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**Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)**

13<sup>th</sup> session  
12-13 March 2008,  
Almaty, Kazakhstan

**UNECE/UNESCAP REGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL TRANSPORT  
ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST TO SPECA COUNTRIES**

(Item 7 of the Agenda)

*Note by UNECE/UNESCAP*

**I. THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT  
IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, PHASE I (2007–2011)**

1. In May 2007 the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) adopted resolution 63/9 on implementation of the Busan Declaration and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007–2011), endorsing a long-term vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region with the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway as two major building blocks and the development of logistics as an important additional element that needed to be integrated into the vision.

2. The Busan Declaration and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011) seeks to comprehensively address a wide range of issues relating to transport infrastructure, transport facilitation and transport policy to achieve the vision. It envisages a Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport which could provide strategic guidance for regional development of transport, improving transport capacity, promoting cooperation, contributing to regional integration and enabling countries to benefit from globalization.

3. With two additional ratifications (Kazakhstan and Philippines) in 2007, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, which entered into force on 4 July 2005, has now been signed by 28 member States, of which 22 including all SPECA countries except Turkmenistan ratified, accepted or approved the Agreement (see Annex for status of SPECA member States' signing or being Parties to the Agreement).

4. Recent progress shows the upgrade of 10,000 kilometres of the Asian Highway to meet minimum standards and improvement of other sections to higher class standards. It also indicates that 12,000 kilometres or nine per cent of the network still remain below minimum standards. In an effort to assist member States in promoting, developing and upgrading the Asian Highway, the secretariat organized an Asian Highway Investment Forum in November 2007 to provide an opportunity to discuss investment opportunities and prospects in member States, different

approaches to project financing, and the experiences of international financing institutions and the private sector in financing, development and operation of major highways.

5. The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network was opened for signature during the Ministerial Conference on Transport in November 2006 and has now been signed by 22 States, of which 3 have ratified or accepted the Agreement.

6. With expectation of the Trans-Asian Railway Agreement to come into force by mid-2008, the secretariat is implementing a project to identify investment needs and development priorities for the Trans-Asian Railway Network. A series of subregional workshops are being organized to start a process of consultation to assist member States in agreeing on priority railway projects, assessing the investment requirements and promoting financing the priority projects.

7. UNESCAP continues its efforts towards the vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system through the development of logistics including intermodal interfaces such as dry ports and ICD's. UNESCAP is undertaking a project to promote regional cooperation in improving facilities and operational practices at intermodal interfaces on selected international transport corridors. A series of subregional workshops are being organized to have a detailed understanding of the actions being taken by member countries to develop intermodal transport and the problems encountered in the process. UNESCAP has also actively assisted member countries in the creation of sustainable and customized learning pathways in freight forwarding, multimodal transport and logistics.

## **II. MAIN RESULTS OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT FUNDED PROJECT ON DEVELOPING EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKAGES**

8. Globalization of the economies and trade is generating a continuous increase in the transport of goods between Europe Asia. At present, goods between Europe and Asia are mostly carried by maritime transport. However, the development of Euro-Asian land transport linkages, in addition to providing additional transport options for Euro-Asian trade, is of utmost importance for socio-economic development of landlocked countries in the region and for their integration into the global economy.

9. UNECE extended its road and rail infrastructure network agreements in 2000 and 2002 respectively in order to include the Caucasus and Central Asian links. However, these agreements do not foresee priorities or time limits, let alone financial means. The links are to be developed by the governments concerned, which often lack sufficient funds to cover their large needs.

10. In order to promote the development of Euro-Asian transport links, UNECE and UNESCAP participated actively in the Euro-Asian transport conferences held in St. Petersburg some years ago. UNECE and UNESCAP also developed a common strategic vision for the development of Euro-Asian links.

11. The greatest progress has been made since 2003 when, with funds from a United Nations Development Account Project, the UNECE and ESCAP secretariats together with designated national focal points from eighteen countries in the Euro-Asian region promoted cooperation among the countries most directly concerned in the framework of the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages Project (EATL). The following countries were invited to participate: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Georgia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova,

Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. In 2004, Greece expressed the wish to be associated with activities of the project. At the Ministerial Meeting on Euro-Asian Transport Links in Geneva on 19 February 2008, Mongolia joined the other participating countries while signing the joint declaration (for details see the UNECE Transport Division website: <http://www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/index.html>)

12. In four Expert Group Meetings (EGMs) that took place in Almaty (March 2004), Odessa (November 2004), Istanbul (June 2005) and Thessaloniki (November 2006) government representatives from these countries have *identified the main Euro-Asian rail, road and inland waterway routes* to be considered for priority development, and *identified the main transshipment points along* these routes.

13. Country experts provided a huge amount of data for the creation of a *GIS database* and related maps that were used by the project. This include data on technical characteristics and performances of main rail, road and inland water transport infrastructure, borders crossing points, ferryboat links, intermodal terminals and ports along the Euro-Asian routes. This work has been made available to participating countries and constitutes a basic toll for future efforts aimed at developing efficient, safe and secure Euro-Asian transport links.

14. These government representatives have also agreed on a common methodology, similar to that used in the TEM and TER Master Plan, for the evaluation and prioritization of projects along the selected routes. On the basis of the agreed methodology and national proposals submitted by 15 countries, *230 transport investment projects, of an estimated total cost of over USD 43 billion, have been evaluated and prioritized.* About one-half of the projects have secured financing and are likely to be implemented in the medium term.

15. *Non-physical obstacles*, which constitute a major barrier to Euro-Asian transport, have also been addressed in the context of this project. *Capacity-building national workshops* on facilitation of international transport and trade were organized in the framework of the EATL project in six participating countries: Azerbaijan (May 2006), Belarus (May 2007), Georgia (May 2006), Kyrgyzstan (December 2006), Moldova (November 2007) and Ukraine (December 2007). Workshop participants included government officials and business sector representatives from the beneficiary countries. Moreover, over the last year, four participating countries acceded to a number of UNECE transport-facilitating conventions (Moldova – 6 accessions, Mongolia – 1 accession, Kyrgyzstan – 1 accession, Ukraine – 3 accessions).

16. The recently *published in-house study*, elaborated jointly by UNECE and UN-ESCAP, describes the routes that have been and considers the status and problems of international transport along the Euro-Asian land bridge. It shows that a successful development of the EATL network depends on intergovernmental cooperation that is necessary to address technical and operational issues as well as non-physical obstacles to efficient transit and border clearance. The study also presents specific recommendations on infrastructure development, facilitation and policy. The English version is available free of charge at the UNECE Transport Division website: [http://www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/in\\_house\\_study.pdf](http://www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/in_house_study.pdf). The Russian version will be available within 2-3 months.

17. Government representatives have identified *priority areas for future work*, including: monitoring of implementation of the identified priority projects; removing non-physical obstacles to transit transport; improving the performance of border- crossing facilities; promoting harmonization of transport legislation; and promoting best practices and sharing of know-how.

18. The project outputs, as described above, also provide a solid basis for continued international cooperation towards this end. While it is clear that much work remains to be done and for long time and that the momentum created by the project activities should be maintained, the project has come to its close at the end of 2007. The UNECE Inland Transport Committee and its Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics as well as the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing and other stakeholders have repeatedly stressed the project's relevance for ECE member countries. It would, therefore, be essential to ensure the continuity of the project as from 2008.

19. Government representatives have agreed that the Expert Groups Meetings held so far are a suitable mechanism for coordination and monitoring of national strategies on the development of Euro-Asian transport linkages. Therefore, following the proposal of the UNECE Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics, at its seventieth session in February 2008 the UNECE Inland Transport Committee approved the establishment of a Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links that will monitor the implementation of the EATL project for the next 2 years.

20. During the 70th Session of the Inland Transport Committee held in Geneva 19-21 February 2008, Ministers of Transport and high level Officials (Annex II) from countries in the Euro-Asian region, **signed** a Joint Statement on Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links UNECE-UNESCAP project, by which they confirmed their support for continued cooperation, endorsed the identified Euro-Asian routes and their priority developments, supported the establishment of an adequate mechanism to ensure continued monitoring of the follow-up of the project. They also invited Governments, international organizations and potential donors to consider providing the needed financial assistance to ensure implementation and development of the second Phase of the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL) project (2008-2011). Copy of the signed Joint Statement will be made available to the participants of the 13<sup>th</sup> SPECA PWG-TBC meeting.

### **III. TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT PAN-EUROPEAN PROGRAMME (THE PEP)**

#### **(i). Clearing House on Transport, Health and Environment**

21. The Clearing House on the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) is a web portal designed to facilitate exchange of information and knowledge across the transport, health and environment sectors in the pan-European region. It is used to collect, disseminate and exchange information on sustainable transport policies, legislation, research and good practices, with a particular focus on the 12 countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA)<sup>1</sup> and South-Eastern Europe (SEE)<sup>2</sup>.

22. Its present information content covers 110 topics relevant to the transport, health and environment sectors, including as priorities the health and environmental effects of transport, policy integration, urban transport and transport demand management. The Clearing House is

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<sup>1</sup> EECCA: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

<sup>2</sup> Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

primarily targeted at addressing the information needs of national and local policymakers as well as transport planners and experts in the design, communication and implementation of sustainable transport policies. The Clearing House ([www.thepep.org/CHWebSite](http://www.thepep.org/CHWebSite)) operates in English and Russian. Its framework and description of topics are also available in French.

23. The information collected, validated, structured and disseminated stems from national focal points and the UNECE and WHO/Europe secretariats and is, to a large extent, kept and maintained by the original information providers. Since its launch in December 2005, the Clearing House has operated in a pilot phase. In 2006, numerous modifications were made to the site and its underlying mechanisms to improve its user-friendliness and to introduce new features such as directories of other relevant sites at national ministries.

24. The number of persons authorized to upload information onto the Clearing House at the end of 2007 was 276 (2006: 235 persons), including 61 persons (2006: 32 persons) from EECCA and SEE countries. The number of uploaded documents or references amounted to around 600 with around 1,500 resources indexed in the search engine. Very little information is provided by EECCA and SEE countries. Seventy per cent of these documents or references are in English, 24 per cent in French and 6 per cent in Russian. The main substantive areas addressed by these documents and references are, in order of importance: “urban transport”, “effects of transport” and “demand management”. Relatively little information is available on “cross-cutting issues”. Little information is available on national studies, research or governmental records that are of particular interest for EECCA and SEE countries.

25. In 2007, the average number of visitors of the Clearing House was approximately 350 (2006: 240) per month. The number of pages visited during the same period was approximately 970 (2006: 1,000) per month, with peaks during the beginning and in the middle of the year. Most visitors were from Western Europe, but large numbers were from the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Negligible number of documents and references were uploaded by SPECA countries. Number of pages accessed from SPECA countries was far behind other UNECE countries. Number of visited pages from SPECA countries in the period January 2006 – December 2007 was between 1 from Tajikistan to 41 from Kazakhstan.

(ii). Sustainable urban transport

26. Cross-sectoral cooperation and policy integration are necessary preconditions for (a) achieving a holistic long-term strategy for urban transport development in the countries; (b) agreeing on policy goals that are compatible with transport, environment, health and urban planning priorities and requirements; and (c) allocating national and local resources. An integrated approach to urban transport development is also required for clarifying the rights and responsibilities of the actors and improving coherence between the legislative acts, policies and decisions that influence the development of urban transport. In this connection, three sub-regional workshops have been held under THE PEP (Nicosia (2003), Moscow (2004) and Tbilisi (2006)).

27. Following the Tbilisi workshop, the PEP Steering Committee endorsed proposals to organize further workshops on urban transport in EECCA and SEE countries to strengthen collaboration among the three sectors and to address the challenges related to transport. Moldova and Bulgaria indicated the possibility of hosting a subsequent workshop in 2008 as part of the preparatory process for THE PEP Third High-level Meeting. This workshop would be focused on sustainable and healthy urban transport in EECCA/SEE, including the use of surveys on urban travel preferences and perceptions as used in the Tbilisi workshop.

(iii). Policy integration

28. A report on “Practical guidance on Institutional Arrangements for Integrated Policy- and Decision-Making” has been prepared as a brochure to be made available to THE PEP Third High-level Meeting. The brochure was prepared by the Federal Environment Agency of Germany and in English, French and Russian. It is designed to provide support to political decision makers in their efforts to ensure more sustainable development by strengthening policy integration among relevant sectors of government, and to incorporate variety of stakeholders in decision making process. It is also intended to provide guidance to decision makers on how to move forward in the direction of policy integration. Most of the suggested steps, tools and instruments were derived from best practices from all over Europe and are one of the concrete results of the THE PEP programme and its activities.<sup>3</sup>

#### **IV. Issues for consideration**

29. The Project Working Group may wish to:

(a) Encourage those SPECA member States that have signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network to take the necessary steps towards ratification, acceptance or approval to ensure its early entry into force and encourage those member States that have not yet signed the Agreement to take measures to do so.

(b) Encourage SPECA member States to actively participate in the UNESCAP activities to implement the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007–2011).

(c) Encourage SPECA member States to reaffirm their support and commitment to the project while endorsing the EATL links selected as well as the priority infrastructure investments identified and supporting the establishment of the Group of Experts mentioned above to ensure continued monitoring and the follow-up of the project.

(d) Encourage SPECA member States to participate in THE PEP Third-High-level Meeting which will be held in January 2009 and hosted by the Government of Netherlands. In order to formulate the specific needs and views of SPECA member States (as well as other EECA and SEE countries) and adequately represent them at the Third High-level meeting, encourage SPECA member States to consider hosting a regional preparatory meeting for THE PEP Third High-level Meeting.

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<sup>3</sup> 3 Stead, D. and M. de Jong, Supportive Institutional Conditions for the Integration of Transport, Environment and Health Issues in Policymaking (ECE/AC.21/2006/7/EUR/06/THEPEPST/7).

Annex

**Status of SPECA member States' signing or being party to Intergovernmental Agreements  
on the Asian Highway Network and Trans-Asian Railway Network  
as of February 2008**

<b>Country</b>	<b>AH Agreement</b>	<b>TAR Agreement</b>
Afghanistan	<b>x</b>	- *
Azerbaijan	<b>x</b>	<b>s</b>
Kazakhstan	<b>x</b>	<b>s</b>
Kyrgyzstan	<b>x</b>	-
Tajikistan	<b>x</b>	<b>s</b>
Turkmenistan	-	-
Uzbekistan	<b>x</b>	<b>s</b>

Note: s – signatory; x – party

\* Afghanistan has not joined in the formulation of the TAR network

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## Annex II

### Countries and representative that signed the Joint Statement

Country	Representative	Title/Position
Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	Mr. Niamatullah Ehsan JAWID	Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation
Armenia	Mr. Zohrab MNATSAKIAN	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Armenia**
Republic of Azerbaijan*	Mr. Zia MAMEDOV	Minister of Transport
Republic of Belarus	Mr. Vladimir SOSNOVSKIY	Minister of Transport and Communications
Republic of Bulgaria	Mr. Petko DRAGANOV	Ambassador, the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the U.N. **
People's Republic of China	Mr. Guozhi CHANG Mr. Chengzhi JU	Senior Advisor of Ministry of Railways ** Director General, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Communications**
Republic of Georgia	Ms. Tamar KOVZIRIDZE	Deputy Minister of Economic Development **
Republic of Greece	Mr. Andreas KAMBITSIS	Minister Counselor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Greece in Geneva **
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Mr. Mohammad BOKHARAEI	Deputy Minister of Roads and Transport **
Republic of Kazakhstan	Mr. Dulat KUTERBEKOV	Vice-Minister of Transport and Communications **
Kyrgyz Republic	Mr. Muktar DJUMARLIEV	Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Kyrgyz Republic **
Republic of Moldova	Mr. Vasile URSU	Minister of Transport and Road Management
Republic of Mongolia	Mr. Dorjpurev BATKHUYAG	Vice-Minister for Road, Transport and Tourism **
Republic of Romania	Mrs. Steluta ARHIRE	Deputy Permanent Representative, the Permanent Mission of Romania **
Russian Federation	Mr. Oleg STAROVOYTOV	Director, Ministry of Transport **
Republic of Turkey	Mr. Erdem DIREKLER	Head of Foreign Relations Department, Ministry of Transport and Communications **
Republic of Ukraine	Mr. Yosyp VINSKYI	Minister of Transport and Communications
Republic of Uzbekistan	Mr. Abdurakhman ABDUVALIEV	Head of Automobile and River Transport Agency

\*Reservation: The provisions of this Statement shall not be applied to the routes connecting the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, Minister of Azerbaijan

\*\* Signed on behalf of the Minister of Transport