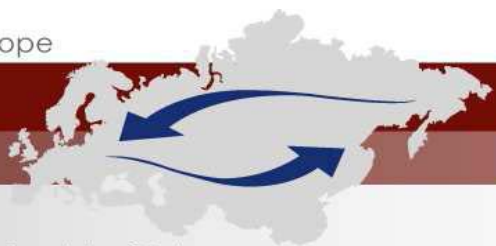




Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links

EATL - Phase II

3rd session in partnership with the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Turkey
and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Co-operation



3RD EATL EXPERT GROUP MEETING AND REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS (EATL) Istanbul, 11-13 November 2009

Regional Workshop

Information

The 3rd EATL Expert Group Meeting and Regional Workshop on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Links were held in Istanbul, at the BSEC Headquarters, on 11-13 November 2009. The events were organized jointly by the Ministry of Transport of the Republic of Turkey, UN Economic Commission for Europe and Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

The representatives of the UNECE and BSEC Member States (the Republic of Armenia, Republic of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Croatia, Czech Republic, Hellenic Republic, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Latvia, Republic of Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Republic of Tajikistan, Republic of Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and Republic of Uzbekistan), governmental organizations (BSEC, BSRH JPTS, OSCE, OSJD, OTIF, PABSEC, UNCTAD, UNECE) and non-governmental organizations (BASPA, BSEC-URTA, CIT, FIATA, IRU, "PLASKE" JSC, TEN-T, TOBB, UIC) took part in the events. (The list of participants is attached as Annex 1)

The participants were welcomed by the co-organizers of the event.

Mr. Erdem DIREKLER Head of Foreign Relations Department, Ministry of Transport and Communications Republic of Turkey underlined that the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project is one of the best examples of coordinated international transport planning studies. Regional and international cooperation enable us to define the most appropriate international transport routes to develop and canalize the scarce resources to the right projects on these routes. Turkey has 19 projects identified as priority projects in the EATL study with a total cost 11.5 billion US Dollars. He wished fruitful results in every field of international cooperation among nations. (The address is attached as Annex 2)

H.E. Ambassador Sumru NOYAN, First Deputy Secretary General of the BSEC PERMIS, emphasized a high level of cooperation between BSEC and UNECE based on the Cooperation

Agreement between BSEC and UNECE signed on 2 July 2001. The BSEC transport cooperation is a good example how the efforts at the regional level can supplement the efforts, which are being done in the development of Euro-Asian transport links under the auspices of the UNECE and ESCAP. She gave a high estimation to the outcome of the recent BSEC-UNECE Seminar on the Implementation of Annex 8 to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (Geneva, 18 June 2009) and wished every success to the participants of the event. (The address is attached as Annex 3).

Mr. Michalis ADAMANTIADIS Chief, Transport Facilitation and Economics Section Transport Division United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), noted that the 3rd EGM and interregional Workshop is a 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. Holding this event in partnership with BSEC gives 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. He wished successful work to the participants. (The address is attached as Annex 4).

The Workshop was co-chaired by Mr. Robert NOWAK, UNECE, and Mr. Yevgen KOZIY, BSEC PERMIS.

Session 1. Transport infrastructure , facilitation and policies in the BSEC region

Mr. Adrian ALBU, (BSEC-URTA), informed the participants about the Union of Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region and its activities related to facilitation of road transport of goods developed in closed cooperation with the BSEC Organization. Particular attention was paid to the implementation of the BSEC MoU on the Facilitation of the Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.

The Meeting took note with interest of the BSEC-URTA presentation on Gradual Liberalization of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region and welcomed the readiness of seven interested BSEC Member States to start implementing as of 1 January 2010 a Pilot Project of a BSEC Permit for the International Transport of Goods in the Region.

Mr. Kurt NEMEC, Republic of Austria, gave a brief summary of the impact assessment for federal roads in Austria and of the relevant procedures to be undertaken prior to the construction to a road. Following EU regulations Austria is obliged to conduct such procedure since joining the European Union in 1995.

In particular, when taking a decision on the routing of a road some criteria (principles of construction and maintenance; protection of neighbours; economic efficiency; environmental impact etc) should be observed. Certain projects should pass the Environmental Impact Assessment. The whole circle may include, in particular, public inquiry, expertise and summary assessment, realization of the project and post-project analysis. Some factors should be studied (noise and vibration, air pollution, water and soil quality, landscape and cultural heritage etc. It

was mentioned that the BSEC countries may benefit from the Austrian experience in this sphere. (The Statement “Environmental Impact Assessment for Federal Roads” will be available on the UNECE website).

Ms. Ruzanna AIRAPETYAN, the Russian Federation, informed about the development of the Sochi coastal area and its sea port in accordance with the “Program of Olympic venues construction and Sochi development as an alpine resort” approved by the Government of the Russian Federation on 27 July 2009. The Program, in particular, is aimed at creation of the international sea passenger and cruise shipping centre as well as development of resorts. It foresees substantial investments from the Federal and private sources and it is being realized within the established deadlines. It was noted that the projects foreseen by the Program passed the environmental expertise in accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation (The presentation “Development of the Sochi transport node” will be available on the UNECE website).

Mr. Gustav MANDING, UIC, made a presentation “The North-South Corridor: the New Caucasus Route”, containing information about the International Union of Railways, its activities and the latest developments. The detailed information was present on the development of the North-South Corridor, its benefits, existing obstacles, legal aspects and progress achieved in the advancement of project.

Mr. Jan HOFFMAN, UNCTAD, elaborated on the Europe-Asian connections via shipping lines. It was noted that the International trade of manufactured goods is increasingly moved by containerized maritime transport, notably fixed-schedule liner shipping services. Liner services between East Asia and Northern Europe constitute the most important global shipping route with the highest deployed container carrying capacity and making use of the largest existing container ships (13800 TEU). The Baltic Sea and the Black Sea countries are both connected to this main route through secondary “feeder” services, deploying smaller vessels. The latter services also connect the regional countries among themselves, providing an economic alternative to land-based transport.

In addition to the feeder services, both the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea also count on some limited direct services to other regions, deploying vessels with capacities of up to 8400 TEU in the Baltic Sea (Poland and Sweden) and 6600 TEU in the Black Sea (Romania, Turkey and Ukraine).¹ The Research has shown that higher liner shipping connectivity is positively correlated with higher incomes, larger trade volumes and lower transport costs. Port reforms and competitive markets have been identified as factors that can positively impact on countries’ connectivity. (The presentation “Linking via the sea: Liner shipping connectivity between Asia and Europe” will be available on the UNECE website)

Prof. Apostolos GOULAS, BSRH JPTS, “EGNATIA ODOS S.A”, informed about progress in implementing the BSEC MoU for the Coordinated Development of the Black Sea Ring Highway. It was noted that development of the BSRH compliments the UNECE efforts on the

¹ Source: UNCTAD, based on data from Containerization International. For further information see also www.unctad.org/transportnews.

EATL projects. The BSRH Steering Committee started its active phase elaborating a main BSRH route and an Action Plan. This work will be continued in Istanbul on 8-9 December 2009. (The presentation “The Black Sea Ring Highway” will be available on the UNECE website)

Dr. Helmut MEELICH, the UNECE TEM and TER Project Manager, presented a short summary of the TEM and TER Master Plan, elaborated in 2003-2005 under the auspices of the UNECE.

He presented its main results and recommendations; one of them is to revise its strategy after 5 years. The Revision is now in the process of elaboration to be finished at the end of 2010.

An integral component of this revised Master Plan will form the identification and development of rail transport corridors in the region, focused especially on Baltic-Black Sea and East-West ones.

Dr. MEELICH illustrated the possible impacts of transport infrastructure improvement including the corridors development on the example of social and demographic structure of population of the Black Sea coast provinces of Turkey which may greatly benefit especially from the introduction of new rail ferries linking them to Russia as well from upgrading of the Black Sea Ring Road in the future. (The presentation “TER transport corridors in the BSEC Region» will be available on the UNECE website).

Mr. Gabriel LEONTE, OSCE, presented the OSCE activities aimed at facilitating transport and trade across the region. In particular he described the 18th OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum process which will focus on “Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security of land transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region”. The OSCE representative gave examples of the OSCE involvement in transport and cross-border facilitation, in particular, through promotion of the UNECE Harmonization Convention, working with the UNECE on a Handbook of best practices at border crossings, and organizing relevant events. (The presentation “OSCE activities aimed at facilitating transport and trade across the region” will be available on the UNECE website)

Session 2. International initiatives in the EATL Region

Ms. Inga JANKAUSKAITE, Republic of Lithuania, made a presentation about the outcome of the Asia-Europe Transport Development Forum and the First ASEM Transport Ministers’ Meeting held in parallel on 19th of October 2009 in Vilnius. The events provided the meeting ground for key players in Asia-Europe transport and logistics business, including heads of major transport companies, representatives of financial institutions and international organizations.

She gave detailed information on the Lithuanian transport network. In particular, it was noted that Klaipeda seaport is connected to main ports of Europe and other continents by a dense network of feeder and transcontinental shipping lines. Moreover, the port is effectively linked by rail and road hinterland connections, mainly within Pan-European transport corridors. These corridors provide further connections to the Eastern neighbours of the EU: Belarus, Ukraine and Russia and can be extended as far as China.

Mr. Erik EVTIMOV, CIT, delivered a comprehensive presentation concerning the common consignment note CIM/SMGS for optimizing the Black Sea ferry connections with the railway network of the member states of the BSEC. The CIM/SMGS consignment note has been developed as part of a joint CIT and OSJD project “Transport Interoperability CIM/SMGS”. Main Scope of the project is to make the CIM and SMGS laws of railway freight carriage interoperable. The CIM/SMGS consignment note simplifies and speeds up traffic on the West-East and East-West axes. It is recognised as a customs and bank document. Implementation is in the responsibility of the various railway undertakings participating largely and very successfully in the CIT/OSJD Project.

Very important further development in the project in respect with the Kaliningrad Declaration is to extend the running railway transportations using the common consignment note CIM/SMGS on the existing ferry connections especially Varna-Ilichevsk, Ilichevsk-Samsun and Kawkaz-Samsun. (The presentation “Railways’ single transport documentation: optimizing the Black Sea ferry connections” will be available on the UNECE website)

Mr. Haydar Özkan, IRU, presented the conclusions of the IRU’s New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative (NELTI) and informed that its Second Phase was launched in July 2009 for another two years. In cooperation with the ADB, the Second Phase of the NELTI will continue analyzing actual commercial deliveries along the EATL road routes on a wider geographical coverage and focus on national action plans to be implemented in partnership with the national governments under special bilateral Memoranda, notably in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, in order to facilitate trade and road transport and reduce the border waiting times along the main NELTI routes, which are based on the EATL routes.

The Meeting welcomed information provided by the IRU that Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and China agreed to activate a trilateral agreement signed in 1998, on the occasion of an IRU initiative in Bishkek, on 11 November 2009. The countries concerned agreed to exchange 150 trilateral permits in spring 2010. In the meantime, the three countries will undertake necessary technical and procedural preparations in order to initiate the actual movement of their trucks across their borders smoothly. (The presentation “IRU’s NELTI: Interconnecting every business in Central Asia to every major world market!” will be available on the UNECE website)

Mr. Ahmet GÜRLEK, TOBB, made a presentation “Modernization of border crossing points in Turkey: New Prospects for Silk Road Region and Joint Border Crossing Model” which gave a good example of a public-private partnership in modernization of border crossing points in Turkey discovers. It was mentioned that Turkey’s foreign trade reached \$ 330 billion in 2008. 40 % of trade is conducted through the border crossing points. The ineffective and inefficient border structures needed to be changed to new ones with modern facilities and technological innovations. In this regard, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) undertook an initiative, allocating 190 mln. USD from private sector into the substantial modernization of border crossing points. For that purpose a private company named “GTI” was established in 2005. The company operates on the model “Build-Operate-Transfer” and creates no burden for the public treasury. (The presentation will be available on the UNECE website)

Mr. Kosta SANDALCI, FIATA, sharing the concerns addressed in the IRU presentation regarding the existing problems of international road transporters, he also touched the issues of the development of the freight forwarding sector, harmonization of activities between carriers and freight forwarders, airfreight in Turkey and activities of the Turkish freight forwarding association (UTIKAD). It was noted that the Rotterdam rules are in some points are not in favour of freight forwarders. He provided information about the future events to be organized by FIATA, in particular, the Freight Forwarding Days (Odessa, 2010) and the BALKAN Congress (Istanbul, May 2011). (The presentation will be available on the UNECE website)

Ms. Mara TAPINA, the Republic of Latvia, informed that the transport routes from Asia to the ports of Latvia are actually operating as significant corridors providing cargo deliveries. These corridors are already marked on maps of EU TEN-T and OSJD. Thus, Latvia has joined AGC and AGTC. The corridors already ensure over 60 million tons cargo transportation per year. Latvia also provides container trains BALTIC- TRANSIT and ZUBR to Central Asia via Russia and the Black Sea direction via Belarus. Latvian Railways is also the member of the Coordination Council of Trans-Siberian Transportation. Therefore, Latvia is sure that the mentioned corridors should be in the list of the UNECE – UNESCAP routes and maps. The cargo flows in these corridors are based on the offer – demand principles and is using existing infrastructure and there is no construction of new alignments. (The presentation “New opportunities for cargo logistics in Baltic region” will be available on the UNECE website)

Mr. Nikolay KOTELNIKOV, the Russian Federation, made a presentation and provided a detailed information about the “Strategy on the development of the Railways of Russia until 2030”, adopted by Government of the Russian Federation. Special attention was paid to the Trans Siberian Railways. Based on the Strategy, the new innovative complex measures were elaborated in order to increase container flows through TransSib. The measures foresee better services to the cargo owners and increase of speed of the cargo flows. This project has received the name “TransSib for 7 days”. In accordance with the project, by 2012 the container trains will cover the distance between East and West borders of Russia for 7 days with a speed 1400 km per day. This indicator was 9 days in 2009. The participants were presented a movie about TransSib advancement. (The presentation will be available on the UNECE website)

Mr. Victor ZHUKOV, OSJD, informed about work on the development of 13 OSJD international corridors. The detailed presentation was made about the corridors, their technical and economic indicators. Particular attention was paid to the elaboration of Technical-Operational Passports of the corridors, containing 13 chapters on the main characteristics of corridors, what allows to have all necessary data about the possibilities of corridors, problems and barriers, traffic capacity, tariffs and perspectives for further increase of cargo flows via railways.

Mr. Zhukov drew attention of the participants to the existence of many different corridors, routes and lines on the Euro-Asian space which were elaborated by different international organizations. In this regard he proposed to streamline the numeration of these corridors under the auspices of the UNECE, thus uniting the efforts of the international organizations and countries, which are part to these corridors, through better coordination and cooperation. (The presentation will be available on the UNECE website)

Mr. Petr POSPISIL, TER Project Consultant, provided detailed information on the TEM and TER Master Plan Revision for 2009-2010, containing objectives, organization of the revision work, timetable and parties involved.

Mr. Constantinos ALEXOPOULOS, Hellenic Republic, made a presentation “Container block trains in Central Asia: Theory and practice” describing the experience of Islamabad - Tehran - Istanbul block train. He also elaborated on the progress made with respect to an EATL Study to compare and analyse EATL Inland Transport options with the existing maritime routes.

Mr. Anthony PEARCE, mentioned that on behalf of the UNECE Team of Specialists on Public Private Partnerships that the Team of Specialists is working with the Kazakh and Kyrgyz Governments and is ready to assist governments in the region to implement PPPs.

Mr. Jan TOMCZYK, the UNECE Consultant, EU Black Sea-Caucasus Project, delivered a summary of the presentations. The summary addresses the need for international organization to transfer road and rail knowledge and experience between international organizations and to national road and rail ministries and agencies.

The summary mentioned the North-South and West-East road and rail transport corridors which are getting investment funds but that infrastructure projects require: best practices in environmental impact assessments; good practice border-crossing point management procedures and increased border-crossing cooperation; to design training which is sustainable and government ministries and agencies, such as customs, need to have a method to implement the training good practice methods.

Some countries need to implement the provisions of international conventions. Finally, many presentations illustrated that it is possible to turn road and rail problems into opportunities using the latest technology to built high-speed railways and quality motorways using international standards.

**3rd EATL Expert Group Meeting and Regional Workshop on
Developing Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL)
Istanbul, 11-13 November 2009**

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Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Linkages
3rd session (11-13 November 2009)
Istanbul, Turkey

**OPENING SPEECH BY MR. ERDEM DIREKLER, HEAD OF FOREIGN RELATIONS
DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all in Istanbul, for the 3rd meeting of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project.

Istanbul, being a bridge not only between continents but also among civilizations, cultures, economies and commercial regions, could be regarded as a symbol city for the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project.

Some of you may recall, the 3rd meeting of the Working Group during the first phase of the project was held in Istanbul in June 2005 as well.

The main objective of the EATL project could be establishing and developing the main transport connections between the continents of Europe and Asia, but eventually this kind of transport studies would serve for the benefit of ever-increasing economical, commercial, social and cultural interactions among our nations.

Distinguished Participants,

In February 2008, the Ministers of Transport of Euro-Asian Countries came together in Geneva and clearly confirmed their confidence and support for the Euro-Asian Transport Links Project. And they had approved to start the second phase of our study by signing declaration.

As you know, in the first phase of the project which was started in 2003, we have defined the main rail, road and inland waterway corridors linking the two continents and identified our common priorities on these main axes.

Our priorities were concretized in 230 transport projects with a total value of 43 billion US Dollars.

Especially during the economic crisis and recovery periods, the importance of international planning for transport infrastructure investments becomes more evident.

In this context, Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project is one of the best examples of coordinated international transport planning studies.

Regional and international cooperation enable us to define the most appropriate international transport routes to develop and canalize the scarce resources to the right projects on these routes.

During the crisis periods, the guidance of this kind of studies becomes crucial.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey located in the centre of three continents, namely Europe, Asia and Africa, is also surrounded by Mediterranean Sea, Aegean Sea and the Black Sea by three sides.

Turkish territories are the main route for important arteries of trade among many economically vital regions and in this context provide many important transport opportunities for global trade.

We perceive these characteristics of our country not only as an advantage but also as an important international responsibility.

For this reason, providing various reliable, fast and safe transport connections between Europe and Asia is a leading priority of our transport policy.

In this respect, we attach great importance to the EATL Project. 5 routes within the 16 routes defined by the EATL project pass through Turkish territories. Moreover, Turkey has 19 projects identified as priority projects in the study.

Also as a remarkable figure, I would like to mention that the total cost of these 19 projects reaches to 11.5 billion US Dollars.

This means that the total value of the 19 priority projects of Turkey reaches to 25%, percent of the total value of the 250 priority projects identified by the EATL study.

These figures reflect the ambitious targets of Turkey in the field of transport which will greatly strengthen the Euro-Asian transport connections internationally as well.

Moreover, I would like to underline the fact that these projects are not long term objectives for Turkey.

Actually, necessary funds were secured and the construction works have started for most of these projects which will be completed in the very near future.

In this context, Marmara Tube Tunnel, Kars-Tbilisi-Baku Railway Line, Ankara-centered High-Speed Train Projects, new highway projects and many other crucial infrastructure projects are rapidly being conducted.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey, participates not only EATL but almost every project or study regarding the Euro-Asian transport connections. As I mentioned, this is the leading priority of our transport policy.

We always take into account the international dimensions while we are establishing our transport policy.

The most recent example of this understanding is the 10th Transport Forum of Turkey. The 10th Turkish Transport Forum is an on going body chaired by the Ministry of Transport.

The Forum is established by law as a national platform by policy makers and all the stakeholders to debate and set the strategic goals as the guiding principles for the Ministry.

This year the Transport Forum was organized by the participation of international experts for the first time and a ministerial panel was held in the Forum by the participation of 13 ministers and deputy ministers of different countries. Even in a national planning platform, we consider the international consultations as crucial.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the 10th Turkish Transport Forum in which more than 6000 people participated daily, the vision of Turkey in the field of transport and communications until the year 2023 and beyond has been identified.

The debates during the Forum have resulted with a Final Report of 3000 pages. We have prioritized approximately 150 transport and communicators projects.

It is estimated that these priority projects will cost approximately 350 billion USD. Now, these projects constitute the roadmap of transport sector in Turkey, on the way to the 100th year of our Republic.

This roadmap, doubtlessly, includes the reflections of our country's objective of establishing high-quality integrated transport connections with our neighbours and third countries.

In this respect, Turkey is determined to continue and further develop its contributions in related international cooperation platforms.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express that I am more than confident of the continuous success of the Expert Group within the context of the second phase of the project as well.

I believe that the outcomes and objectives of the first phase would be developed and implemented during the second phase; and we would reach to more concrete results in terms of infrastructures, non-physical obstacles and technical capacities.

Concluding my words, I wish that the 3rd EATL Group of experts meeting will achieve fruitful results in promoting not only the transport connections between the two continents but also better interactions in every field of international cooperation among our nations.

Thank you

ADDRESS
OF H.E. AMBASSADOR SUMRU NOYAN,
FIRST DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL, BSEC PERMIS,
TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE THIRD EXPERT GROUP MEETING AND
INTERREGIONAL WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS

Istanbul, 11 November 2009

I am honored to address the esteemed participants of the Third Expert Group Meeting and Interregional Workshop on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Links, which is being held at the BSEC Headquarters.

I am especially pleased with a high level of cooperation between BSEC and UNECE, based on the Cooperation Agreement between BSEC and UNECE signed on 2 July 2001. It should also be noted that this cooperation started long before in the mid of 1990s, when the joint efforts were applied to the development of the Crete corridors.

As you know, the BSEC Member States are also members of the UNECE. The Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States agreed that the development of transport axes connecting the Trans – European Transport Network with the Black Sea infrastructure transport network should be based on the Euro-Asian transport corridors and on the major routes adopted in the framework of the UNECE-UNESCAP Euro-Asian Transport Links Project as well as other international agreements and initiatives.

The BSEC work resulted in the development of three important mutually supplemented projects on cooperation in facilitation of road transport of goods, development of road and maritime infrastructure. Most of the BSEC initiatives in the field of transport were elaborated within the Working Group on Transport - a working organ of the BSEC Organization.

Its work goes in harmony with the work of the UNECE on the development of transport, in particular, on the development of TEM Master Plan, hinterland connections of seaports, facilitation of custom procedures, etc. The heads of BSEC and UNECE secretariats have regular consultations on the issues of cooperation. Both organizations mutually extend invitations to each other for participation in their transport events.

We are pleased with the outcome of the recent BSEC-UNECE Seminar on the Implementation of Annex 8 to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982, Harmonization Convention) took place in Geneva on 18 June 2009. The Seminar brought together all potential participants (from public and private sectors) of the current process on the introduction and implementation of Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention.

The Seminar addressed the existing problems related to the cross-border facilitation as well as the best practices in the development of the border infrastructure and procedures.

The BSEC transport cooperation is a good example how the efforts at the regional level can supplement the efforts, which are being done in the development of Euro-Asian transport links under the auspices of the UNECE and ESCAP.

The BSEC projects are also in line with the EU policy concerning the extension of major Trans-European Transport Axes to the neighboring countries. Of the five axes connecting the EU and its neighbors¹ the BSEC projects would cover the Central Axis, the South Eastern Axis and the Motorways of the Sea.

Much of the BSEC success in the development of transport cooperation belongs to its fruitful cooperation with other transport organizations – UNECE, UNDP, CEI, CIS TC, Danube Commission, IRU, IRF, and non-governmental associations - BASPA², BINSAs³, BRASS⁴ and BSEC-URTA⁵.

Further cooperation of the international organizations and coordination of their will greatly facilitate the development of the regional infrastructure as part of the Euro-Asian Transport links.

I would like to wish every success to the participants of today's meeting.

Thank you

¹ Commission's Communication (COM 2007)32 Final dated 31 January 2007

² Black and Azov Seas Ports Association

³ Black Sea International Shipowners Association

⁴ Black Sea Region Association of Shipbuilders and Shiprepairers

⁵ Union of Road Transport Association in the BSEC Region



**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.