
Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)

12th Session

13-14 March 2007

Dushanbe, Tajikistan

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRESS OF THE UNECE PILOT PROJECT ON
THE FACILITATION OF PARTICIPATION OF CENTRAL ASIAN AND CAUCASUS
COUNTRIES IN MEETINGS OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE AND
SELECTED SUBSIDIARY BODIES (FUNDED BY THE EU)**

(Item 4 c(iii) of the Agenda)

Note by UNECE

1. The objective of the project has been to assist delegates from the Caucasus and Central Asian countries to participate in the work of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC). In the past there has been a lack of participation of delegates from the Central Asian and Caucasus countries in the work of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC), due to budgetary constraints in those countries. Such participation presupposes attendance at meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in Geneva. However, the lack of regular participation prevented effective harmonization of transport legislation, precluding a rapid development of efficient Euro-Asian inland transport links.

2. To help remedy this unsatisfactory situation, the secretariat prepared a project proposal aimed at facilitating the attendance of Central Asian and Caucasus countries to the meetings of ITC and selected subsidiary bodies for one year, which was submitted to the European Commission (EC) for co-financing. The EC accepted to co-finance this Project and in August 2004 the relevant contract was signed, thus enabling its implementation from September 2004. With the signature of two addenda to this contract, in August and November 2005, respectively, the implementation period of this Project was extended up to April 2006. The available funds covered the cost of travel and per diem for the duration of specific meetings in Geneva.

Altogether 56 government experts from most of the Central Asian and Caucasus countries concerned have participated in a total of 11 meetings of the Inland Transport Committee and selected subsidiary bodies, instead of the seven originally planned under this project. These meetings, and the participation of experts, per country, are described in detail below.

¹ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Meetings

- the 17th and 18th sessions of the UNECE Working Group on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), September 2004 and 2005;
- the 45th and 46th sessions of the UNECE Working Party on Road Transport Safety (WP.1), September 2004 and March 2005;
- the 98th and 99th sessions of the UNECE Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1), October 2004 and 2005;
- the 58th session of the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2), October 2004;
- the 67th and 68th sessions of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC), February 2005 and 2006;
- the 56th session of the UNECE Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6), June 2005, and
- the 110th session of the Working Party of Customs Questions Affecting Transport (WP.30), June 2005.

Participation of experts per country

Events	1 st WP.5 SEP 04	2 nd WP.1 OCT 04	3 rd SC.1 OCT 04	4 th SC.2 OCT 04	5 th ITC FEB 05	6 th WP.1 MAR/05	7 th WP.6 JUN/05	8 th WP.30 JUN/05	9 th WP.5 SEP/ 05	10 th SC.1 OCT/05	11 th ITC FEB/ 06	No. of participants
Armenia	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			8
Azerbaijan	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Georgia		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	10
Kazakhstan	X	X	X	X	X		X				X	7
Kyrgyzstan			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		8
Tajikistan					X			X			X	3
Uzbekistan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		10
Turkmenistan												0
Number of participants	4	4	6	5	7	5	6	6	5	4	4	56

3. The project generated measurable positive effects. For instance, the number of accessions in the 7 participating countries to key UNECE conventions increased by 13 per cent in 2006 over the previous year, i.e. much more rapidly than in the rest of the world where it grew 3 per cent. This catch-up has been conducive to a progressive harmonization of the transport sector legislation in the countries of Caucasus and Central Asia, improving prospects for an effective integration of their national routes and transshipment facilities into the evolving Euro-Asian transport network. At a subregional level, the pace of progress was much faster in the Caucasus than Central Asia.²

² The number of new accessions in 2006 to UNECE transport conventions amounted to seven in the Caucasus subregion and two in Central Asia.

4. Based on the positive evaluation made by the beneficiary countries of the implementation of this project, the secretariat requested the EC to consider co-financing the continuation of the Project in 2007. The EC has been unable so far to continue its financial contribution to the project.

Issues for consideration:

At its 12th session, in Dushanbe-Tajikistan, the PWG-TBC it is invited to:

- (a) evaluate the project's substantive contribution to the harmonization process of the transport legislation of the SPECA countries and their transport systems' integration with those of other UNECE member countries;
- (b) stress the importance of participation of SPECA countries in the work of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee;
- (c) express its gratitude to the EU for its contribution and request the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan, the lead SPECA country in the field of transport, to address a letter on behalf of the PWG-TBC to the EC EuropAid, confirming the importance of this project for SPECA countries and supporting the UNECE's request to the EU to consider co-funding its continuation, as well as welcoming the UNECE's initiative to explore the possibility of allowing Afghanistan to participate.
