Council of Ministers

GLOBALISATION: EUROPE-ASIA LINKS
EUROPE-ASIA INTERMODAL TRANSPORT
Follow-up to the Kiev Seminar (27-28 September 2004)

This document will be examined under Item 3.1 "Globalisation: Europe-Asia Links" of the Draft Agenda for the Moscow Council of Ministers.

Ministers are invited to note the Conclusions of the Kiev Seminar and to approve the proposed Action Plan.
A. OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

Given the present and forecasted traffic increases between Eastern and Western Europe, to what extent and under what conditions could intermodal transport play a significant role in dealing with these additional traffic flows? How to promote alternative modes to road transport, given the present difficulties of the European intermodal system?

To answer these questions, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) were invited, by the Minister of Transport of Ukraine to hold a Seminar on “Intermodal Transport between Europe and Asia: Opportunities and Challenges”, that took place in Kiev on 27 and 28 September 2004.

Besides the Minister of Transport of Ukraine also invited the Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics to hold its autumn session immediately after the Seminar, i.e. on 28 and 29 September 2004.

The venue of this Seminar was Kiev, an interface between European and Asian trade flows, which brought together more than 23 countries interested in the improvement of intermodal land transport relations between Europe and Asia.

B. PARTICIPATION

The Seminar was attended by more than 120 participants representing the following ECMT and UNECE member States: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the European Commission (EC).
The following international and national organisations participated: ECMT, UNECE, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Co-ordinating Transport Meeting (CTM) of the CIS, CLECAT, International Union of Combined Road-Rail Transport Companies (UIRR), International Union of Railways (UIC), International Road Transport Union (IRU), International Multimodal Transport Association (IMMTA), Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSZhD), Europlatforms, Steering Committee of Pan-European Transport Corridor III, Steering Committee of Pan-European Transport Corridor VII, TRACECA Programme, World Road Association (PIARC), Association of International Freight Forwarders of Ukraine, Association of Forwarding Companies of Ukraine “Ukrzovnishtrans”, “Belarus shipping company”, “Delta-Lozman” (Ukraine), NESTEAR (France), Plaske (Ukraine), Société Aérospatiale Adour Technologie (France), “Ukrferry” (Ukraine).

C. PROGRAMME

Three successive sessions were organized, devoted to the analysis of the present situation of transport relations and to the opportunities and challenges of intermodal transport in East-West trade:

(a) Development of Intermodal Transport between Europe and Asia;
(b) Intermodality: Significance and Comparative Advantages;
(c) Intermodality: Development and Improvement Perspectives.

D. CONCLUSIONS

At the end of the Seminar, the following conclusions were adopted:

"Representatives of transport authorities of European, Central Asian and Caucasus States, ECMT, UNECE, UNESCAP, EU and other international organisations as well as transport unions and associations and other concerned bodies, which took part in the international Seminar held in Kiev on 27 and 28 September 2004,

Taking into account the importance and timeliness of efforts to develop intermodal transport communications for the sustainable development of international traffic in the European and Asian direction,

Supporting the initiatives of the Member States for acceleration of intermodal transport development, creation of up-to-date transport infrastructure and the introduction of new technologies,

Confirming their adherence to the resolutions of international Conferences adopted before, as well as the provisions of relevant International Transport Conventions and Treaties,
Acknowledging the efforts of ECMT, UNECE, UNESCAP and the EU TRACECA Programme for the development of European and Asian transport links directed to a consistent, coordinated and harmonious development of the transport infrastructure on the Continent,

Welcoming the initiative taken by ECMT and UNECE to work in partnership towards the development of intermodal transport and logistics,

Having discussed the prospects of intermodal transport and ways for improving its organization,

Have considered that the main lines of further joint activities for the creation of effective intermodal land transport links between Europe and Asia should be as follows:

• combining efforts in order to increase the efficiency of measures taken to raise the volumes of intermodal transport through the development of technical and technological capacities of transport infrastructures of the Member States,
• increase in the coordination of activities of transport, Customs and border authorities of the Member States for simplification of border crossing procedures for freight transportation using intermodal transport,
• removal of physical and non-physical obstacles that impede passing of traffic between the countries of the European and Asian region,
• enlargement of the network of intermodal transport by faster accession of the countries of Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus to the AGTC Agreement and its Protocol on combined transport on inland waterways,
• development and implementation of joint investment projects and ensuring their financing,
• acceleration of freight traffic by rail in gauge interchange stations,
• creation of a network of logistics centers and information support for freight transport,
• implementation of harmonized tariff and price policies,
• development of rail ferry lines in the region of the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov and the Caspian Sea and improved use of the inland waterways for intermodal transport,
• increased use of rail transit capacities for intermodal freight transport for passage from China to Europe via Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Russian Federation, Belarus, the Caucasus States, Ukraine and Turkey,
• support to the United Nations Development Account Project on capacity building for developing, in particular, Euro-Asian transport linkages, jointly carried out by the UNECE and UNESCAP,
• harmonisation of the regulatory and legal frameworks in the field of transport of the Member States on the basis of international agreements, ECMT resolutions, UNECE Conventions and the legislation and principles of EU transport policy.
Ask the International Organisations involved to follow-up and deal concretely with the issues and problems above and to make available all the information provided during the Seminar to a wide audience.

Express their confidence that the results of the international Seminar will contribute to a better coordination of activities for further development of intermodal transport that can serve the dynamically developing trade and economic relations between the States of Europe, the Near and Middle East, Asia and other territories and increases the effectiveness of the Euro-Asian transport system as a whole.

E. LESSONS

Reports and discussions held during the Seminar brought to the fore a certain number of specific considerations to be dealt as a priority when promoting intermodality between the European and Asian continents:

1. Effective inter-institutional cooperation is a prerequisite for any further development of such interregional exchanges. Having said that, their diversity and frequency require increased co-ordination between actors at both national and inter-governmental levels. In this respect, the various declarations already available following the three International Conferences on Europe-Asia Transport held in St Petersburg in 1998, 2000 and 2003, should be taken into consideration as should the report on the 2nd meeting of the UNECE-UNESCAP Expert Group on the Development on Europe-Asian Transport Linkages, held on 3 to 5 November 2004 in Odessa.

2. The main weakness identified for an effective development of transport linkages between Europe and Asia are the persistent problems at border crossings. Facilitation of border crossing procedures, particularly in rail transport, is therefore of utmost importance.

3. As far as land linkages between Europe and Asia are concerned, the weak rail services should also be stressed, but in this respect, and contrary to what has been underlined in the ECMT Consolidated Resolution, it is less the quality of rail services which must be considered, than the interoperability of rail networks, and first and foremost the main freight routes, to be achieved.

4. Among the modes, waterways have some importance as far as North-South relations between Europe and Asia are concerned, as well as short sea shipping for the Mediterranean–Black Sea linkages, but rail transport should be further developed in East-West linkages.
F. FOLLOW-UP

The considerations developed above show that cooperation between the various international institutions concerned with the development of land transport between Europe and Asia, should be further enhanced and could be guided by a framework action plan, which could be as follows:

1. Identify the main lines where action is needed as a matter of priority, taking into account:
   - The need to consider consistency between international agreements (AGTC, AGC…), the reference documents used by the infrastructure managers grouped in the EIM and the TERFN networks;
   - Analysis of the lines identified in the report by the group of UNECE-UNESCAP experts which met in Odessa in November 2004 and those contained in the report by the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport in 2004 (TRANS/SC2/2004/3);
   - Progress on the projected pan-European transport corridors.
2. Give priority to facilitating border crossings, all components and all modes combined, but with the focus on rail transport in particular.
3. Where the railways are concerned:
   - give priority to gauge interchange points and,
   - so as to have not only a coherent investment programme but also an appropriate logistical approach,
   - make pertinent choices concerning interface points between modes - transshipment platforms;
   - improve the interface between sea ports, railways and inland waterways.
4. Define a simplified legal framework so as to avoid any duplication and cover operators from one end to the other of the transport chain thus formed and, with regard to facilitating border crossings, draw up simplified administrative and customs procedures so as to improve the efficiency of the transport chain.
5. Develop new information and communication technologies, within a common framework, so as to facilitate trade and make it easier to track freight flows.
At the Ministerial Meeting in Moscow on 24 and 25 May 2005, Ministers are asked to:

- **Note** the conclusions of the Kiev Seminar, as contained under item D of this document, underlining the close co-operation built up in this respect both by the ECMT and the UN Regional Commissions concerned (UNECE and UNESCAP);

- **Mandate** the Deputies to see to the implementation of the measures required to achieve the objectives referred to under item E above;

- **Approve** the Action Plan proposed under item F as a follow-up to the Kiev Seminar;

- To this end, **entrust the Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics** with responsibility for co-ordination and for providing countries which so wish with assistance in this area, and mandate it to report on progress made with respect to any additional recommendations.