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**DISCUSSION BY MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT OF COUNTRIES
IN THE EURO-ASIAN REGION ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
OF EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS**

**Main results of the United Nations Development Account
funded project on developing Euro-Asian transport linkages**

Note by the secretariat^{1/}

I. MANDATE

1. This text was prepared by the secretariat in response to the request by the Chairman of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC). It aims to provide a brief overview of main results of the joint UNECE-ESCAP project on developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL) that was funded by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) over the time period 2002-2007.

II. BACKGROUND

2. Globalization of the economies and trade is generating a continuous increase in the transport of goods between Europe Asia. At present, goods between Europe and Asia are mostly carried by maritime transport. However, the development of Euro-Asian land transport linkages, in addition to providing additional transport options for Euro-Asian trade, is of outmost importance for socio-economic development of countries in the region and for their integration into the global economy.

^{1/} The UNECE Transport Division submits the present document after the official deadline date.
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3. The UNECE extended its road and rail network agreements in 2000 and 2002 respectively in order to include the Caucasus and Central Asian links. However, these agreements do not foresee priorities or time limits, let alone financial means. The links are to be developed by the governments concerned, which often lack sufficient funds to cover their large needs.

4. In order to promote the development of Euro-Asian transport links, the UNECE participated actively in the Euro-Asian transport conferences held in St. Petersburg some years ago. It also developed, together with ESCAP a common strategic vision for the development of Euro-Asian links. Furthermore, it has been compiling information on trial runs of container block trains on Euro-Asian transport corridors, which have helped to identify border-crossing and other obstacles.

5. The greatest progress has been made since 2003 when, with funds from a United Nations Development Account Project, the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats together with designated national focal points from eighteen countries in the Euro-Asian region promoted cooperation among the countries most directly concerned in the framework of the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project (EATL). The following countries were invited to participate: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. In 2004, Greece expressed the wish to be associated with activities of the project.

III. MAJOR OUTCOMES OF THE EATL PROJECT

6. In four Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) that took place in Almaty (March 2004), Odessa (November 2004), Istanbul (June 2005) and Thessaloniki (November 2006) government representatives from these countries have *identified the main Euro-Asian rail, road and inland waterway routes* to be considered for priority development, and *identified the main transshipment points along these routes*.

7. Country experts provided a huge amount of data for the creation of a *GIS database* and related maps that were used by the project. This include data on technical characteristics and performances of main rail, road and inland water transport infrastructure, borders crossing points, ferryboat links, intermodal terminals and ports along the Euro-Asian routes. This work has been made available to participating countries and constitutes a basic toll for future efforts aimed at developing efficient, safe and secure Euro-Asian transport links.

8. These government representatives have also agreed on a common methodology, similar to that used in the TEM and TER Master Plan, for the evaluation and prioritization of projects along the selected routes. On the basis of the agreed methodology and national proposals submitted by 15 countries, *230 transport investment projects, of an estimated total cost of over USD 43 billion, have been evaluated and prioritized*. About one-half of the projects have secured financing and are likely to be implemented in the medium term.

9. *Non-physical obstacles*, which constitute a major barrier to Euro-Asian transport, have also been addressed in the context of this project. *Capacity-building national workshops* on facilitation of international transport and trade were organized in the framework of the EATL project in six participating countries: Azerbaijan (May 2006), Belarus (May 2007), Georgia (May 2006), Kyrgyzstan (December 2006), Moldova (November 2007) and Ukraine (December

2007). Workshop participants included government officials and business sector representatives from the beneficiary countries.

10. The recently *published in-house study*, elaborated jointly by UNECE and UN-ESCAP, describes the routes that have been and considers the status and problems of international transport along the Euro-Asian land bridge. It shows that a successful development of the EATL network depends on intergovernmental cooperation that is necessary to address technical and operational issues as well as non-physical obstacles to efficient transit and border clearance. The study also presents specific recommendations on infrastructure development, facilitation and policy.

11. Government representatives have identified *priority areas for future work*, including: monitoring of implementation of the identified priority projects; removing non-physical obstacles to transit transport; improving the performance of border-crossing facilities; promoting harmonization of transport legislation; and promoting best practices and sharing of know-how.

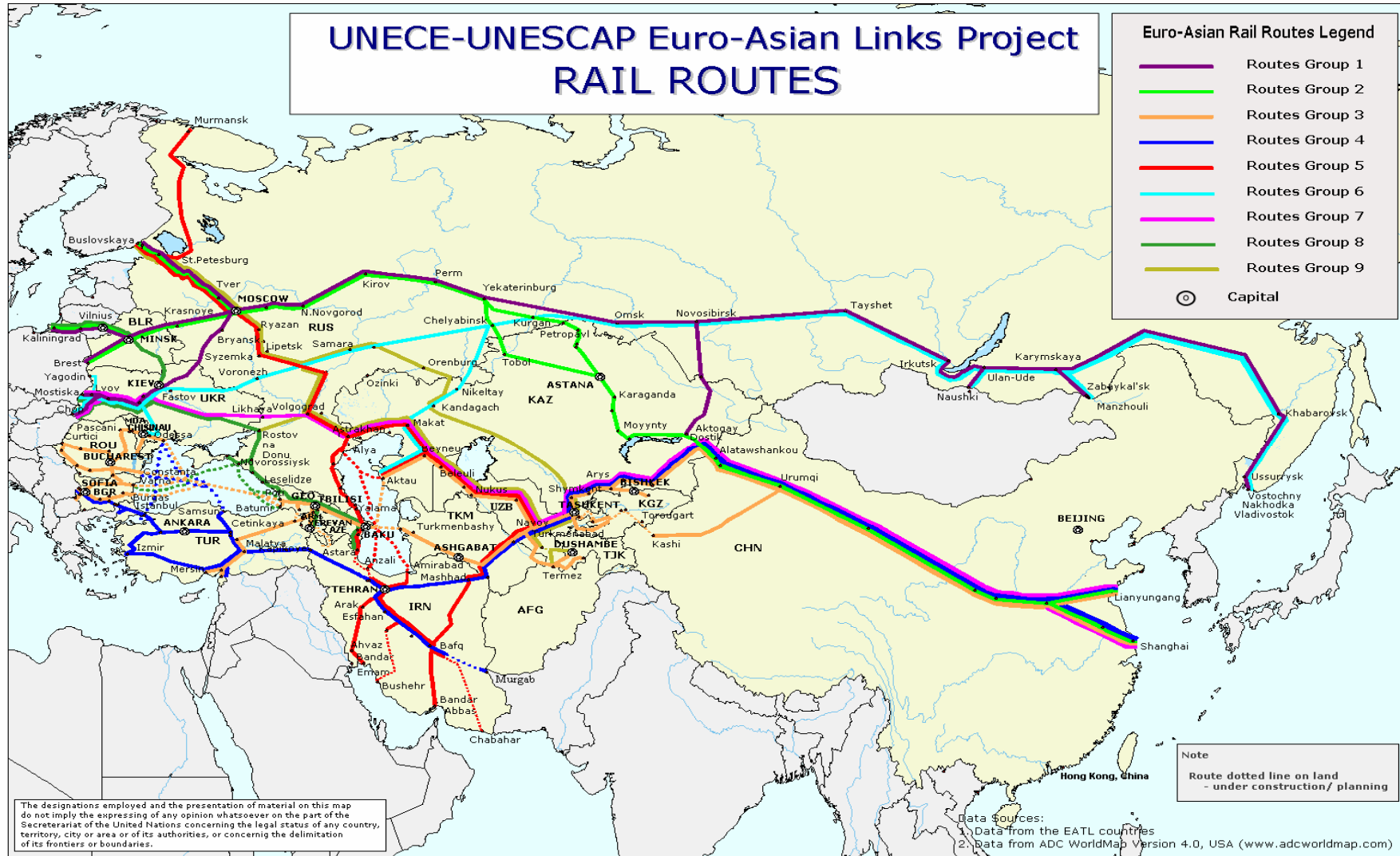
12. Government representatives have agreed that the Expert Groups Meetings held so far are a suitable mechanism for coordination and monitoring of national strategies on the development of Euro-Asian transport linkages.

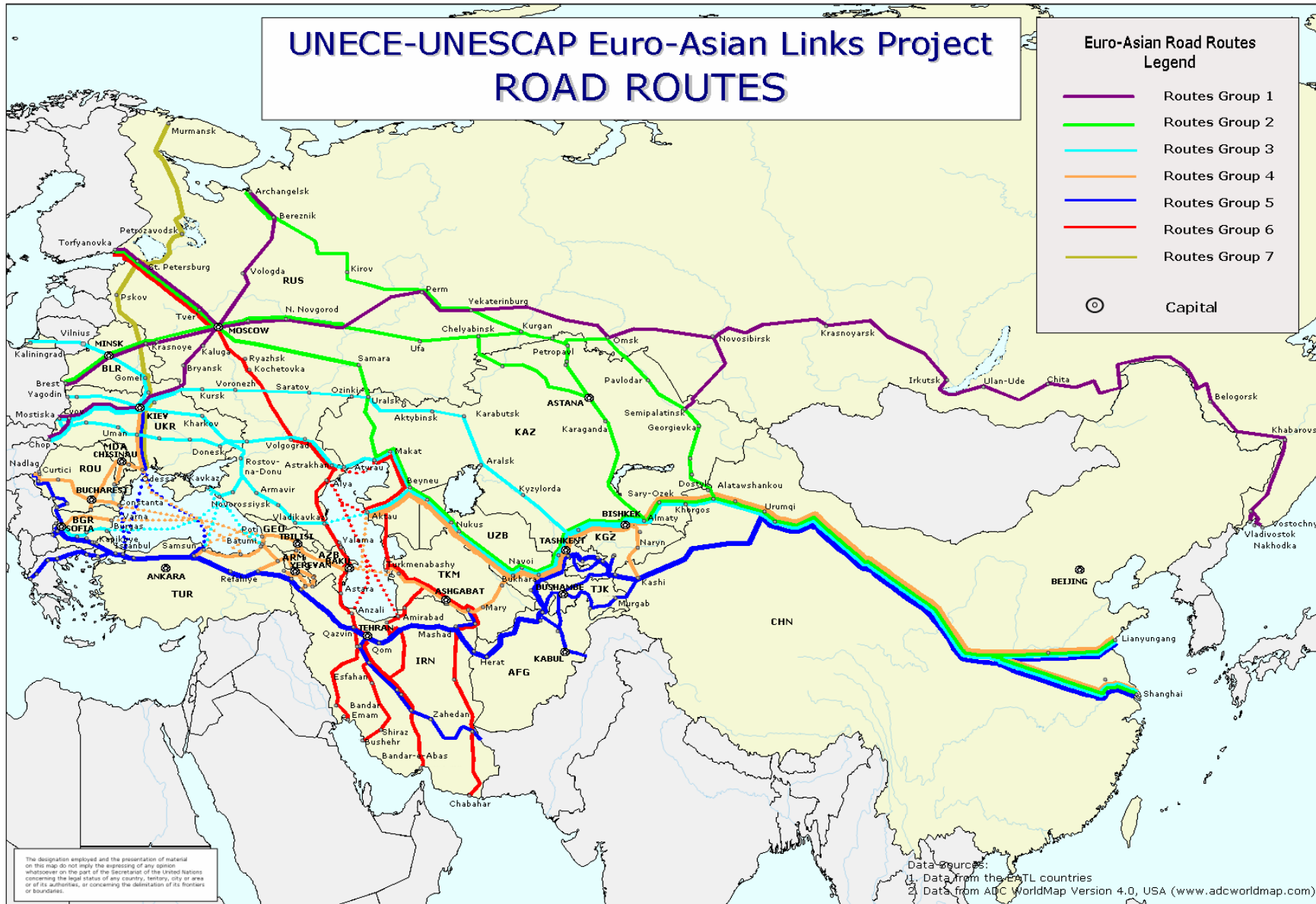
13. The project outputs, as described above, also provide a solid basis for continued international cooperation towards this end. While it is clear that much work remains to be done and for long time and that the momentum created by the project activities should be maintained, the project has come to its close at the end of 2007. The UNECE Inland Transport Committee and its Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics as well as the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing and other stakeholders have repeatedly stressed the project's relevance for ECE member countries. It would, therefore, be essential to ensure the continuity of the project as from 2008.

IV. CONCLUSION

14. With a view to ensuring the political commitment necessary for the continuation of the EATL project, the ITC Bureau decided in June 2007 to convene a Ministerial Meeting on the occasion of the 70th session of the Inland Transport Committee. At this Meeting, the Ministers from participating ECE and ESCAP Member States are expected to reaffirm their support and commitment to the project while endorsing the EATL links selected as well as the priority infrastructure investments identified and supporting the establishment of an adequate mechanism to ensure continued monitoring and the follow-up of the project.

15. The identified main Euro-Asian rail and road routes maps and the list of the priority projects are annexed.





Annex III
EATL projects (number of projects and costs in million \$)

ISO Country Code	All types of projects		Per type of infrastructure									
			ROAD		RAIL		MARITIME		INL WATERWAY		OTHER	
	No. of projects	Cost of projects	No. of projects	Cost of projects	No. of projects	Cost of projects	No. of projects	Cost of projects	No. of projects	Cost of projects	No. of projects	Cost of projects
ARM	8	121.7	3	56.4	5	65.3	-	-	-	-	-	-
AZE	10	1 681.5	7	1 079.1	1	600.0	2	2.4	-	-	-	-
BLR	4	28.1	3	27.4	1	0.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
BGR	24	5 488.9	15	1 532.8	7	3 816.8	1	115.6	1	23.7	-	-
CHN	3	4 603.0	1	413.0	-	-	2	4 190.0	-	-	-	-
GEO	49	3 312.0	4	108.2	21	2 140.5	24	1 063.3	-	-	-	-
IRN	44	8 428.3	34	3 700.3	10	4 728.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
KAZ	14	1 902.4	14	1 902.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
KGZ	8	1 555.1	5	218.7	3	1 336.4	-	-	-	-	-	-
MDA	9	888.9	5	225.5	3	413.4	-	-	1	250.0	-	-
ROU	12	721.8	-	-	-	-	7	333.3	5	388.5	-	-
TJK	7	240.2	4	237.0	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3.1
TUR	19	11 450.0	12	3 124.0	7	8 326.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
UKR	7	1 226.2	-	-	2	292.6	1	1.5	4	932.2	-	-
UZB	12	1 774.5	5	100.8	7	1 673.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	230	43 422.6	112	12 725.7	68	23 393.4	37	5 706.0	11	1 594.3	2	3.1

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