor in that of European modal shift policy. Where necessary, ports should improve their communication strategy.

Given the current difficult situation in which the Short Sea Shipping Promotion Centres find themselves, with extremely limited funding and understaffing, an overhaul of the organisation of the Promotion Centres for Short Sea Shipping seems indicated. This opportunity should be taken to change in the direction of the thought underlying this paper: the need to develop a co-modal logistics chain in Europe.

To start with, future Promotion Centres should not focus on Short Sea Shipping alone, but on the whole logistics chain. They should be turned into Co-modality Promotion Centres. This will work only if the funding is overhauled. A one-off start up sum for a Promotion Centre is not a guarantee for success in the future.

A good example of an appealing promotion activity is the one below organised by Short Sea Flanders, by the way the only Promotion Centre to be 100% financed by the Flemish authority and therefore independent from industry.

Short Sea Flanders organises three short sea vessels against truck races

Based on an Italian idea of 2002, Short Sea Flanders is organising a race between short sea shipping and onwards transportation to final destination and full road transport in June/July.

1) a) Vessel of DFDS from Gent to Goteborg and onwards by truck to Stockholm
   b) Truck from Gent via NL, DE, DK to Stockholm
2) a) Vessel of Cobelfret Zeebrugge – Waterford and truck to the Dublin area
   b) Truck from Zeebrugge via the Chunnel (and one by ferry) through England, ferry to Ireland and then to the Dublin area by road
3) a) Vessel of MSC via Antwerp to Gebze and on to Izmit (Turkey)
   b) Truck over land to Izmit with short ferry distance between North Italy and South-west Europe

Parameters for success of one mode above the other are: speed and price relative to road transport.
Learning points from the races will be the following:
- Influence of waiting times at terminals and driving and rest time for truckers;
- Tracking and tracing of cargo (via container/cargo unit number or number plate depending on the cargo);
- Comparison of emissions between the two modes. In cooperation with the University of Leuven emissions will be monitored from start to finish;
- Whether return freight can be found.

The coordinator recommends initiating a public – private partnership for the creation of Promotion Centres, into which the Short Sea Shipping Promotion Centres could be merged. Their funding could come from public funds (EU and/or national/regional funding), the private sector and from projects the Promotion Centres will run with the sector. They should first submit a business plan for 3 years and depending on its merits be granted the funding for a period of 3 years, after which they will have to present a new business plan for 3 years. Continuity of funding is of the essence, the only conditionality being the performance of the individual Centres.

In order to make sure that they really know the sector inside out and are useful in promoting the co-modality philosophy, part of their funding should come out of the projects they set up with players in the sector. They should be allowed to enter into bonus-malus type contracts with the sector and keep the profit they make on projects, to be invested in further projects.

The Promotion Centres should also become the single window for the transport sector for advice and guidance on subsidy possibilities, both from appropriate EU and from national/regional funding possibilities.

From the considerations above, it seems nearly inevitable to conclude that port authorities are in the best position to stimulate and initiate fluid door-to-door delivery supply chains into Europe. Their role in the logistics chain is pivotal and is to be developed. They will not have to manage the supply chains, this can be done by third parties, but they should be fully involved.

III ENSURING FAIR COMPETITION

Some parts of the sector and some Member States are rather wary of the competition distorting effects of choosing a shipping line as Motorway of the Sea, or choosing a port as Head of a Motorway of the Sea. This is a risk that is not imaginary and this consequence of the Motorways of the Sea deployment should be avoided.

It is not more than fair, however, to realise that this will always be somewhat difficult. No market functions in a vacuum and its functioning is to a lesser or greater extent determined by conditions that were or are created by some form of intervention or another. Roads have been constructed, ports and railways built without a second thought being given to fair competition.

The European Union seeks to prevent or combat any distortion of competition. This does not mean that under duly justified circumstances and without causing undue distortion of the internal market, Member States can choose to provide funding for vessels or for transport services or for port development, providing the State Aid rules are complied with.

To err on the side of caution, the European coordinator has gradually come to believe that Motorway of the Sea status and TEN-T or Marco Polo funds should possibly not be coupled.

In Chapter II a) the coordinator indicates his perceived way forward on benchmarking and indicators for performance of Motorways of the Sea. The coordinator is of the opinion that Motorway of the Sea status should not be given to a line that serves ports that are underperforming against the most important benchmarks concerning efficiency of ports and hinterland connections. Nor should a line be rewarded that does not comply with minimum environmental and service efficiency standards. Motorway of the Sea status must be seen as reward for efficiency, for environmental performance or for concrete plans to achieve a given benchmark within well defined delays, backed up by earmarked financing and formal guarantees.

IV SOCIAL ASPECTS

Maritime transport in the European Union can only keep growing, or in some cases start growing again, when the right social framework conditions are in place. The importance of constructive social dialogue cannot be overestimated in this respect. Some flexibility is necessary to ensure the interests of both workers and employers; their interests will only be fully understood and room will be made for accommodating them if constructive and open social dialogue is possible at all levels.

To start with the employers: there are some very good examples of shippers and other employers in the maritime trade that are able to attract and keep good personnel, because of the good primary and secondary working conditions they offer. Among the secondary working conditions one can cite: growth perspectives, including different career choices possible within the same company or same sector, taking into account the fact that for a number of people in a certain age group the combination of family life and life at sea is impossible, continuous training possibilities for personnel, specialisation possibilities, possibility to find a job on shore after a career at sea and possibility to go back to sea after a stint on shore. Where possible, these practices should be emulated by other employers.

Seafaring careers are not very appealing to job seekers at this moment. A serious recruitment problem therefore exists in many parts of the EU. Good pay is the only way to attract high quality seafaring personnel. High quality personnel are the best guarantee for efficiency, safety and security of maritime transport. The EU fleet will never become a cheap flag fleet, nor can it make a distinction in salary on board for similar jobs based on EU or non EU nationality, as this endangers social cohesion on board, and with that efficiency and security of operations.

The maximum use has to be made of the different possibilities that exist under, for instance State Aid regimes, where seafaring personnel can under certain conditions be exonerated from income tax.

Equally on the side of employees some show of flexibility and solidarity with future colleagues might be necessary. This holds especially for employees in monopoly services, where these exist, such as crane drivers, dockers, pilots, personnel operating locks. If EU shipping with its respect for working conditions both at sea and at land is to keep competing in the future, some changes are necessary. These might be painful, but losing employment to employees from third countries is even more so.

Training

The importance of training, apart from training facilitated by employers, should also be underlined here. Good training opportunities exist, but in many Member States the needs are not completely or not at all in line with the needs of employers. The development from a segments approach to transport to a whole logistics chain approach has not found its translation in many of the curricula. Even though sectoral training is essential, developments in transport render it necessary to accommodate the needs for training in co-modality and general training into logistics and transport flow management.
Here again, good examples exist of players in the sector actively engaging with schools and helping in setting up curricula that respond better to the need of current practices.

Some streamlining in schooling should also happen, the existence of four medium performance major schools in a Member State might be considered an unnecessary luxury were two well performing to schools exist that deliver graduates that can be put to work in the sector straight away. Involvement of the sector and a public relations exercise from their part to explain the job and growth opportunities in the sector would be helpful in raising the image of the sector among future job seekers.

V ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS

Environmental aspects, apart from the environmental performance of vessels themselves, have only very briefly been touched upon in the discussions so far. This is however a crucial part for the development prospects of Motorways of the Sea and shipping in general. Close cooperation with DG ENV, on issues like the Habitats Directives, the Water Framework Directive and environmental rules agreed upon in the framework of the International Maritime Organisation is necessary.

The possibilities of vessels having access to charging points for electricity to make their approach and leaving of ports less damaging to the people and environment in the immediate vicinity of ports should be evaluated. Possible incentive measures to speed up the deployment of these charging points need to be considered in close cooperation between TREN – MARE and TAXUD.

Possibly a link might be made with the work of Commissioner Piebalgs in his efforts to create a performing off shore network to transport electricity from renewable generation points at sea, primarily off shore wind, to shore. Opportunities for the involvement of the shipping industry into the development of this grid, and possibilities to let shipping benefit from this green source of electricity might be looked into.

VI SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety and security at sea is an issue that is being dealt with in the appropriate fora. Safety issues surrounding the Channel and other narrower straits or difficult waters like the Gulf of Biscay, have not been mentioned by any of the interlocutors as a real obstacle to the growth of maritime transport. The Channel with its mounting and descending ramp has plenty of capacity to accommodate more traffic. The crux is good policing of compliance with the rules by the competent authorities.

Of greatest interest for the Motorways of the Sea project are questions related to safety and security of transported cargo. This goes for the whole logistics chain from charging of cargo to final destination and is therefore not limited to the sea leg of the transport chain. Here again, informatics treatment of cargo is crucial.

The coordinator advocates the generalisation of the harbour master figure. The harbour master is responsible for nautical safety and security in port approach and leaving. It administers pilot, tucking and mooring services and clearance for entering port once a quay, depot or terminal has capacity to receive the vessel. Capacity constraints in ports or at other parts of the logistics chain are aggravated by poor communication between (too many) involved players, when such a central figure does not exist.

The Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) would normally fall under the responsibility of the harbour master. As the name suggests, presently it focuses only on the traffic management operations of the vessels, it does not directly support the management of cargo operations or track cargo.

Therefore, great care should be taken of the interface between VTS and the future tracking and tracing of individual cargo, both at sea and on land. Some shippers (Evergreen, for example) are running pilot projects with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) systems to enable it to track and trace every individual cargo, every individual container, and different cargoes inside one container. Furthermore, the potential shown by the new VTMIS (Vessel Traffic Management and Information Services) systems, for tracking and tracing cargoes and to reconcile ships and their cargoes has not yet been sufficiently exploited

Some rudimentary form of tracking and tracing of individual cargo already exists in the form of tracing by container number. This is not always 100% accurate though. Customs only trace cargo by document number. Every badge of cargo from a particular transport company receives a document number. It does not distinguish between cargos.

In the near future, the European Union transporters should dispose of a watertight satellite system of tracking and tracing their cargo. For the moment, the GPS system will be used. The coordinator would advise to ask DG TREN's services to consider prioritising such a European or worldwide system as one of the applications for Galileo which can be developed in partnership with the industry.

VII SIMPLIFICATION

E-maritime and a common maritime space as indicated in Commission Communication on a European Ports Policy are clearly the way forward for maritime transport. The competent services of the Commission are working on this.

A one-stop-shop or 'guichet unique' for administrative and customs procedures is necessary to reduce the disproportionate administrative burden imposed on transport by water. Especially since short sea shipping competes with road transport, the administrative procedures should resemble those applicable to road transport.

In this respect it is important to set up a watertight system to distinguish EU containers from non-EU containers. The system needs to be watertight since counterfeiting of goods such as medication makes it impossible to relax customs procedures and checks for containers. Just vessel control is not enough, containers need to be checked.

For the deployment of the Motorway of the Sea project it would furthermore be helpful if ports would make the distinction between Schengen and non-Schengen traffic, like air and road traffic do.

Swifter customs treatment for Motorway of the Sea cargo would also help. Decision 70/2008/EC of 15 January 2008 on a paperless environment for customs and trade should provide the answer to speeding up customs treatment for, among others, maritime transport. The Decision leads to an interoperable e-customs system by 2013. The system will gradually be introduced with technical preparatory work underway. Single windows for customs treatment are an important part of the system.

In relation to simplification of funding procedures, it would seem advisable to ask for advice on a kind of streamlining of interstate cooperation or proposing a new framework for interstate cooperation on Motorways of the Sea projects. The fact that two or more Member States give state aid to the same project often necessitates a bilateral treaty and thus parliamentary approval in two or more Member States with the ensuing delays. In addition a special body needs to be designated to deal with resolution of disputes. For the limited amounts of state aid now talked about by the Member States this seems a disproportionate burden.

Finally, the coordinator feels that an even wider-spread of English as a common working language, like in aviation, would facilitate maritime transport in the EU greatly. In addition to the current use of English for the safety of maritime operations e.g. Pilotage, anti-collision procedures, VTS reporting, a wider spread on the shore side of the maritime transport chain would be beneficial to increased cooperation, simplified communication and reduction of friction.

VIII IMPACT OF GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS ON THE SEA LEG OF MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA

The current climate of increasing competition for scarce resources and the negative environmental impact of the use of most energy sources makes increasing efficiency on all fronts more urgent than ever. Maritime traffic from South Asia, North or South America to Europe and vice-versa via anything but the shortest route might be a luxury the global community will find very costly to bear in the medium to long term. The economic and environmental costs associated with such inefficiencies in the logistics chain will start to weigh heavily on the world economy.

To resolve one of the most obvious inefficiencies in environmental terms – detour of cargo from the Mediterranean to North continental Europe to be transported back over land - transhipment ports need to be developed in the southern part of Europe, and environmentally efficient onwards land transport. This will help European transport infrastructure coping with the doubling of the Suez and the Panama Canal.

The expected increase in traffic generated by their doubling will need to be accommodated in Europe, where it makes most economic sense to receive it, i.e. as close as possible to final destination.

Connections should be provided with the most important container route, known as the 'round the world trip' from Singapore-Suez-Panama to Singapore.

The European spatial planning framework might need reviewing in the light of origin and destination of freight. Choices must be made concerning the development of inland waterways, railways, pipeline

infrastructure and road infrastructure based on the ways that can most efficiently and most environmentally friendly transport imports from ports to destination in Europe and exports to European ports, bearing in mind that 90% of freight in and out of Europe is moved through ports. For this reason a step by step study into the origin and destination of freight is necessary.
DG TREN, supported by an advisory council consisting of Eurostat, some research institutes, EPSO, ECSA and independent experts from academia, should start this process soonest.

On top of the doubling of the Canals, comes the relentless increase in the size of ships which makes infrastructural works necessary in many ports, if they do not want to loose out on most of the deep sea traffic of the future.

The seemingly relentless increase in energy prices as a result of (at least a perceived) scarcity of resources makes action unavoidable. Losing 5 days of bunker for a detour to efficiently run ports with good hinterland connections should be reason for immediate action by Member States in the Mediterranean.

Shippers are not waiting and already start developing ports in third countries along the Mediterranean where conditions can be offered that can never be matched by Member States. The legal framework in third countries surrounding for instance working conditions and environmental protection is less strict, and makes it easier for operators to make profits.

More acute realisation of the implication of this development seems indicated. Seeking protection from unfair competition is logical. It is a fact that this constitutes unfair competition to European ports, and some form of protection might perhaps be warranted. However, erecting protection barriers is not the right answer. It is a stop gap measure that will not alter the fact that without urgent necessary investments in ports and hinterland connections, Member States bordering the Mediterranean will keep losing out on economic development opportunities.

The coordinator is of the opinion that European investment support for infrastructure or shipping lines should not be extended to third Mediterranean countries at this moment. He does feel that the European Union only stands to gain from better qualified personnel in all logistics services in the countries it trades with as this increases safety and security of operations in the Union as well. Extension of European financial support for training in some areas would therefore be welcome.

The coordinator intends to play an active role in the development of the plans for Motorways of the Sea in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean, instigated by French president Sarkozy. He equally intends to play an active role in the development of Motorways of the Sea in the Black Sea Region and with Russia.

Regarding global developments in environmental regulations, the impact of the IMO marine environment committee decision of early April which would lead to barring the use of bunker oil from 2010 by vessels in IMO members' territorial waters, if the rule is formally adopted by IMO in October, would have consequences for the competitive position of the shipping industry.

Should the decision be formally adopted, the additional demand for distillates this would cause might create scarcity in existing refining capacity. The oil industry will have a heavy responsibility as well in ensuring that cleaner fuel will be used in shipping. Should additional refining capacity be constructed in time and should demand for oil still be able to be met with current resources, the additional costs for shipping fuel could mean sizeable price increases for many products.

The current downturn in the economy already affects global shipping. Especially traffic to the United States, as the rate of the dollar and its poor economic performance have sized its imports down considerably. Global demand for ships is slowing, with an exception for short sea vessels. It is not clear how long this exception for short sea shipping vessels can last.

All this makes it all the more urgent to invest in Research and Development into new and cleaner ways of propelling vessels, and fuelling the transport sector in general.

IX FINANCING MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA

As for all infrastructural and other transport projects, the bulk of the financing for Motorways of the Sea related investments will have to come from the private sector. Community funding provides leverage for projects which might otherwise not quickly be realised by the private sector alone.

For all forms of public funding to projects related to Motorways of the Sea, no funding should of course be given out without cast iron guarantees concerning the feasibility of the project, the market research that has preceded it and the formal engagement of enough players to secure a successful project. There should always be a possibility of reclaiming money if partners do not live up to their commitments.

a) EU funding and State Aid Guidelines

Among the players in the sector and among Member States' authorities some confusion reigns as to the articulation of the different kinds of European funding for Motorways of the Sea project. Under Marco Polo and the Trans European Networks funding, different conditions apply. This is compounded by the fact that under the Community Guidelines on State Aid for maritime transport still other conditions apply.

The current situation can be broadly summarised as follows:

	Marco Polo II 2007-2013	**TEN-T funding 2007-2013**	**State Aid Guidelines 2004**
Fundable	Operations/ services	Investment in infrastructure[1]	Investment in infrastructure Operations/services
Aid intensity	35%	30%	30%
Aid duration	5 years		Depending on individual case decision. In principle degressive
Budget	450 m€[2]	310 m€[3]	Not relevant

[1] Start-up aid for operations /services is possible in special cases

[2] The Marco Polo II budget is spread out over yearly calls. No funding has been earmarked for Motorways of the Sea projects. The amount of funding going to Motorways of the Sea projects depends on the quality of the projects.

[3] The funding for Motorways of the Sea is spread out over yearly calls for proposals. The budget is divided in the following manner: 2007 – 20 m€, 2008 – 30 m€, 2009 – 85 m€, 2010 – 100 m, 2011 – 50 m€, 2012 – 25 m€. The first call will be published on 23 April 2008.

More transparency and ease in the handling of the different EU funding possibilities has been recognised as an important issue. The issue is especially important for Member States' authorities and for smaller and medium sized enterprises.

Duration and intensity of aid could be harmonised to some extent. As regards subsidies for services, all interlocutors have indicated that they accept the idea of degressivity of support. This could also be made to apply to support for services under Marco Polo or, if considered eligible for funding, under TEN-T.

The coordinator firmly believes that TEN-T funding should be given to investments in infrastructure that benefit the whole logistics chain, i.e. port/hinterland infrastructure. TEN-T funding is there to enable modal shift and to lubricate the logistics chain in order to make other modes an attractive proposition. Public service related cohesion efforts are a different matter.

The limited amounts of funding available under Marco Polo and TEN-T for Motorways of the Sea projects will to some extent limit the use of this funding to seeding money. It is in the sector's and in the common interest to make sure that the seeds are sowed in fertile ground. Improvement of infrastructure both in ports and hinterland connections seem the best way to spend TEN-T funding.

For Marco Polo special priority should be given to subsidising services in the common interest, such as improvement of efficiency of services in ports and of personnel in ports and at sea. Funding of vessels should only be considered for the part of the necessary investment to improve the environmental performance of shipping. Here, close cooperation with DG RTD under the 7th Framework Program is indicated, especially as regards the application of innovative technology in vessels or on land to make operations run with less harmful emissions.

Should start-up aid be given to new lines, this support should be degressive and given to the one deciding on the modal choice for the cargo: the cargo owner.

One of the criticisms of TEN-T and Marco Polo funding is that it risks being spread out over a host of small projects of a very different nature. An idea to focus the yearly calls under TEN-T and Marco Polo on specific subjects could be considered. For instance the development of logistical platforms for TEN-T in a given year and training under Marco Polo. All yearly calls could have a specific subject. This would focus the minds of applicants, make it easier to apply and gives the European Commission additional leverage on the direction it wants to steer its efforts in.

b) National tax instruments

All players in the sector have spoken highly of the Italian Ecobonus system. This is a direct subsidy of 100€ to a transporter which, instead of choosing the road to final destination of its cargo, chooses to take a vessel for (part of) its trip. This reduces congestion on the clogged Italian roads, reduces air pollution and gives the incentive to the players that directly influence the balance between the transport modes by the choices they make. In some ways it resembles the incentive of a 30% subsidy given by the Region of Friuli Venezia Giulia for train transport.

According to the coordinator this system merits to be considered taken as best practice example that could be integrated by other Member States. Especially by the Member States that profit from the Italian subsidy as it also relieves congestion on their roads. He therefore recommends an evaluation of the possibilities of expanding the system to a cooperation effort by 2 or 3 Member States. Should such an approach be successful, it could be generalised throughout Europe, taking into account national and regional specificities.

In order to speed up investment in new vessels and therefore increasing the environmental performance of shipping, the coordinator would welcome initiatives by Member States that would allow for quicker depreciation times of vessels.

There are a host of other national tax possibilities that can be brought to bear when promoting modal shift and increasing the environmental performance. Important is that the sector and the Member States engage in a constructive dialogue on how to redistribute income from taxes and excises to enable these goals.

c) Structural funds

In this context it would be useful to remind the Member States that under the Structural Funds they should make full use of the available financing to enable modal shift. Some Member States have access to significant amounts of funding under the Cohesion Fund. However, all Member States can use money from

the Structural funds for training activities, for reconversion of industrial areas in decline, for cross border cooperation and for other activities that could be used to speed up the transition to a European co-modal transport infrastructure.

In conclusion, the coordinator is of the opinion that TEN-T funding should only be destined to projects of common interest to the European Union, be it for reasons related to the environment, European competitiveness or cohesion.

Where duly substantiated reasons exist for a Member State or a region to fund the development of a given port or service, without this clearly serving the common interest, such funding should be considered under the State Aid rules, as it is done in other sectors.

Member States need to be encouraged to make the best use of the Community and national funding possibilities at their disposal to improve the position of their maritime sector and make the most of the environmental imperative of promoting modal shift in favour of less polluting modes

d) European Investment Bank

The role of the European Investment Bank for funding investments needs clearer definition. The coordinator intends to visit the EIB shortly to discuss this.

X CLARIFYING THE CONCEPT OF MOTORWAYS OF THE SEA

The Transport White Paper of 2001 introduced the concept of Motorways of the Sea as high quality transport services based on short sea shipping. Not many are really clear as to what the concept entails or as to what sort of activities would form part of a Motorways of the Sea project. The coordinator believes that the Transport White Paper gives an adequate description and that further definition is unnecessary.

More important than a definition of Motorways of the Sea, in his view, is clarity on what the conditions are for enabling fluidity of the logistics chain in direct connection to the maritime part of the chain. He believes that the realisation of these conditions can form part of a Motorway of the Sea project.

Defining a Motorway of the Sea line or a Head of a Motorway of the Sea line will inevitably cause problems in countries with many ports, in countries with a decentralised structure and in countries which are liberalised and fear competition distortion.

For this reason the 'flag' for a port or for a shipping line, based on objective indicators as described in Chapter II, serves as quality stamp of approval. All ports or shipping lines meeting the benchmarks should receive such a quality stamp. This does not mean that they will all receive support. It is recognition of excellence. Just like beaches can loose their flag every year, so should the dynamic benchmarking of Motorways of the Sea lines and ports lead to new flags being given out. Lines or ports that do not meet the benchmarks anymore should lose their quality stamp.

The different players have given the coordinator their views on what makes or breaks a Motorway of the Sea project. Their input leads to the following conclusions:

- Reliability is the most important success factor. Transporters need to be sure of the conditions under which their cargo will be transported over sea; they need to be sure their cargo will reach the agreed destination at the agreed time. Reliability depends on all the efficiency issues described in the report, concerning services, ports and hinterland connections;

- Frequency of the line comes next. There is no standard frequency for a Motorway of the Sea line, it cannot be said that frequency should be determined as 1 or 2, 3, 4 or 5 or 7 times a week. One sailing a week is the minimum, but it would go too far to decree at EU level that frequency should be at least 3 or 5 times a week. It very much depends on the line and on the cargo that is being transported. A new line will take time to get to full capacity, even considerable time as many experiences in the short sea shipping field show. Upping frequency requires enormous investment and can only be done when the line has found its feet. Where frequency can not be decreed, fixed departure times are essential;

- Ease of access and use for the clients - good informatics support to enhance transparency;

- Close contacts with potential clients and continuous exploration of the market;

- Marketing of the concept among transport companies and getting these to change their way of doing business and changing their traditional investment patterns, for instance for an equal amount of trailers to trucks, to more trailers than trucks for unaccompanied transport.

  This would lead to the following list of quality criteria for Motorway of the Sea status:

  - Hinterland connections of ports
  - Port internal network
  - Characteristics of ro-ro terminal or container terminal
  - Characteristics of ro-ro ramps or container platforms
  - Loading, unloading operations
  - Time and procedures necessary for departure, arrival of vessels
  - Berthing of vessels
  - Vessel characteristics
  - Maritime services characteristics
  - Indicative prices of maritime services
  - Administrative procedures

Development of the Motorways of the Sea project

For the latest developments relating to the deployment of the Motorways of the Sea project, the coordinator refers to the Commission Staff Working Document 'Report on the Motorways of the Sea – State of play and consultation' of October 2007.

The choice for the 5 different corridors is justified, as the relevant seas have characteristics that are unique enough to warrant specific approaches. One possible exception would be the Mediterranean, where the split halfway through Italy seems to some extent artificial.

Apart from stimulating progress within the different corridors and appealing on all players involved, and offering his help should project implementation problems arise, the priority of the coordinator is to ensure that the articulation points between the different corridors do not develop into friction points of whichever nature.

XI CONCLUSION

The basic thought underlying this report is that a success will only be made of Motorways of the Sea when all involved actors – the European Union, the Member States and all their levels of administration, all the players in the transport chain from shippers, to ports, to terminal operators, railway companies, truckers' organisations, motorway concessionaires, down to individual clients of transport and to consumers at large – cooperate on the realisation of the most important objective underpinning the European Union's Trans European Networks policy:

Strengthening Europe's competitive position in the world by doting it with a seamless modern transport infrastructure guided by radical and immediate choices for:

a. Ensuring responsible and sustainable economic growth;

b. Ensuring that internalisation of external costs related to transport develops from being an object of discussion into being professed in practice;

c. Coordination between the European Union and the Member States on infrastructure policy; the right coordinated choices now will enable the European Union to keep growing and to increase its competitive edge in future oriented sectors;

d. Research and Development efforts to decrease environmental consequences and global energy use implications on shipping's competitive position, thus sustaining global economic growth by trade.

It is the coordinator's belief that in principle a policy of either regulatory or financial incentives to realise the objectives above would be the best guarantee to get cooperation of all involved players in the achievement of these objectives. The European Union, but most of all the Member States bear an important responsibility in realising the Lisbon Agenda's goals through the right policy framework conditions.

However, a firmer regulatory approach might be warranted should the behaviour of Member States and economic actors keep stunting European efforts to achieve economic growth in a responsible and sustainable way.

XII RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings above bring the European coordinator to formulate recommendations; many recommendations are incorporated in the text and are not repeated here. Some new recommendations and recommendations of an institutional nature are summarised below. Most of these are addressed firstly at the Vice-President of the European Commission and through him to the broader European institutions, Member States and economic players.

- In general a refocusing of infrastructural priorities and policies in the Member States would be called for.

- Start of an industry wide initiative to improve the environmental performance of shipping, upon the initiative of the Vice-President;

- Implication of the Vice-President in brokering bi-or trilateral agreements on Ecobonus type systems in relevant Member States, for instance starting by setting up a working group between Italy, France and Spain;

- The Commission to adopt a Communication on Motorways of the Sea and the articulation between different sources of European funding shortly;

- Setting up of an Interservice group between TREN (and EMSA) – MARE – RTD – ENV – COMP – TAXUD, to meet in different compositions according to agenda, steered by TREN;

- Launching a call for expressions of interest into becoming a Motorway of the Sea Head or line, not related to subsidy, but on the basis of an on-line benchmarking questionnaire producing traffic light results. A rapid two month study will precede the call.

- Focus TEN-T funding on infrastructure investment that benefits the whole logistics chain.

- Focus Marco Polo II funding on training of personnel, on Co-modal Promotion Centres and on environmental improvement of the vessel fleet.

- Focus the yearly calls for TEN-T MOS funding and Marco Polo II funding on specific subjects.

- Introduce English as "langue véhiculaire" for all services related to port approach and operations.

- Public Relations efforts to put expenditure in modern European infrastructure in perspective, for instance in relation to Member States' expenditure.

- Studies:

    - Step by step long-term study into origin and destination of freight in Europe to be gradually refined

    - A short study on appropriate benchmarking/indicators in line with existing national and international systems to grant Motorways of the Sea status

- Continuous improvement on indicators/benchmarking exercise for ports, dynamic exercise
- Follow-up and possible deployment of pilots into tracking and tracing of cargo
- Atlas of European ports with main characteristics, in port and hinterland connections – to be reviewed every 3 years

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

2007 –2008

PAVEL TELIČKA
EUROPEAN COORDINATOR

PRIORITY PROJECT No 27

« Rail Baltica »

Warsaw-Kaunas-Riga-Tallinn-Helsinki

Brussels, August 2008

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 23rd July 2007 a plaque was unveiled at Mockava station in Lithuania, 22 km north of the Polish border, in the presence of the Lithuanian and Polish transport ministers and senior officials and staff. This unveiling was to symbolise and commemorate the start of the "*Rail Baltica"* modernisation project and to underline the cross-border cooperation which had already taken place in the period 2005-2007.

From its inception*" Rail Baltica"* was envisaged as a strategic and sustainable rail project linking four of the new Member States of the EU - **Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia,** as well as **Finland**. It is the only TEN-T Priority Project involving the new Member States exclusively in construction work. Further it provides the only rail connection between all four countries and can be a key link between the Baltic region and the countries of the Single Market further west to Germany and south into Central and Eastern Europe. To the north it can eventually be joined to Helsinki by improved rail ferry services across the Gulf of Finland and could one day form a "bridge" to the countries of the Nordic Triangle.[1]
The length of the current track is approximately 1200 km. by the most direct existing route from Tallinn to Warsaw. A variety of track systems are currently in use: double track and electrified, single track electrified and un-electrified single track (the latter forming the greatest length). The line passes through a variety of different terrain - urban areas such as the cities of Bialystok, Kaunas and Riga, and very rural areas such as in the Podlaskie region of north eastern Poland and southern Lithuania as well as in northern Latvia and the south of Estonia. It connects three major Baltic seaports: Helsinki, Tallinn and Riga with a short connection to a fourth – Klipeda.

When complete the route will also link three capital cities: Warsaw, Riga and Tallinn (with a ferry link to Helsinki and a short rail connection to Vilnius). The *"Rail Baltica"* also has to provide the connection between the European standard gauge system as used in Poland and most other EU countries and the broad gauge system used in the other partner countries to the project, as well as Russia. There is therefore an important issue of inter-operability. The line passes through some sensitive environmental areas (particularly in Poland) and these issues will have to be taken into account through detailed impact assessment throughout the duration of the project. Nevertheless, the rail line (which has existed for many years) is a sustainable and environmentally friendly alternative to any new road construction proposed in the region. [2]

If the first year of operations since the appointment of the European Coordinator Pavel Telička in July 2005 was essentially preparatory and the second centred on the economic viability of the project and the findings of the EU funded Feasibility Study, then the third year saw concrete moves towards practical realisation as underlined by the opening ceremonies at Mockava. These included the applications made by the partner countries for six projects to be in part financed by the TEN-T programme, the deliberations on and the acceptance of these project proposals and the creation of a Joint Coordinating Committee to oversee developments. The European Coordinator had an active role in all these actions. A High Level Conference in the Presence of Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus and Commission Vice-President Jacques Barrot in Vilnius at the start of October 2007 marked the beginning of this third year of activity. The entry into the Schengen zone by the Baltic States and Poland in December 2007 improved the border crossing situation, particularly at Valga/Valka on the Latvian/Estonian border and April 2008 also saw the resumption of passenger services from Riga to Valka. Interest in freight services continued to grow during the year with the prospect of a faster rail corridor becoming operational. The ultimate objective, as repeated by the Coordinator on several occasions during the year under review, would be to achieve *"a line operating at a speed of 120 km for passengers and freight by 2013".*

2. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE THIRD YEAR OF ACTIVITY

2.1 Adoption of the first Six Project applications under the TEN-T (2007-2013).

Following the conclusion of the EU negotiations on the Financial Perspectives for the period following 2006, the partner countries were invited to submit proposals for projects to be funded under the TEN-T (2007-2013) by the end of July 2007. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania submitted six projects in total: one works proposal and one study proposal from each country respectively. Poland decided not to make an application under the TEN-T but rather to earmark funds from its substantial Cohesion Fund allocation

[1] For a full history of the project please refer to the first two Annual Reports 2005-6 and 2006-7 available at http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/coordinators/index_en.htm

[2] In this context it should be noted that the parallel road project; the *"Via Baltica"* is not linked in any way to the *"Rail Baltica"* and is not an EU TEN-T Priority Project.

which would allow more time for planning and route design. Following scrutiny by the Coordinator and by an independent external evaluation, the six projects were adopted by the European Commission on 19 February 2008 after obtaining the approval of the European Parliament and the Member States.
Briefly, the three works projects cover the reconstruction of the three cross border sections. In Lithuania this is from the Polish border to Marijampole in the south and from Siauliai to the Latvian border in the north. In Latvia there are to cross border sections: from the Lithuanian border in the south to Jelgava and in the north from Valmiera to Valka/Valga on the border with Estonia. In Estonia the section is from Valka/Valga to Tartu. Latvia has also applied to upgrade the non-cross border section from Riga to Valmiera and Estonia wants to improve the station facilities at Valga as an integrated part of their project). The three proposals for study projects are to investigate the construction of a new European standard gauge line on the north/south axis from Tallinn to the Lithuanian/Polish border. The Coordinator strongly encourages the three countries to combine these studies together for a unified overview of a new European gauge line. If possible this would mean one call for tender and one overall study report. Meanwhile, during the year Poland applied for an amending decision granting assistance for studies to modernise their section of the *"Rail Baltica"* from Warsaw to Trakiszki (border with Lithuania). Such studies should be completed by December 2010. Track reconstruction would then follow.

2.2 High Level Conference, Vilnius, October 2007

On 4th October 2007 in Vilnius the Lithuanian authorities hosted a High Level Conference entitled *"Rail Baltica - from Vision to Reality"* in the presence of Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, Prime Minister Gediminas Kirkilas and Commission Vice-President Jacques Barrot as well as ministers, officials and stakeholders. The Lithuanian authorities took the initiative to hold this conference to draw attention to the progress already made on the project and to provide a forum to exchange ideas for future development. President Adamkus and Prime Minister Kirkilas underlined the importance of the project for not only Lithuania and the Baltic States, but for the wider region as a whole. Lithuanian Transport Minister Butkevičius highlighted the work that had been achieved in the two years since Pavel Telička started work coordinating the project including the cross border Memoranda of Understanding, the projects which had been submitted to the Commission and the developing coordination between the partner countries. Latvian Transport Minister Ainārs Šlesers gave a clear overview of the transport and transit issues confronting the Baltic States in 2008 and beyond. He mentioned the problem of the long truck queues on the Eastern frontiers with Russia and Belarus and suggested that the *"Rail Baltica"* could help in solving the problem by providing alternative transit possibilities along the north/south axis.

2.3 International Coordination Group, Inaugural Meeting, February 2008

The first meeting of the newly created International Coordination Group on the implementation of the Rail Baltica project met in Vilnius on 29th February 2008 in the presence of the Coordinator and including representatives from the transport ministries and railway undertakings of the partner countries. The parties agreed on the strategic aims of the implementation of the Rail Baltica project and its medium and long term dimensions. The strategic aim is to develop the north-south infrastructure axis with all relevant components and interlinking networks of the four countries concerned as well as with the other parts of the Trans-European Network. The medium term dimension encompasses the period 2007-2013. The meeting agreed that the "aim for this period consists of the equalization of technical railway parameters by the implementation of missing components of interoperability and intermodality, and in starting an active operation of freight and passenger transportation. Equalization of technical railway parameters is directed towards reaching the minimum (design) speed of the Rail Baltica line to 120/160 km/h".
The Group determined to prepare a Master Plan for passenger and freight (intermodal/ combined) transportation which would describe the functionality of the line and all the sections, encompassing such issues as the kind of freight, the kind of load units, distances of transportation, capacities and access terminals. The relevance of this task was endorsed by a Communication from the European Commission "Towards a rail network giving priority to freight", where the concept of freight-oriented corridor structures is formulated and the notion of the EU that each Member State will have to participate in at least one corridor by 2012. The parties also exchanged views on the necessity to evaluate the aspects of organising the *Rail Baltica* line operations and agreed to elaborate the strategic objectives for the long-term dimension (from 2014 following the end of the TEN-T financing period of 2007-13).
On the future working methods of the International Coordination Group the partner countries agreed to work on a regular basis and maintain the current level of participation in the Group for future meetings. Also the parties agreed to organize meetings of the Group biannually, (in the first and third quarters). The Chairmanship/hosting and venue of each meeting will rotate by country according to alphabetical order, starting with the first meeting in Lithuania[1]. It was further agreed that each partner country would assign a

[1] following in the order Poland, Estonia, Latvia etc.

contact person (to act as an informal secretariat), under the responsibility of the head of the national delegations. The preparation of the necessary documentation for the meetings will rotate between the national contact persons. The country hosting the meeting will also act as chair and perform the functions of the general secretariat for that specific meeting. The next meeting of the Group will take place in Warsaw in October 2008.

2.4 The opening of the border at Valka/Valga, December 2007

There is no doubt that the entry of the four partner countries into the Schengen Zone in December 2007 greatly facilitated cross border travel in the region. This was particularly the case on the Latvian-Estonian border at the town of Valka/Valga. Valka/Valga (population 20,000) is an interesting place with an unusual history. Valka and the Estonian town Valga are twins, separated by the Estonian/Latvian border. The border was marked out in 1920 following the First World War by the International Border Commission appointed to arbitrate on the borders of the newly independent Baltic States and headed by British Colonel Stephen Tallents. It decided to use the course of a small stream passing through the town as the border line which effectively cut the town in two. Since then, and particularly since the regaining of independence in 1990/1 by Estonia and Latvia, the town has developed under the slogan *"One Town, Two States."* Nevertheless the border restrictions continued to cause difficulties, particularly in the transport field as Latvian Valka possesses no rail station – it is to be found on the Estonian side of the border. However with the entry of Estonia and Latvia into the Schengen Zone in December 2007 the situation radically improved and now, with passport free movement of citizens across the interstate border, the development of the twin towns and the region can move ahead, assisted by the development of the *"Rail Baltica"* corridor. The Coordinator visited Valka/Valga in April 2008.

2.5 The Gauge issue

The question of the track gauge remains a key issue at the heart of the *"Rail Baltica"* project. As long as the region supports both the broad and the narrow gauge systems, (which it will continue to do in the short to medium term) the question of interoperability remains crucial. The European Coordinator stresses that it is essential that a modern and efficient gauge change be carried out at the point where the two track gauges meet (currently at Sestokai in southern Lithuania, north of the Polish border). At the moment there are no gauge change operations as the experimental system at Mockava station has been abandoned. Currently goods are transhipped using the parallel tracks of both gauges at Sestokai station further up the line. It is understood that both the private sector and the Lithuanian Transport Ministry have been looking at the various modern gauge change systems available on the market, including those produced by the Spanish TALGO company. The Coordinator is urging the early installation of a modern effective system for both freight and passengers to ensure smooth transit between the two gauges at a point deemed most suitable by the Lithuanian authorities. It is absolutely essential that the gauge change is made in the shortest possible time that is technically possible within approved safety requirements, thus allowing any comparative advantage which the *"Rail Baltica"* route possesses over road to be fully realised. The extension of the European standard gauge along the rest of the route to Tallinn remains an option for the future. This idea will in any case be developed and investigated by the Baltic States in the three study projects that have been accepted under the 2007-2013 call for proposals to be part-financed under the TEN-T.

2.6 Freight services developments

A new ferry operation entitled *"Navirail,"* specifically targeting the Rail Baltica corridor, began operations in spring 2008. Its expressed aim is to service inter and multimodal transport corridors between North and Central Europe. Navirail is planning to interlink North and Central European distribution centers by sea and rail, concentrating on trailer and container shipments. For the moment the company is operating one ship the *M/S Ahtela* a 139 m long ro-ro cargo ship flying a Finnish flag with two services a day between Sompasaari (Helsinki) and Muuga (Tallinn) ports.
The Lithuanian/Belorus/Ukrainian joint container venture the *"Viking Line"* operating from Odessa to Klaipeda uses the *"Rail Baltica"* section from Jonava to Siauliai for its combined traffic operations which began in 2003. The container and contrailer traffic on this line continues to grow and in 2007 a total of 400,100 TEU containers were carried on this train (2006 = 230,500)

2.7 Passenger service developments

On 26 April 2008 a passenger service was resumed between Riga, the capital of Latvia and Valka/Valga on the border with Estonia. This followed a break of several years. The Coordinator travelled the route as far as the Sigulda a few days before and gave interviews to the Latvian press expressing his satisfaction on this initiative. It is intended that the service will be the start of a regular and gradually upgraded passenger

service across the border to Valga station in Estonia – a cross border service facilitated by the entry of Latvia and Estonia into the Schengen zone (as mentioned above). Meanwhile the Lithuanian authorities are hoping to restart passenger services between Vilnius and Riga in the short term while the Lithuanian and Polish authorities have held preparatory discussions on a new faster service between Warsaw and Vilnius. Currently the badly supported, existing low scale service, takes approximately 10 hours to cover the 500 kms between the two capitals (around two hours longer than the bus service). This is partly caused by multiple stops along the route. If rail is to provide an alternative, then a faster service at competitive prices (stopping possible only at Kaunas and Bialystok-plus changing trains from one gauge system to the other at Sestokai), will have to be introduced. The Coordinator fully supports these initiatives which he sees as providing important sustainable passenger transport options in a region where the congested road sector currently dominates.

2.8 Developments along the route

This question of the route is now largely settled on a *de facto* basis (with some possible small future adjustments):

1) **Poland**: As was mentioned in last year's report the Polish authorities would prefer the route of "Rail Baltica" in Poland to be Warsaw/Bialystok/Ełk/Suwalki/LT border rather than the eastern corridor route through Augustów as defined in the TEN-T alignment. This eastern route through the Rospuda valley involves environmental issues relating to the building of various bypasses on the north-south road project "Via Baltica".[1] The Polish authorities currently feel that Ełk will provide an excellent position for a new railway hub in the northeast of the country, away from environmentally sensitive areas, and with good access to Warsaw and the coast. However the local administration of the Voivod are concerned that this would mean that "Rail Baltica" will not then be exclusively in Podlaskie prefecture. The Coordinator however agrees with the approach of the national authorities and points out that Podlaskie will still retain a considerable section of the "Rail Baltica" on its territory including Bialystok (the regional capital). He therefore supports the change from the original TEN-T alignment. The Polish authorities will however be required to make a formal application to change the original route of Trans European Corridor No. 1 to incorporate the diversion to Ełk in time for the revision of the TEN-T guidelines in 2009.

2) **Lithuania**: Lithuania intends in the first phase to build a new European standard gauge double track from the Polish border at Trakiszki to Marijampole at 40 km. from the border. This will reduce the track length on the cross border section by 25 km. and will be the same gauge width as the Polish system. New gauge change facilities can then be installed at Marijampole, which can become a useful inter-modal terminal. The Lithuanian authorities are waiting for the results of the preparatory studies before taking a decision as to whether to continue to extend the European gauge via Kasla Ruda on the main east/west corridor or to construct the line directly to Kaunas. They also have a longer term plan to continue a European gauge line to Vilnius, probably building it alongside the existing broad gauge system. This would have many advantages, particularly improving the passenger service potential on the Vilnius-Warsaw route, where currently rail underperforms on both cost and time with the bus services between the two cities. Avoiding the necessity to change the gauge of passenger trains would speed such services considerably. There would obviously be transit freight advantages as well for goods coming from Belorus.
In July 2008 the Commission had the chance to inspect the track from Kaunas to Joniskis, (16 kms. south of the Latvian border). The line varies between double and single track (with passing places) for most of the 160 km distanced inspected. It is not electrified. Between Kaunas and Jonava it winds through the attractive Kaunas forest with several narrow radius curves which will slow the design speed. Crossing the Nevis river at Jonava the single track railway viaduct would have to be rebuild to accommodate double track (although bridge columns remain from a former structure destroyed during the Second World War). North of Jonava the line runs straight and appears to be in a good state of repair. Also there seems to be usually enough width for completing a double track system, which seems to be the priority if the line is to carry increased freight and passenger traffic. The design speed on this section Jonava – Siauliai appears to be 120 km/h at least. The short section from Seduva to Siauliai is of great importance to the Lithuanian rail network as it carries the traffic between Vilnius and the nation's only large port of Klaipeda via the large marshalling and traffic control complex at Radivilis.

3) **Latvia:** The Coordinator had the opportunity to personally inspect the line from Riga to Sigulda in April 2008. It was clear that the general quality of the track is acceptable and meets the agreed criteria of 120 km/h design speed as it is double track, although not electrified. After Sigulda (and particularly after Valmiera in the border crossing section) the line is often single track and of lower quality with some tight curves and many unprotected crossing points which will have to be upgraded. The Coordinator understands well, having now travelled on this line, that this line from Sigulda to Riga essentially serves Riga commuter

[1] It is important to underline that the road project *"Via Baltica"* is not, and never has been, a TEN-T Priority Project

needs, and that the links from the outlying districts to Riga are of high importance to the Latvian authorities given the large population of Riga in Baltic terms. Improving this commuter service is a priority for the Latvian authorities. Connections between Riga, the largest city in the Baltic States and the *"Rail Baltica"* are of primary interest, as are the links with Riga port and its expected development – also positions well understood by the Coordinator.

4) **Estonia:** The priority for the Estonian authorities is the upgrading of the poor quality track on the border section from Tartu to Valga. This work is understood to have already started in June 2008. For the moment the Estonian authorities do not intend to make route alterations, but they do intend to use TEN-T funds to restore and upgrade the important border railway station at Valga on the Estonian side of the border and its surrounding access. The Coordinator had a chance in April 2008 to visit the station and discuss with the authorities of both Valka and Valga their plans for developing this border area. Upgrading the station and its access will also benefit Latvian travellers as there is currently no station on the Latvian side of the border (as has been mentioned).

2.9 Agreements to use "own funds" to supplement TEN-T support

By the end of the year under review, all four partner countries had agreed to commit funds to the project, by sharing the costs of the TEN-T fund allocations from national funds or by using Cohesion Funds or railway company finance for the sections where the TEN-T would, or could not be used. This agreement represented a major breakthrough in the negotiations on the project, as clearly there will now be available sufficient funds to ensure that the "step-by-step" approach can go ahead and that work can start well before the end of the current financial perspective. This remains the case in 2007-8 as the financial burdens imposed by the project will still require far more finance than can be provided solely by the TEN-T budget.
The partner countries will therefore still have to assign considerable national and cohesion funds if the first stage of the project is to be completed on time by 2013.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION

The COWI study covered the environment in detail and it has always been made clear by the Coordinator that while rail provides intrinsic environmental improvements (sustainability, low carbon emission, small land purchase demand etc.,) any new construction involving *"Rail Baltica"* should still have environmental considerations as a priority. Environmental impact assessments are in any case mandatory for all EU financed projects and all the partner countries must be aware of this.
The main environmental issue in the region during the year continued to be the controversy over the building of the *"Via Baltica"* bypass system in the Rospuda river valley in NE Podlaskie Prefecture in Poland. However, the Polish rail authorities PKP/PLP are exploring the possibilities of using the western route through Elk for the *"Rail Baltica"* therefore avoiding the environmental issues relating to the Rospuda. The new route will cross the *Natura 2000* protected area (as it already does) of the Biebrza river valley. But as this involves only an existing single track railway line which is fully electrified already, with a wide cleared band on either side, there seems to be no significant environmental impact on this line being designated as part of *"Rail Baltica".* If ever the line should be extended to a double track system then environmental impact studies would be required, but as there is already a double bridge over the Biebrza, then again, new construction would be very limited.

4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION

During the last year there have been several significant economic developments which affect the *"Rail Baltica"* project:

- Growth in the Baltic States and Poland has continued to be positive with 11.2% growth in Estonia, 7.7% in Latvia, 6.1% in Lithuania and 6.1 % in Poland.[1]
- Some administrations continue to complain about the exodus of skilled labour to other EU countries hampering their construction industries and the ability to construct major capital works. Although there are signs the trend may be reversing as the Western EU countries begin to encounter economic difficulties
- Continuing congestion on the road network is still a major problem for economic development in the region - particularly in Latvian and on the border with Russia and the Polish Lithuanian border as well as throughout the Polish Podlaskie region.

[1] Eurostat figures for 2006

5. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE REGION

Relations with Russia seemed to have stabilised somewhat during the year 2007-8 following the periods of tension the year before with Poland (import of agricultural products) and Estonia (War memorial/alleged cyber attack). Outside bodies such as the CER[1] continue to highlight the possible implications of Russian investment in Baltic rail companies. The net effect of any reduction in Russian freight traffic would have a definite effect on the finances of the Baltic railway companies which up to now have been profitable. These issues could mean that *"Rail Baltica"* can provide alternative freight routes for the partner countries both north/south from the Nordic States, south from Finland and down to Warsaw or also for traffic coming in the other direction from Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary to the north. If enough multi-modal terminals were constructed along the line then freight companies could use whichever section of the *"Rail Baltica"* track they needed, entering or leaving from any of the existing east/west axis routes and then proceeding either north to Finland or south to central and eastern Europe.

6. PRIORITIES FOR THE 4TH YEAR OF THE COORDINATORS MANDATE 2008-2009

The Coordinator sees four main areas where he will be concentrating his efforts and that of DG TREN in the coming year. These will be

- Encouraging the development of the International Coordination Committee into a real Operating Authority dealing with safety, security, signalling, freight slot allocations, rolling stock and locomotive supply
- To engage wherever possible the interest of the local authorities of the major towns along the route. To undertake to visit as many as possible and discuss with the authorities their concerns and preoccupations.
- Publicising and promoting the economic possibilities offered by this new rail axis, both to local and international business, and to stakeholders in the railway construction and transport industries
- Reviewing the connections between the major seaports along the route and their links with the *Rail Baltica* north/south axis.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

By the end of the year 2007-8 the Coordinator can report that:

- The main conclusion remains that the project possesses real economic potential. This is not only the judgment of the Feasibility Study but is evidenced by established and active commercial interest in using a north/south axis.
- Around € 120 million of TEN-T funding has been earmarked for the 6 works and study projects in the Three Baltic States for the period 2007-13. The partner countries will be providing considerable own resources contributions (around € 300 million)
- New passenger services have started (for example Riga – Valga/Valka)
- New rail ferry services have started across the Gulf of Finland linking Helsinki with the Baltic States.
- The issue of the route remains largely decided, (at least in the short-medium term).
- Interest continues to be shown by the private sector in operating on the line. This confirming the economic potential that the line possesses.

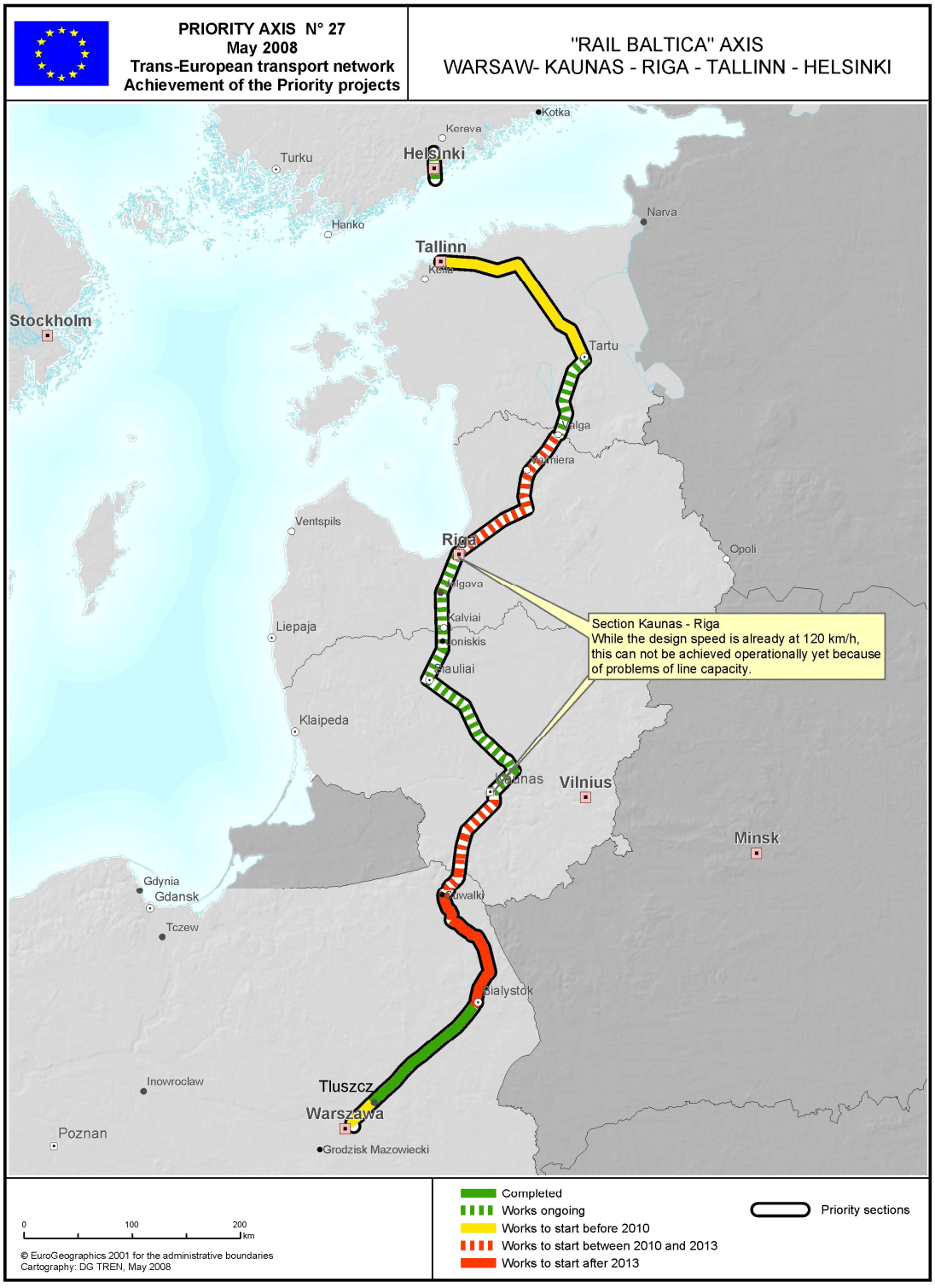
Additionally, the strategic changes taking place along this eastern boundary of the EU mean it is ever more important that the Baltic States should be linked by high quality transport (and eventually energy) links in the interest of Baltic solidarity and overall EU Cohesion.

The Coordinator continues to recommend, (as in last year's report) that *"the line continues to be developed using a "step-by-step" approach over the period of this Financial Perspective, drawing down on TEN-T funds for studies and border crossing sections, ensuring smooth flows of both passenger and freight transport across the three land frontiers and enabling the line to grow towards economic success".* Developing and extending the European gauge, particularly in Lithuania remains an option which he can support, so long as it does not interfere with the short term freight and passenger operations. The declared aim continues to be that there should be a system operating at 120 km/hr by the year 2013.

Once again it is important to state that if in later years the partner countries see the need to upgrade the project to a higher speed European gauge line, they will be able to use the foundations of an already successful rail link to build upon.

[1] The CER (Community of European Railways) is the Brussels based organisation representing the European railway and infrastructure companies

ANNEX **MAP OF THE PROPOSED ROUTING**



ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT
2007 - 2008

KAREL VINCK
EUROPEAN COORDINATOR

ERTMS PROJECT

Brussels
August 2008

This report only represents the opinion of the European coordinator
and does not prejudge the official position of the European Commission.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Rail transport in Europe has seen a worrying decline for more than thirty years, especially in the area of freight transport, but significant progress has been made in some Member States in the last years. The climate change discussion puts an ever growing pressure on the overall transport system. Rail, as an environmentally friendly transport mode, should be able to offer an alternative to road and air transport. However, rail has to be able to offer its customers a good service in terms of cost, reliability, punctuality, flexibility and safety. Without guaranteeing an excellent service, rail will never be able to make a real contribution to changing the balance between modes of transport and addressing the needs of the climate change.

The European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) is a tool to establish an integrated and intelligent railway transport system in Europe. There are currently over 20 signalling systems in use across Europe, many of which are incompatible and obsolete. Implementing a common European speed control and signalling system across key freight and high-speed corridors - and ultimately the wider rail network - will greatly improve the competitiveness of European railways. This is the aim of ERTMS.

ERTMS is composed of two distinct features: GSM-R, based on GSM technology, but using radio frequencies specific to the railways, to exchange information (voice and data) between trackside and on-board; and ETCS (European Train Control System), in which a train-based computer controls the speed of the train in relation to the operational characteristics of the track.

Using the most up-to-date technologies, ERTMS allows for reduced transport costs and improved capacity use, punctuality and safety. ERTMS makes rail travel across national borders easier by ensuring interoperability. And it helps make rail a more competitive alternative to road, air and sea transport. ERTMS is a key element of several trans-European transport network (TEN-T) priority projects.

ERTMS is gradually replacing obsolete national systems and is being deployed along key high-speed and freight corridors. The larger goal is to implement ERTMS across the wider European rail network: the system has already been installed on over 2,000 km of lines in Europe (end 2007) and a further 20,000 km are contracted or planned.

2. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE 3RD YEAR OF ACTIVITY

During the first year, the Coordinator concentrated his efforts on the activities of the MoU ERTMS Steering Committee, in particular on the definition of the freight Corridors, including a methodology to carry out detailed performance studies. In the second year, significant progress was made in setting up the freight Corridors and in addressing the financing issues for ERTMS in general. The Coordinator actively supported the European Railway Agency (ERA) in stabilising the technical standard for ETCS[1].

In the 3rd year of activity a significant part of the Coordinator's efforts continued to be concentrated in stabilising the technical standard for ETCS and in defining the way towards ETCS baseline 3. He also advised the Commission in the selection of ERTMS projects for EU financial support under the TEN-T programme. The Coordinator continued to support the work of the freight Corridors throughout the year.

2.1. ERTMS MoU Steering Committee

The Commission signed in March 2005 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the European Railway Associations (CER, EIM, UIC, UNIFE), with the objective to implement an EU-wide network of interoperable rail corridors within a 10-12 year timeframe. The MoU set up a Steering Committee and the Coordinator chairs this committee. There were seven more meetings in the course of the year; from September 2007 to May 2008.

[1] http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/coordinators/index_en.htm

2.2. Development of ETCS technical standard

'2.3.0d'

Several lines using ETCS are currently in service in various Member States (e.g. Italy, Spain, Luxembourg). These projects involve several manufacturers and have now been operational for several months, or even several years in some cases. At the same time, other projects are underway in Europe, in particular for high-speed infrastructure. These projects will connect lines equipped with ETCS across several Member States (Germany, Belgium, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands). The same train will have to be able to run using the ETCS system on lines located in these five countries.
A study carried out by the manufacturers at the start of 2007 showed that certain ambiguities in the specifications had not been interpreted in exactly the same manner, both in the case of projects which had been in service for a few months, and for the projects about to be put into service. Therefore a so called crash programme was launched by the ERA to set out the correct interpretation of the specifications.
The Coordinator actively supported both the ERA in dealing with the technical questions and the Commission in explaining the situation to the Member States in the Committee on the interoperability and safety of the European rail system. A Commission Decision on version 2.3.0d was adopted on 23 April 2008[1]. This version constitutes the unique and interoperable technical reference to ensure interoperability of all ETCS equipment deployed in Europe.

'3.0.0'

During the last part of the activity year, the Coordinator focused on a new Memorandum of Understanding. This new MoU complements the existing one, but concentrates on more technical issues.

ERTMS can succeed only if, on the one hand, there is full technical compatibility between the tens of thousands of kilometres of track and the trains to be equipped and, on the other hand, deployment is carried out swiftly and in a coordinated manner. The new MoU addresses these two fundamental issues, mainly by:

- using a single technical baseline[2] for all railway lines equipped with ERTMS in the European Union up to the end of 2012;
- getting manufacturers to agree to include software updates in new contracts at a client's request. Clients (rail companies and infrastructure managers) currently complain about the excessive costs imposed by manufacturers;
- agreeing on a programme enabling a new version of the specifications[3] to be drawn up by the end of 2012 in such a manner that trains equipped with this new version can run on lines equipped with the old version;
- improving and harmonising test procedures for checking the compatibility and compliance of equipment and
- accelerating deployment of ERTMS, particularly by adopting a binding European plan and equipping new models of engine.

The MoU was signed in Rome on 4 July 2008 by the Commission, the European Railway Associations CER, EIM, UIC, UNIFE, who were signatories of the first MoU, and in addition the GSM-R Industry Group and the European Rail Freight Association (ERFA) joined the signatories.

2.3. Freight corridors

As indicated already in the Coordinator's 1st annual report, the deployment of ERTMS on the freight corridors requires a methodology and proper project management structures. In addition to ERTMS, in

[1] COMMISSION DECISION 2008/386/EC of 23/04/2008 modifying Annex A to Decision 2006/679/EC of 28 March 2006 concerning the technical specification for interoperability relating to the control-command and signalling subsystem of the trans-European conventional rail system and Annex A to Decision 2006/860/EC of 7 November 2006 concerning the technical specification for Interoperability relating to the control-command and signalling subsystem of the trans-European high speed rail system.
[2] Version 2.3.0d of the specifications
[3] Version 3 of the specifications

order to optimise the performance of the Corridors, it is also important to address infrastructure bottlenecks and to harmonise operational procedures.

The Coordinator is concentrating his efforts on the following freight Corridors:

A – Rotterdam-Genoa

B – Stockholm-Naples

C – Antwerp-Basel-Lyon

D – Valencia-Lyon-Ljubljana-Budapest

E – Dresden-Prague-Budapest-Bucharest-Constanta

F – Aachen-Berlin-Warsaw-Terespol

The ERTMS MoU Steering Committee decided that the methodology to be followed on each Corridor is based on a Letter of Intent, signed by the Ministers of Transport of the Member States concerned, giving the broad objectives and the political commitments and defining the project management structures. The project management structure includes an Executive Committee, composed of transport ministry representatives and a Management Committee, composed of infrastructure managers, to deal with all aspects concerning the deployment of ERTMS.

The main developments since the last annual report in setting up the required project management structures were: the signature of the Letter of Intent for Corridor F in November 2007 and the extension of Corridor E to Romania in April 2008. The EEIGs are now in place for Corridors A, C and D.

The Coordinator has had several meeting in the course of the year with Corridor A. The aim of these meetings has been to try to clarify the situation concerning the technical requirement for ETCS implementation on the German and Swiss sections of the Corridor A by 2012 and 2015. The DB and the SBB are of the opinion that to be able to meet the 2012 deadline, a version of the ERTMS/ETCS specification including harmonised braking curves and limited supervision needs to legalised in 2009. The Coordinator has proposed that the progress towards baseline 3 will be analysed towards the end of 2008 and based on the analysis the Commission may consider an intermediate legal version, although the latter is not the preferred solution.

Corridor B remains the only outstanding Corridor, where the countries i.e. Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria and Italy have not yet reached an agreement on the Letter of Intent. Thus, no Corridor management structures are yet in place. In June 2008 Mr Vinck together with Mr Van Miert met both the DB and the German Ministry of Transport in order to try to progress on the development of Corridor B and TEN-T priority project No 1 in Germany.

Work on the other Corridors, covering all three aspects, is progressing well.

2.4. Financing

TEN-T financing for ERTMS projects

Financial support from the TEN-T budget is of paramount importance for a rapid migration towards ERTMS. This is vital because a critical mass of ERTMS deployment needs to be reached as quickly as possible, which in turn will induce more and more infrastructure managers and railway undertakings to equip tracks and locomotives with ERTMS.

In the TEN-T Multi-Annual Programme 2007-2013, an indicative amount of € 500 million is reserved for ERTMS investments. The first call was published in 2007 and the second is expected in early 2009. The support rate for ERTMS investments is up to 50% of the eligible cost of the project. The Commission together with the Coordinator has fixed specific funding ceilings for both track side and on board investments.

In total 49 ERTMS projects were submitted in the first call, of which 4 were reclassified under the Priority Project field of the Call, and 1 was ineligible. Of the 44 projects evaluated, requests totalled € 1 500 million (€1 200 million for trackside (80%) and € 300 million for on board (20%)).

The Coordinator's advice has been taken into account in the Commission's selection of projects to be supported. Particular attention was paid to proposals submitted jointly or in a coherent manner by several

Member States or by organisations involving several infrastructure managers from different Member States. In this framework, specific consideration was given to the projects submitted by the six freight Corridors.

Because of the high demand and the high quality of projects, the ceilings laid down in the call had to be strictly applied and the maturity and EU dimension of the projects were carefully considered. In the evaluation of proposals, a number of criteria were applied as a general rule: project activities should start in 2007/2008 and should be completed by 2012 for trackside projects and by 2009 for onboard projects. Even with this strict approach, it was necessary to increase the indicative amount to € 271.59 million.

Private sector contribution to financing the freight Corridors

The full benefits of ERTMS can only be realised if infrastructure bottlenecks are also addressed and steps are taken to harmonise operational procedures along the Corridors. Having analysed the financing needs of the six freight Corridors, the Coordinator has reflected on ways to raise the necessary financing needed especially on infrastructure bottlenecks to improve the Corridors. He has had preliminary discussions with some financial institutions in order to explore ways to raise the financing needed.

2.5. ERTMS deployment – national plans and EU plan

The technical specifications for interoperability for control-command and signalling require each Member State to draw up a national plan for the implementation of ERTMS. Based on those plans, the Commission is to draw up an EU level master plan. The Member States had to submit those national plans to the Commission by 28 September 2007. The national plans need to explain how the Member States intended to move progressively from the existing situation to the final situation in which ERTMS is deployed over a wide network.

Following the reception of those national ERTMS deployment plans, the Commission launched a public consultation on the way forward towards an EU level master plan, which offered three different options (not necessarily mutually exclusive) for consideration:

- Option A: voluntary ERTMS European Deployment Plan centred around the development of corridors – national plans are collated in a document which is not binding. Coordination takes place only at the level of corridors.

- Option B: binding ERTMS European Deployment Plan which includes lines with renewed signalling – ERTMS would be compulsory on all new trans-European network lines and conventional trans-European network lines on which signalling is renewed.

- Option C: binding ERTMS European Deployment Plan based on a target deployment rate – Member States must submit deployment plans with targets (e.g. 3% of the trans-European network per year and/or certain key corridors). On that basis, a binding Plan is drawn up.

The Commission received 29 responses in total – 12 from Member States and 17 from stakeholders within, or involved with, the railway sector. The majority of respondents was in favour of Option C, which foresees the introduction of a legally binding deployment plan.
In parallel to the public consultation, the Commission reviewed the national deployment plans and compiled a consolidated version in order to see the extent of ERTMS deployment along the European network in 2012, 2015 and 2020. This analysis revealed a number of gaps, or missing links, across the network which often occur at national borders. EU action will focus on this issue as the importance of removing potential missing links and ensuring a coordinated deployment along corridors.
As a next step the Commission together with the Coordinator will engage in discussion more directly with the relevant actors in order to better identify the most important "missing links" in the network. Afterwards the Commission will enter into bilateral discussions with the Member States in order to define a European Deployment Plan. This plan would consist of a core network on which the implementation of ERTMS would be mandatory at specific target dates (2012, 2015, 2020 as well as a date by which the whole Trans-European network shall be equipped).

2.6. Publicity

The publication of the ERTMS newsletter SIGNAL continued. Two additional issues were published in 2007 and four issues were published in 2008. SIGNAL focused on current affairs concerning ERTMS development and deployment. The latest issue of the newsletter was devoted to the signature of the new MoU and it included an article by the Coordinator. SIGNAL also acts as a valuable platform for stakeholders for example the July edition featured an article by Mr Paolo Costa, MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament's Committee on Transport and Tourism.

The Coordinator has also participated in a number of important events and conferences with various stakeholders from the railway sector in order to keep the railway sector experts and the general public up to date on the progress of the ERTMS project. A specific press conference was organised at the same time as the Commission adopted the decision on '2.3.0d' in order to explain the importance of the step for the overall ERTMS deployment in Europe.

3. PRIORITIES FOR THE 4TH YEAR OF ACTIVITY

In the 4th year of activity, the Coordinator will concentrate his efforts on monitoring progress on the development of issues defined in the new MoU. There are clear milestones for the development of the baseline 3, which have to be kept, in order to keep the final deadline of 2012. Also for improving the testing procedures, a number of steps have to be taken.

The Coordinator will of course continue to support the performance optimisation programmes of the Corridors. Corridor B remains the only one without a Letter of Intent. Thus, this Corridor should be analysed in more detail in order to see what could be done to make significant progress on this Corridor in the course of next activity year.

The Commission is working on a European deployment plan for ERTMS based on an analysis of the national deployment plans. Although the European deployment plan is discussed with the Member States, who will also formally adopt the plan, the railway sector is also involved and consulted in the framework of the ERTMS MoU Steering Committee.

The TEN-T financing decisions for the ERTMS projects selected for supported will be adopted in the course of autumn 2008. At the same time, it is important to establish the priorities for financing under the next call for proposal for ERTMS projects, which is due to be published in early 2009. The Coordinator will make recommendations on the financing priorities and these will be also discussed in the ERTMS MoU Steering Committee. Once the projects are running it is of paramount importance to put in place a good follow-up mechanism to monitor the project implementation in order to ensure that technical solutions implemented within the project are consistent with the Technical Specifications for Interoperability. The Commission has launched a call for tender for the provision of external technical assistance to help it to monitor the implementation of the ERTMS projects. The follow-up has to be carried out in close cooperation with the TEN-T Executive Agency and also with the ERA.

4. CONCLUSIONS

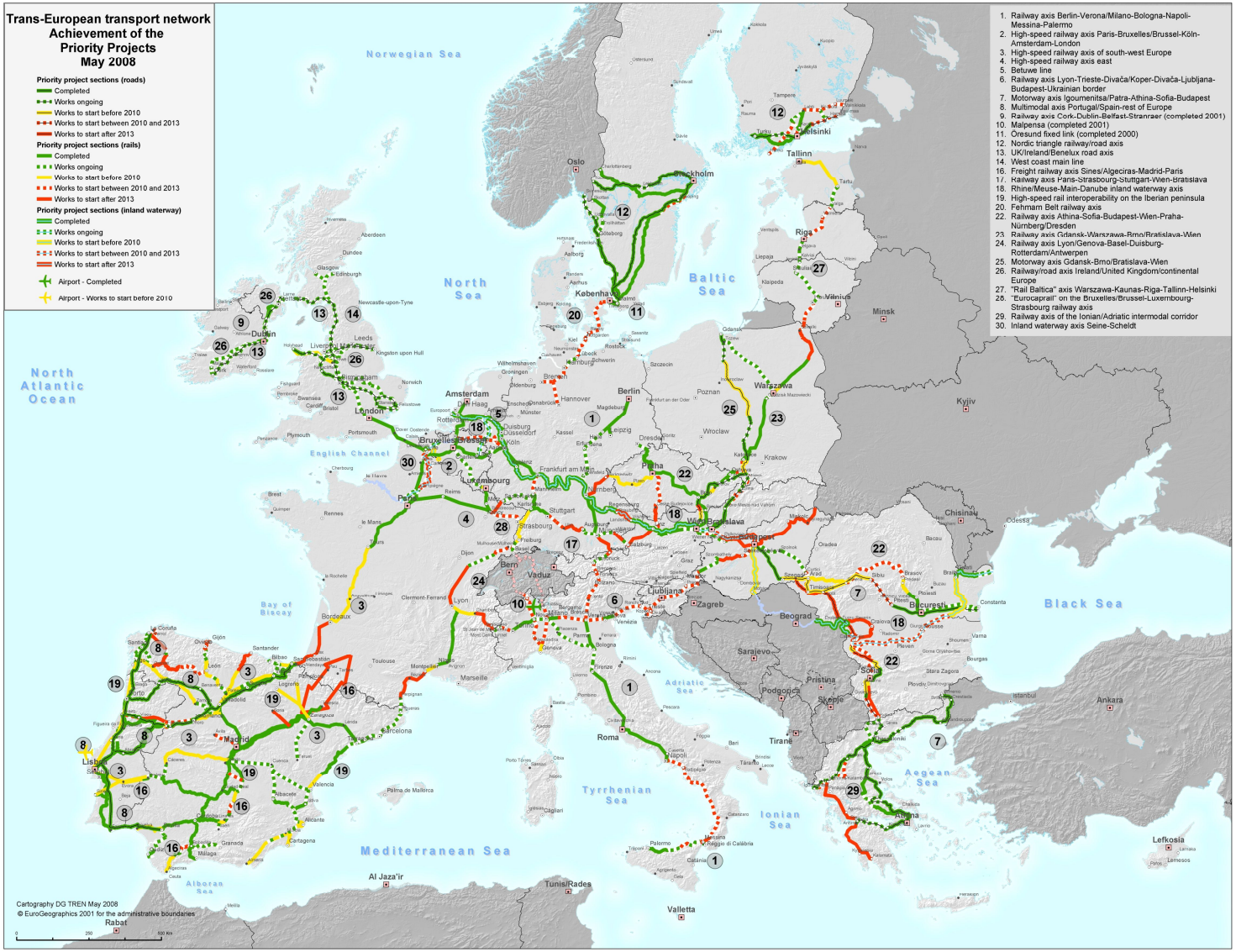
A significant step in the field of ERTMS deployment was taken in the 3rd activity year and that was the Commission decision on the version 2.3.0d of the ETCS specifications. This allows for the system to be deployed throughout Europe with a guarantee of full interoperability across the whole network. Another important step was the signature of the new MoU which paves the way to baseline 3 of the ETCS specifications through the strong commitment of all stakeholders involved.

Work on the Corridors is progressing and the Commission has been in a position to grant financial support to ERTMS implementation on all of these Corridors.

Work on the European Deployment Plan for ERTMS has progressed following the submission of the national deployment plans and the Commission will shortly propose binding targets for ERTMS deployment in Europe.

Overall, the 3rd activity year has been an important one and significant steps have been taken in the field of ERTMS. Nevertheless, we have to keep the pressure on and to meet the agreed targets and common deadlines for ERTMS implementation in order to fully realise the underlying objectives of increased capacity, better reliability and improved safety, offered by ERTMS.

Priority projects - Overview map May 2008



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR ENERGY AND TRANSPORT
DIRECTORATE B – Transport Logistics, TEN-T and Co-modality