

**United Nations**  
**Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia**  
**(SPECA)**

**Protocol of the third session**  
**of the PWG-Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation**

Almaty, 18-19 October 1999

**General observations**

1. The Project Working Group (PWG) held its third session in Almaty from 18-19 October 1999.

**Attendance**

2. The session was attended by the delegations of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan. The Republic of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan did not take part in the session. The session was also attended by the representatives of UN ECE, ESCAP and the Office of the UN/UNDP Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan. The Central Asian Economic Union, OSCE, EBRD, IDB, EC TRACECA attended the session as observers. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

**Agenda**

3. The suggested agenda of the session was adopted unanimously. The text of the Agenda is attached as Annex II.

**Discussion**

4. The session was addressed by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mrs. M. Jarbusynova. She emphasized the importance of the work of the PWG-Transport and border crossing of the SPECA programme for the region of Central Asia. The response of the participating SPECA countries to the decisions and recommendations of the previous session of the PWG was encouraging. At the same time, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have not responded to those decisions and recommendations, and that was unfortunate. Actually, non-participation of those countries at the sessions of the PWG was delaying the adoption of the Programme of work of the PWG and also sending wrong signals to prospective donor countries and institutions. It was out of step with the efforts of the UN Regional Commissions to obtain financing for SPECA related projects from the UN Development Account. Kazakhstan has proposed to hold a meeting of Senior Officials of SPECA participating countries to finalise organisational issues on SPECA before the end of the year. Kazakhstan was ready to continue its efforts to ensure full participation of all five SPECA countries in all aspects of the Programme.
5. Mr. Karibjanov, Chairman of the PWG-Transport and border crossing facilitation, in his opening remark referred to considerable preparatory "home work", which had been undertaken by the participating SPECA countries in accordance with decisions and recommendations of the second session of the PWG. It was indicative of the importance of relevant issues to the countries concerned and of their wish to jointly work for the success of their joint efforts.
6. The UN/ECE Focal Point on SPECA gave an overview of major developments in SPECA for the period from the second session of the PWG. He expressed the appreciation of the UN Regional Commissions to

the organisers of the PWG session for their preparatory work for this session. At the same time, he expressed concern over the absence of delegates from Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. He suggested that the Programme of Work for 1999-2000 be adopted, with the possibility to reconsider the Programme when Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan join the PWG. With reference to applicable experience of the Balkan countries (cf. para. 21), he suggested that SPECA countries consider working out a Memorandum of Understanding in the area of transport and border crossing facilitation in Central Asia.

7. Following this opening of the session, the Agenda was adopted. The main features of the session's discussion were as follows:

***Nomination of the Coordinator on Transport and border crossing facilitation issues in each participating country of SPECA. (Agenda item 3)***

8. The participants have reconfirmed the need for the appointment of a Coordinator for transport and border crossing facilitation in each of the SPECA Participating Countries. The meeting took note that Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have made considerable progress in this regard. Mr. Karibjanov was appointed the Coordinator in Kazakhstan. It was agreed that the process in other SPECA countries should be finalised before the end of 1999.

***Establishment of National committees for the facilitation of border crossing and the development of international traffic and information on status of accession by SPECA countries to recommended international conventions. (Agenda item 4)***

9. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan informed the meeting on the progress in creating their National committees. The process of inter-ministerial consultations was in an advanced stage so that there was a good chance that such committees would be established before the end of 1999.
10. It was agreed that information on National committees should be submitted to the Chair before the end of 1999. It was also recommended that information on the National committees be circulated to all participating SPECA countries, ECE, ESCAP and to other supporting international institutions.
11. With reference to the status of accession to recommended international conventions, it was noted that accession is a necessary but not sufficient step for improving the border crossing procedures. The issues of implementation of those conventions are of paramount importance.
12. The ESCAP representative informed the meeting on the state of accession by SPECA countries to international conventions referred to in ESCAP Resolution 48/11 (as of 30 June 1999). He reminded the participants of the international recommendations to complete the process of accession in the year 2000.
13. It was also noted that the list of recommended conventions in the above Resolution 48/11 is not exhaustive. Other important conventions and agreements have been recommended and have been included in a list established by the second session of the Transport PWG (Annex III to the Protocol of 7-8 June 1999, Astana).
14. The Executive Secretary of the Freight Forwarders Association of Kazakhstan recommended the inclusion of additional international conventions in the air and marine transport modes. It was agreed to consider the inclusion of such other relevant conventions in future meetings of the PWG.
15. The TRACECA Coordinator informed the meeting on the project providing for assistance in implementation of international conventions on international traffic with MDP carnets and also on transport of dangerous goods.

***Operational communications and computer facilities in SPECA countries for improved border crossing efficiency (Agenda item 5)***

16. According to information from participating countries, they recognised the importance of effective communications among national agencies concerned with border crossing operations. Their efforts in this direction have been hampered by a lack of resources. There was also insufficient coordination between neighbouring countries.

17. It was emphasised that whether countries purchased existing computerised Customs applications or developed their own, these systems should be based upon international standard data elements to ensure global compatibility.
18. The TRACECA Coordinator noted that development of computer and communications infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating border crossing procedures in the SPECA countries is being pursued within the TRACECA framework. The participants expressed interest in this (see Annex VI of TRACECA documents submitted).

***List of obligations stemming from transit transport framework agreements.  
(Agenda item 6)***

19. The ECE provided information on the issue. It was important that the proposed Cross Border Agreement negotiated between Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and the Asian Development Bank be also included in the list tabled by ECE (TRANS/WP.5/1999/8). The participants agreed that it was important to ensure that the obligations included in the relevant transit and transport framework agreements are harmonised and consistent with international norms and standards for the facilitation of international transport.
20. It was recommended that ESCAP and ECE undertake to review such framework agreements with regard to the aforementioned obligations and report at the fourth session of the PWG. such a list be developed by ESCAP and ECE before the end of 1999.
21. The ECE reported to the PWG about similar efforts being undertaken by the countries of Southeast Europe in the framework of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). Of the eleven SECI Participating States, ten have already established National committees, which are called "PRO Committees" to emphasise the focus on simplification of international trade procedures. They have formed an association, SECIPRO, which seeks to identify projects of mutual benefit for the sub-region. One activity recently initiated has been for the PRO Committees to review the synchronisation of services at the borders. This, combined joint inspections of the border crossings by representatives of the respective national committees, had served to identify opportunities for increased efficiency of controls and reduced waiting times for transporters. The SECI countries have signed a "Memorandum of Understanding for the Facilitation on International Road Transport in Southeast Europe." The PWG should compare this document (Annex III) to existing agreements, such as the ECO Transit Transport Framework Agreement and the Baku Declaration, to determine whether there is a need for a complementary document similar to the SECI MoU.
22. The TRACECA Coordinator expressed interest in joining forces with SPECA in such activities.

***Establishment of Border Crossing Database (Agenda item 7)***

23. Participants agreed that they have to proceed with collecting national information for a border crossing SPECA-wide database. At present there are just initial attempts to identify and consolidate relevant information. The ECE provided the meeting with a sample of a similar database being developed with the SECI programme (see Annex IV). It was agreed that SPECA countries would continue their work in this regard, agree on the structure of the database and submit the agreed information to the Chair for establishing a consolidated border crossing database. The ECE volunteered to assist the Chair with this task, in order to build upon the experience of the SECI countries in this area.

***Detailed study on land transport routes of the TRACECA corridor: Identification of impediments to transit and border crossing traffic (Agenda item 8)***

24. The TRACECA representative informed the meeting that a considerable amount of information on the barriers to transit and trans-border shipments along the TRACECA corridor has been collected. Copies of relevant TRACECA reports were distributed (see Annex VI). The TRACECA project on these issues will be completed in early 2000. By that time all the existing barriers will have been identified and recommendations prepared for actions to overcome them.
25. The participants expressed their satisfaction with this information. They emphasised the specific needs of consignors from the SPECA countries for the following information:

- i. Shipment possibilities for both standard and non-standard containers and the cost of shipment from SPECA countries to Europe;
  - ii. Physical and non-physical barriers along the TRACECA corridor to ensure that container traffic is feasible and economical;
  - iii. Recommendations on removal of such barriers on the basis of criteria for the choice of transport routing: duration, cost and quality of services.
26. It was recommended to revert to this issue in 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2000, after receiving such information from the TRACECA Coordinator. The SPECA countries were invited by the TRACECA Coordinator to make project proposals for elimination of specific barriers.

***Study the possibility of opening the international passenger traffic among the main Trans-Asian railway line on the route Almaty-Tashkent-Tehran-Istanbul (Agenda item 9)***

27. Since the representative of the Economic Cooperation Organization was unable to attend this meeting due to technical reasons, the discussion of this item was postponed to the next session.

***Programme of Work for the Transport and Border Crossing PWG (Agenda item 10)***

28. The programme of work for 1999-2000 was unanimously approved (see attachment).
29. It was agreed that Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan could submit their comments and suggestions for inclusion into the programme.
30. It was also indicated that the programme was indicative and not exhaustive. It can be therefore be amended, based on the experience of the SPECA participating countries.

***Other business (Agenda item 11)***

***a) Problem issues in transit of shipments through the territory of SPECA participating countries***

31. Delegation of Kyrgyzstan tabled an information on problem issues of transit of their shipments through the territory of Kazakhstan and requested the PWG session to consider the issue of rendering assistance to Kyrgyz freight carriers in facilitating their transit through the territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan. After discussion, it was noted that SPECA could and should play a leading role in solving problem issues related to transit of shipments through the territory of SPECA countries.
32. It was decided to include this issue into the agenda of the fourth PWG session. It was also noted that it is essential that relevant information from SPECA countries is submitted to the Chair and circulated to all PWG participants before the end of February 2000.

***b) Continuation of work concerning identification of priority projects of SPECA countries in the area of transport and border crossing***

33. Delegation of Kyrgyzstan reminded the participants that in the course of the first session of the PWG it submitted a list of priority investment projects. It suggested to take measures in order to expedite the consideration of the list. In the course of discussion, that followed, it was agreed that the projects must be sub-regional or regional in scope. As a first step, a list of the projects will be established. They will be screened to identify the high priority projects. Those selected projects will be prepared for submission to prospective financial institutions.
34. It was recommended that Kazakhstan collect information on such projects from all SPECA countries for consideration at the fourth session of the PWG.

***c) UNDP Silk Road project***

35. UNDP presented the project. Participants noted the need for coordination of the work under this project in the area of transport and border crossing with the activities of all international organisations, including ECE, ESCAP, ECO and EC.
36. It was also noted that implementation of the Silk Road project in the framework of SPECA would make possible both the active participation of SPECA countries in its implementation and necessary coordination of work between international organisations. It was recommended that the Chair address such a proposal to UNDP.

**Date and place of the fourth session of the PWG**

37. It was decided to hold the fourth session of the PWG in Almaty on 30-31 March 2000.

Chairman of the  
Project Working Group

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K. S. Karibjanov

Almaty, 19 October 1999

## **Annex I**

### **LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

#### **3<sup>d</sup> Session of SPECA PWG on Transport and Border Crossing**

18-19 October 1999, Almaty

#### **Republic of Kazakhstan**

Hairat S. Karibzhanov	Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Madina B. Jarbussynova	Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Antizar G. Aitasheva	Head of Department, Power Engineering, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Akischeva L. Zhuldyz	Deputy Head of Multilateral Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Aidana A. Jeksekova	Head of Department of International Relations with CIS, Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Dmitry K. Beknijazov	Head of Department of Customs Control for Delivery and Transit of Goods, Customs Committee, Ministry of State Incomes of the Republic of Kazakhstan
Erzhan Birtanov	Second Secretary of Multilateral Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan

#### **Kyrgyz Republic**

Anatoly Ja. Kropotkin	Deputy Head of the Foreign Relations Unit, Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kyrgyz Republic
Ainur A. Turdubaeva	Deputy Head of Legal Unit, State Customs Inspection of Kyrgyz Republic

#### **Republic of Tajikistan**

Ahmed T. Kakharov	Attache of Embassy of the Republic of Tajikistan in Almaty
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## **UN/ECE**

Peter Tsyba	Regional Adviser, Focal Point on SPECA
Zisis Haritos	Regional Adviser on Transport
Will Keenan	Regional Adviser, Focal Point on SECI

## **UN/ESCAP**

Vladimir N. Timopheev	Head of Land Transport Section, Transport, Communication and Tourism Department
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## **UNDP**

Richard Dion	Program Coordinator
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## **OBSERVERS**

### **Islamic Development Bank**

Erzhan Akhmedov	Project Engineer
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### **European Commission**

Paulin Gavrilov	Project Coordinator on Transport
Michael Sims	TRACECA Coordinator in Central Asia

### **Kazakhstan Freight Forwarders Association**

Alexander A. Denisenko	Executive Director
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### **International Road Union of the Republic of Kazakhstan (KAZATO)**

Teodor L. Kaplan	General Secretary
Bagzhan N. Zhakupov	Senior Specialist, Customs Issues

### **RSV "Kazakhstan Temir Zholy"**

Zamanbek Nurzhanov	Head of Transit Transportations Unit
Erbolat T. Sejilekhanov	Head of Foreign Relations Unit

### **Institute "Kazgiprozhildortrans"**

Valery I. Kasjanov	Deputy Director
Galina V. Vintsjuk	Chief Project Engineer

### **CJSC Research Institute on Transport**

Murat M. Bekmagambetov	Director of the Institute
Elena G. Grigoriady	Senior Specialist

### **Unit of Transport Control Committee in Almaty**

Serik N. Adiriskaliev	Head of the Unit
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## **Annex II**

### **AGENDA**

#### **III SESSION OF SPECA PWG ON TRANSPORT AND BORDER CROSSING**

18 – 19 October 1999, Almaty

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Nomination of the coordinator (Transport and Border Crossing) in each participating country of SPECA.
4. Establishment of National committee for the facilitation of border crossing and the development of international traffic and status of accession by SPECA countries to recommended international conventions.
5. Operational communications and computerization facilities in SPECA countries for improvement of border crossing efficiency.
6. List of obligations followed from transit transport framework agreements.
7. Establishment of Border Crossing Database.
8. Detailed study on land transport routes of TRACECA corridor: Identification of impediments to transit and border crossing traffic.
9. Study the possibility of opening the international passenger traffic along the main Trans-Asian railway line on route Almaty-Tashkent-Tehran-Istanbul.
10. PWG on Transport and Border Crossing Program of Work 1999-2000.
11. Other business.