

ECE-ECO Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors – PROGRESS UP-DATE

Ms. Els de Wit
Chair, WP.5 (NL)
04 | 09 | 2023, Geneva



Mandate



“At the 35th annual session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (September 2022), participating railway companies and customs administrations from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Türkiye, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan requested the establishment of a coordination committee that would gather periodically in the format of an informal Group of Friends of the WP.5 Chair co-facilitated by the ECE and ECO secretariats”

“WP.5 welcomed this initiative and requested the countries concerned and the secretariat to prepare an update report ahead of its annual session next year.” (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/72)

Coordination Committee sessions



- **First session of the Coordination Committee (Geneva/ Hybrid, 16 December 2022)**
 - Held with support of WTO and FIATA (HQs & national associations)
 - To offer a stock-taking opportunity for private sector, freight forwarders and logistics companies operating on both corridors and to collect their perspectives on most urgent operationalization needs (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/1)

- **Second session of the Coordination Committee (Istanbul, 6-7 June 2023)**
 - Hosted by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure of Turkiye and Turkish Railways/ TCDD Taşımacılık A.S. JSC
 - To prepare, discuss and endorse the CC Terms of Reference and its 2023-2025 programme of work (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/1, Annex I and II) and to appoint two Corridor Coordinators

Coordination Committee sessions – *Cont.*



- **Third session of the Coordination Committee (Baku, 25-26 July 2023)**
 - Hosted by the Ministry of Digital Development and Transportation of the Republic of Azerbaijan
 - To kick-start implementation of the CC 2023-2025 programme of work, with a two-fold focus:
 - To take stock of ongoing border crossing facilitation and customs digitalization projects being implemented on both corridors
 - To shed light on the availability of reliable corridor-wide agreed time-tables and tariffs and other issues hampering regular rail freight services

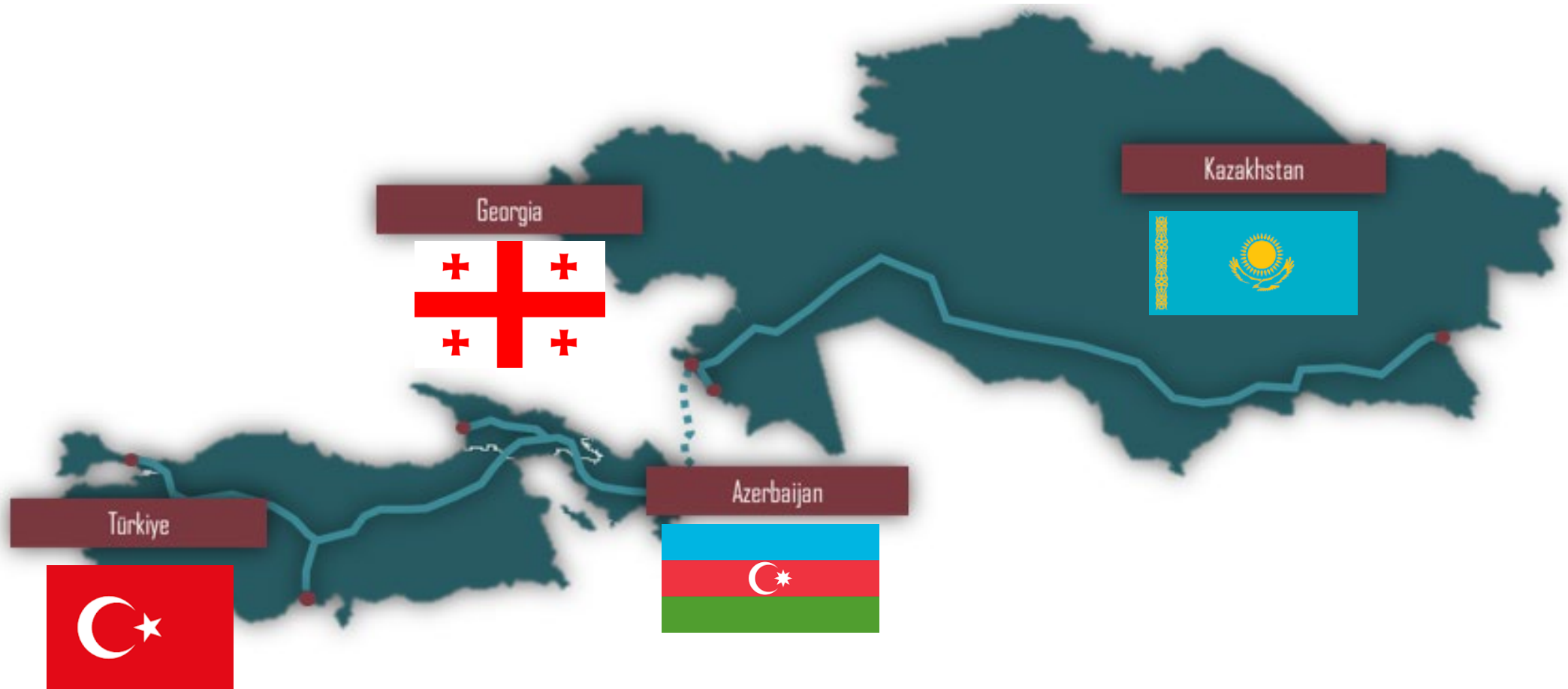
*Chair`s summary of discussions available as **Informal document WP.5 (2023) No. 2***

I. Terms of Reference (ToR)

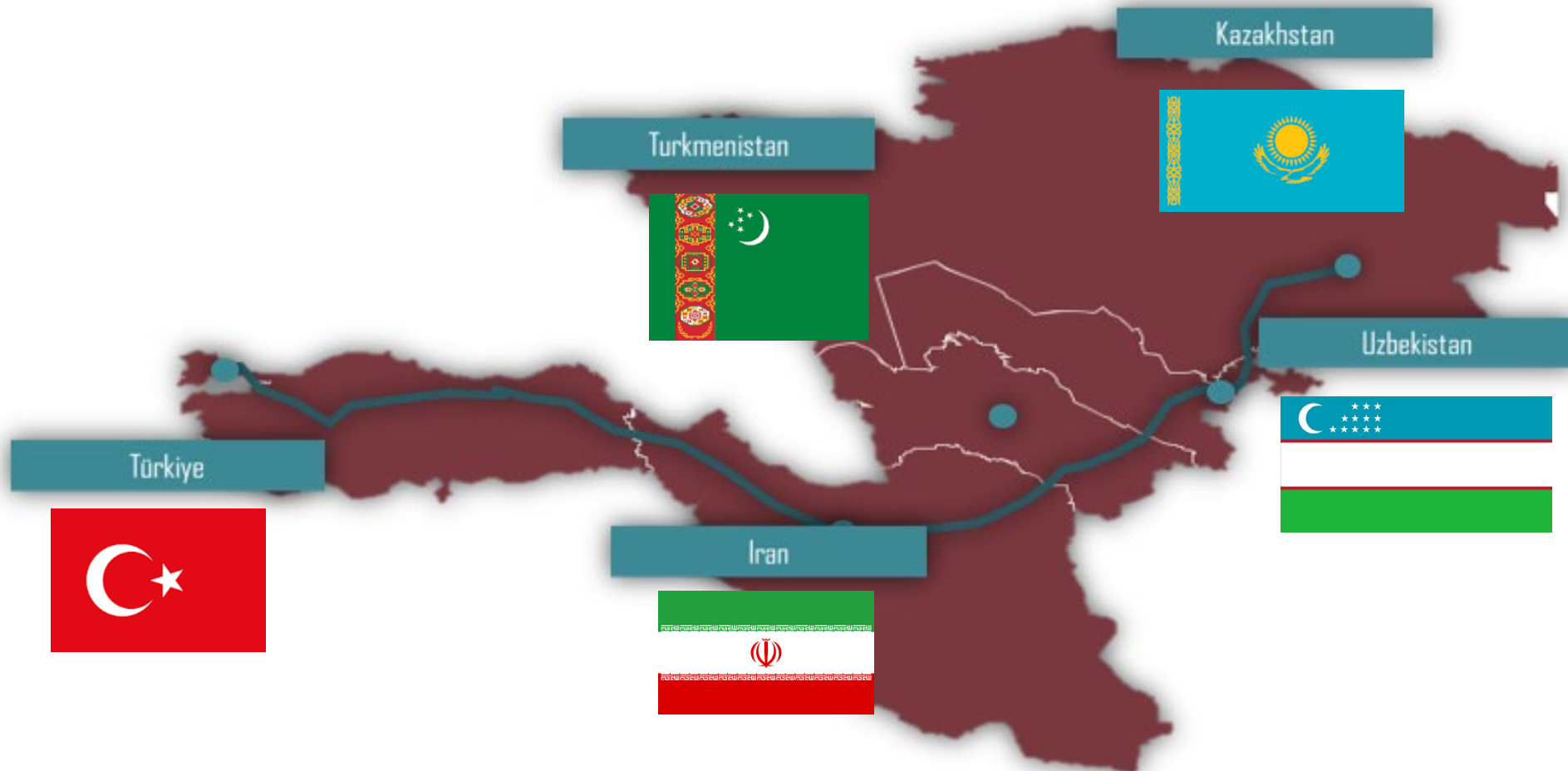


- **Full name:** Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)/ Economic Cooperation Organization Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Teheran-Istanbul Corridors (as per the WP.5 mandate)/ **Abbreviation** (for internal purposes): CC
- **Mission statement:** *“To untap the full potential of the corridors enabling economically viable, environmentally sound, interoperable, and resilient multimodal inland transport corridors between Europe and Asia”*
- **Main scope:**
 - Intercontinental rail freight and intermodal operations, in light of its long-distance potential
 - Road transport in terms of last mile connectivity and to connect adjacent countries that are not on the main rail freight axes

II.a ToR – Geographical scope



II.b ToR – Geographical scope



III. ToR – CC Membership



Three (3) officially nominated/ accredited Government representatives:

- One (1) senior level representative from the ministry in charge of transport and/ or infrastructure
- One (1) senior level representative from the national railway undertaking in charge of rail freight/ corridor management
- One (1) senior level representative from the customs/ revenue administration in charge of cross-border transport and transit policies

Five (5) dimensions of work determined/ thematic clusters

IV. ToR - Methods of work



- All meetings chaired by the WP.5 Chair/ WP.5 Vice Chair
- Secretariat services provided by ECE and ECO
- Two corridor coordinators (one for each corridor) are appointed from among the main members of the CCTCC on a one-year rotational basis
- Frequency and sequence of sessions:
 - 2-3 sessions per calendar year/ preferably in-person
 - Hosted either by a CC member or back-to-back with existing inter-governmental meetings in Geneva/ Switzerland, permitting budget
 - Ad hoc sessions could be held in hybrid format upon proposal by the WP.5 Chair
- Decision-making: as per ECE guidance for teams of specialists – **ECE/EX/2/Rev.1**

V. ToR - Tasks of Corridor Coordinators



- Support the WP.5 Chair and the ECE and ECO secretariats in organizing the sessions, setting the agenda, developing supporting documentation, running the meetings, drafting the report and conducting relevant follow-up activities
- Support identification of appropriate corridor specific interoperability priorities and operational targets and assessing expected impacts of actions
- Support identification and endeavoring to address the capacity needs of the specific corridors
- Report annually to the WP.5 in cooperation with the WP.5 Chair/ Vice-Chair

VI. ToR - Tasks of Committee members



- Set up appropriate, corridor specific interoperability priorities and operational targets
- Map the interests of different stakeholders on a corridor to ensure seamless transport from origin to destination and make suggestions to CC
- Develop a comprehensive corridor work plan for the implementation of priorities and targets and monitoring its implementation
- Formulate recommendations/ advocate for regulatory and legislative reforms and piloting reforms in border crossing facilitation
- Identify and endeavor to remedy the capacity needs of the specific corridors
- Marketing of the corridor, advocating for and promoting corridor use in line with the operational targets

VII. ToR - Resources



- Inception phase (2023-2025): operation and servicing of the Committee as well as travel costs for Committee Members and interpretation services (English and Russian) are covered through ECE XB resources provided by the Netherlands
- In-kind contributions of Committee members (host the sessions in their capitals or elsewhere/ provide meeting room and in-kind coffee/ lunch breaks)
- Starting from 2026, funding to be provided by interested Governments following the good practice of the TEM/ TER projects

2023-2025 - Programme of work across five thematic clusters



- A. Evaluation and prioritization of transport infrastructure construction and renewal requirements including for rolling stock and pool containers as well as missing infrastructure links
- B. Digitalization, harmonization, and standardization of transport documents in use on the corridors (uni- vs. multi-modal)
- C. Evaluation of the availability of reliable corridor-wide agreed timetables and tariffs
- D. Evaluation of en-route border crossing efficiency on both corridors, identify, prioritize and implement border crossing facilitation initiative
- E. Strengthening the economic viability and resilience as well as environmental performance of the corridors

A. Evaluation of transport infrastructure construction and renewal requirements/ identification of missing links



- Building on the available **AGTC, AGC and AGR** infrastructure agreements undertakes a corridor wide mapping exercise of missing infrastructure links or links of insufficient parameters
 - Analyses currently available networks and identifies segments of the railway lines or roads in need of modernization
 - Prioritizes a list of infrastructure construction or upgrade projects
 - Matches the projects with national funding programmes for the development of infrastructure
 - Develops funding proposals to receive additional financing for the projects and includes them on the ITIO
 - Reaches out to MDBs and RCOs and other stakeholders

B. Digitalization, harmonization and standardization of transport documents in use on the corridors



- CC reviews the use of different types of **multi- or uni-modal transport documents** and matches them against the requirements by enforcement bodies in all countries on the corridors, in particular customs or other inspection authorities
- CC produces **recommendations on digitalization solutions** and use of technical standards and norms on the corridors
 - Explores the use of eTIR as inter-modal customs transit document on the corridors
 - Explores the use of eCMR
 - Implements Unified Railway Law (subject to its adoption)

C. Evaluates availability of corridor wide agreed timetables and tariffs



- CC prepares an analysis on existing timetables and tariffs and makes recommendations for tariff and time table harmonization
- Explores the possibilities to establish a unified/ consolidated customer service centre, offering a “Single Window” customer access point for private sector operators interested in the available service
- A proposal (including a cost plan) is prepared for the establishment of a neutral corridor wide customer service centre

D. En-route border crossing efficiency/ prioritization and implementation of border crossing facilitation initiatives



- Based on the provisions of the **Harmonization Convention** and its **Annexes and Appendixes**, the AGTC agreement and other relevant instruments, the Coordination Committee conducts assessments of the main border crossing points performance in terms of staff resources/ infrastructure/ processing capacity and coordination among control agencies nationally as well as bilaterally

E.g.

- Evaluates the extent to which Annex 9 on “Facilitation of border crossing procedures for international rail freight” at rail crossing points is observed
- Evaluates the extent to which Appendixes 1 and 2 to Annex 8 regarding the use of the Technical Inspection Certificate and the International Vehicle Weight Certificate (IVWC) for road vehicles is applied
- Eventually prepares an evaluation report on the status and degree of compliance of main border crossing points (rail/ road) on the corridors with the provisions of these instruments

E. Strengthening the economic viability, resilience and environmental performance of the corridors



- Development of an **International Contingency Management (ICM) concept** for one or both corridors
 - Assess the external contingencies likely to occur (accidents, natural disasters, pandemics etc.)
 - Proposes response plans and emergency protocols to be activated during contingency situations likely to occur
 - Interested CC member countries to pilot such an ICM concept to be identified

Role of CC as an ongoing platform for coordination



- At its second session (Istanbul/ June), members of the Coordination Committee agreed to create and maintain a joint table of activities which for “information sharing purposes” will be updated ahead of each Coordination Committee session over time providing a comprehensive overview of the work being undertaken in support of both corridors.
- Document **ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/2** submitted by the governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Turkiye and Uzbekistan provides such an overview



Thank you!

Mrs. Els de Wit – Els.de.Wit@minienw.nl
Chair, WP.5 (NL)

Mr. Roel Janssens – Roel.Janssens@un.org
Secretary, WP.5

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