

**MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CORRIDOR VIII**

Asia Transcontinental Links

Bourgas (Bulgaria), 1-3 September 1997

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Meeting of the Ministers of Transport for the Development of
the Corridor VIII - Asia Transcontinental Link

1-3 September 1997
The Republic of Bulgaria, Bourgas

Preamble

The Minister of Public Works and Transport of the Republic of Albania, H.E. Gaqo Apostoli,

The Minister of Transport of the Republic of Bulgaria, H.E. Wilhelm Kraus,

The Minister of Transport and Communications with the Macedonian Government,
H.E. Abdulmenaf Bedzeti,

The Minister of Transport of Georgia, H.E. Merab Adeishvili,

The Minister of Transport of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Necdet Menzir,

The Minister of Road Transport of Turkmenistan, H.E. Senagouli Rakhmanov,

The Vice-President of the State Corporation "Uzavtotrans" of the Republic of Uzbekistan,
Mr Validjan Ismailov,

The Head of Department of Transport and Communications with the Ministry of Economy of the Republic
of Azerbaidjan, Mr Ikram Sadujhov,

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Republic of
Bulgaria, H.E. Touletai Souleimenov,

are hereinafter referred to as the Parties.

The meeting was also attended by:

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the USA to Bulgaria, H.E. Avis Bohlen,
Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Republic of Greece, Mr Dimitrius Tziras,
Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Italian Republic, Mr Vincenzo Celeste,
Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Commission to Bulgaria, Mr Anthony Kirk.

The Parties

wishing to implement the development of the transcontinental link from Central Asia to Europe, hereinafter referred to as the Transcontinental Link,

wishing to undertake all possible measures for the implementation of transport along the Transcontinental Link and namely to reduce tariffs and harmonize procedures, to improve services, safety and infrastructure,

considering the approach of the European Commission (EC), as well as the Asghabat Declaration on the development of transport and communications infrastructure and network of transnational pipelines in the ECO region of 13-14 May 1997, to the constant increase of the importance of transport links between Europe and Asia and their use,

recognizing the achievements of the Third Pan-European Transport Conference and other conferences in developing co-operation in the field of transport,

expressing their willingness to facilitate the adoption and implementation of the norms and policies based on common policies, multilateral agreements and conventions,

considering the Agreement signed by Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria and Kyrgyzstan on co-operation in the field of transit traffic regulation and the importance attached to further widening of its scope by covering road, railway, air and water transport,

considering the necessity to develop co-operation in the Black Sea Basin Pan-European Transport Area (PETRA),

convinced that reduction of time for border and customs checkpoints and border customs procedures will improve the transportation process,

convinced that for the realisation of the Transcontinental Link it is necessary to apply a multimodal approach, including road, railway, air and water transportation, sea and river ports and airports of international significance,

convinced that it is necessary to use all transport modes in implementing and linking the transport corridors,

convinced that traffic safety, the abolishment of crime, drug trafficking and smuggling are important prerequisites to the development of transport links,

convinced that the protection of the environment is one of the important tasks of transport,

convinced of the need to make the Transcontinental Link popular and to explain to the public the necessity of its establishment,

recognising the activities of all organisations and initiatives related to the implementation of the Transcontinental Link,

welcoming all the events so far conducted within the scope of the objectives set forth in this Memorandum of Understanding by the Parties and the international organisations,

welcoming the achievements in the development of transport infrastructure in the Republic of Turkey and in the neighbouring EU Member States, the Italian Republic and the Republic of Greece,

welcoming the interest and the assistance of the European Union and the United States of America in the realisation of the Transcontinental Link between Europe and Asia,

agreed on the text of the following Memorandum of Understanding as a first step towards the achievement of its overall aim:

Article 1: Aim

The aim of this Memorandum of Understanding is to promote the development of the main and ancillary infrastructure along the Transcontinental Link, as defined in Article 2, with the priority given to the Black Sea Transport Area as defined in Helsinki, including sea and land connections. The development of the Transcontinental Link includes maintenance, upgrading and new construction of main and ancillary infrastructure, as well as establishment of mutually acceptable forms of operation where appropriate.

The aim is to create conditions for bilateral and multilateral co-ordination of the activities as regards border and other types of control, the visa regime, adaptation of documents, services, studies and other activities in order to facilitate and improve the efficiency of traffic flows.

In addition to that the co-operation aims to define the necessary steps for the most efficient use of public and private funds as well as advanced technology and know-how.

Article 2: Definition of the Transcontinental Link

The Transcontinental Link is defined as follows: a transport infrastructure system, institutional and administrative activities for traffic stimulation and performance in the Europe-Asia direction and vice-versa.

The Transcontinental Link as a system is composed of road and railway infrastructure, ports and airports, combined transport infrastructure, including ancillary infrastructure, such as access roads, border crossings, all services, freight and passenger terminals, warehouses and corridor traffic management installations, as well as their compatibility with the transport infrastructure for all transport modes along this destination.

Article 3: Information Exchange

The Parties will provide each other with information on the development, use and operation of transport systems along the Transcontinental Link on a bilateral and multilateral basis, in accordance with their domestic legislation. This will include detailed data about the state of the infrastructure, the traffic flows, waiting time at the borders, specific services, document processing, upgrading, investments, measures planned or undertaken to organise the protection of the environment and measures envisaged for the development of the corridors and their interconnection.

Article 4: Practical Steps

The Parties will conduct co-ordinated activities, necessary for the implementation of this Memorandum of Understanding. Implementation will be bilateral and multilateral as regards the criteria, management and investment activities and other aspects related to the establishment of the Transcontinental Link. Special attention will be paid to:

- the formulation of priorities;
- the intensification of common efforts for taking concrete steps in order to further develop the implementation of the projects along Corridor VIII: Durres - Tirana - Skopje - Sofia - Bourgas - Varna;
- the acceleration of the future extension of the existing multilateral Agreement between Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Bulgaria and Kyrgyzstan on co-operation in the field of transit traffic regulation by multilateral agreements on international transport in the region;
- the state of the existing infrastructure along the Transcontinental Link;
- completing the setting up, modernisation and upgrading of all connections between Varna - Bourgas, Poti - Batumi and Baku - Turkmenbashi as a basis for the development of the Europe - Asia connection across the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea;
- the development of Pan-European Corridor X, branch C: Nish - Sofia - Dimitrovgrad - Istanbul and its land link to the TRACECA route;
- the creation of favourable conditions for the attraction, facilitation and speeding up of traffic flows along the Transcontinental Link;
- the conditions necessary for private capital attraction for the development and operation of the Transcontinental Link;
- ensuring safety along the Transcontinental Link;
- organisational, legal, economic and social matters.

Article 5: Border Crossings and Customs Co-operation

Taking into account the fact that waiting time at border crossings could lessen the advantages of any transport infrastructure improvements, the Parties agree to stimulate and promote the future development and upgrading of border checkpoints on a bilateral and multilateral basis. Co-operation in customs services will minimize waiting time and will facilitate transit conditions. All activities will be co-ordinated with the competent authorities. The Parties will stimulate and support joint action on the necessary infrastructure and organisational activities in accordance with international commitments.

Article 6: Framework for Providing of Funding

The Parties intend to offer maximum involvement to investors and to the international financial institutions in the development and operation of the Transcontinental Link. Co-ordinated dialogue will start as early as the stage of planning and studies implementation. Information about the activities planned will be published in all co-operation phases under this Memorandum.

The Parties will establish bilateral relations to carry out all or some of the activities needed to achieve the objectives of this Memorandum of Understanding.

Article 7: Co-ordination

Implementation of the activities under this Memorandum will be carried out by representatives of the Parties. Each Party will authorise one representative and one deputy representative by notification to the Depositor. Sessions will be held at least once a year. The mandate and the rules of procedure of the group will be determined in due course. Representatives of the private sector and of the international financial institutions will be invited to the sessions when appropriate.

The Ministers of Transport of the participating states will discuss the implementation stage of activities under this Memorandum; they will regularly meet upon mutual agreement and sessions will be chaired by the host Party.

Article 8: Memorandum Implementation

The information exchanged and the studies carried out by the Parties will serve as a basis for defining the priorities, budgets and schedules of the relevant activities necessary for the development of the Transcontinental Link, the rules of its use and operation.

The Parties will agree on the appropriate project development stages.

Article 9: Accession

The Parties declare that this Memorandum is open for accession to every country, whose transport network is interoperable with the transport networks of the Parties, upon the consent of all states, signatories to this Memorandum

The accession documents will be submitted to the Depositor of this Memorandum.

Done on 2 September 1997 in Bourgas in two equally binding original copies, one in the English language and the other in the Russian language, that will be kept with the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria in its capacity of Depositor. The Depositor will submit certified copies of the Memorandum to each of the Parties.

The Minister of Public Works and Transport of the
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The Minister of Transport of the
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with the Macedonian Government H.E. Abdulmenaf Bedzeti:

The Minister of Transport of Georgia
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