

Dear Ministers,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honored to address You on the occasion of the second reunion of the transport Ministers from the Europe-Asia region, that is taking place under the auspices of the seventy-fifth jubilee session of the Inland Transport Committee. I truly believe that this reunion will bring added value to the mutual understanding of our perspectives with regard to the development of Euro-Asian transport connections.

I would like to congratulate the representatives of the states involved in the project and those of the secretariats of UN-ECE and UNESCAP for the quality of their activity during the two phases of the project for the development of the transport connections between Europe and Asia.

In this context, I would like to express, on behalf of the Government of Romania, the support for the implementation of the EATL project and its follow-up into a new phase III (2013-2017).

Also, I wish to express appreciation for the efforts at expert level with a view to elaborate the two declarations:

- Common declaration on the development of the Euro-Asian transport connections.
- Common declaration on promoting the Euro-Asian rail transport and the activities for unifying the legislation.

instruments through which the governments with the support of the involved international organisations are committed to achieving a set of common objectives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A quality transport infrastructure is indispensable to ensure economic and social cohesion, to eliminate development imbalances between different countries in Europe and Asia and to ensure economic growth. This is why the infrastructure remains a major policy objective.

As you know, at the European Union's level, the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network published by the European Commission in October 2011 is under debate and, when adopted, it will define the trans-European transport network map on the territories of the EU Member States, the technical specifications that must be met by the infrastructure elements and the implementation deadlines for the two infrastructure levels of the network: 2030 for the core network and 2050 for the comprehensive network.

In light of this, I want to point out that during the negotiations, at Council level, for agreeing the relevant maps of the proposed TEN-T Regulation, Romania, along with other Member States, struggled to match, prior to the adoption of this Regulation, the EU priority infrastructure projects with the priority projects of the countries in the Eastern neighborhood of the EU and even their representation on the final maps, to the degree this will be possible until the completion of the legislative proceedings.

This will ensure the elimination of the physical barriers in the interconnection area at the EU Eastern border and support in the common endeavor for implementing the project of developing the Euro-Asian transport connections.

In the EATL project, Romania has proposed as initial alignments the Pan-European Transport Corridors IV, IX (road and rail) and VII (Danube and the port of Constanta), proposal which was afterwards completed with the project *Târgu Mureş - Iaşi - Ungheni* – at motorway profile – section that is included in the TEN-T core network, as contained in the proposed TEN-T Regulation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now, allow me to present to you some of the most relevant aspects with regard to the transport infrastructure of the main connecting routes / corridors between Europe and Asia, as follows:

⇒ **The Pan - European Transport Corridor No. IV (road and rail)** – crosses the Romanian territory from West to East and makes the connection between the Western Europe and the Black Sea, through the Port of Constanta.

- The whole corridor on the road component is in various stages of design and construction, part of the corridor being already completed. The entire corridor will be completed in 2013, except for a section (Sibiu-Pitesti), crossing a difficult geographical area that leads to an expensive project, difficult to be realised, which is intended to be executed under concession / PPP.

- For the railway infrastructure of this corridor, Romania envisages the rehabilitation of 1,364 km of railway line, the total investment amounting to approximately 11 billion EUR. The efforts made until now have led to the completion of the rehabilitation projects for the railway section Predeal – Bucharest – Constanta on a length of 368 km. The whole corridor on the **rail component** is in various stages of design and execution and the section connecting the port of Constanta to Romania's capital is already completed.
- ⇒ **The Pan - European Transport Corridor No. IX (road and rail)** – crosses the territory of Romania from North to South, providing a transport flow from / to Asia, through the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, to / from the Balkan countries of Europe.
- The corridor on the **road component** has a length of 460 km, out of which only 106 km are completed. The rest is to be completed – at motorway profile – by 2030. Depending on the identification of financial sources and the preparation of related projects, it is intended to complete this very important corridor earlier than 2030.
 - Regarding the projects aiming at the rehabilitation of the railway infrastructure on this corridor, with a length of 618 km on the territory of Romania, the Government of Romania pays special attention to the start of these projects, with an estimated investment of 4.5 billion EURO.
- ⇒ The project **Târgu Mures – Iași – Ungheni motorway** will make the interconnection between the two Pan – European Corridors No. IV and No. IX on the territory of Romania, providing a West – East connection in the north side of my country, between three countries: Hungary, Romania and the Republic of Moldova. The future motorway, with a length of 310 km, is included in the TEN-T core network and also in the Romanian PPP / concession projects portfolio.
- ⇒ Taking into account that 47% of the navigable sector of the Danube is on the territory of Romania, my country attaches a particular importance to the development of the **Pan-European Transport Corridor No. VII – the Danube river**. In this respect, a series of projects are under development or are going to be implemented in order to promote the inland waterway transport of freight and passengers on the Danube and in the Port of Constanta.

Romania aims to connect the navigable sector of the Danube with the principal economic-commercial pole of the country – Bucharest City, by building the Danube-Bucharest channel. The project is included both in the TEN-T network and in all transport development strategies in Romania.

⇒ I would also like to make reference to the **Port of Constanta**, the main Romanian port and the largest port to the Black Sea, whose importance is highlighted by its connections with the Pan-European Transport Corridors: No. IV (rail and road), No. VII (the Danube river) via the Danube-Black Sea Canal, and No. IX (road), which passes through Bucharest.

Among the advantages offered by the Port of Constanta, I would like to mention:

- ▶ multi-purpose port with modern facilities and sufficient water depths in the port basins to accommodate the largest vessels passing through the Suez Canal;
- ▶ direct access to the Central and Eastern European countries through the Pan-European Corridor No. VII – the Danube river;
- ▶ a hub for the container traffic in the Black Sea;
- ▶ good connections with all modes of transport: railway, road, river, airway and pipelines;
- ▶ customs facilities for commercial operations performed through the Port of Constanta;
- ▶ modern facilities for passenger vessels; land surfaces available for future developments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the context of the reorientation at European level of the railway system towards an intermodal services system, leading to more efficient transport services, but also to environment protection, the Ministry of Transport of Romania has developed a strategy for intermodal transport, through which several key areas were identified, where new intermodal terminals could be built and logistics centers could be organized.

Given the above conditions, locating a regional intermodal freight center in the North-East of Romania, in Iasi (about 26 km from the border with the Republic of Moldova) is considered to be appropriate both to enhance the local economy, its competitiveness, as well as the proper functioning of transport passing through the Western part of the country, resulting in increased mobility of inter- and intra-regional freight.

Currently, the feasibility study is completed, acquired through a public procurement procedure by Iași County Council, study that will indicate the optimum location for this project. The construction of this intermodal center will allow barrier-free transit of container freight between Europe and Asia.

Thank you for your attention!