

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
“THESSALONIKI-SKOPJE-TABANOVCE” ROAD AND RAILWAY CONNECTION
BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA AND THE HELLENIC
REPUBLIC
 (“ROAD AND RAIL PROJECT”)

The Republic of North Macedonia and the Hellenic Republic, hereinafter referred to as the “Parties”, represented by the Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of North Macedonia and the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport of the Hellenic Republic,

Emphasizing their common objective to develop the “Road and Rail Project”, a road and railway connection between Thessaloniki – Skopje - Tabanovce and the future extension to Belgrade and Budapest, which is of common and international interest given its considerable strategic and economic importance for the citizens and economies of the two Parties;

Desiring the Republic of Serbia and Hungary to join the project

Desiring to fully integrate the road and railway networks of the Parties into the Trans-European transport network;

Acknowledging the importance of inter-modality and inter-operability of transport network in connecting the two countries;

Taking into account the “Treaty establishing the Transport Community” and Annex III “Indicative maps of the TEN-T extended to specific third countries” of Regulation (EU) 1315/13.;

Aiming to draw up a development strategy which will place emphasis on the exploitation of the high potential of road and rail transport on the axis “Thessaloniki – Skopje – Tabanovce.;

Agree as follows:

This Memorandum of Understanding shall be guided by the aims and principles of the Parties and the European Union (EU), shall be based on the principles of mutual respect, trust and partnership, and shall be fully aligned with the national legislation of the two Parties.

A. Background

The focus of this Memorandum of Understanding is the realization of the road and railway connection between “Thessaloniki-Skopje-Tabanovce”, including preparatory works, further implementation and overall management of the project, as part of the Trans- European Transport Network.

This is a strategic road and rail multimodal project aiming at developing a sustainable: a) motorway dual carriage two lane plus emergency lane per direction and b) double-track, electrified railway corridor with modern ERTMS, connecting Thessaloniki with Skopje and Tabanovce.

The development, operation and management of the “Road and Rail Project” at a later stage, could be assigned to a Joint Undertaking named “RRP”, registered in one of the two Parties. The establishment of such a structure as well as of its form will be the result of specific preliminary studies. In this context, at present, the Parties agree to set up a joint Task Force of experts to prepare and deliver a Work/Action Plan for the development of the “Road and Rail Project.”.

The final decisions on all issues will be taken by the Ministries of Transport of the two Parties

B. Objectives of the Task Force

The objectives of the Task Force are set out in this MoU as follows:

- To study all aspects, including the legal and economic perspective, of the form of a Joint Undertaking of the two Parties for the development, operation and management of the “Road and Rail Project”.
- Present the basic technical characteristics of the “Road and Rail Project”, and estimate of its total cost;
- Investigate options of common funding including financing from the EU, other International Financing Institutions, the private sector and other sources of financing.
- Share and exchange all relevant information concerning the “Road and Rail Project” and related actions of the Parties.
- Once the Task Force identifies the Joint Undertaking scope, it will propose the financial commitments of the Parties and the opportunities to attract private investors and /or receive European or other financial support.

C. Organisation and Timetable

The Task Force will be appointed by the Ministers of Transport of the Parties, by 15 May 2019. The Task Force will meet at least three times per year at expert level to work on the progress of implementation of the “Road and Rail Project” in each Party. By the end of May 2019, the Task Force will have its first meeting. The Task Force will agree on the annual meeting schedule and action plan based on the assessment of needs carried out by the Task Force members.

The meetings will be organized in one of the two countries on a rotation basis. A possibility to use other international formats to arrange a side meeting of the Task Force could be also considered.

D. Members of the Task Force

The Task Force will consist of team members from the Two Parties. The members will be appointed by the Ministers of Transport of the Parties. The Task Force members should have adequate professional capacity and expertise in fields like Project management, European and International Law, Engineering and Financing management. The Parties could also invite external experts/advisors to be members of the Task Force. In this case, experts/advisors fees, as well as travel, subsistence and accommodation costs, shall be provided by each of the Parties that has invited them to participate.

The members of the Task Force shall respect the confidentiality of all proceedings.

E. Final provisions

Provisions, amendments and supplements to this Memorandum of Understanding are subject to mutual agreement in writing among the Parties.

It shall enter into force from the date of its signature.

Signed in Skopje on 2 April 2019 in two originals in English.

For the Republic of North Macedonia

For the Hellenic Republic

The Minister of Transport and
Communications

The Minister of Infrastructure and
Transport

Goran Sugareski

Christos Spirtzis

