



**STATEMENT BY MR. MICHALIS ADAMANTIADIS,
CHIEF, TRANSPORT FACILITATION AND ECONOMICS SECTION,
TRANSPORT DIVISION, UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR
EUROPE, AT THE THIRD EXPERT GROUP MEETING AND INTERREGIONAL
WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS**

(Istanbul, Turkey, 11 – 13 November 2009)

Your Excellency Ambassador Sumru NOYAN Deputy Secretary of BSEC,
Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and a pleasure for me, on behalf of Mr. Jan Kubis, UNECE Executive Secretary and Mrs. Eva Molnar, Director of the Transport Division and the UNECE delegation to welcome you all to the 3rd Meeting of the Group of Expert on Euro-Asian Transport Links and Interregional Workshop, organized in partnership with the Ministry of Transport of Turkey and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

I should like to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Binali YILDIRIM, Minister of Transport of Turkey for having accepted to host this event together with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in the beautiful and historic city of Istanbul, which at the same time is the physical bridge connecting Europe and Asia.

I should also like to thank Ambassador Leonidas Chrysanthopoulos, Secretary General of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, for his positive response to our request for hosting this Meeting in the premises of BSEC and for providing all necessary support for its organization.

Let me also thank our good colleagues and friends Mr. Erdem DIRECLER, Head of Foreign Relations Department, in the Turkish Ministry of Transport and Mr. Yevgeni KOZYI, Project Coordinator of the BSEC PERMIS and the members of their teams for their kind support and efforts to host this event in such excellent conditions.

Our thanks are also addressed to you all, for your participation and for your active involvement and contribution to the project.

It is with a pleasure for me to see with us the colleagues from the Trans-European Railway (TER) and Trans European (TER) Projects with whom I had the privilege to work together for a number of years. I should like to underline that TER and the TEM Projects have provided valuable input in the development of the EATL Project. As you may know, apart from other aspects of synergy created between the TEM and TER projects and Euro-Asian Transport Links, which is being further explored, the project prioritization methodology used in EATL Phase I, was based on that of the TEM and TER Master Plan.

The 3rd EGM and interregional Workshop is part of the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project Phase II and of the activities of the UNECE Group of Experts that has

been established to continue selected actions of the EATL Project, which between 2002 and 2007 produced tangible results.

Phase II of the Project has been funded by the Russian Government. Without this funding, we would have been unable to do much progress in following up the results of the EATL Phase I and for this we are grateful to the Russian Government.

In the previous Expert Group meetings held in Geneva, in the course of the last two years, as well as in the workshop organized in Tehran last May together with ECO, National Focal Points from 26 participating countries put the basis for the development of the EATL Phase II.

They have agreed on the specific tasks and expected accomplishments (the project work plan). Discussed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the Euro.-Asian Inland transport routes. They agreed on the basic data that need to be collected and processed in this project phase and on the basic methodological aspects of the work. They have also agreed on the studies to be elaborated with the support of external consultants and country inputs, related to the transport flows and statistics, the comparison of inland transport options with that of existing maritime and on the analysis of non-physical obstacles to international transport along the EATL routes.

Since the last meeting in Geneva, a huge preparatory work for following up various project tasks has been done by the secretariat with the support of external consultants. Some of the questionnaires and templates have been sent to National Focal Points and other will follow soon.

At the present meeting we will discuss about the developments on transport infrastructure and facilitation in the BSEC region, and specific project, will review the related national experiences along the Euro-Asian Links and will deal with issues of implementation of various tasks under the projects both on infrastructure and facilitation.

Holding this event in partnership with BSEC is giving us the opportunity to explore further interaction and synergy with the work being developed under BSEC auspices and address specific issues of BSEC region, a region that is the centre of the Euro-Asian transport routes. .

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident that the project will progress well to bring tangible results, as in the case of the Phase I. This is based on our conviction for your willingness to cooperate. However, we should bear in mind that developing Euro Asian transport links is a long-term undertaking, which requires a great deal of effort and perseverance. Your role as National Focal Points and that of your governments is essential.

The road is long. The challenges are difficult. But I am persuaded that with your cooperation and support, we will achieve the objective for the benefit, not only of the countries concerned, but also of all European and Asian countries.

I wish every success to this meeting and thank you for your attention.