



**ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT**

**2007 – 2008**

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**PRIORITY PROJECT 1**

**Berlin-Verona/Milan-Bologna-Naples-Messina-Palermo rail link**

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This report only represents the opinion of the European coordinator  
and does not prejudice the official position of the European Commission

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Annexe I: Map of PP 1

## SUMMARY

The second year of activity ended in July 2007 with two major events: the **signature of a Memorandum of Understanding** by the Austrian Minister of Transport, Mr. Faymann, and the Italian Minister for Infrastructure, Mr. Di Pietro (Annex I), in presence of the German Minister for Transport, Mr. Tiefensee, who assured German support, and the **joint submission** by Austria and Italy of a co financing request for the financial perspectives 2007-2013<sup>1</sup>.

The third year of activity of the European Coordinator has been marked by two other milestones: the **Decision of the European Commission to grant a subvention** of 903 million € for the Brenner Base Tunnel and its northern and southern access routes and the **start of the approval procedure** for the final project of the Brenner Base Tunnel in Austria and in Italy.

The European Commission, after obtaining approval of the European Parliament and the Member States, adopted its Decision for the multi-annual planning 2007-2013 on 19 February 2008. The TEN-T budget has been concentrated on cross-border sections and on bottlenecks situated on the priority projects. This approach creates the highest leverage and avoids spending too small amounts on a too high number of projects.

The Decision to reserve an important part of the TEN-T budget for the Brenner Base Tunnel is putting a key element in place for launching this project successfully within these financial perspectives. However, the project of the Brenner Base Tunnel depends on a number of decisions being taken: the completion of the approval procedure including the Environmental Impact Assessment and the completion of a financial model for the entire project. These Decisions will lead to the issuing of the building permit. This is expected to happen in early 2009. A major step was made in March 2008 when BBT SE handed in the final project for approval in Rome and Vienna.

Aside these milestones being reached, priority project 1, the 'Berlin-Verona/Milan-Bologna-Naples-Messina-Palermo rail link', is steadily going ahead in all three Member States involved. Germany is investing heavily in one of its major bottlenecks that remain today, a high speed link between Berlin and Munich, crossing the Thüringer Wald. Austria is investing in the Inn Valley, thereby creating the necessary capacity for the north-south and east-west traffic that uses the same infrastructure here. And Italy will be achieving, still in 2008, the doubling of the Verona-Bologna railway line and will be close to finishing the works for a high-speed and high-capacity line from Milano via Bologna to Firenze, thereby creating a new back-bone for rail traffic between Torino and Napoli. All three Member States are thus investing billions in achieving this priority project.

But, in order to link these national networks north and south of the Alps, the crucial central section of the Brenner Base Tunnel and its access routes remains the centrepiece of the project. This confirms the choice of the European Commission to concentrate its interventions on the cross-border and bottleneck sections.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/coordinators/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/coordinators/index_en.htm)

In this respect, the coordinator decided to maintain a high level of attention to the Munich-Verona section.

The coordinator attended all meetings of the Intergovernmental Commission Austria-Italy on the Brenner Base Tunnel and presented at each occasion a very clear list of points that remain to be done until the moment when the project will be reaching full maturity, ie completion of the EIA procedure, completion of the financial model and issuing of the building permit. This decision depends notably on the progress of the EIA procedure. If this calendar will be met, the coordinator will issue an additional intermediate report at the beginning of 2009.

The coordinator has kept and will continue to keep close contact with both governments in order to guarantee the financing of the Brenner Base Tunnel and the access routes.

Furthermore, the coordinator has been visiting in person the ongoing works and intensifying contacts with the regions, the local mayors and the elected representatives, in order to ensure a direct dialogue and to obtain information on the project from first hand.

Last but certainly not least, the coordinator has followed up on the works of the Brenner Corridor Platform, put in place on his request in May 2007. In particular, the coordinator obtained full support from the Ministers of Transport, the Presidents of the Regions and the Presidents of the Railway undertakings for elaborating a new Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022. This challenging exercise shall be concluded end 2008. It will propose measures for optimising the transfer from road to rail along the existing rail link Munich-Verona until 2022, preparing for the optimal use of the new rail infrastructure thereafter, integrating aspects regarding interoperability, logistics and freight corridors and thus combating air pollution and noise. The coordinator will discuss the Action Plan with all stakeholders in the oncoming months in order to propose it for signature by the Austrian, German and Italian Minister of Transport, as well as the Presidents of the Regions from Munich to Verona and the railway companies concerned. This signature could take place early 2009 when the Decision to build the Brenner Base Tunnel will be taken.

## **1. MUNICH-VERONA**

### **1.1. Brenner Base Tunnel**

As mentioned in the second annual activity report, the Brenner Base Tunnel is foreseen **to be realised between 2010 and 2022 at a cost of 6 billion €** (2006 figures, without correction for inflation and without financing costs). This scenario is unchanged at the moment and takes into account a certain amount of risks. On basis of the final project that was submitted to both governments in March 2008, further detailed risk assessment is underway and will be included into the Decision process upon final approval of the project which is expected to take place in early 2009. The coordinator welcomed the detailed charts that were submitted to the CIG on its 1 July 2008 meeting.

The **approval procedure for the Brenner Base Tunnel** is running since March 2008. At that moment, BBT SE, responsible for the preparation of all studies and works leading up to the building of the base tunnel itself, submitted the final project for the approval procedure to the Austrian and Italian authorities. This procedure

includes the environmental impact assessment and will run until the middle of December 2008.

**Early 2009**, both governments can then take the decision to launch the construction of the main tunnel, for which the financial model needs to be finalised in the oncoming months. Upon that moment, it will be of utmost importance to verify that **the following conditions are respected**: (1) completed EIA procedure; (2) firm and realistic commitments on the completion of the northern and southern access routes allowing maximal use of the new tunnel infrastructure; (2) interoperability for the Brenner Base Tunnel and for the access routes from Munich to Verona, including a coordinated management of the infrastructure for the whole section Munich-Verona, once the tunnel will be put into service, in order to guarantee optimal use of the infrastructure; (4) financial guarantees from the Member States involved.

The European Commission decided on 19 February 2008 to reserve **786 million € for both studies and works for the Brenner Base Tunnel**. The individual Decisions related to this co financing are under way and will be formalised according to the foreseen procedures. The TEN-T Executive Agency will manage these Decisions throughout the financial perspectives 2007-2013.

## **1.2. Pilot tunnels**

Meanwhile, the work on the pilot tunnels is ongoing on Italian side. These works started back in September 2007 and the President of Italy, Mr. Giorgio Napolitano, launched the tunnelling machine in Aicha on 5 May 2008. Also the works on the pilot tunnel in Mauts are ongoing.

On the contrary, the pilot tunnels on Austrian side have been included in the ongoing environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the main tunnel. In Italy, the EIA procedure for the pilot tunnels was concluded, therefore the works started in 2007. In Austria, the EIA for the pilot tunnels was not yet realised. A decision was taken in spring 2008 to undertake one single EIA procedure for both the pilot tunnels and the base tunnel. This decision should allow a full respect of the European and Austrian environmental legislation.

## **1.3. Intergovernmental Commission Austria-Italy**

The intergovernmental Commission Austria-Italy is presided in turn by both Member States. In 2008, the presidency lies with Italy. This important Commission is presided by Mr. Fagiolo on behalf of Italy and by Mr. Weissenburger on behalf of Austria. It deals with all important decisions related to this cross-border project. At the last meeting of the **intergovernmental Commission on 1 July 2008**, a number of important aspects have been dealt with.

The local administration of the Province of Bolzano presented on the basis of the analysis and studies worked out by BBT-SE an **important improvement for the main tunnel**, which will be imbedded in the ongoing procedure: the access tunnel Vize/Pfitsch will no longer be planned; instead, the Mauts access will be used for a second, diagonal access to the new 'multi-functional station' (MultiFunktionsStelle, MFS) Trens situated south of the former MFS Vize/Pfitsch. This will constitute a better solution from a (hydro)geological point of view and will eliminate the impact upon the Vize/Pfitsch valley. The basis of this improvement was the relocation of

the MFS Steinach to the south in a better geological regime; called now MFS St. Jodok. BBT SE also reported on the works of an international task group it has formed with experts to find out the most convenient and low risk approach for the tender of the main tunnel.

At the same meeting, it was concluded that the bilateral Treaty in place does constitute the basis for the construction of the base tunnel. BBT SE will see its statutes modified in order to continue its function as project promoter on behalf of both Member States. BBT SE will also seek to set up a single functional headquarter as soon as possible.

Other important discussions took place at the Intergovernmental Commission of 14 May 2008 concerning the **comparability of the traffic studies** for the Brenner Base Tunnel, the Lyon-Torino base tunnel and the Basel railway node. Analysis has been undertaken to allow the data for these different projects to be compared.

Furthermore, presentations have been made on 14 May and on 1 July on the ongoing work on the **financial model**, in particular regarding the possibility of realising a Public-Private Partnership. A decision is expected to be taken during autumn 2008.

#### **1.4. Access routes**

The European coordinator continued to stress the **need to realise the access routes** until the moment the Brenner Base Tunnel will be completed. This principle has been agreed upon by all three Member States at the summit in Vienna on 10 July 2007.

**The northern access** is progressing swiftly insofar as the works on the Kundl/Radfeld-Baumkirchen section in the Inn Valley are concerned. Austria is investing heavily in works that are carried out under often very complex conditions, taking into account the limited space available in the Inn Valley, forcing the new railway tracks into tunnels under the highway, the Inn River or into the mountains. This section will create additional capacity on the Munich-Verona section upon completion in 2012, as the north-south and east-west rail traffic, which for the moment is using the same two track infrastructure, will dispose of these new two tracks. The European Commission decided to reserve **58.3 million €** for works on this section.

ÖBB also actively pursues the initial studies for the further Austrian section between Kundl-Radfeld and the German border. Here, an **increased cooperation between Germany and Austria for the cross-border section between Kufstein and Rosenheim needs to be put in place**, in order to timely determine the necessary construction measures on this section.

Germany has in the past years modernised the existing sections between Munich and the Austrian border. These often technical measures have increased the capacity of the existing tracks. Some further minor measures are under preparation and can still increase capacity on the existing tracks. First studies by DB AG show that, in line with the actual growth rate, especially of the unaccompanied combined rail traffic, the **present capacity still available will be fully absorbed by 2010** and by 2012/13 if small additional measures are put in place.

This leads to the conclusion that **studies for the northern access need to be undertaken as soon as possible**, in order to allow for a timely construction of the northern access until the moment of completion of the Brenner Base Tunnel. At this moment, Germany is undertaking a revision of its infrastructure investment plan at federal level. This revision will offer the basis for the further studies and works on the northern access to the Brenner on German territory.

For the moment, priority project 1, Berlin-Palermo, and **priority project 17**, Paris-Bratislava, are still using the same infrastructure between Munich and Rosenheim. It is foreseen since long that in the future, the railway axis Paris-Bratislava will be conducted from Munich via Mühldorf and Freilassing to Salzburg. This new alignment would free up capacities for the railway axis Berlin-Palermo between Munich and Rosenheim.

Still within Germany, no progress has been made regarding the so-called '**Truderinger Kurve**' that would allow to directly connect the container terminal of Munich Riem to the Brenner corridor. The construction of this small missing link would have immediate positive effects: a time gain of 20 to 30 minutes, reduced costs because of a reduction in operations and an increase in capacity in the very dense Munich area. This small infrastructural measure should be realised as soon as possible and independent from the construction of the Brenner Base Tunnel.

**The southern access** is progressing well. RFI and the Provinces of Bolzano, Trento and Verona cooperate closely with the Italian state to achieve the southern access. The southern access has been split into several sections of which four were defined as '**priority sections**' as they constitute bottlenecks on the southern access and therefore need to be realised prior to the other three sections, which were defined as 'complementary sections'. In spring 2008, the largest of these complementary sections, south of Bolzano, between Branzoll and Salurn (Trento), has been definitely redefined as a priority section. The result is that almost all of the southern access is now defined as 'priority section'.

Detailed studies are ongoing at the moment for each of these 'priority sections' and can be finalised in 2010/11. The start of the works for the four original priority sections is foreseen for early 2013. These are the access to the node of Verona, the bypasses of Rovereto-Trento and of Bolzano and the section Ponte Gardena-Fortezza. The construction of the more recent Branzoll-Trento priority section will start in 2015. The preliminary studies of the section Branzoll – Salurn are ongoing and have been already presented to the public. The European Commission decided to reserve **58.81 million €** for both studies and works for the southern access.

The Italian authorities, former Minister Di Pietro and actual Minister of Transport, Mr. Matteoli, as well as the President of RFI, Mr. Moretti, have at several occasions assured their full implication in this project. This implication is evidenced by the **important progress made on PP 1 in Italy** (see under chapter 2.2).

The realization of all priority sections on the southern access is essential for an **increased modal shift** along this route. It will allow a large number of freight trains to use the route, bypassing the cities of Bolzano, Trento and Rovereto. Moreover, the additional tracks will benefit the regional passenger transport system which is foreseen to increase.

All these works will also allow to include the full interoperability of the future line and hence the installation of the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS). This is another clear condition for the proper functioning of the new infrastructure.

Discussions have taken place to align work on **corridor B**, one of the six freight corridors put forward by Mr. Vinck, European coordinator for ERTMS and interoperability aspects, and PP 1. Corridor B runs all the way from Stockholm to Napoli and coincides with PP 1 from Nürnberg up to Napoli. These discussions should be pursued as there is a need to pay more attention to freight flows. For the moment, the main freight flows by rail link the northern harbors (Antwerpen, Rotterdam, Bremerhaven, Hamburg) with the rest of Europe. These so-called '**Hinterlandverbindungen**' are running short of capacity. Freight corridors A, B and C and priority projects 1 and 24 are directly concerned by this. The future focus can be twofold: reorient part of the traffic through the Mediterranean harbors, which then need to be streamlined for allowing a good intermodality with rail, and a reinforced freight oriented network, which should coincide with the TEN-T network.

## 2. BERLIN-PALERMO

### 2.1. Berlin-Munich

Germany is very engaged in realising its sections of this priority project. Berlin-Halle/Leipzig and Nürnberg-München have already been put into service. Furthermore, the German authorities have taken a firm commitment to realise the **missing link between Halle/Leipzig and Nürnberg**. This important bottleneck consist partly of a new high-speed line between Halle/Leipzig and Ebensfeld (north of Nürnberg) and of an upgraded line between Ebensfeld and Nürnberg.

The new high-speed line will be realised until 2015 between Halle/Leipzig and Erfurt and until 2017 between Erfurt and Ebensfeld. This important bottleneck between Berlin and Munich will then be gone. EU support from the ERDF budget is flowing into this project for the Länder that are eligible. Furthermore, the Commission decided to grant **58 million €** TEN-T support for the section Halle/Leipzig-Erfurt section. This evidences the fact that PP 1 is progressing swiftly on German territory.

Concerning the completion of all PP1 infrastructure in Germany, apart from the northern access to the base tunnel, there are two more points that need to be highlighted, which are the **nodes of Nürnberg and Munich**. In Nürnberg, north-south and east-west traffic is crossing. Passenger traffic, but in particular also freight traffic. Therefore, DB AG has been pointing at the need to bring some relief to the bottleneck of Nürnberg by constructing the so-called 'Güterzugumfahrung Fürth' which would not only have a local effect, on the contrary, it will mainly serve the long-distance unaccompanied freight transport, both across the Brenner and towards the new Member States of the EU.

The Munich node has been analyzed in the framework of a Conference held in Munich on 20 April 2007. In recent meetings in Berlin with DB AG and the federal Ministry of Transport, this subject has been taken up again.

## 2.2. Verona-Palermo

The Italian sections south of Verona are progressing very well. The section **Verona-Bologna** will be completed still this year. During a specific on site visit, the European coordinator witnessed the swift progress, traveling along the line from Roma up to the Po river, visiting works between Firenze, Bologna and the Po river. The whole section Verona-Bologna will be **double track until the end of 2008**. This will allow increasing the modal shift on the Italian territory to a large extent. RFI is actively pursuing this by creating additional terminal capacity, also south of Verona.

The coordinator also welcomes the progress on the **Milano-Bologna-Firenze** sections. Most of these sections have been completed and will enter into service in 2009. Spectacular underground bypasses of the cities of Bologna and Firenze are under construction and will allow further time gains and increase the modal shift. The section between Firenze and Roma will be adapted for ERTMS. The section Roma-Napoli was put into service already in 2006.

This progress shows that **Italy is well on track** to realise very important sections of PP 1 in the near future. These efforts cannot be underestimated. The Commission granted support for these sections in the two previous financial perspectives.

## 3. BRENNER CORRIDOR PLATFORM

The European coordinator set up a so-called Brenner Corridor Platform in 2007. This Brenner Corridor Platform met at very regular intervals during the past activity year 2007-2008. The three Member States (Austria, Germany, Italy), the five regions (Bavaria, Tirol, Alto Adige, Trento, Verona) and the railway companies involved are represented in the Platform. **The Platform shall guarantee an integrated approach for the Brenner Corridor, including road and rail, going beyond the mere development of the infrastructure project and putting into place a strong cooperation between all partners involved.**

This integrated approach should offer a solution for the exponential increase of road traffic, leading to bottlenecks and congestion, **which cannot be dissociated from the respect of environmental standards**, such as the air quality and noise standards. Therefore, the Platform will come forward with short, middle and long term proposals, ranging from infrastructural improvements, management of train slots, handling at terminals, interoperability issues, to policy proposals.

At the meeting of the Brenner Corridor Platform in November 2007, a range of important decisions were taken: creation of working parties, analysis of the Brenner Action plan 2005 and the formulation of a new Action Plan 2008-2022.

Furthermore, an exchange between the Brenner Corridor Platform and various Commission services took place on 13 June 2008 in Brussels. This exchange mainly served to inform the Platform of the Community legislation and new initiatives in areas such as railway policy or environmental policy. Particular attention was devoted to the Community logistics action plan, the setting up of rail oriented corridors, rail interoperability standards, vehicle legislation and environmental

legislation. The discussion focused on how the Platform could take into account these developments and be in line with such policy developments.

### **3.1. Working parties**

The Brenner Corridor Platform decided to rally existing working groups to the work of the Platform. This allowed avoiding duplication of work and continuation of existing efforts. When necessary, new working groups have been up.

The following working groups were set up: rail infrastructure, rail capacity and rail slots, road capacity, terminals, ERTMS and interoperability, accompanying measures, cross-financing, rail freight and passenger traffic.

Regarding **rail infrastructure**, the existing **trilateral working party Austria-Germany-Italy**, presided by Dr. Adelsberger of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria, took over this working field as it has been one of the working parties installed on grounds of the Brenner Action Plan 2005. This working group has been very active to discuss traffic forecasts and infrastructure planning over the past year. Discussions focused on the comparability of data for different infrastructural projects. The cooperation with the Brenner Corridor Platform allowed cross-fertilising with other domains such as terminals and interoperability. Contacts with the regions and the railway companies have been increased as well. The trilateral working party is following up on the step by step process of timely realisation of the access routes and the Brenner Base Tunnel in order to cope with the actual transport demand. It can also be instrumental in the monitoring of the realisation of this infrastructure.

Regarding **rail capacity and rail slots**, the existing **RailNetEurope (RNE) Korridor C04 (Brenner)**, presided by Dr. Ludwig of DB AG, has been asked to take over this working field and to cooperate with the Brenner Corridor Platform on these aspects. RNE Brenner has been undertaking within its responsibilities a first study on the capacity of the actual line. It is undertaking a further study on the capacity of the future line. The work done by RNE Brenner so far has been very useful in shedding a factual light on the present capacities.

Moreover, RNE Brenner has been usefully working on a range of **interoperability issues**, notably those aspects that allow a smooth cooperation between the infrastructure managers and the freight forwarding railway companies. Some other aspects of interoperability, such as **ERTMS**, are on the contrary not covered by RNE Brenner but rather by the trilateral working party infrastructure. The trilateral working party will continue to discuss this aspect.

The **road capacity** working group has not progressed according to the initial planning and will deliver results later in 2008. Studies are under way to determine the maximum road capacity and possible bottlenecks and should also lead to formulate proposals for cooperation between road and rail along the corridor. It is worth mentioning in this place that the **Alpine Convention**, and more precisely its traffic protocol, does not allow increasing road capacity.

A new working party on **terminals** has been convening several times in the past year, under the presidency of Mr. Sondermann of KombiConsult. The working party has been cooperating closely with the Member State authorities, the regions and the

railway companies to draft a report on the short and middle term planning for all terminals that have a transport relation along the Brenner corridor. This fact finding report will be useful for future activities in this area, guaranteeing that there will be sufficient capacity available to handle the modal shift that is foreseen to be realised in the oncoming years.

A further new working party on **accompanying measures** has been set up and is meeting regularly under the presidency of Dr. Satzinger of the Tirol government. A report has been produced, presenting a very wide range of measures that are intended to realise the modal shift that should guarantee the full use of the future infrastructure.

Specific attention has been devoted to one of the accompanying measures: **cross-financing**. A working party, presided by Mr. Schimanofsky from the Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria, has been set up. By signing a Memorandum of Understanding on 10 July 2007, Austria and Italy have committed themselves to fully use the mark-up possibility for cross-financing the Brenner Base Tunnel. This will include a 25% mark-up for the section Innsbruck-Fortezza and 15% mark-ups in the Inn Valley and the Fortezza-Affi section. For the moment, only Austria introduced an application with the European Commission for a 25% mark-up on the Brenner pass itself. This mark-up has been approved by the Eurovignette Committee in spring 2008. Further applications still have to follow. **A full use of these possibilities offered by Directive 2006/38/CE is crucial for the completion of the financing model of the Brenner Base Tunnel.**

### **3.2. Brenner Action Plan**

The Brenner Corridor Platform decided to analyse the results of the **Brenner Action Plan 2005**. This action plan was set up in 2002 under the Greek Presidency of the EU, in close cooperation between Austria, Germany and Italy. This analysis should allow building upon existing results and efforts. It appeared that the underlying assumptions and statements were outdated in 2008. Furthermore, only one of the three working groups that were installed at the time, the trilateral working party infrastructure, was still in function. There is an urgent need to update the Action Plan 2005 that was focusing on the development of combined transport. Instead, the Brenner Corridor Platform has a larger scope: it aims at a modal shift and takes all aspects related to the Brenner Corridor into account.

Nevertheless, a number of issues have been progressing significantly thanks to the Action Plan 2005. Notably the effort of the Commission to co-finance the **BRAVO project** within the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Program for Research has contributed to tackle a range of issues that were identified by the Action Plan 2005. This project, carefully managed by KombiConsult and in close cooperation with railway undertakings and other partners, delivered impressive results. The unaccompanied combined transport increased by over 50% in the 2003-2007 project period.

These conclusions led the Brenner Corridor Platform to decide that a new Action Plan is necessary. The Plan should run from end 2008 till 2022, date of completion of the tunnel. It should clearly define individual actions, determine who is responsible for carrying out each action, until which date and how the monitoring of each action will be guaranteed. The **Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022 contains over 80 actions**

and was presented at the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission Austria-Italy of 1 July 2008.

### 3.3. Next steps

The next meeting of the Brenner Corridor Platform is scheduled for 3 and 4 September 2008. The Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022 and the reports of the working parties will be discussed and decisions will be taken how to continue the work of the Brenner Corridor Platform for the oncoming year. It will be essential to further analyse the impact of the individual measures. These measures are now regrouped by theme. They will also be regrouped according to their realisation in time and their contribution to the goals of modal shift and environmental impact.

This should allow the European coordinator to **consult all parties** involved on the Action Plan and all individual measures, which will allow to significantly contributing to the objectives of modal shift and environmental impact.

The European coordinator will propose the Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022 for signature to all involved parties: Member States, regional authorities and railway companies. This signature could take place early 2009, at the moment that the final decision for building of the Brenner Base Tunnel will be taken.

## 4. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

Also in the past year, the European coordinator has been actively pursuing the **communication on this priority project** at several occasions. Like during the first two years of activity, the coordinator has met the Ministers of Austria, Germany and Italy, several regional authorities, such as the Presidents of Bavaria, Tirol, Alto Adige and Trento, as well as the Presidents of DB AG, ÖBB and RFI.

The cooperation with the governments, the regions and the railway undertakings alike has been positive, systematic and with a high level of mutual trust. The efforts of the European Commission through the coordinating activities have been highly valued. Equally, the cooperation with BBT SE has continued in a very positive way, in particular with regard to the preparation of the meetings of the Intergovernmental Commission and of the Brenner Corridor Platform. Moreover, BBT SE has been instrumental in the visits of the Coordinator in Austria and Italy.

The European coordinator continued his regular visits to the central section of the corridor between Munich and Verona. Regular meetings with the mayors concerned and with the press have been continued offering the opportunity to obtain information from first hand. The coordinator also attended several public conferences (Amsterdam, Munich).

The European coordinator also presented his work at a meeting with the TRAN Committee in the European Parliament in November 2007. The lively exchange was highly valued by the Members of the TRAN Committee.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above activity report, the coordinator puts forward the following conclusions and recommendations:

- Two crucial steps have been taken which guarantee the progress of the project:
  - The Commission decided on 19 February 2008 to grant 960 million € to priority project 1, Berlin-Palermo, of which 903 are reserved for the Brenner Base Tunnel and the northern and southern access routes. Given the importance of launching the Brenner Base Tunnel for the priority project 'Berlin-Palermo', the Commission Decision is of crucial importance.
  - The final project has been handed over for approval by BBT SE to both Member States in March 2008. This launched the environmental impact assessment and should allow both Member States to decide on the construction of the base tunnel itself early 2009.
- The aforementioned conditions when deciding the construction of the base tunnel should be respected: (1) completed EIA procedure; (2) firm and realistic commitments on the completion of the northern and southern access routes allowing maximal use of the new tunnel infrastructure; (2) interoperability for the Brenner Base Tunnel and for the access routes from Munich to Verona, including a coordinated management of the infrastructure for the whole section Munich-Verona, once the tunnel will be put into service, in order to guarantee optimal use of the infrastructure; (4) financial guarantees from the Member States involved.
- The Brenner Corridor Platform has formulated a first draft for a Brenner Action Plan 2008-2022, comprising over 80 measures that should allow optimising the use of the new rail infrastructure. Short, middle and long term actions will need to be further defined, deciding who will be responsible for each individual measure, including a target date and monitoring process. This action plan should be signed by all parties involved at the moment the decision for the construction of the base tunnel is taken. The Brenner Action Plan 2009-2022, elaborated by the Brenner Corridor Platform, will offer a coherent approach to the whole corridor, integrating the environmental objectives and offering answers to modal split questions.

If the decision to build the base tunnel will be taken early 2009, the coordinator will evaluate the need to publish an intermediate report in order to communicate in a transparent way his evaluation of the decisions taken.

