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**MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE TASK FORCE ON
THE BLUE CORRIDOR PROJECT**
(Berlin, Germany, 15 March 2003)

I. ATTENDANCE

1. The third meeting of the Task Force on the Blue Corridor Project was held on 15 March 2003 in Berlin (Germany) at the headquarters of the European Business Congress (EBC). There were over 20 participants from Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, and Russian Federation, as well as from the following non-governmental organizations: European Natural Gas Vehicle Association (ENGVA), Vernadsky Ecological Foundation, Clean Air Foundation, International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the European Business Congress (EBC).
2. The UNECE secretariat (Messrs. A. Chachine and C. Smith) serviced the meeting.

II. REVIEW OF THE DRAFT REPORT

3. The draft final report of the Task Force on the Blue Corridor Project was presented by Mr. A. Andreevsky, Executive Director of the Vernadsky Ecological Foundation and Chairman of the Task Force. All participants took part in the discussion and made their comments and observations. Some comments (from Germany, Italy, Russian Federation and Turkey) were received in writing and were made available to experts prior to the meeting. In addition, the Task Force was informed about comments received from the representative of Finland who had stated that there were currently no natural gas trucks or coaches in Finland or commercial refuelling stations.

4. It was decided, inter alia, to add an Executive Summary to the report and also, for the Berlin – Rome corridor, to further develop the information on traffic flows and fuelling stations on the sections of the corridor in Germany, the Czech Republic and Austria. It was also questioned whether it would be necessary to add information on the potential problems, if any, of differing standards, for example, for CNG fuelling nozzles.

III. TIMETABLE

5. It was decided that the Chairman of the Task Force would incorporate comments and changes into the draft report by 15 May 2003 and the UNECE secretariat would circulate the revised version of the draft to experts for final comments. The final version of the report should be ready for translation into the three official UNECE languages before 15 June 2003.

6. The Chairman may wish to call a small «bureau» meeting for final consultations before that date.

IV. FUTURE STEPS

7. It was agreed, that the final report will provide a “calling card” to bring to international institutions and other potential stakeholders (customers, gas companies, governments, etc.) to describe the objectives and costs of implementing the Project.

8. In terms of practical implementation of the Blue Corridor Project, there needs to be a strategy developed to move forward. As was suggested by Mr. J. Seissler, Executive Director, ENGVA, it would be necessary to build the project up step by step. The first step would be to identify a few potential customers (e.g. a large supermarket chain) which used a particular section of a corridor, and convince them of the economic and environmental benefits of converting their fleets to CNG. It would be necessary to develop a business plan for the Project. He cited examples in the United States where CNG corridors had developed over time between cities with important CNG infrastructures for city-based vehicles.

9. Others felt that the success of the project would only be ensured through government incentives for the CNG sector and that the Task Force should concentrate its efforts on developing that side of the Project.

10. As regards sources of financing, it was suggested that the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Union’s TACIS Programme were possibilities which should be explored.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

11. Participants in the meeting expressed special thanks and gratitude to the members of the EBC Secretariat, namely Mrs. N. Doniy, Mr. A. Kurochkin and Ms. U. Lorenz for the excellent organization of the meeting and the warm hospitality.
