

# Inter-Regional Consultations on Sustainable Transport Connectivity

*(UNECE WP.5 34th Session, agenda item 3(b))*

Geneva and virtual, 15 September 2021

## Supporting sustainable transport connectivity between Asia and Europe: status and way forward



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# ESCAP's work on inter-regional connectivity in 2019-2020

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- **Organized an Expert Group Meeting on Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe (Bangkok, 30-31 January 2019)**
- **Joint consultation between Economic Commission for Europe and ESCAP member States (Geneva, 30 October 2019)**
- **In 2020, prepared an updated study report on progress in enhancing transport connectivity between Asia and Europe**
- **Regional Meeting on Sustainable Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe (Bangkok, 25-26 November 2020)**

# Study report on inter-regional transport connectivity (completed in September 2020)

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- Provides an overview of transport connectivity trends, existing challenge, current initiatives, planning and institutional arrangements, regulations, and standards
- Includes a section on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on transport connectivity between Asia and Europe
- Presented to the virtual Regional Meeting on Sustainable Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe
- Publication can be accessed at:  
<https://www.unescap.org/kp/2020/connecting-transport-infrastructure-networks-asia-and-europe-support-interregional>

# Overview of transport connectivity between Asia and Europe

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## Global significance

- 70% of global population
- 55% of global trade
- 65% of global economy

## Benefits of Transport Connectivity

- Economic growth
- Market expansion
- Jobs creation
- Competitiveness
- Trade



# Euro-Asia Transport Connectivity Trends

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- Euro-Asian trade largely transported by sea, more than 95% of the volume and 70% of the value of cargo in 2018
- Air cargo between Asia and Europe was less than 2% by volume, but over 30% by value
- Railways carried 1% of volume and more than 2% of the value
- Rail freight transport between Asia and Europe grew by more than 500 percent between 2014 and 2016

# Current Challenges

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- **Lack of a sustainable integrated intermodal transport and logistics system between Asia and Europe**
- **Areas of improvement:**
  - **Infrastructure and traffic control systems**
  - **Vehicles and rolling stock**
  - **International road and rail transport (visas, permits)**
  - **International transport operations**
  - **Border crossing infrastructure and equipment**
  - **Intermodal infrastructure, control procedures and operations**
  - **Euro-Asia policy, planning, institutions and capacity**
  - **Subregional policy, planning, institutions and capacity**
  - **National policy, planning, institutions and capacity**
  - **Data, analysis, monitoring, modelling and studies**
  - **Best practices and models**
  - **Financing infrastructure, traffic control systems, vehicles and rolling stock**
  - **Human resources capacity**
  - **Transport technological resources**
  - **Environmental and social dimensions, safety**

# Regulations and Standards

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- **Harmonize regulations and standards across Euro-Asia, e.g. standardized transport documents**
- **Implement technical and regulatory standards, e.g. weights and dimensions of vehicles, emissions, and enforcement**
- **Reduce non-physical barriers for increased efficiency, e.g. inconsistent and complicated border-crossing procedures**
- **Apply United Nations transport and border-crossings facilitation conventions and agreements**



# Impact of COVID-19 (1)

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- **Disruptions experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic are similar across Asia and Europe but the type of policy responses implemented, the timing and duration of their implementation varied by country and region**
- **COVID-19 recovery pathways should consider how the resilience and sustainability of transport connectivity infrastructure and systems could be further improved**
  - **Categories of Policy Responses:**
  - **Infrastructure**
  - **Border crossing procedures**
  - **Transport modes**
  - **Transport crew**
  - **Cargo**
  - **Recovery measures**



# Impact of COVID-19 (2)

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- **A decrease in global economic activity will lead to less freight transport demand and in the case of COVID-19, a decrease in supply has also been observed**
- **The suspension of production and border closures have led to a decrease in supply**
- **COVID-19 reduced global freight activities**
- **There has been an increase in rail freight transport volumes during COVID-19 due to the unreliability of maritime freight services and the substantial reduction of flights and subsequent high cost of aviation between Europe and Asia**

# Recovery Pathway towards Greater System Resilience and Sustainability

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- **COVID-19 response funds – financial support for recovery pathways**
- **“Build Back Better” – economic recovery considering environmental and social impacts**
- **Modal shift to rail transport – a resilient and reliable mode**
- **Regional cooperation**
  1. **Mitigating the impact of cross-border restrictions**
  2. **Allowing better coordination of policy responses across regions**
  3. **Sharing of best practices**
  4. **Digitalization of information**
  5. **Enhancing supply chain connectivity**

# Moving Forward to improved Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe

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- **Selection of priority tasks and activities (based on proposed recommendations and measures)**
- **Step-by-step strategy**
- **Geographical approach**
- **Sectoral approach**
- **Physical / non-physical (barriers) approach**
- **Dissemination and promotion of existing studies, best practices and models**

# ESCAP Committee on Transport

## (6<sup>th</sup> session, 12-13 November 2020)

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- **Noted the continuing growth of transport operations between Asia and Europe, despite the pandemic crisis, due to collaborative efforts at both national and international levels**
- **Expressed support to the secretariat's efforts to discuss matters related to inter-regional transport taking into account the current practicalities**
- **Reaffirmed the importance of continuing to consider issues related to Euro-Asian transport connectivity by the secretariat in accordance with its mandate**
- **Requested the secretariat to explore, in a cost-effective manner, the possibility of involving additional stakeholders from governments, transport industry and academia, from Asia and the Pacific, as well as from other regions, in the discussions on Euro-Asian connectivity**

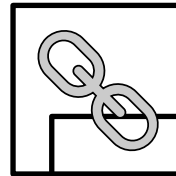
# Linking Asia-Pacific to the global supply chains



## Maritime connectivity

**Status:** maritime connectivity gaps and sustainability agenda

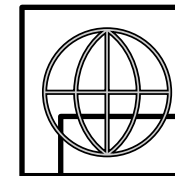
- Systematic regional dialogue
- Integrated approach to sustainable shipping
- Digitalization and smart ports development



## Euro-Asian transport connectivity

**Status:** Inter-regional coordination and consultations

- Study report on E-A connectivity
- EGM and Forums
- Recommendations on the institutional aspects



## Countries with special needs

**Status:** widening connectivity gaps

- Enhancing maritime connectivity
- Electronic transit transport systems
- Rail corridor coordination mechanisms

# Practical arrangements and next steps

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- Inter-regional fora could be organized and held in a manner utilizing synergies with existing ESCAP's and interested partners' platforms and cooperation mechanisms
- ESCAP secretariat is organizing the Forum on Sustainable Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe on 5-6 October 2021 (virtual format)

## In the coming years:

- Forums could be organized under a dedicated theme topic related to Euro-Asian sustainable transport connectivity
- Dedicated experts by governments and other stakeholders for could be designated for exchange of information/discussion of particular topics/sharing updates on latest trends, etc. between the fora

# THANK YOU

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