
**Eighth Annual Meeting of Ministers on the
Development of the SEETO Comprehensive Network
"Common problems – Shared solutions"**

**December 4th, 2012
Hotel Westin, Zagreb**

Concept note

Aim of the Meeting:

SEETO Annual Ministerial Meeting is the highest-level political forum in the Western Balkans when it comes to transport and relevant transport network.

In the light of the Croatian entry to the European Union in 2013, the 8th Annual Meeting of Ministers will be a crucial turning point to enshrine the established regional transport cooperation and to give further fresh impetus for catching up the European integration processes in the area of transport following the footsteps of the upcoming enlargement.

Therefore, the aim of this year's AMM is to bring several decisions and commitments with regard to the possibilities to explore the conditions for future definition of the TEN-T Core Network in South East Europe (SEETO Core Network), as well as to the facilitation of transport and trade which should have synergy effect in strengthening the cohesion, economic growth, but also political stability in the region.

Goals and discussion topics:

The meeting will be tentatively divided into two sessions, the topics of which will reflect the following main goals:

Session 1: "From the SEETO Comprehensive Network to the TEN-T Core Network in the South East Europe – how ready are we?"

- To emphasize the results in the regional transport cooperation and progress made in the development of the SEETO Comprehensive Network in 2012
- To support the future Regional Transport Study which will update REBIS and will serve as a ground for definition of investment plan for removal of physical and non-physical barriers in the region, as well as to encourage the SEETO, the European Commission and the EU Member States to endeavour in creating the conditions for extension of the TEN-T Core Network to the South East Europe
- To embrace the rising interest and attention from the neighbouring EU Member States, thus to underline the role of the SEETO in widening and deepening the regional cooperation, in order to achieve optimum management and utilisation of resources, financial instruments and mechanisms for development of the SEETO Comprehensive network

- To stress the importance of consistent transport planning and earmarking adequate resources for the priority projects listed in the MAP 2013 and rated according to the new SEETO Methodology which was welcomed by the European Commission and all major IFIs
- To ensure a suitable level of presentation of the Croatian authorities in the SEETO structures despite the fact that its formal participation ceases on July 1st, 2013 with the accession of Croatia to the EU, given the common interest in development of the Network and the unprecedented experience that can be transferred to the rest of the region

Session 2 - "Seamless transport in support of a free trade in the South East Europe – targets to achieve"

- To demonstrate willingness to anticipate the bottlenecks, eliminate the barriers at border crossings and facilitate the transport of goods in general, given the growth of intraregional and international trade due to the liberalisation of the markets, which as a result will increase the traffic flows as well
- To introduce the corridor approach in designing a high added value, well coordinated, pioneering "flagship" project aiming to address physical and non-physical bottlenecks and to employ concrete measures on relevant border crossing points along a particular co-modal transport axis
- To highlight the need to develop co-modality in a reasonable perspective, and to put forward the proposal to set up Rail Corridors with due account of the EU railway regulations, in order to contribute towards a competitive and sustainable freight transport
- To welcome and encourage the established cooperation with other relevant regional organisations, notably with the CEFTA Secretariat and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) in achieving the common aims in tackling the urgent horizontal policy and infrastructure issues

Special note for Member States representatives

Orientation topics for discussions

- The experience from the process of revision of TEN-T Guidelines and in development of the TEN-T
- Support of the EU Member States in the development of the SEETO Comprehensive network and in identification of TEN-T Core Network in South East Europe: common project proposals, joint investments, lobbying and financial support
- Strengthened cooperation with regards to the most prominent transport and trade arteries in the South East Europe: "flagship" axis – axis without barriers

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- EU accession of Croatia: implications to the transport and infrastructure policy in the wider region and to the network connectivity
 - Strategic development of co-modality and adjacent infrastructure: investing in transport efficiency, competitiveness, environment and sustainability

Speakers:

- Vice President of the European Commission in charge for Transport, Mr. Siim Kallas (TBC)
- Ministers of Transport of seven Regional Participants
- High-level Transport representatives from neighbouring EU member states (TBC)
- High-level representative of the European Commission, DG Mobility and Transport
- High-level representative of the European Commission, DG Enlargement (TBC)
- High-level representative of the European Commission, DG Regional Policy (TBC)