

Speaking notes for President Toth

Public Debate European Rail Freight Corridors

Thursday, 17 September 2009, from 8.30 p.m to 16.30 p.m

at

The House of the Romanian Parliament

" The Human Rights Hall "

Street Izvor no. 2-4, sector 5, C1 access

Bucharest

Distinguished hosts, dear Minister, dear European Commission representative, dear members of our Committee, ladies and gentlemen,

- As president of the section dealing with Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society of the European Economic and Social Committee (the so-called EESC), I am delighted to welcome you at this public presentation that our Section has the pleasure to co-organise together with the National Trade Union Confederation of Romania (MERIDIAN), the European Commission Directorate General for Energy and Transport, the Romanian Ministry of Transport, and the Transport Committee for Industry and Services of the Romanian Chamber of Deputies.
- I take this opportunity to thank all our partners, with a special thank to Mr. Ion Popescu, the President of the National Trade Union Confederation MERIDIAN, for all their efforts to make the organisation of this event possible very shortly after the adoption of the EESC opinion on "European rail network for competitive freight" in our 15th of July Plenary session.
- I see today's event as an excellent opportunity to discuss the creation and organisation of a European rail network for competitive freight based on the international rail freight corridors and as a step forward for the development of this mode of transport in Europe
- And this is for two reasons:

- First, in its recent opinion on the Commission's Proposal for a Regulation concerning a European rail network for competitive freight, of which you will soon hear more from our rapporteur Mr Fornea, the EESC welcomes the Commission's proposal but draws attention that concrete political action is required at corridor level by securing public and private investments to increase the overall quality, efficiency and capacity of the infrastructure. In this context, the Committee calls for efficient high-level coordination, **mobilising relevant national ministers** along individual corridors, in the framework of a **coordinated EU level policy action**.
- The improvement of rail freight is strongly debated in many EU Member States, and it is a very topical debate in Romania where the ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management System) Corridor E "Dresden–Prague–Budapest/Vienna-Constanta" and the implementation of a logistic corridor linking the port of Rotterdam to the Romanian Port of Constanza are at stake. Establishing a cross-Europe rail freight axis with priority to freight should promote rail even further as an attractive option to transport goods in the region. We today have the chance that Mr Radu Berceanu, the Romanian Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, Representatives of the Romanian Parliament, together with the Director of the European Commission, Mr Jonathan Scheele, responsible for Transport Logistics, TEN-T and Co-modality do participate to the event. This is a great opportunity for a very constructive dialogue on **the challenges** brought about by the EC Proposal for a Regulation, **both from the Romanian and European points of view**.
- Second, today's event brings the right stakeholders into the debate, in addition to the policy-makers that I mentioned beforehand. As you most probably already know, the EESC is an original body of the European project, bringing together in its 50 years of history various stakeholders from the European economic and social organisations in a wide and representative forum of deliberations.
- The Committee considers it **vital that all concerned parties** (infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, representatives of the Member States, relevant trade unions, customers and environmental organisations) are consulted **or part of the governance body of the rail freight corridors**. I am happy to see today several representatives of

various interested parties among you, including influential EESC members. We also invited today **the key railway stakeholders at Romanian level and representatives of the three biggest umbrella organisations from railways and logistics at European level**: the CER, EIM, and CLECAT.

- I am convinced that these different stakeholders will trigger an interesting debate during the open discussion which will follow the presentations, in turn leading to useful insights for the European Commission and the Romanian policy-makers.
- I am therefore looking forward to this discussion as, in this way, our Committee will have fulfilled its role in the best possible manner.

Dear panellists, ladies and gentlemen, I conclude by welcoming you again and wishing you all a fruitful and constructive participation in this public presentation. I thank you for your attention and immediately pass the floor to the EESC rapporteur, Mr Dumitru Fornea.