



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

Press Release

"The European Union and South East Europe: a common vision for connecting people".

7 May 2008

Mr. Radovan Žerjav

Today's conference *"The European Union and South East Europe: a common vision for connecting people"*, organised by the Slovenian Transport Ministry, the Serbian Ministry of Infrastructure, the South East Europe Transport Observatory and the European Commission was mainly focused on presenting activities which are planned in the framework of the so-called Transport Community between the EU and the Western Balkans.

The Slovenian Presidency believes that this successful conference further upgrades our current exemplary cooperation, which will pave the way to eliminating the isolated transport island within the European Union and to increasing mobility both within the region as well as between the EU Member States.

During the conference, the Slovenian EU Presidency clearly supported the idea to grant the mandate to the European Commission to open negotiations for a Transport Treaty between the EU and South East European countries as soon as possible. The guidelines for the Treaty were already discussed by the EU transport ministers at their April meeting. The aim of the treaty on Transport Community is to form a single market with the South East European countries, encompassing infrastructure as well as road, railway, maritime transport and inland navigation. One of the contract's objectives is also to align the transport legislation of the Western Balkans with the existing Community legislation.

The Slovenian Presidency is pleased to note good attendance at the conference, which was opened by the Serbian President, Mr. Boris Tadić.

The organisation and the realisation of the conference were a demanding task, and we should highlight good cooperation with the South East Europe Transport Observatory. I must say that these actions clearly confirm that we set good grounds for transport cooperation, as it was envisaged by the Memorandum of Understanding on the development of the South East European Core Regional Transport Network, which was signed in 2004 and which provided the basis for the establishment of SEETO.

On behalf of the Slovenian Presidency, I wish to thank all those who contributed to successful completion of the conference. Special thanks should go to the Serbian Ministry of Infrastructure and the European Commission. I also believe that the team of the Slovenian Transport Ministry also did its share of work in organising and realising this conference.