

NC Memorandum

Attn: **National Coordinator** for the EuroMed Transport Project

From: Mr. R.-M. Kalthier, Director, EuroMed Transport Project - Main Contract

Cc: Mr. L. Kioussis, Principal Administrator, EuropeAid Cooperation Office

Ms. A. Panagopoulou, Administrator, DGTREN

Mr. R. Timberlake, Director, EuroMed Transport Project – Infrastructure Contract

Date: 14 April 2006

Subject:

Minutes of the 4th National Counterpart Team Meeting with respect to the conclusions on the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional Transport Action Plan

Dear National Coordinator,

First, I would like take this opportunity to express our Project's deepest appreciation for your active and precious participation in the NCT4 meeting that was held in Tunis on 6-7 April 2006. I am sure you share my feeling that the event was a big success, mainly because of the highly participatory environment which dominated the meeting and due to the solid exchange of view, opinions and ideas that took place. I can say that such a genuine collaborative process, which is in line with the usual tradition of our project, has allowed us to reach a consensus and common agreement on the way forward for the establishment of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP). In this regard, please find below the minutes of meeting regarding the conclusions on the establishment of the RTAP. I am confident you will find these minutes a true reflection of the discussions that took place in relation to the RTAP. Nevertheless, I will be more than happy to receive any comments or remarks you may have on these minutes, appreciating if you can send these latest by the 24th of April 2006.

1. The second day of the NCT4 meeting was devoted to presenting the first draft of the Regional Transport Action Plan (RTAP), discussing with the National Coordinators this draft, and reaching a common agreement on the way forward and future activities in relation to the establishment of the RTAP.
2. The starting point was to explain to the participants the rationale upon which the first draft RTAP was elaborated, and to highlight the logic which steered the development of this first draft. This was undertaken by Ms. Panagopoulou from the EC, followed by Mr. Anouti from the Main Contract. In this regard, the following points were emphasized:
 - This first draft RTAP was originally envisaged to serve a political purpose. This objective was considered of paramount importance by the European Commission, who also considers that efforts should further focus on evolving this document, if possible, by the end of the year into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the development of the Regional Transport System.
 - Based on this perspective, the RTAP would need to be as brief as possible, suitable for endorsement by decision makers (maybe even signature by the Ministers as MoU). It would need to combine the major Strategic Measures (the high-end policy directions and global orientations) of the Blue Paper and HLG Report, and would need to define appropriate corresponding strategy lines (sequence of steps required to implement the strategic measures). It would not need to specify actions, which are the operational tools required to implement the strategy lines.
3. Following the explanation of this logic and rationale, the Transport Policy Advisor from the Main Contract, Mr. Anouti, presented the details of this first draft document, which consisted of seven main sections and four supporting Annexes.
4. Afterwards, intensive and active discussions took place to explore the views and opinions of the National Coordinators about the first draft of the RTAP. The discussions revealed that, in general, there is convergence in the perception of the National Coordinators about what the objectives and nature of the Regional Transport Action Plan should be. Specifically, the following main comments and remarks were shared by several NCs:
 - The need to prepare a political document that could evolve into a MoU, is indeed important. However, this should not be the focus of the RTAP, as an action plan should typically be a technical document that spells-out clear objectives and defines individual concrete actions at the operational level (with implementation budgets, schedules and responsibilities) to accomplish the set objectives. As a matter of fact, this action plan in its technical version could be annexed – or referred to – in the political document (maybe MoU) which could be prepared separately later on.
 - The approach that was adopted in the first draft of the RTAP differs substantially from the requirements of the Terms of Reference of the Main Contract which emphasize that the RTAP should be of a technical nature. The NCs stressed the need to come up with a new methodology that complies fully with the ToR, and ensures that the RTAP fulfils its important role as a technical document.
 - Module 9 which was produced under the Diagnostic Study as a result of the recommendations on potential actions established during the second National Counterpart Team Meeting in Damascus should be integrated and taken into consideration in the preparation of the RTAP as a useful reference for defining operational actions.

- The implementation, monitoring and regular update of the RTAP are highly important issues that should be given due attention (based not only on logic, but on the ToR as well). Accordingly, the RTAP should include suitable recommendations and proposals on the organizational structure that is required to undertake these tasks.
 - It is important that the RTAP is shaped as a self-standing document. It should include inter-alia different Chapters on the methodology, the objectives, the strategy measures, the operational actions, the corresponding descriptions/ budgets/ schedules, the recommendations on organizational structures, etc.
5. In his closing words, the EuropeAid Programme Manager, Mr. Kioussis, asked the contractors of the Main and Infrastructure Contracts to come up with a second draft of the Regional Transport Action Plan till end of June 2006, taking into consideration the above mentioned comments and remarks of the MEDA beneficiary countries and the results of the Damascus NCT2. This is to be preceded by proposing and agreeing on a clear methodology of the steps to be taken in the establishment of the RTAP.
6. Under this perspective the EuroMed Transport Project - Main Contract - will accommodate the requests of the beneficiary countries and the contracting authority and pursue the following tasks during the forthcoming two months:
- Prepare a paper on “Guidelines and methodology for the establishment of the RTAP”. This document will be forwarded to the National Coordinators during the last week of April 2006.
 - Update the information of ongoing and planned MEDA partner transport initiatives (physical infrastructure and institutional/policy reform) with relevance to the establishment of the RTAP. This is to avoid duplication of the measures suggested in the RTAP with those ongoing exercises and instead to ensure complementarities among them. This update will be done based on a Questionnaire established by the Main Contract and distributed to the National Coordinators for completion (date of transmitting the Questionnaire to NCs: April 28, 2006; date of returning the Questionnaire to Main Contract: May 15, 2006).
 - Define a first set of policy/institutional actions under the policy recommendations and strategic lines outlined in the Blue Paper and High Level Group report, and taking into consideration the Damascus (NCT2) exercise and the results of the Questionnaire. The draft document with action descriptions will be forwarded to the National Coordinators by May 26, 2006.
 - Liaise with the Infrastructure Contract on sending to the National Coordinators a draft consolidated programme for the development of the multi-modal MTIN (as required in the contract’s ToR). The Infrastructure Contract will propose on its convenience a date for this transmittal, preferably paralleling the delivery schedule of the Main Contract (i.e. May 26, 2006).
 - Undertake, in coordination with the Infrastructure Contract, workshops with the National Coordinators on a sub-regional level to discuss and agree on the above deliverables. The meetings (project contracts/NCs) will take place at the Main Contract’s premises in Tunis during the first week of June 2006. The meetings will have three main objectives: (i) obtaining first-hand feedback from the NCs on the actions (policy and infrastructure) proposed thus far by the contracts and making the necessary amendments; (ii) discussing the methodology for prioritizing the actions and (iii) to set the stage for the upcoming meeting with the European Commission in Brussels (tentatively end of June 2006)

- Prepare a second draft of the RTAP integrating the actions identified by both contracts and taking into consideration the results of the workshops by June 20, 2006.
7. This second draft RTAP will be presented and discussed in meetings organized by the European Commission in Brussels by the end of June 2006. The meetings will be attended by all National Coordinators (possibly structured in a Western and Eastern Mediterranean sub-group). Apart of the discussion of the second draft RTAP, the participants will decide on the next steps to be taken to finalise the RTAP including the implementation mechanisms to ensure its sustainability.

Yours sincerely,



Ralf-Michael Kalthier
Project Director