

## Meeting of the CEOs of the railways of South Eastern Europe (SEE) with the European Commission (DG TREN)



On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2008 the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) organized a meeting of the CEOs of the SEE-railways with Mr. Ruete (head of DG TREN of the European Commission) in Brussels. Participants were the president of ARGE Korridor X Mr. Schiefer, the head of Rail Traffic Management Mr. Koller (Railnet Austria Inc.), representatives of CER (under the leadership of Mr. Ludewig) and of the railways, respectively of the ministries of transport of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia.

The aims of the meeting were the identification of obstacles as well as the further procedures for a positive development of the SEE-railways. By means of the South East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) the European Commission will promote the implementation of the legal framework of the EU into the railway sector of SEE. At present the railways prepare themselves for the liberalization and the competition on the open market.

Mr. Lasica (head of Cabinet of the Serbian Ministry of Transport) pointed out that the rapid and complete opening of the market would put the railways into troubles. The support of the EU is necessary for restructuring of the railways as well as the elimination of infrastructural deficits. Mr. Klaric (chairman of the passenger transport of the Croatian Railways HZ and vice president of ARGE Korridor X) emphasized that the modernization of the rolling stock would be a significant factor in the competition. Mr. Dimitrovski (general director of the Railway Infrastructure Company of Macedonia PE MZ Infrastructure) mentioned that stronger investment activities were urgently needed on Corridor X.

Mr. Schiefer pointed out that there was heavy truck traffic on the road at present because of the bad condition of the railway infrastructure. Therefore a financial aid of the EU for the improvement of the infrastructure on the pan-European Corridor X is immediately necessary.

At the beginning of 2008 the SEETO will order a consultant to develop regional network statements for SEE (completion at the end of 2008). The European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the World Bank are ready for financial support - in the first tranche in 2008 there are 500 Mio. EUR available for SEE from the World Bank, thereof 100 Mio. EUR for Serbia.