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Identification of cargo flows on the Euro-Asian transport links

Conclusions and Recommendations for EATL Phase III Report

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Introduction

This document contains an updated version of the sections on "EATL: Looking into the future" and on "Conclusions and Recommendations" of the draft report of the phase III of the Euro-Asian Transport Links project, (chapters IV and V of Informal document No. 1).

IV. EATL: LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

As noted in the Joint Statement on Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links signed in Geneva, on 26 February 2013, by ministers of transport from EATL countries, there is a great potential to diversify freight transport routes between Europe and Asia and increase the use of existing and projected inland transport capacities.

The development of efficient, economically justified, safe and more secure Euro-Asian inland transport routes could provide alternative or complementary transport connections to the maritime transport, facilitate existing and future trade and cargo flows between Europe and Asia, and facilitate integration of national economies in the global economy¹.

Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links plays a significant role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Euro-Asian inland transport routes facilitate access to markets, economic opportunities and social services to a number of countries spanning these routes, including landlocked and transit developing countries, in a manner that could significantly contribute to economic development, reduction of poverty and increase in the stability of economic prospects in these states.

The initial SWOT-analysis of the EATL transport communications was developed during Phase II of the EATL-project to give the overall picture of a project. Results of SWOT analysis help to gain maximum benefits from strengths, outline the ways to compensate weaknesses, minimize threats and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities.

The current section of the report contains the upgraded version of the SWOT analysis of the EATL project reflecting the changes and trends identified in the course of the project Phase III.

The following are considered to be EATL inland transport connection **strengths**:

- EATL inland transport routes can often provide faster delivery than maritime routes for the transport of goods between Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.
- EATL inland transport routes are an important transport option for EATL landlocked developing countries in the region for their access to international markets and their participation in global trade which means the constant objective attention to their development from the side of governments, international organizations and financial institutions as reflected in the Vienna Programme of action.
- There are unutilized capacities along some parts of the EATL road and railway routes running East-West and North-South.
- Some EATL routes are currently the preferred way for certain countries along the EATL to reach their major trade partners. First of all, there are countries of Central Asia, Afghanistan, Mongolia, and other LLDs.
- EATL routes are the integral part and physical extensions of Pan-European Corridors, AGR, AGC, AGTC, the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T), Asian Highway (AH) network, Trans-Asian Railway (TAR), Trans-European Motorway (TEM), Trans-

¹ UN ECE. Joint Statement on Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links, 26 February 2013. Available: http://www.unecce.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2013/itc/Joint_Declaration_on_EATL.pdf

European Railway (TER), TRACECA and other related corridors and networks of high significance for Europe and Asia. Thus their development is within the general trend of Eurasian trade facilitation supported by numerous international initiatives and transport policy aimed to promote regional connectivity, facilitation of trade and border crossing procedures.

- There is political commitment for the development of EATL inland transport routes expressed by concerned governments and various international and subregional governmental and non-governmental organizations promoting related initiatives and projects in the area of transport.
- Local partnerships are being developed along the inland EATL routes among key players, including non-governmental organizations and bodies. In principle these partnerships
- Public-private partnerships (PPPs) plays more and more significant role in the implementation of projects and initiatives aimed at the development of Euro-Asian transport links. Additionally to traditional PPPs, new institutional forms of global partnerships, in particular the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport (GPST) should contribute to the ensuring cooperation between different transport businesses and the United Nations, its specialized and regional agencies in the area of transport facilitation, harmonization of transport law and other issues essential to the Euro-Asian Transport Links.
- Since a good portion of EATL routes are in the planning and design phase, they can be constructed according to the best available technological and environmental standards and best practices.

The following are considered to be general **weaknesses** observed on EATL inland transport links (not necessarily present in all the EATL countries):

- The costs of goods transportation via inland EATL routes are generally too high compared to competing routes containing the maritime transport leg across the Indian Ocean and the Suez Canal. The reason for that is not only the objective transport-economic factors such as high competition between liner shipping companies and the associated low freight rates but also the (sometimes) unreasonably high transit tariffs, fees and charges that pursue, primarily, the fiscal objectives as well as the lack of harmonized tariff rates covered cargo delivery between Europe and Asia for rail transport operators;
- The quality of transport and logistic services across the EATL corridors is rather low compared to that of maritime routes and usually does not match the market standards of developed countries;
- Intermodal transportation is generally poorly developed across the EATL region, mainly in the Central-Asian part of it. There are relatively few intermodal services provided on the continental Euro-Asian market; intermodal logistic centers are rear on the transport infrastructure of the region.

Numerous physical and non-physical barriers along the inland EATL routes render transport operations difficult, costly, time-consuming, unpredictable and uncertain. These include, in particular:

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- inadequate, underdeveloped and poorly maintained road and rail networks with many bottlenecks and missing links on them;
- cumbersome and inefficient control procedures leading to long delays at border crossing points;
- multiple cargo checks *en route*, mandatory transit convoys, numerous agencies at borders requesting to approve documentation and numerous fiscal charges to be paid at certain points along the routes.
- many border posts are poorly equipped and some are closed
- transport restrictions, rules and procedures are frequently changed without notice.

The market institutions as well as the conditions for competitive business development are often underdeveloped in EATL countries, which is restricting the institutional development of Euro-Asian transport links particularly:

- market oriented railway reforms are not in place and many national railway systems are state-owned and keep their monopoly position. As a result rail rates are uncompetitive, inflexible and often contain hidden charges. The intentions of private operators to arrange competitive railway services often has no legal basis;
- although many road transport operators in the EATL countries are now private, transport monopolies and oligopolies are still in place in some countries, operating under high tariffs and offering inadequate levels of service in some countries;
- permit systems in the area of bilateral and transit road transport of goods significantly hinders access to the market for operators from other EATL countries;
- the institute of freight forwarders, cargo integrators, 3 PL providers and other market players facilitating trade and transportation is not adequately developed in many countries(as well as the legal base for their activities).

The level of international co-ordination and harmonization across the EATL routes is not high enough to provide smooth traffic of vehicles and goods. In particular:

- there is no harmonized customs transit regime along all EATL routes;
- international permit quotas for bilateral and transit road transport of goods are in force in most countries along EATL, while the grant of visas to professional drivers is cumbersome and costly;
- the heterogeneity of existing transport and transit rules and regulations along the inland EATL routes makes monitoring of the EATL corridors situation quite difficult
- some national and regional transport initiatives are aimed at shifting freight traffic and regional competition rather at co-operation within the EATL context;
- intentions towards co-operative development of infrastructure are not adequately supported by mutual practical steps, in particular – investments.

Widespread corruption along some EATL road routes (detected during some international projects implementation - NELTI, the Global Anti-Corruption Initiative, etc., as well as by international organizations - OSCE, ECO, IRU and others) not only forces international operators to make illegal payments but also makes officially declared procedures unreliable.

There are safety concerns along sections of the EATL road routes and international transport operators lack security.

Another problem with the effect strengthen in the future is the absence of fully electronic document and procedures management in the Border crossing points, including pre-declaration of vehicles and cargo, e-CMR, e-TIR along most of EATL routes.

A serious problem is the limited institutional and human resource capacities exist in many EATL member countries, especially in Central Asia, Afghanistan and other LLDCs.

Generally low level of investment potential of many EATL countries is currently aggravated by the regional economic crisis that compels the governments to fulfil primarily urgent needs like health, housing, pensions, etc.

Due to low transport network development and insufficient amount of alternative routes (in comparison with the European region) one particular weak segment or missing link in one country can render a whole EATL route economically unviable for international transport.

The same is in the case of various natural, technological or political disasters, which may take out from operation not only sections of transport infrastructure, but entire routes (which was clearly demonstrated in the presentation of Dr Robert de Souza Professor of Asia-Pacific University of Singapore during the 14th meeting of the EATL Expert Group, November 26-27, 2016, Yerevan, Republic of Armenia). In this regard, the risk management activities in the field of transport and development of relief transport and transit routes is becoming increasingly important.

The following are considered to be EATL inland transport connection **opportunities**:

In a long term, continuous globalization is expected to increase the transport of goods between Europe and Asia. The rapid growth of China and India and some other Asian countries generates greater transport demand and thus new opportunities for inland EATL routes.

Several events and trends are expected to promote the development of EATL routes, particularly:

- The adoption during 2014-2015 by UN General Assembly and the ongoing implementation of UN Resolutions 70/1 "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" 69/213 "The Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation for Sustainable Development", 70/197 "Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors";
- Launch "The Ashgabat Process" on Sustainable Transport development based on the results of the First Global UN Conference on Sustainable Transport (November 26-27, 2016, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan);
- The adoption of Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity

in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021) during the Third Session of the UNESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport (5-9 December 2016, Moscow, Russian Federation);

- Ongoing Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024;
- The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) establishment in 2014 and implementation of coordinated (agreed) transport policy of the member states of the EAEU with gradual creation of a single transport space and common market of transport services;
- The start of “One Belt – One Road” (OBOR) initiative;
- Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport (GPST) creation and launch of its work in the area of key transport issues related to the development of Euro-Asian transport links;
- Accession of EATL countries to the WTO, incl. the Russian Federation (2012), Republic of Tajikistan (2013) and Republic of Kazakhstan (2015), signing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA);
- Economic reforms in certain EATL countries improving the business climate and transparency of procedures as evidenced by the growth indices of competitiveness and LPI in some EATL countries;
- Developing trade among EATL countries, in particular between landlocked developing countries in Central Asia and their transit developing neighbors;
- Certain infrastructure projects are being implemented improving the transport-logistic network within the EATL area, including the Eurasia Tunnel crossing the Bosphorus strait undersea, construction of road corridor "Europe - Western China", construction and launch operation in the new commercial sea and dry port Alyat (Republic of Azerbaijan), construction of road corridor North-South in the Republic of Armenia, a large-scale reconstruction of the railway lines of BAM and TRANS-SIB in the Russian Federation, etc.

A portion of “time-sensitive” transit can be redirected through inland EATL routes. Introduction of “slow steaming” on the maritime routes is expected to enlarge this segment.

Further expansion of universal railway legal regime, in particular – enlarging coverage of the CIM/SMGS consignment note along EATL railway routes, as well as CMR consignment note and TIR carnet along EATL road routes would facilitate land transport between Europe and Asia.

Railway reforms in certain EATL countries improve the environment for long-haul block-train operations.

Best decisions and practices in facilitating border-crossing procedures are generalized, described and open to implementation

Increased efforts and progress in regional cooperation and integration among countries offer new opportunities to address existing challenges in a coordinated way.

The following are considered to be EATL inland transport connection **threats**:

- The dangers of "slowdown" of the Chinese and other fast-growing Asian economies and thereby low growth or reduction of the physical volume of trade between Europe and Asia;
- Replacement of productive capacities by trans-national businesses from China to other Asian and Pacific countries (such as Vietnam and Indonesia), making the switching freight traffic from maritime to land transport routes inappropriate;
- The increasing trend of economic nationalism, persisting conflicts and political instability along some parts of EATL routes (as expected after US President D.Trump's inauguration the number of productive capacities will be withdrawn from foreign countries, including China, to the U.S.);
- The extremely low competitive transport costs of maritime routes that maintain them as the most attractive and simple (minima of border crossings) transport option for the majority of supply chains in Euro-Asian trade;
- The continuing growth of the efficiency of international air transport and air cargo logistics will further outflow of the most attractive "luxury" goods from the sea and land Euro-Asian routes to air transportation;
- Global warming and the expected opening of the Arctic North-West passage to container traffic may result in even more competitive maritime routes;
- Frozen conflicts and political instability in some countries and regions of Eurasia may hinder the efficient operation of some Euro-Asian land transport routes.

EATL Roadmap to 2030 (“Challenges – Opportunities – Solutions” matrix).

This section describes proposed steps on national, regional and multilateral level aimed to further EATL development.

The main goal of Project Phase III is to identify the measures that will make the EATL overland links operational.

In fact, these links are already functioning accumulating the everyday experience of trade and transportation over the surface routes connecting Asia and Europe. In this way, the task is to generalize this experience and formulate the coordinated measures that will facilitate the further growth of EATL routes utilization.

Table 1 presents the *Challenges-Opportunities- Solutions* matrix for EATL area further development. Main project challenges are put together with the opportunities identified during the SWOT analysis.

The principle solutions indicated in the table are itemized below in the form of the recommendations in the following spheres:

- Transport policy;
- harmonization and facilitation of procedures, institutional measures;
- infrastructure development.

Table 1 - *Challenges-Opportunities- Solutions* matrix for further EATL development

Opportunities	Challenges		
	TRANSPORT POLICY	HARMONIZATION AND FACILITATION OF PROCEDURES, INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES	INFRASTRUCTURE
In long-term perspective – increasing trade volumes between Europe and Asia. Actually developing trade between the EATL countries	Continue the activities within the EATL project, other projects and initiatives implemented by IGOs and NGOs (UN ECE, UN ESCAP, SPECA, OSJD, ECO, CCTP, UIC, IRU, GPST, etc.) with the aim to increase the Euro-Asian land transport links efficiency	Consistent implementation of trade and transit facilitation measures, paperless technologies of transport and border crossing. Movement towards the universal legal regimes and administrative procedures across the Eurasian area based on best international practices	Eliminating bottlenecks and missing links on the potentially most effective overland transit routes and trade routes in the EATL area
Market-oriented economic reforms in certain EATL countries	Analyzing and dissemination of best decisions and models in the sphere of international trade and transport (UN ECE – OSCE Handbook of best practices at border crossings, WCO standards, etc.)	Implementation of best international practices by accession of EATL countries to international agreements and UN conventions in the field of transport and transit and strict implementation of their provisions	Encouraging introduction of public-private –cooperation and other market-oriented and innovative forms of infrastructure projects financing
Increased efforts and progress in regional cooperation and integration. Development of series of regional initiatives and agreements. Further implementation of infrastructure projects in the EATL area	Development of bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation in the field of transport between EATL countries. implementation of integration initiatives aimed at EATL development, such as a project of Merging of Eurasian integration and the Economic Belt of the Silk Road”. Improvement of the monitoring and high-level coordination of regional initiatives, programs and projects	Inter-harmonizing provisions on transport, trade and transit facilitation in the framework of regional and bilateral agreements	Coordinating of infrastructure programs and projects. Developing the “system approach” to infrastructure programs developing the transport and logistic infrastructure in the interests of the entire economy
Growing practical experience in long-haul overland trade, in particular – in block-container train operation	Develop co-operation at the business level together with intergovernmental cooperation	Developing institutions and procedures facilitating the long-haul container trains operation and related services and activities	Advanced development of railway and logistic infrastructure, dry ports, providing effective container transportation
Relative growth of the “time-sensitive” segment of cargo in the Eurasian trade	Encouraging development of the freight-forwarding and high level logistic providers segment (3PL and higher)	Paying special attention to procedures and paperless technologies accelerating trade and transport operations	Paying special attention to infrastructure projects providing time-effective transportation, creation of dry ports

Opportunities	Challenges		
	TRANSPORT POLICY	HARMONIZATION AND FACILITATION OF PROCEDURES, INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES	INFRASTRUCTURE
			network, border crossing points infrastructure modernization
Railway reforms in certain EATL countries. Expected expansion of universal railway legal regimes	Put railway reforms among highest policy priorities. Creation of competitive market of rail transport operations between Europe and Asia	Introduction of best international experience in newly adopted railway legislation	Introduction of effective mechanisms of railway infrastructure development in reform programs

RECOMMENDATIONS

TRANSPORT POLICY

EATL seems to be the most comprehensive of all initiatives aimed at facilitation of trade and transportation across the Eurasian region. Thus it seems reasonable to continue the activities under the EATL “umbrella” in the format that will be found appropriate by the EATL countries

1. Continue the activities within the EATL project in co-ordination with other similarly focused initiatives (UNECE, UNESCAP, SPECA, OSJD, ECO, CCTT, UIC, IRU, GPST etc.) with the aim to increase the Euro-Asian land transport links efficiency:

- implement on the national level the provisions of UN Resolutions 69/213 "The Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation for Sustainable Development" and 70/197 "Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors";
- implement by the Asian EATL countries of Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021);
- participate in the regional and international projects and initiatives implemented by IGOs and NGOs in the area of Euro-Asian Transport links, trade, transport and transit facilitation (UNECE, UNESCAP, SPECA, OSCE, OSJD, ECO, CAREC, CCTT, UIC, IRU, GPST etc.);
- accede to relevant international, regional and subregional conventions and other legal instruments related to transit transport and trade facilitation;
- formulate national transport policies including transit and border crossing provisions with the participation of all relevant stakeholders;
- integrate EATL achievements in national transport plans and programs.

2. Analyzing and dissemination of best decisions and models in the sphere of international trade and transport (UN ECE – OSCE Handbook of best practices at border crossings, WCO standards, etc.)

- carry out studies on transport-logistical competitiveness based on internationally recognized methodologies;
- promote policies helping national firms, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, to participate better in international trade and transport;
- simplify and synchronize visa issuing procedures, introduce long-term multi-entry visas where possible.

3. Development of bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation in the field of transport between EATL countries. Implementation of integration initiatives aimed at EATL development, such as a project of Merging of Eurasian integration and the Economic Belt of the Silk Road”.

Improvement of the monitoring and high-level coordination of regional initiatives, programs and projects

- Include the issues on Euro-Asian transport links, infrastructure, border crossing procedures facilitation into the agenda of bilateral and regional EATL countries cooperation;
- improve the monitoring of infrastructure developments, execution of transport facilitation plans, transport corridors functioning;
- improve collection and dissemination of transport and trade statistics and other relevant data, develop the harmonized approach in trade and transport activities monitoring and forecasting to produce reliable commonly used forecasts;
- collaborate on prompt exchanging trade and transport data between the neighbor countries across the EATL routes;
- promote harmonization of regional policies, in particular – within regional initiatives and programs - so as to strengthen regional synergy, competitiveness and regional value chains;
- support national transport and trade facilitation action plans and committees with participation of all the groups of stakeholders;

4. Develop co-operation at the administrative and business level together with intergovernmental cooperation

- continue and enhance coordination and cooperation of national agencies and bodies responsible for all kinds of border and customs controls and procedures;
- promote involvement of transport business associations in public-private partnership, training and knowledge-exchange projects;
- establish or strengthen national committees on trade and transport facilitation, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders;
- introduce the early-warning systems to inform the countries along transport corridors about the changes in the administrative regimes, charges, infrastructure restrictions, etc.

5. Encouraging development of the freight-forwarding and logistic providers segment (3PL and higher)

- provide legal conditions for market competition development in the transport and logistic sector;
- undertake efforts to build human capacity in the logistic sector (training, educational programs, international knowledge and experience exchange, etc.);
- encourage establishing the associations and other non-governmental structures expressing the interests of market players involved in international trade and transportation.

6. Put railway reforms among highest policy priorities. Creation of competitive market of rail transport operations between Europe and Asia

- create the favorable conditions for independent national and foreign entities to undertake railway international and transit operations between Europe and Asia;
- provide the mechanisms for prompt changing railway tariffs according to the market situation;
- provide necessary market conditions in neighbor segments (e.g., in wagon manufacturing) to avoid lack of equipment and services used by railways for transport operations between Europe and Asia;
- whatever model of the railway reform is used, monopolism in operations should not be in place in the industry.

FACILITATION, PROCEDURES AND INSTITUTIONS

During the crisis times high-scale infrastructure investments seem to be a serious burden for many developing EATL countries and economies in transition. That is why institutional reforms and trade facilitation should be the leading priority in comparison with infrastructure projects

1. Consistent implementation of trade and transit facilitation measures, paperless technologies of transport and border crossing. Movement towards the universal legal regimes and administrative procedures across the Eurasian area based on best international practices

- standardize trade and transport documents;
- encourage shift to electronic documents with the aim of full paperless technologies of transport and transit implementationp;
- implement or scale up trade facilitation initiatives such as single-stop inspections, single windows for documentation, electronic payment, etc.
- avoid fixing certain routes or border crossing points for international trade and traffic;
- avoid discrimination in visa regimes for drivers; offer long-term and multi-entry visas;
- avoid arbitrary derogations or limitations of international agreements concerning trade and transportation;
- use standardized practical tools to identify the obstacles to trade and transport flows, e.g. *the World Bank Trade and Transport Facilitation Assessment: A Practical Toolkit for Country Implementation*

2. Implementation of best international practices by accession of EATL countries to international agreements and UN conventions in the field of transport and transit and strict implementation of their provisions

- accede to the E-CMR Protocol;
- expand of TIR system to the market of road transport to and from China, implement of the electronic TIR carnet (e-TIR);

- implement of best practices at border crossings recommended by UN ECE and OSCE in their Joint Handbook;
 - implement the WCO standards indicated in Handbook on Transit.
3. Inter-harmonizing provisions on transport, trade and transit facilitation in the framework of regional and bilateral agreements
- introduce of best international practices in bilateral and regional cooperation as well as in new-adopted trade and transport national legislation;
 - harmonize procedures in the international road transport, introduce permits-free system of transit road transport;
 - introduce the rule of obligatory “early warning” about the changes in rules, tariffs, and procedures related to international trade and transport;
 - provide special easy control procedures for market players with good reputation
 - limit compulsory convoy or escort by high risk commodities only;
 - implement the best practices in using internationally adopted regimes and procedures like TIR; e-CMR consignment note, etc.;
 - implement legislation allowing the operation of long-and-heavy road vehicles across the main trade corridors and in the hinterland of logistic centers;
 - promote multilateral and regional permit systems for road transport aimed to eliminate quantitative limits and focused on provision of quality and safety of road transport services.
4. Developing institutions and procedures facilitating the long-haul container trains operation and related services and activities
- promote a better business environment so as to assist all the interested parties to organize and operate long-haul container trains;
 - encourage the establishment of container pools across the overland operators;
 - encourage organizing of training programs and inter-railway staff exchange programs in the area of organization and promotion of long-haul container block trains;
 - organize research work analyzing the successful cases and the failures in overland container train operations;
 - introduce the simplified border procedures providing all the necessary conditions for their actual efficiency for market players;
 - analyze the possibility of developing “Terminal services standard minimum” for use by the terminal staff across the EATL corridors - in a form of recommendations or “Best practices manual”.

5. Paying special attention to procedures and paperless technologies accelerating trade and transport operations

- streamline and simplify border crossing procedures and practices and harmonize rules and regulations, including accession to relevant international conventions
- identify non-physical barriers and evaluate their influence according to agreed common benchmarking procedures
- use available customs transit systems (e.g. TIR) to expedite transport and transit operations
- avoid maintaining, seeking or adopting any arrangements establishing quotas or other quantitative restrictions to international transportation
- simplify visa requirements and formalities for personnel involved in international transportation
- remove where possible additional internal checkpoints
- record and analyze the reasons for border-crossing point congestion, queuing and time delays
- develop and implement the system of border-crossing point Performance Indicators to benchmark the current situation and to evaluate the results of investment projects and changes in procedures
- decrease the number of documents necessary for export or import procedures
- introduce optimization of border crossing procedures on the basis of through joint operations and sharing of data

6. Introduction of best international experience in newly adopted railway legislation

- follow the provisions of the Joint declaration expressing willingness to create a common legal regime for rail traffic across Asia and Europe of 2013;
- co-operate in the development of general conditions of transport for Euro-Asian rail transport (GTC EurAsia)
- introduce competition within the railway sector using the most effective international models
- envisage the legal conditions for the access of foreign rail operators to the national network, at least, in container train operations

INFRASTRUCTURE

To date, the EATL transport network has been very nearly formed and proved its efficiency for certain trade lanes and commodities. Numerous initiatives, programmes and projects are undertaken to improve the infrastructure in the EATL region. It seems reasonable to focus the efforts on coordination, standardizing of infrastructure parameters and implementing the most effective “point-focused” projects

1. Eliminating bottlenecks and missing links on the potentially most effective overland transit routes and trade routes in the EATL area

- Focus at identifying and remove obvious physical bottlenecks rather than at high-scale infrastructure projects;
- Road and rail transport should complement each other rather than compete in the Eurasian corridors;
- Logistic centers development in the nodes of the EATL corridors should be envisaged;
- Encourage the development of international logistic hubs;
- Modernise the infrastructure of border crossing points.

2. Encouraging introduction of public-private cooperation and other market-oriented and innovative forms of infrastructure projects financing

- develop the necessary policies and regulatory frameworks to promote private sector involvement in infrastructure development;
- promote enabling environment to attract foreign direct infrastructure investments;
- encourage the PPPs for development of Euro-Asian routes infrastructure.

3. Coordinating of infrastructure programs and projects. Using the “system approach” to infrastructure programs developing the transport and logistic infrastructure in the framework of regional cooperation and unions of economic integration

- encourage creating transport-logistic and industrial clusters in order to fostering knowledge networks and links among companies;
- promote economies of scale for transport systems through intermodal transport development, creation of dry ports, logistic centers, etc.;
- provide development of sea ports coordinated with the development of port hinterland connections and the infrastructural objects located in the hinterland and directly linked to sea ports;
- motivate the developers and operators to co-operate in creation of high-scale multipurpose logistic sites serving domestic, international and transit trade and transportation;
- create logistic centers and dry ports as market-oriented nodes of supply chains improving the competitiveness of the entire EATL system;
- harmonize the axle limits along the main road routes to provide the effective road transportation
- Further improve GIS applications and develop tools to support “smart” decisions in transportation and supply chains

4. Advanced development of railway and logistic infrastructure providing effective container transportation

- encourage development of multi-purpose logistic centers with intermodal terminals
- development of effective reloading capacities for containers and other intermodal units in the gauge-changing points
- promote co-operation of railway and port authorities/operators in order to create effective railway intermodal terminals “on the quay” to ensure fast and cost-effective transshipment of containers
- promote the cross-border cooperation of railway infrastructure administration to provide the harmonized technologies for container trains’ border crossing
- replace the boogie change procedures for container trains to effective container transshipment on railway gauge changing stations.

5. Paying special attention to infrastructure projects providing time-effective transportation, creation of dry ports network, border crossing points infrastructure modernization

- ensure technical and operational interoperability of railway and road systems of neighbor countries;
- develop project in sea ports aimed at improvement of sea-rail interoperability to ensure the synergy between the two modes;
- encourage harmonization of railway technological standards and road axle load limits to facilitate regional connectivity, where feasible;
- implement IT-systems to ensure transparency in border crossing procedures, customs and transit transport rules, regulations, fees and charges;
- upgrade border crossing point equipping them with modern surveillance methods for security (vehicle scanning equipment, etc.), as well as the necessary IT infrastructure and supportive systems;
- develop a Border-Crossing Point Design Guide for border crossing points of different types and scales based on BCP best-practice examples.

6. Introduction of effective mechanisms of railway infrastructure development in reform programs

- establish the independent bodies responsible for infrastructure management and development;
- introduce of adequate infrastructure fees within the railway industry;
- encourage private participation in development and operation of certain infrastructure objects (terminals, railway logistic centers, railway sections built and operated by private companies).
