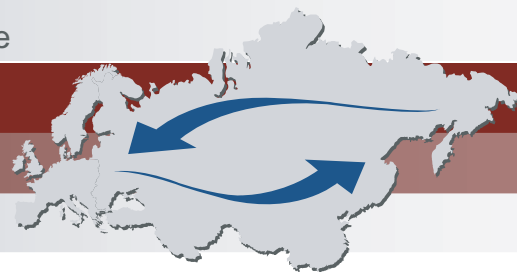




# Euro-Asian Transport Links Ministerial Meeting

19-21 February 2008 | Geneva, Switzerland



## Newsletter No. 1 – 16 January 2008

### Message from the Director

Dear reader,

Welcome to the first in a series of Newsletters leading up to the Meeting of Transport Ministers on 19 February 2008. Designed to keep you informed about the preparatory process and give you background information, this Newsletter will hopefully stimulate your thought processes ahead of the event.

Ministers of Transport from countries in the Euro-Asian Region meet in Geneva on occasion of the 70th Annual Session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) to confirm their support for the UNECE-UNESCAP project, Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL).

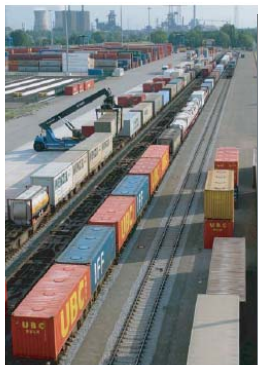
This is the first time the UNECE Transport Division is organizing a Ministerial Meeting in conjunction with the Inland Transport Committee Meeting here in Geneva. We are excited to offer a forum where decision makers and stakeholders can share views on the future of Euro-Asian Transport Links.

There is no longer any doubt as to the necessity of such links. The question is when and where to build them and how to phase them in with respect to the funding needs, both for the maintenance of existing infrastructure and for new constructions. We hope you will join us for the discussion!

Eva Molnar, Director,  
Transport Division, United Nations  
Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

### Ministerial Meeting

Transport Ministers and High-Level Officials from countries in the Euro-Asian region, and other interested UNECE-UNESCAP countries, as well as from the United Nations, the European Commission and other International Organizations, will take part in the Ministerial Meeting.



### Participants

*Several Ministers have so far confirmed participation. All international organizations that deal with regional cooperation in the area will be represented.*



### 70th Annual Session of the Inland Transport Committee

The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) is the highest policy-making body of the UNECE in the field of transport. Over the last 60 years, the ITC has, together with its subsidiary bodies, provided a pan-European intergovernmental forum, where UNECE member countries – 56 in all – come together to forge tools for economic cooperation and negotiate and adopt international legal instruments on inland transport.

These legal instruments are considered indispensable for developing efficient, harmonized and integrated, safe and sustainable pan-European transport systems. The ITC will meet from 19 to 21 February 2008.

To read more about the ITC's 70th Annual Session, including main issues to be addressed this year, see: <http://www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/ITC70.htm>

Ministers are expected to:

- Confirm their support for the UNECE-UNESCAP EATL project
- Create a mechanism ensuring efficient coordination and monitoring of project related activities
- Approve a joint document on the future development of Euro-Asian transport link

You can read more on:

<http://www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/ministerial.htm>

## Why Euro-Asian Transport Links?

In light of newly liberalized economies, growing trade and increasing congestion in major Asian and European ports, governments and international organizations in the Euro-Asian region now consider that inland transport links can offer additional transport options to existing and future trade flows between Europe and Asia, as well as facilitate participation of national economies in the global economy. Better links from ports to inland destinations are also needed to sustain further projected growth in merchandise trade.

Eighteen countries from the Euro-Asian region, working together under a UN Development Account Project, have identified the main Euro-Asian road and rail routes for priority development and cooperation.



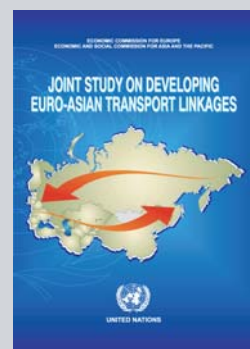
In addition, under this project these countries have also evaluated and prioritized a large number of projects along these routes, developed a Geographical Information System (GIS) database, and made a preliminary analysis of transit transport obstacles and recommendations for reducing them. The project achievements include also the organization of a number of national capacity-building workshops on transport facilitation. The Expert Group that has met four times under the project has become a good cooperation mechanism for the coordinated development of Euro-Asian Links.

Read more on the EATL Website:

<http://www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/intro.html>

## The Euro-Asian Transport Links Study

- › Five (5) years of work
- › 18 participating countries
- › Identified major rail, road and inland water routes connecting Europe and Asia
- › Identified a number of key container depots, Intermodal terminals and ports
- › Created a comprehensive Geographic Information System (GIS)
- › Out of 230 submitted projects exceeding \$42 billion
- › Railway projects account for 54% of total investment cost
- › Road projects for 29%
- › Maritime projects for 13% and
- › Inland water transport projects for 4%



To download the Study, please go to:

[www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/in\\_house\\_study.pdf](http://www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/in_house_study.pdf)



Please visit the Ministerial Meeting and ITC 70th Session Website for more information:

[www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/index.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/index.html)