

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

among the ministers in charge of transport of

**the Republic of Austria,
the Republic of Bulgaria,
the Czech Republic,
the Hellenic Republic,
the Republic of Hungary,
Romania and
the Slovak Republic**

**on the implementation of rail freight corridor No 7
(Orient Corridor)**

General Objectives

The implementation of a rail freight network was one of the objectives of the White Paper of the European transport policy for 2010. In this framework, the goal was that investments should, amongst others, encourage the gradual development of trans-European corridors for priority or even exclusive use by freight trains. The gradual establishment of corridors giving priority to freight has to be achieved through improvements in capacity, including the upgrading and the rehabilitation of infrastructure on alternative low-traffic routes or through the development of traffic management systems (control-command and signalling). An important step was taken by a common decision of Ministers to identify the necessary steps for establishing functioning freight corridors.

In December 2008, the European Commission made public a proposal of regulation aiming to improve the competitiveness of rail freight. Regulation No 913/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 concerning a European rail network for competitive freight (hereinafter referred to as 'Regulation') came into force on 9 November 2010.

The Regulation lays down rules for the establishment and organisation of international rail corridors for competitive rail freight with a view to the development of a European rail network for competitive freight. It sets out rules for the selection, the organisation, the management and the indicative investment planning of freight corridors. The Regulation applies to the management and the use of railway infrastructure included in freight corridors.

In order to implement the provisions of the Regulation, the management board of freight corridor No 7 to be established by the infrastructure managers of the Member States concerned shall in particular:

- draw up an implementation plan, at the latest 6 months before making the freight corridor operational;
- draw up an investment plan, which includes details of indicative medium and long-term investment for infrastructure in the freight corridor;
- set up a freight corridor one-stop shop for application for infrastructure capacity;
- define the need for capacity to be allocated to freight trains running on the freight corridor;
- define the reserve capacity for international freight trains running on the freight corridors, taking into account the need for capacity for passenger transport;
- define pre-arranged train paths along the freight corridor in an annual path catalogue;
- put in place procedures for coordinating traffic management along the freight corridor, and regarding the interconnection of the freight corridors Nos 5, 6, 8 and 9 procedures for coordinating traffic.

The Ministers

1. recognise the contribution of rail freight to Europe's socio-economic development and to the environment;
2. stress the high potential of rail freight corridors to interconnect in a more efficient and effective way the existing TEN-T priority projects in the future TEN-T Core network;
3. stress the high potential of a such a railway's Core network for the relations with Asia, but also for its high potential in terms of multimodality and for its benefits for the global transport;
4. share the ambition to continue to work together to develop the network by the management of the freight corridors and their interconnections, but also by the improvement of interoperability, the removal of bottlenecks, the harmonisation of operational rules and the capacity management;
5. want to increase the involvement of the business community in developing the freight corridors;
6. recall the Letters of Intent on the development of ERTMS Corridor E;
7. consider that this Memorandum of Understanding is without prejudice to the competence of the Member States regarding planning and funding of the rail infrastructure on their territory;
8. consider as a potential the extension of the freight corridor to Germany as well as the connection between ERTMS Corridors E and F;
9. welcome the objective to extend ERTMS Corridor E in line with the direction of freight corridor No 7 towards Bulgaria and Greece.

Taking into consideration the above and in order to comply with the provisions laid down in Article 8(1) of the Regulation, the Ministers hereby establish the executive board of freight corridor No 7 (Orient Corridor) described in the Annex to the Regulation. The members of the executive board appointed by the Ministers to represent them shall be as follows:

- Federal Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology of the Republic of Austria
- Director of the National transport policy Directorate of the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Bulgaria
- Director of Department for Rails, Railway and Combined Transport of the Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic
- Head of the Freight Transport Division of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks of the Hellenic Republic
- Deputy State Secretary for Transport of the Ministry of National Development of the Republic of Hungary
- Minister of Transports and Infrastructure of Romania
- Minister of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic.

The executive body of freight corridor No 7 shall elaborate and approve its terms of reference on the basis of mutual consent in accordance with Article 8 (4) of the Regulation the latest on 30 September 2011. The terms of reference shall include in particular:

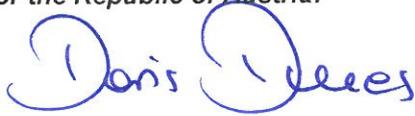
- objectives of the organization,
- members and their rights and obligations,
- rules of operation,
- decision making procedures,
- sanctions.

The Ministers have moreover decided to:

1. continue supporting the need to implement the financial decisions relating to the ERTMS deployment on Corridor E by 2015/2020;
2. insist that the freight corridor and its principal routes become part of the TEN-T Core network;
3. support that the management board of freight corridor No 7 considers RailNetEurope (RNE) as one of the potential suppliers of principles, methods and tools for the allocation and the management of the capacity on the freight corridor and for related matters;
4. encourage the National Safety Authorities in their countries to improve their cooperation along the freight corridor No 7.

Done at Luxembourg on 16 June 2011, in seven original copies in English.

For the Republic of Austria:



Ms Doris BURES,
Federal Minister of Transport, Innovation and Technology

For the Republic of Bulgaria:



PP. Mr Ivaylo MOSKOVSKI, *Peter STEFANOV*
Minister of Transport, Information Technology and Communications

For the Czech Republic:



Mr Jiří ŽÁK,
Deputy Minister of Transport

For the Hellenic Republic:



Mr Spyros VOUGIAS,
Deputy Minister of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks

For the Republic of Hungary:



Mr Pál VÖLNER,
Minister of State for Infrastructure

For Romania:



Ms Anca Daniela BOAGIU,
Minister of Transports and Infrastructure

For the Slovak Republic:



Mr Peter JAVORČÍK
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the European Union