



*Tenth International Seminar on Trade and Transport Facilitation organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with the Government of Ukraine with the support of the Ukrainian National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC Ukraine), Association "UKRZOVNISHTRANS", "PLASKE" JSC and "PLL 33-35" LLC.*

## ***MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT DATA EXCHANGE, DIGITAL TRANSPORT CORRIDORS AND TRADE FACILITATION***

**27-29 April 2020**  
(online seminar, Ukraine, Odessa)

### **Report**

The tenth anniversary the Odessa seminar on trade facilitation, for the first time since its establishment, took place online from 27 to 29 April 2020. It gathered over 260 participants from Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Ukraine, as well as representatives of UNECE, various sectorial organizations and the international business community, who are active in the area of international trade and transport. In their ten-year history, the annual UNECE Odessa Seminars have turned into tradition, associated with three success stories:

1. establishment of the Port Community Information System in Odessa (PPL33-35);
2. establishment of the Working Group on Trade Facilitation and Logistics, which contributed to the establishment of the National Trade Facilitation Committee; and
3. readiness assessment and work on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in Ukraine.

Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, Director of the UNECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, Ms. Sue Probert, Chairperson of UN/CEFACT, Mr. Ivan Petrov, Senior Vice President of FIATA, Mr. Erik Evtimov, Deputy Secretary General of the International Railway Transport Committee (CIT), Mr. Richard Morton, Secretary General of the International Port Community Systems Association (IPCSA), Mr. Hans Rook, Chairman of the IPCSA, , Mr. Igbal Babayev, Deputy Chair of the State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan, Mr. Sabuhi Temirov, GUAM Programs Coordinator, as well as international experts, practitioners and technology consultants were among the participants.

The target audience of this technical cooperation seminar consisted of experts and policy makers from government agencies and the business community in Ukraine, the countries of the Black Sea – Baltic Sea and GUAM corridors, as well as regional and sectorial organizations custodians of transport documents or supporting projects dealing with these issues: IPCSA, FIATA, CIT, the International Road Transport Union (IRU), the GUAM organization (Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and Moldova), with a view to include them in work on implementing UN/CEFACT's standards for multimodal transport data sharing.

The seminar focused on data exchange in multimodal transport based on international standards (UN/CEFACT semantic standards and reference data models), so that the aligned data could be seamlessly transmitted and re-used along multimodal digital transport corridors and fed into Single Window and Port Community Systems, and other modern information-processing facilities in international trade and transport.

The agenda was split into three for the three days of the seminar: (1) progress on the package of transport documents to be aligned with the UN/CEFACT standards and reference data models (e.g. MMTRDM); (2) focus on the example of eCMR; and (3) the role of Port Community Systems in ensuring data sharing between different modes of transport.

The speakers provided insights and shared experience in the following areas: (1) data harmonization and information exchange in international trade and transport; (2) the practical implementation of standardized data and documents in electronic exchanges; (3) the use of electronic documents in international transport and trade, notably, documents accompanying goods: the eCMR road consignment note, the railway consignment note CIM/SMGS; the FIATA Bill of Lading; (4) best practice of data sharing in Port Community Systems.

The participants commended UN/CEFACT for developing semantic-neutral standards and rules for electronic data exchange. Experts from CIT, FIATA, GUAM, an EU-sponsored project supporting digital corridors in the framework of the Eastern Partnership and others called upon the Governments of the countries participating in Black Sea – Baltic Sea and GUAM corridors, international organizations and the business community to build political will and cooperation for comprehensive implementation and integration of UN/CEFACT deliverables in their respective projects.

The participants shared experiences on restraining the impact of the COVID-19 sanitary crisis on the international trade and outlined that data sharing among transport documents and processes in different modes of transport along multimodal digital corridors is expected to reduce person-to-person contacts and risks of infection, enhance connectivity and keep corridors and supply chains open.

The participants also appealed to the Governments, organizations and development partners, which launch tenders for projects, both for research and implementation, to encourage the use of existing international standards (notably those of UN/CEFACT) within those projects and sharing the results with the pertinent standard-setting organizations.

The issues discussed at the seminar were subsequently summarized in a set of recommendations oriented at supporting the further harmonization, standardization and digitization of the trade and transport related data flows.