

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the NL
during UNECE Ministerial Meeting, 26-02-2013

Mr Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

The most obvious way to promote far-reaching Eurasian economic integration is to link our countries better by road, rail & inland water connections and to harmonize the existing rules of contract.

It is therefore that the Netherlands welcomes any further development of the Eurasian land bridge. The efforts of the UN ECE Inland Transport Committee are essential to establish a level playing field for all modes of transport in our region.

☞ *More and better connections are needed, and strong*

More and better connections are needed, and strong cooperation between Russia and the EU is essential. Russia's and Central Asia's role as major transit countries between China and the EU will only increase.

The Eurasian Transport Link and the Unified Railway projects are important steps in realizing this ambition. Rail freight traffic between the EU and its Eastern neighbors is expected to soar between now and 2020.

For unified railway law the signing today is an important step forward. Real progress depends first on whether market parties will conclude single transport contracts for Eurasian rail freight transport. A second step in the declaration is the preparation of unified railway law under UN ECE.

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Today's declarations are a first step forward, but we still need to solve important issues.

Investments for new infrastructure, where will they come from? In these times of government budget restraints in many of the ECE countries it is clear that partnerships between public and the private sector are essential.

Luckily some of our ECE Member states are well advanced in such partnerships, the Netherlands e.g. has a wealth of experience with PPP constructions for infrastructural projects. But also Russia is taking the first decisive steps in developing such innovative financial constructions.

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Let us not forget that here at UNECE we have
established a PPP Center of Excellence that can assist
ECE member states (and beyond) with providing the
tools for successful ppp-s. The Center has already
cooperated successfully with the ECE Transport
Division.

The Netherlands warmly support this Center of
Excellence and we can only encourage the other
member states to use its services for building &
investing further on the Eurasian Land Bridge.

Another essential component of well-functioning
Eurasian Transport Link is of course the facilitation of
procedures at our border crossings. It is imperative for
the growth of intra- Eurasian trade that we will have a

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negotiations that are ongoing right now here in Geneva.

Meanwhile most ECE Member States are also WTO Member or are advancing in their accession negotiations (such as Kazakhstan and Belarus). We would all benefit from single window processing and far reaching customs cooperation as proposed in the TF agreement which we can hopefully conclude this year in Bali.

When we solve all these important issues, we can truly say that all roads & railways lead us without delay at the border from Rotterdam to Rostov and from Amsterdam to Astana!

Thank you Chair.

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