Joint Meeting of the OSCE Economic and Environmental Committee and the Security Committee

Best Practices at Border Crossings: Handbook

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Policy issues:

Globally, three-quarters of delays are attributable to procedures and borders not to transport infrastructure
Comparison of the “ideal” with actual road transport costs and transit times in Central Asia

Source: Asian Development Bank, Central Asia: increasing gains from trade through regional cooperation in trade policy, transport and customs policy, 2006.
The Northern Transport Axis:

Road:
Virtually all delays at borders

Rail:
Technical constraints at borders

Freight costs and transit times
China to Western Europe, (40 foot container or equivalent)

**Customs clearance and technical control, Former Soviet Union, regional averages, 2007**

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Note: Turkmenistan not included  
Reforms/application of best practices at border crossings:

- Often low implementation costs
- Large economic rewards
- The economic impact of inefficient border crossings often overlooked
- Need to raise awareness
How:

- **Simplification**: eliminate all unnecessary elements in formalities and processes
- **Harmonization**: align national formalities and processes with international conventions, standards, practices
- **Standardization**: develop internationally agreed formats
**UNECE:**

- The UNECE administers 56 international conventions and agreements on transport (many deal with border crossing facilitation)

- Expertise in the area of international norms and standards

- More effort is required to simplify/harmonize transport and transit regulations internationally

- Continued effort to promote the application of best practices and common standards
Handbook on Best Practices at Border Crossings:

- **Worthwhile initiative**
- **Focus on producing tangible, beneficial outcomes for UNECE/OSCE members**
- **Contribution to greater economic integration and regional co-operation throughout the UNECE/OSCE region**
- **UNECE supportive. Ready to assist**
Conclusions:

- UNECE/OSCE has experience in joint projects/events
- Capacity building re. “The Harmonization Convention”
- Transport and transit in landlocked countries
- Handbook: a natural extension of work to-date