



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Seventy-sixth session

Geneva, 25–27 February 2014

Item 4 (a) (ii) of the provisional agenda

#### Strategic questions of a sectoral nature:

#### Project related activities – Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) Project

## Euro-Asian Transport Links

### Note by the secretariat

#### *Summary*

This document provides information about recent activities in the field of the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) Project, including ongoing discussions about the funding of the project activities.

The ITC may wish to:

- give its support to the EATL Work Plan;
- encourage Governments to participate more actively in the activities of the EATL Group of Experts;
- invite Governments and other donors to contribute to the EATL budget preferably on a project basis.

1. In 2013, the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) project continued to fulfil its role as the platform for cooperation and coordinated development of the Euro-Asian land transport links. The primary goal of Phase II, completed by the end of 2012, was the revision of EATL priority transport infrastructure projects identified in Phase I and development of an updated international investment plan for new projects that would entail a consistent and realistic short, medium and long-term investment strategy for the identified road and rail EATL routes. Further results of the phase II included an extensive inventory of specific road, rail, inland waterway, maritime port, inland terminal and other

infrastructure projects for the 27 participating countries, together with their estimated budget and an implementation timetable. At the end of the phase II, the secretariat published the final report.<sup>1</sup>

2. The Second EATL Ministerial Meeting took place on 26 February 2013 and marked the conclusion of phase II of the project as well as the launch of the EATL Phase III (2013-2015). The Ministerial Meeting endorsed the final report of the phase II and supported the continuation of the project in the next phase in its Joint Statement. Thirty two Governments signed the Joint Statement on Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links which, inter alia, reiterated their willingness to work together towards the implementation of activities that:

(a) aim to develop and enhance favourable financial conditions to ensure sustainable and long-term financing of priority transport infrastructure projects in order to integrate them into medium and long-term investment programmes adopted at the national level;

(b) foster and sustain coordination and collaboration with other participating member States, international organizations and International Financial Institutions as well as other stakeholders from the public and private sector to ensure that additional financial resources for completion of identified priority projects are made available;

(c) orderly and systematically remove the remaining non-physical barriers along the Euro-Asian transport routes crossing their countries;

(d) support the establishment of an adequate mechanism to ensure continued monitoring and the follow-up activities of the project, and the most appropriate modalities to use the existing structures and available resources of the UNECE; and

(e) support further implementation and continuation of the EATL project in a new Phase III (2013–2017) with clearly defined targets and measurable objectives and ensure the necessary resources for its timely implementation.

3. The EATL participating countries increase from 27 (Phase II) to 38 countries (Phase III). This increase demonstrates both the growing interest for and relevance of the work that has been carried out so far in the previous two phases of the EATL project.

4. The primary objective of Phase III is to make operational the identified nine road and nine rail EATL routes. The Expert Group and the secretariat initiated the process expected to convert results of the Phase II into reality during Phase III, as much as the available resources permit. To this end, the EATL Expert Group had a meeting on 10 September 2013 in Geneva which brought together EATL countries with the priority infrastructure projects and International Financial Institutions. This activity will continue throughout the phase III, together with other concrete activities according to the plan of work adopted by the EATL Expert Group in September 2013.

5. In order to promote the EATL project and its potential impact on the Euro-Asian region, the secretariat presented this project at the Euro-Asia Economic Forum in Xian, People's Republic of China in September 2013. The participants expressed their keen interest for the project and in opportunity to participate in activities of the phase III. The Government of Mongolia also expressed strong interest for the project and its representatives were informed about the details of the project in November 2013.

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<sup>1</sup> Available at: [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/main/eatl/docs/EATL\\_Report\\_Phase\\_II-Ru.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/main/eatl/docs/EATL_Report_Phase_II-Ru.pdf) in the Russian language  
Available at [http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/main/eatl/docs/EATL\\_Report\\_Phase\\_II.pdf](http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/main/eatl/docs/EATL_Report_Phase_II.pdf) in the English language:

6. The EATL project now enters in the most critical phase. The operationalization of Euro-Asian links, the core activity of the phase III, will require specific knowledge and additional skills which may only be available in private sector. To be able to fully and efficiently accomplish agreed objectives of the phase III, the project will require additional financial support from governments, private sector and International Financial Institutions. The attractiveness of the project and opportunities which could be opened up with its complete implementation are not sufficient to attract potential donors and contributors. The full and committed political as well as financial support by participating Governments is needed more than ever before in order to attain the full benefits of the EATL project.

7. The ITC may wish to:

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