

**SEETO Railway and Intermodality Working Group Meeting
Podgorica, November 14 2012**

RAIL REFORM IN GREECE - recent developments

Good morning

My name is Georgios Kouparousos and I am with the greek Regulatory Authority for Railways ('RAS').

First of all, I would like to thank Mr Jost for inviting us to this meeting as well as all the organisers for their hospitality.

Those of you, who also attended the 17th SEETO Railway Working Group meeting, may remember the presentation made by the President of RAS, Mr Vasileios Tsiamantis, on the mission and competencies of RAS.

Further to that presentation, I would like to give you an overview of the progress achieved so far in RAS's area of activities.

RAS has already awarded two railway undertaking licenses: to TRAINOSE S.A. and to STASY S.A., both incumbents.

Hence, the Greek Railway Market comprises so far:

- OSE S.A. (formerly Hellenic State Railways Organization): the sole Infrastructure Manager in Greece,
- TRAINOSE: the major state-owned incumbent operator, separated from OSE under Directive 2001/14 and active on the entire network
- STASY or Urban Rail Transport: State-owned Athens Metro & Tram Operating Company, active on a 20 km section of the OSE infrastructure running special dual-voltage shuttle metro trains to and from Athens International Airport

In view of promoting the railway market opening, RAS has advertised the start of its operations through its official website www.ras-el.gr, as well as through a targeted action to make all potential market players, such as Forwarders', Shippers' and Logistics Associations, National and International Chambers of Commerce, aware of the prospects opened by the railway market liberalization.

In the light of Directive 2007/58, RAS has elaborated and put up for public consultation two new regulation drafts regarding the decision-making process and criteria for assessing:

- the principal purpose of an international passenger service and
- whether the economic equilibrium of existing public service contracts is compromised by a new international passenger service.

Under its established right to propose legislative recommendations on issues of its responsibility, RAS has also drafted a Ministerial Decision, specifying the "Call for Hearing Regulation". This proposal, which is still under evaluation by the relevant ministerial committees, is a prerequisite for RAS to be able to impose any sanctions.

Moreover, RAS has elaborated and submitted a proposed amendment to L.3891/2010, under which the Authority was set up, aiming at enhancing the effectiveness and consequently the role of RAS by granting to it the right to issue legislative acts in its field of competence. This amendment to the law is also still pending, awaiting ministerial approval.

RAS continues to check the Infrastructure Manager (OSE) and the incumbent operators in all areas, which are subject to regulatory control.

Furthermore, on April 2012 RAS was admitted into the Independent Regulators' Group for Railways.

IRG-Rail (www.irg-rail.eu) is a network currently comprising rail Regulatory Bodies from 21 European countries. The overall aim of IRG-Rail is to facilitate the creation of a single, competitive, efficient and sustainable internal railways market in Europe. The IRG-Rail acts as a platform for cooperation, information exchange and sharing of expertise and best practice between national railway regulators in order to face current and future regulatory challenges in railways.

RAS was the 18th RB to join the group.

It is worth noting that for a regulatory body to join the group, no EU membership is required. However, full financial and administrative independence of the regulatory body from any other public Authority is an absolute prerequisite for admission to IRG-Rail.

Among SEE states, Croatia and FYROM are currently members of IRG-Rail.

The work carried out by IRG-Rail is structured around Working Groups (WGs). RAS is active in all IRG-Rail's Working Groups, namely:

- Charges
- International passenger services
- Recast of First Railway Package
- Market Monitoring
- Rail Freight Corridors

What IRG-Rail is pursuing is to promote a consistent application of the European regulatory framework through the highest possible level of common understanding among all European regulators.

Of special significance was the contribution of RAS to the drafting of a Position Paper, now adopted by the IRG-Rail Plenary, on the assessment of the Principal Purpose of an international passenger service introduced under Directive 2007/58.

Equally important is the joint effort of the Market Monitoring WG to regularly (on a yearly basis) produce a comprehensive Railway Market Survey, applying uniform reporting principles and using commonly agreed indicators. This survey aims at becoming the sector benchmark, superseding similar surveys issued by other bodies, such as the Eurostat.

RAS is contributing by collecting, processing and sharing all data needed to this end.

RAS has also been following the developments in the Interoperability area, as we consider it to be essential for effective market opening. In this context, RAS has established contacts with the relevant National Safety Authority, which is still under ministerial jurisdiction.

RAS has already published its first Annual Report, which can be downloaded from the website www.ras-el.gr.

RAILWAY TRAFFIC GROWTH IN THE GREEK NETWORK

You may find below the rail usage for freight and passengers:

	2009	2010	2011
Total passengers kms (millions)	1.466	1.382	957
Total freight tonnes kms (millions)	562	615	352

Clearly there is a reduction in both passenger and freight transport volumes, due to the following facts:

- from 2009 TRAINOSE started a financial recovery effort through route cuts and business restructuring, which bore fruit so as in 2011 TRAINOSE was for the first time profitable (PSO contracts taken into account).
- Greece is in the middle of an unprecedented financial crisis

Thank you for your attention.

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