

FOURTH EURO-MEDITERRANEAN TRANSPORT FORUM

Technical meeting (high-officials)

Brussels, 28 October 2003

Official report

The fourth meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Forum of Transport was held in Brussels on 28 October 2003, at the level of high-officials for transport. The list of participants is attached.

On the occasion of this meeting, the members of the Forum reviewed existing regional cooperation, discussed the short and medium term perspectives for this cooperation as well as some key issues related to the development of a Euro-Mediterranean Transport network (recent Commission proposals on new guidelines for the Trans-European Transport network, infrastructure financing). The meeting also made it possible to take stock of the Working Groups set up following the 2nd and 3rd Forum, and to allow them to pursue their activities until the next Forum.

This official report appears as a statement of the conclusions of the Forum and does not show the interventions of participants.

A. General remarks

As an introduction, the Commission referred to the ongoing revision process of the Trans-European Transport Network in the context of enlargement and to the recent Commission Communication on the development of a Euro-mediterranean Transport Network of June 2003. It stressed the need for strengthening Euro-Mediterranean transport cooperation in line with the Wider Europe policy and the setting up of a new neighbourhood instrument which will combine MEDA financing and structural funds with a view to fostering cross border activities. The importance of South-South and South-East cooperation was also put forward.

B. Status of on-going regional cooperation

The members of the Forum noted the progress of the main on-going projects and programmes, in particular, regarding bilateral cooperation, the structural adjustment project to transport sector reform in Morocco (Euro 96 million), and regarding regional cooperation, the Euromed Transport Project approved by the Commission in November 2001 (Euro 20 million) and the Research projects falling under the INCO-MED programme (Destin, Reg-Med).

The Mediterranean Partners welcomed this progress and called for a close coordination between all these projects, the working groups and the Forum itself. The Commission confirmed that overall coordination between these initiatives would be a key factor in achieving successful results, and that it would therefore make sure that

the national coordinators of the Euromed Transport project are closely associated to the Forum and working groups' activities.

C. Short and medium term perspectives for cooperation

The Commission presented to the members of the Forum the progress achieved in the framework of the working groups « Maritime safety » and « Satellite navigation » on the identification of guidelines for two new MEDA regional projects : the SAFEMED project (maritime safety and security) and the Euromed GNSS project (GALILEO). The Forum members welcomed these works. The guidelines of these new projects will be submitted for approval to the MED Committee in the first quarter of 2004.

Regarding air transport, the Commission highlighted the consequences of the November 2002 « open sky » ruling of the Court of Justice for Euromed cooperation in the field of air transport (horizontal mandate and perspectives for negotiating Euro-Mediterranean Aviation agreements). A Commission Communication is under preparation on the EU external relations with neighbouring countries in the field of air transport. This Communication will include a Mediterranean dimension. The Mediterranean Partners welcomed these perspectives.

On ports and short sea shipping, the Commission presented the latest EC developments in the field (Ports Package, programme for the promotion of short sea shipping, Marco Polo programme) and highlighted the opportunities for transfer of experience and know-how. The Forum members approved the launching of training micro-actions on the three following issues identified by the working group on « Maritime policy, ports and short sea shipping » : security, ports reform and ports computerization (including customs).

From a general point of view, Syria referred to the White Paper on European Transport policy and called for a similar initiative to be carried out by the Mediterranean Partners, in order to foster the emergence of a strategic vision for transport development in the region.

D. Working Groups of the Forum

The Forum decided to maintain the existing working groups (« Network and Infrastructure », « Navigation by satellite », « Maritime Transport » - with its two sub-groups « Maritime safety » and « Maritime policy, ports and short sea shipping » - and « Air transport ») and to pursue their activities. The mandates of these working groups are annexed, with the exception of the « Network and Infrastructure » working group for which a mandate proposal – taking into account the latest developments of the Trans-European Transport network and the progress of the Infrastructure component of the Euromed Transport project – will be transmitted to the Forum in the first part of 2004.

It was agreed to strengthen the synergy between the national coordinators of the Euromed Transport Project and the Forum working groups.

The working groups will resume their activities in the first semester of 2004.

E. Miscellaneous

The Greek delegation informed the Forum about the Vth International Conference on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and viable development which take place in Pyreus on 28 November to 4 December 2003. This Ministerial conference, organised by the Greek Ministry for Foreign Affairs will include a Transport and Communication Day on 30 November (See draft programme in annex).

F. Next meeting of the Forum

The next Euro-Mediterranean Transport Forum will take place in the last quarter of 2004 (location to be identified).

G. Coordinates of the Forum

The Secretariat of the Forum and of its Working Groups is provided by the European Commission.

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Annexes: List of participants
Mandates of the Working Groups
Presentations made at the Forum
Agenda of the Pyreus Conference