



Development of Euro-Asian land transport links

A Seminar on Intermodal Transport between Europe and Asia was held in Kiev (Ukraine) on 27-28 September 2004. The Seminar, jointly organized by the UNECE Transport Division and the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), assessed the opportunities and challenges for intermodal (container) rail transport between Europe and Asia. The sharp increase in Euro-Asian trade experienced in recent years has led to an enormous growth of maritime Euro-Asian container transport. However, the Seminar noted that there is also a small but growing market for cargo to be transported across the railway networks of the Russian Federation and the countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Rapidly developing economic and urban centres in China, far away from main ports, and the EU enlargement process together with the growing economic integration of Central Asia and the Caucasus into the world economy, provide arguments for an increased share of such Euro-Asian land transport.

The four main Euro-Asian land corridors that have been agreed upon at international level are the Northern corridor along the Trans-Siberian railway, the TRACECA corridor via the Caucasus, the Southern corridor with rail links via Turkey, and the North-South corridor. Cargo from Japan or the Republic of Korea to Europe could be delivered, for instance via the Trans-Siberian railway, in 13-18 days compared to 30-38 days on maritime vessels using the Suez Canal.

The Seminar found that international organizations like the UNECE have a key role to play in promoting coherent transport infrastructure networks, harmonized and simplified border crossing procedures and international regulations for safe, secure and sustainable transport. It called for concerted action among Governments, shippers, railways and border crossing authorities to promote Euro-Asian land transport links.

For more information see <http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24> or contact wp.24@unece.org.

