

DECLARATION
adopted by the International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport
(St. Petersburg, 12-13 May 1998)

The representatives of the governments and the parliaments of European and Asian countries, international organizations having a bearing on transport and international financial institutions meeting at the International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport in St. Petersburg on 12-13 May 1998,

having regard to the Declarations and the reports of the Second and the Third Pan-European Transport Conferences (Crete, March 1994; Helsinki, June 1997) and the UN ECE Conference on Transport and Environment (Vienna, November 1997),

recalling the decisions of the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure (New Delhi, October 1996) to launch the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific (1997 - 2006),

recognising the crucial role of transport in sustaining and promoting the economic and social development of countries in Europe and Asia,

recognising also the increasing need for reliable and efficient transport linkages between Europe and Asia to promote international and interregional trade, tourism and economic co-operation,

taking into consideration that the gradual opening of transport markets and the development of principles of market economy of the European and Asian countries require closer co-operation in the field of transport,

taking into account that economic, social, technological, environmental and safety aspects of transport policy create new challenges and opportunities for all countries in Europe and Asia,

taking into account the important role of the UN ECE and UN ESCAP in the development of Euro-Asian transport links,

being convinced, that the establishment of coherent and efficient Euro-Asian transport links requires the approximation of national transport legislation and regulations in conformity with the international transport agreements and conventions, included those developed by the UN ECE and UN ESCAP, facilitation and harmonisation of customs and other border-crossing procedures, co-ordinated development of the relevant transport infrastructure and further research of transport problems,

appreciating the significance of activities implemented by the UN ECE, UN ESCAP, European Commission, ECMT and other international organisations concerned with the development of international and interregional transport linkages and services in Europe and Asia, as well as between both continents,

Hereby,

A. Acknowledge the actions and decisions taken so far to develop efficient Euro-Asian transport links, including:

1. Recommendations of Pan-European and Pan-Asian transport fora on the development of trans-continental transport links between Europe and the Middle and Far East, including:

The Northern Sea Route;

The Trans-Siberian trunk railway connecting Europe with the Far East and South-East Asia;

The routes from Moscow to Novorossisk (Black Sea) and Astrakhan (Caspian Sea);

The connection of the Caspian and Black Seas via the Volga-Don Canal, further - links to several Crete Corridors, in particular Corridor VII (Danubie) and IX, as possible elements of the Black Sea PETrA;

The Euro-Asian transport links connecting Europe with the Caucasus and Central Asia (TRACECA).

2. Memoranda of Understanding on the development of the Pan-European Transport Corridors relevant for the Euro-Asian links, in particular Corridor II (Berlin - Warsaw - Minsk - Moscow - Nizhny Novgorod) and related road/rail initiatives to promote trade between Western Europe and Ural region (Ekaterinburg), Corridor IX (Helsinki - St. Petersburg - Moscow/Pskov - Kiev - Alexandroupolis) with several branches between the Baltic and the Black Sea, and Barents -Euro Arctic and the Black Sea Pan-European Transport Areas (PETrAs).

3. The UN ESCAP integrated project on Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID) comprising the Asian highway and the Trans-Asian railway projects as well as land transport facilitation.

4. The international conventions and agreements worked out in the framework of the UN ECE, the decisions and resolutions of the UN ESCAP (including UN ESCAP Resolution 52/9 on intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges) and the resolutions adopted by the ECMT .

5. The Association Agreements between the EU and the Central and Eastern European countries (Europe Agreements) as well as the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements between the EU and Russia, the Ukraine and other Eastern European countries, are providing the necessary legal framework for strengthening the co-operation in transport.

6. The request of the European Council in Luxemburg in 1997 to the European Commission to present an interim report on the subject of the Northern Dimension of EU can contribute to the development of efficient Euro-Asian transport links in Northern Europe.

- B. Consider that coherent and efficient Euro-Asian transport links are to be further developed with the following aspects taken into account:

further efforts towards progressive liberalization and harmonization of the transport markets of all parties;

compliance or, where appropriate, harmonization of national transport legislation, in particular on environmental protection, safety, technical and social aspects, with the relevant international regulations, including EC legislation and the UN ECE legal instruments in the field of transport;

development of intermodal transport with a specific emphasis on the improvement of the interfaces between the various modes of transport;

improved use of the existing transport networks and facilities through their technical upgrading and modernization and application of the most up-to-date transport means and technologies;

development of information-logistics systems for transport monitoring and management and appropriate information to the users of those systems;

avoiding discriminatory taxes or charges in the transport sector;

elaboration of efficient mechanisms for financing transport infrastructure including the involvement of the private sector and/or international finance institutions; the development of consultation mechanisms for a social dialog across frontiers.

- C. Recommend the following approach regarding the development of integrated Euro-Asian transport system:

1. The maximum possible utilization of the existing infrastructure should be the guiding principle for the development of integrated transport systems covering Europe and Asia, including railways, roads, air and inland and coastal waterways, taking into consideration the relevant Pan-European Transport Corridors and Areas, and using as a basis the extension of the international UN ECE transport infrastructure networks to the Caucasus and the Central Asian region and the international routes identified through the UN ESCAP's ALTID project both of which are the basic surface transport connections for international traffic flows, providing direct links between Northern, Western, Central and Southern Europe and the countries of Caucasus, Trans-Caucasus, Black Sea and Caspian Sea Regions, Near East, Central Asia and the Asia-Pacific Ocean region, including Northern-East Asia region.

2. Invite the UN ECE, UN ESCAP and other international organizations concerned to further promote European-Asian transport in a well co-ordinated manner.

3. Improvement of the operational efficiency of international transport routes on a priority basis keeping also in view that:

3.1. the package of transit time, cost/tariff and the level of services constitutes a major factor in choosing a transport route by a client in a liberal market environment,

3.2. the facilitation of border crossings as regards to regulations, procedures and infrastructure for land transport, sea and river ports and airports could be a cost effective measure to improve the efficiency of international transport routes,

3.3. transit traffic by air should be facilitated while the users should pay the full costs of the services provided in this respect,

3.4. the improved transport logistics including multi modal transport, freight forwarding and electronic data interchange are promising means to increase operational efficiency of international transport along the combined (air/land/sea) transport routes,

3.5. the step-by-step approach should be the guiding principle for the development of national transport routes of international importance in view of the different development status of countries concerned as well as limited resources available.

4. The development of infrastructure and transport means of individual modes of transport in the context of reliable, efficient and environmentally friendly international air/land/inland waterways/sea transport system should be undertaken in compliance with international agreements and conventions and EC legislation, where necessary.

4.1. In the sphere of railway transport:

to introduce progressively free and fair market conditions into operations and simultaneously to continue technical modernization of track infrastructure (including possible solutions to the change of gauge obstacle) and rolling stock, including use of modern information technology and in the longer term working towards introduction of high-speed traffic of passenger trains on economic grounds.

4.2. In the sphere of road transport and roads:

4.2.1 to strive to develop market structures with free and fair competition with particular attention paid to the increase of transport safety, reduction of damage to the environment and introduction of modern traffic management systems and to respect basic principles such as non-discrimination and existence of alternative routes free of charge;

4.2.2 to upgrade the operational condition of roads, to expand road capacity including the elimination of bottlenecks; and to modernize the road networks throughout the international corridors in conformity with internationally agreed norms and standards.

- 4.3. In the sphere of inland waterway transport:
to promote its development as an energy-effective and environmentally friendly mode of transport, with a view to ensure a wider use of this mode of transport in the combined transport chain and for international sea-river services.
 - 4.4. In the sphere of sea transport and ports:
to follow the principle of free and fair competition in keeping with international obligations, to co-operate within international organizations and to co-ordinate forces in further development of short sea shipping.
 - 4.5. In the sphere of civil aviation and airports:
to promote the development and modernisation of airports to more liberal market conditions, to develop cooperation between air companies of various countries, to support principles of parity and mutual interest by providing international transportations, to pursue the modernization of the air traffic management system based on the unified technical standards used by European and Asian countries, and implementation of the relevant safety and environment protection measures.
 - 4.6. In the sphere of satellite navigation:
to continue and reinforce efforts for the further development of a satellite navigation system for civil transport requirements.
5. The transport of dangerous cargoes should be ensured under environmentally acceptable and safe conditions; as a minimum, the main international agreements worked out on the basis of the United Nations Recommendations on Transportation of Dangerous Goods should be applied.
 6. The UN ECE and the UN ESCAP with the support of Governments concerned should further co-ordinate their efforts including standardization of transport statistics, harmonization of statistics questionnaires, and consider the collection and listing of working papers, reports, conclusions and declarations of relevant transport conferences with the objective to build up knowledge on Euro-Asian transport links, to diagnose problems and suggest possible solutions and improvements; they should also consider the elaboration of a joint program on development of transport links between Europe and Asia.
 7. Co-ordination of efforts in the field of transport research should be pursued to enhance the efficiency of the Euro-Asian transport links, to solve the problems of transport development and to make transport safe and environmentally friendly.
 8. The appraisal of major investment projects and their selection for financing are to be based on sound economic and environmental principles and widely accepted international standards.

- D. Invite countries concerned in Europe and Asia, donor countries, multilateral institutions, including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Nordic Investment Bank, the Islamic Development Bank, non-financial organizations and in particular the private sector to provide financial and technical assistance for the development of efficient and sustainable Euro-Asian transport linkages.
- E. Recommend that an International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport be held periodically, about every two to three years to review the progress of the development of the Euro-Asian transport system and to address major related issues.
- F. Confirm their resolution to take concrete actions to develop co-operation in the field of transport between European and Asian countries and international organizations concerned on practical grounds, to ensure implementation of the adopted resolutions, elimination of unilateral acts which would discriminate interests of foreign transport operators.
- G. Express their appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for the organization of this Conference and note that in particular the territory of the Russian Federation and other states participating in this Conference are geographically suitable for the development of Euro-Asian transport links; also note the efforts made by participating Governments to implement international agreements on the development of Pan-European transport corridors and ensure their interconnection with the Trans-Asian transport networks including the support by the Government of the Russian Federation for the Programme on transit Europe-Asia transport through the Trans-Siberian trunk railway.