ECMT/UNECE SEMINAR ON INTERMODAL TRANSPORT BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES HOSTED BY THE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT OF UKRAINE

SPEECH

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The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of ECMT or those of its Member Countries.
Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure and a privilege for me to be here in this beautiful town of Kiev. It is my sincere hope that the Seminar, in the view of our common future, will produce fruitful outcomes for our countries and in particular for the transporters.

Transport sector bears a particularly important role in the recently emerged economic environment resulting from the global political changes. As it is well known, the main objective of transport activities should be the establishment of the door-to-door intermodal chains. Because new international trends in industry, distribution and consumption, such as just-in-time techniques and stockless economy, require a rapid and effective offer of transport services. So, the punctuality becomes the strategic factor as never been before.

Intermodal transport helps to preserve the economic interests of users by integrating and making optimum use of the resources and assets offered by each transport mode. Intermodality has numerous benefits such as reduction of infrastructure costs, reduction of road traffic, better use of existing capacity and protection of the environment.

Although intermodal transport still represents a small portion of goods transport – that is to say between 2 and 4% -- it is increasing rapidly, with an average growth of 10%. In a few European corridors, intermodal transport can even reach a market share of 30%.

In fact, one of the main priorities in the White Paper of the EU Commission on “European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide” is to improve intermodality from financial point of view as well as technical conditions.

We, in Turkey, attribute a great importance to European policies and approaches in this field. Policies put forward in the White Paper constitute an important guideline for us, because we share the similar problems with the EU primarily resulting from unequal development of the modes of transport. Our main goal is to establish a new balance among modes of transport. We, therefore, aim to set our future policies in this framework.

In parallel to this, it is also our priority objective to increase the share of the transport modes other than road transport. We acknowledge that improving intermodality is an instrument to achieve the same objective. To this end, we have included in the Transport Master Plan which is in progress the notion that intermodal transport should be promoted.

Honourable Chairman, Distinguished Participants,

At this point, I would like to give a brief account of some of our activities which, I believe, will stimulate the possibilities of regional cooperation as regards intermodality.

It is important to know that Turkey’s geographical position offers tremendous multimodal transport opportunities on the basis of transport requirements on the Europe-Asia axis. Transport corridors, which provide the flow of goods, passengers and energy, passing through Turkey and connecting Europe to the Caspian region, constitute the Eurasian transport backbone. Moreover, Turkey undertakes an important role and provides rich opportunities for the southeast connections of Europe.
Goods arriving from Europe via railways will uninterruptedly reach the Middle East and the Caucasus transit through Turkey in a couple of year’s time. In order to provide this, the Istanbul Bosphorus Tube Crossing Project has been initiated. Through the project, railway tracks in both sides of the Bosphorus will be connected to each other through a railway tunnel under the Bosphorus. Consequently, the rail system between Europe and Asia will be connected and integrated with Trans European Railway Network. It will be complemented by the Ankara-Istanbul speed train project which is planned to be complete at the end of 2005.

Furthermore, the rail and road connections between the Mediterranean and Black Sea ports in Turkey serve the traffic flow through North-South axis. There is a railway connection between ports on the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. This connection provide the most economic choice for transport of goods originating from the Black Sea Basin towards India and Far East via Red Sea through Suez Channel and vice versa.

As for intermodal applications, Ro-Ro links in the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Region and sea-rail-road container transports should particularly be mentioned. Regular Ro-Ro services are available between our main ports and ports of countries in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

All the cooperation issues and projects I have mentioned provide opportunities for the development of intermodal transport network in our region. It is my belief that the main concern of our countries in the region should be the construction of a cheap, environmentally friendly, uninterrupted and sustainable transport chain.

I further believe that we, as the governments of this continent, have to create a synergy by combining our efforts and powers. In addition, we have to mobilize the energy and dynamism of the private sector transporters by opening their ways. It is a clear fact that any obstacle in front of the transport sector is in fact an obstacle in front of trade and the economy.

Dear Participants,

Please allow me to conclude by repeating my hope of success of this Seminar. I would also like to congratulate and thank our hosts for the excellent organisation of the Seminar.

Thank you.