

**Meeting of the UNECE Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links**  
(Astrakhan, 24-25 October 2011)

I would like to welcome all the participants of the UN Economic Commission for Europe Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links meeting.

Recent years have shown a significant increase in trade and transport between Asia and Europe.

Given the fact that most of the traffic is carried out by way of more and more congested sea routes, the primary task now is to develop effective and integrated land transport links that will provide more reliable and competitive opportunities for transport of goods and passengers.

The Russian Federation is an active participant in the multilateral process of developing Euro-Asian transport links in the context of implementing national transit capacities and attracting additional international traffic to the country's transport network.

Giving priority to the development of transit corridors, in the last four years of the European Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) joint project on development of Eurasian transport links, positive results were achieved, such as completion of the network of Euro-Asian routes, identification of priority infrastructure development projects, whose implementation will contribute to the development of Eurasian land routes, identification of the mechanism of coordination among international organizations and governments of the Eurasian region on the issues of developing transport links.

Today's meeting is held in Astrakhan, since it is through the Caspian region of Russia that major transportation routes linking Europe and Asia pass through from North to South and from

East to West, providing a linkage between the states in the Caspian region, as well as countries of Central Asia.

In the course of this meeting you will exchange opinions, assess the process of development of land routes and approve the final report on Euro-Asian transport links.

I would like to wish all of the participants successful and fruitful work. I am confident that your experience will be of help in elaborating constructive solutions to all issues under consideration.

I.V. Levitin  
Minister