

Concept and expectation of the national capacity-building seminar “Digitalization of Multimodal Data and Document Exchange Using UN/CEFACT Standards”, Tashkent, 29 March 2024

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At the SPECA Governing Council session on 23 November 2023 in Baku, which reviewed for the last time the Trans-Caspian multimodal digitalization Roadmap, the Vice Minister of Transport of Uzbekistan, Mr. Choriev requested capacity-building on the UN/CEFACT standards, which are substantive part of the Roadmap, adopted by the Presidents of the SPECA participating States at their Summit on 24 Nov. 2023.

What is the problem we seek to solve? This is the **fragmentation of efforts to digitalize parts** of the transport chain and supply chain. There are:

1. different and often unharmonized efforts to digitalize data and document exchange about goods transported by different modes of transport: rail, road, inland water, sea or air in the Euro-Asian transport routes and in general.
2. different regulatory regimes for the modes of transport (different conventions), different national or regional legislation, and
3. different technological synaxes.

Historically, this fragmentation among transport modes, national regimes etc. has been the reason for the notorious inefficiency of the Middle or Trans-Caspian Euro-Asian trade and transport corridor. Significant amount of resources are wastefully lost in the repetitive efforts to find fragmented solutions for information exchange on the cargo transported along this route.

The solution is not to offer ready-to-use electronic document equivalents for consignment notes, bills of lading, and similar documents, but to **offer a common semantic layer standards**. In this sense, the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), which has a global remit for such standards in the UN, is the best basis for a solution. These standards are the product of a UN development process open to all UN member States and business stakeholders around the world. They are international public goods, synthesizing the best practices of the world’s trade and transport data and document exchange and free for use by all.

They are a core element in the SPECA Roadmap for the digitalization of data and document exchange along the Trans-Caspian Corridor, which explicitly mentions them as a semantic basis for the information flows on the goods along the corridor.,

This seminar will examine:

- the standards and the methodology for their use as a ubiquitous global public good,
- the pilot implementation projects, which have started or which we may jointly decide on,
- the way forward, in terms of
  - o how can the Governments help the practical implementation of something they have decided on by adopting the Trans-Caspian multimodal digitalization Roadmap,
  - o finalizing the current and launching new pilot implementation projects,
  - o creating centres of expertise/excellence, where business and IT experts will learn how to use the standards in a multimodal setting when working on digitalization.