

FERRMED STATEMENT

DUE TO THE TRANS-EUROPEAN RAIL NETWORK PROPOSAL CARRIED OUT BY THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION



19.10.2011

1. Trans-European Railway Core Network Definition

FERRMED is pleased by the fact that the EU is moving towards an establishment of a reticular and polycentric Rail Network as FERRMED has been requesting since its foundation. FERRMED also states its satisfaction by the fact that the Guidelines established for the Railway Core Network by the EC include many of the FERRMED standards proposals.

However, in opinion of FERRMED the proposed Core Network is excessive in terms of number of corridors. Therefore should be distinguish two kind of corridors as is stated in the Declaration made on the occasion of the FERRMED TRANS-EUROPEAN CLSUTER CONFERENCE held on the 21st last September in Brussels. That is:

- Corridors of the maximum strategic impact, critical mass and that facilitate the links with neighbouring countries and to the global market (Great Corridor).
- Corridors with regular or medium strategic impact and critical mass (Basic Corridor) with a function of feeder axis to the Great Corridors.

Great Corridors require, at least, two parallel rail lines (not necessarily to be side by side) with double track each.

In fact, ten Great Corridors are enough to the European Union, therefore the rest should be considered as Basic Corridors and assume the function of feeding the Great ones.

FERRMED agrees with the ten Great Corridors proposed by the EC, but we strongly believe in the importance of the inclusion of the branching Bremen-Duisburg-Köln-Koblenz-Luxemburg and London—Lille—Metz in corridor number 9 in order to improve the Railway Network effect. Therefore, we kindly request the addition of the mentioned branching to facilitate the coordination and crossing of freight flows North-South and East-West in this key EU area.

2. Intercontinental Great Rail Axis Scandinavia-Rhine-Rhone-Western Mediterranean (FERRMED Great Axis)

FERRMED expresses, at the same time, its satisfaction as a result of the inclusion in the Trans-European Network of the Great Axis's main branch (which crosses eight different states with more than 4.000 Km.) with the following lines:

Saint Petersburg à Helsinki à Turku à Stockholm à Malmö à Copenhagen à Lübeck à Hamburg à Bremen à Rotterdam/ Antwerp/Duisburg à Düsseldorf à Köln à Koblenz à Luxembourg/Apach à Metz à Dijon à Lyon (the east by-pass included) à Avignon/Marseille à Montpellier à Perpignan à Barcelona à Tarragona à Castellón à Valencia à Alicante à Murcia/Cartagena à Almería à Algeciras, considering as well, lines from the east branch: à Koblenz à Mannheim à Basel à Bern/Zürich à Milano à Genova

FERRMED is also gratified by the inclusion in the Core Network of several feeders of the main branch, as requested.

All this will contribute to a significant reduction of logistic costs and a higher competitiveness of the FERRMED Great Axis Area of Influence "Red Banana" and consequently, to the whole European Union, due to the importance that this Area represents for all of the EU (54% of the population, 66% of GDP, 80% of the intercontinental maritime traffic of containers, the most part of exportations, etc.).

Nevertheless, the route through Spain does not cover completely FERRMED proposal and will be necessary to introduce the appropriate modifications. A serious issue is the exclusion of Málaga as node of the Core Network, since its urban agglomeration is well over one million inhabitants. In France the line Lille-Metz has not been included.

3. Iberian Mediterranean Corridor

It is the southern sector of FERRMED Great Axis that links with the important intercontinental Mediterranean traffics and with the North of Africa.

On this corridor, FERRMED would like to highlight that:

- The Mediterranean Corridor denomination must only be applied for the route that runs parallel to the coast.
- The route proposed by the Spanish government in the southern sector of the corridor is not acceptable because of several reasons: it marginalizes the Andalusian coast from Almeria to Algeciras; it doesn't include Málaga as node in the Core Network (becoming part of the main branch of the FERRMED Great Axis, as befits); it doesn't consider the direct link Lorca – Granada and initially doesn't solve the route for freight between Fuente la Higuera and Murcia.

- In short, this route is a detour of several hundred kilometers (about 120 on the route Almeria – Algeciras and 150 in the “provisional” route Fuente la Higuera – Chinchilla – Murcia) with some steep ramps, which significantly diminishes the competitiveness of this part of the Corridor. Particularly, the line Almeria-Moreda-Granada-Antequera-Bovadilla-Algeciras, has many ramps between 20 and 30 per thousand that do not reach, by far, the EC guidelines.

4. Common Standards implementation in the whole Trans-European Core Network.

FERRMED insist once more in the necessity of the implementation of the so called “FERRMED Standards” in all the lines that are included in the Core Network, starting with the main corridors. In fact, the EC Guidelines are the first step in the accomplishment of this goal.

As proved in the FERRMED GLOBAL STUDY cofounded by TEN-T, the application of these standards is the only way to reverse the increasing trend of the road traffic in regard of rail traffic and to be able to accomplish the environmental objectives considered in the “White Book”.

Regarding the gradual implementation of this standards, one key issue in order to get trains of more than 1.000 meters length, is the application of automatic couplings in freight wagons (taking into account an overlapping period with the present coupling).

The introduction of these standards must be followed by the establishment of an EU level organism to coordinate: the appropriate funds assignation, the capacity and traffic lines management, slots assignation, tracking system, etc.

5. Final Considerations

FERRMED is pleased by the important step forward in the definition and establishment of the Trans-European Rail Core Network with the corresponding guidelines, but would like to highlight the necessity to taking into account FERRMED proposals regarding:

- Correct identification of the Great Corridors in the Core Network, giving priority to the investments in these ones.
- To include in France the lines Lille-Metz and the “Rocade Nord de Paris”
- The gradual implementation of FERRMED Standards in the Core Network, first in the Great Corridors, considering, among other concepts, a longer length of freight trains and the urgent change of gauge on conventional lines in the Iberian Mediterranean Corridor.
- The inclusion in the Iberian Mediterranean Corridor of the new lines Lorca – Granada and Almeria – Motril – Málaga – Algeciras (avoiding steep ramps of the interior line).
- The incorporation in Great Corridor number 3 of the branch to Marseille and in Great Corridor number 9 of the branch Bremen-Duisburg-Köln-Koblenz-Luxembourg.

As a result, FERRMED strongly urges the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament and the Members States involved, especially France and Spain, that in this new phase of analysis and discussion of the proposal published by the Commission, the approaches of this statement should be taken into account.

Finally, FERRMED would like to thank for the support received to its proposals by all kind of companies, employers organizations, labor unions, professional associations, Chambers of Commerce, National, Regional and Local governments, European Commission, media and a countless wide range of institutions. This has been decisive for the achievement of the results reached so far.

6. ANNEXE

“Eu 27 Core Network to be completed by 2030”

European Commission. Directorate General for Mobility and Transport.

