



## ***Concluding Recommendations of the 14<sup>th</sup> International Capacity-Building Seminar on Trade and Transport Facilitation***

### **TRADE FACILITATION AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF MULTIMODAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND SPECA, USING UNITED NATIONS STANDARDS**

Baku, Azerbaijan, 22-23 May 2023

1. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), working with the Institute of Control Systems at the Ministry of Science and Education of the Azerbaijan Republic, and the Ukrvneshttrans association, organized the fourteenth UNECE “Odessa seminar” on trade and transport facilitation in Baku, Azerbaijan, 22-23 May 2023. Session Two was co-organized with the Permanent Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Commission of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Central Asia (PS IGC TRACECA).
2. The Seminar was part of a series of demand-driven capacity-building events to help governments and the business community in the region digitalize information flows in international supply chains in the Middle Corridor. This process was launched by the [International High-level Conference on Digital Transformation of Information Exchange in Supply Chains Using United Nations Standards](#), held in Baku on 31 Oct. 2022, which recommended to strengthen training for experts in the region on UN/CEFACT standards, and develop implementation pilot projects, notably in the trans-Caspian corridor. The [13<sup>th</sup> International UNECE “Odessa” seminar](#), held online on 22 December 2022, recommended aligning data exchange with the UN/CEFACT Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model and the EU Electronic Freight Transport Information Regulation (eFTI). These recommendations were reinforced by the SPECA [Ministerial Meeting](#) 17 April 2023 which requested “UNECE to develop a Roadmap for digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange along the trans-Caspian transport corridor using relevant United Nations standards, including through realizing a regional pilot project for SPECA participating States”.
3. The major objective of the seminar was to link developers of international (UN) standards for multimodal data and document exchange in the supply chain with practitioners implementing digitalization in the region, notably from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
4. With this objective in mind, the capacity-building seminar focused on four subjects:
  - a. How to implement the [package of UN/CEFACT standards for digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange](#) in a digital corridor, with special attention to drafting a roadmap on for such digitalization,

- b. Advance a pilot implementation project for the CIM/SMGS railway consignment note, led by the PS IGC TRACECA, following an incremental approach to building a multimodal corridor along the international supply chain,
- c. Discuss port community systems as a multimodal information exchange as a hub or platform in building multimodal data exchange in a broader corridor,
- d. Building partnerships with organizations and donors to establish possible support for pilot projects,

and issued the following

### ***Recommendations:***

to the government agencies, business community and international organizations and development partners active in the countries of Central Asia the Caucasus and Eastern Europe:

1. Use the insights and recommendations shared at this seminar in further work on digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange in the supply chains in the countries along the Middle Corridor, notably, in the development and implementation of a Roadmap for this digitalization.
2. Define a desired vision and goals for this digitalization, as well as activities to achieve the desired situation for a digital corridor information exchange. Include in the roadmap further capacity building on the use of the UN semantic standards and Multimodal Reference Data Model (MMT RDM). Use these technology-neutral standards in the creation of various solutions for digitalization.
3. Use the EU Electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Regulation as a best practice example. Consider creating a set of national and other digitalization platforms along the Middle Corridor, which would facilitate electronic data and document exchange and interoperability between different IT systems and solutions.
4. In support of the signature by five railway agencies of a Memorandum of Understanding, led by the PS IC TRACECA, advance a pilot project on the digital transformation of the CIM/SMGS railway consignment note, support the implementation of this pilot project. Consider the use of the relevant UN/CEFACT Recommendations, semantic standards, and Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model, the eFTI and TAF TSI legislation in the EU, as well as support from UNECE, CIT, OSJD and UIC.
5. Increase efforts to include aviation stakeholders (e.g., ICAO, civil aviation authorities) in pilot project and other activities through targeted capacity-building events, with the intention of expanding MMT RDM adoption to distant regions.
6. Call for harmonization between the organizations supporting the application of relevant international legal instruments (such as the Montreal Convention of 1999), standards and best practices, affecting the digital transformation of business processes in the management of multimodal transport. Consider the legal aspects of this digital transformation, such as the integrity of data, legal equality of documents and electronically transferrable records (datasets), authentication methods, such as e-signature, verifiable credentials, QR codes, or others.

7. Start with the development and testing of a prototype electronic railway consignment note with reference to the international standards, exploring in parallel the legal aspects of the digital transformation (e.g., under the pilot project on digital transformation of the CIM/SMGS railway consignment note along selected TRACECA routes).
8. Encourage governments and the business community to support the development and functioning of Port Community Systems as much as possible involving national resources and integration with existing public and private agencies supporting international trade and transport.
9. Connect the relevant Port Community Systems and Port Environments in the Caspian and Black Sea regions to the overall concept of a supply chain exchange of information on the status of cargo information corridor, using the MMT RDM. Extend the IPCSA Network of Trusted Networks (NoTN) with other necessary APIs for cross-border trade in the Caspian, and possibly the Black Sea, region. Include the digitalization of the CIM/SMGS Consignment Note in hinterland rail track & trace APIs.
10. Further develop capacity-building for staff in the relevant agencies and the business community in the countries.
11. Express high appreciation for the accomplished work of CIT, OSJD, UIC, TRACECA, ESCAP and ECE on the digital transformation of the CIM/SMGS consignment note; ICAO on the digitalization in international air cargo transportation, calling for deepening the cooperation in the implementation of the semantic standards and Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model of UN/CEFACT.
12. Enhance partnerships with development partners to roll out practical pilot projects for the digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange using global standards. Raising funds for the practical implementation of the UN/CEFACT standards for digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange in the countries remains a priority.