

Ministerial Meeting

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will host a Ministerial Meeting for Transport Ministers from countries in the Euro-Asian region.

The meeting takes place on the first day of the 70th annual session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC).

When and Where

19 February 2008 at 10.00 A.M.
in Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Issues to be tackled

- Key Euro-Asian inland transport routes and priority projects
- Implementation plans for priority projects and the progress made so far
- Border crossing and transit issues

Expected Results

Ministers are expected to confirm their support for the UNECE-UNESCAP EATL project and its continuation by endorsing the identified Euro-Asian routes and their priority development as well as the creation of a mechanism ensuring efficient coordination and monitoring of project related activities.

A joint document on the future development of Euro-Asian transport links will be approved by participating Ministers.

Participation

- Transport Ministers from countries in the Euro-Asian region
- Ministers and /or high-level officials from other interested UNECE-UNESCAP countries
- High-Level officials of the United Nations and the European Commission
- International Organizations

Inland Transport Committee

The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) is UNECE's highest political body in the field of transport. For the last 60 years the ITC, together with its subsidiary bodies, has provided a pan-European intergovernmental forum where UNECE Member countries negotiate the international legal instruments on inland transport. These legal instruments are considered indispensable for developing efficient, integrated, safe and sustainable pan-European transport systems.

For more information about the ITC, please visit:
www.unece.org/trans

Contact Information

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Transport Division

Tel: + 41 (0) 22 917 3389

Fax: +41 (0) 22 917 0039

Email: infotransport@unece.org

Palais des Nations
8-14 Avenue de la Paix
CH-1211 Geneva 10

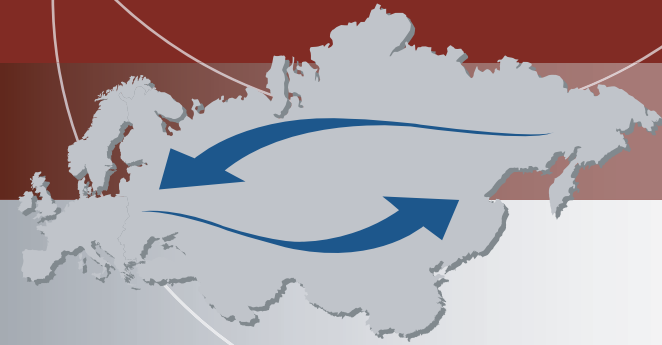
For more information about the event, please visit:
www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/index.html



Economic Commission for Europe

70th Session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee Euro-Asian Transport Links Ministerial Meeting

19-21 February 2008 | Geneva, Switzerland



Transport Ministers from countries in the Euro-Asian region will meet in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on 19 February 2008, to discuss the development of efficient, safe and secure Euro-Asian transport links.

The Euro-Asian Transport Links Project

About the project

The Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) project is a joint undertaking between the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). In close cooperation with designated national focal points from 18 countries in the Euro-Asian region, the EATL project has identified main Euro-Asian road and rail routes for priority development and cooperation.

An Expert Group established under the project proved to be a good cooperation mechanism for the coordinated development of coherent Euro-Asian inland transport links. Results of this work are available in the EATL Study* produced jointly by UNECE and UNESCAP.

This UNECE-UNESCAP endeavor is part of a wider United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project on capacity building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages, implemented by the five United Nations Regional Commissions. The aim is to assist Member States in strengthening their national capacities to develop interregional transport linkages and to promote interregional cooperation to facilitate trade and tourism.

Phase I of the project was carried out from 2002 to 2007. UNECE and UNESCAP have elaborated a joint proposal for a Phase II to be implemented during a four-year period from 2008 to 2012.

*To download the study, please go to:
<www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/in_house_study.pdf>

The Issue

Trade and transport between Asia and Europe continues to rise sharply every year. So far, Euro-Asian traffic has mainly used maritime routes as they were deemed more reliable and competitive than land routes.

However, in light of newly liberalized economies, growing trade and increasing congestion in major Asian and European ports, governments and international organizations in the Euro-Asian region now consider that inland transport links can offer additional transport options to existing and future trade flows between Europe and Asia, as well as facilitate participation of national economies in the global economy. Better links from ports to inland destinations are also needed to sustain further projected growth in merchandise trade.

Road, rail and inland waterways can provide time and cost effective transport between the two continents. It will not only relieve port congestion, but also contribute to the economic development of countries along the Euro-Asian transport links, including landlocked developing countries.

Participating countries include Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The Government of Mongolia has expressed interest in joining the Euro-Asian project.

Achievements

Selection of main Euro-Asian rail, road and inland water routes, transshipment points & ports

Geographic Information System (GIS) database of the Euro-Asian transport links (EATL) identified

Technical assessment of EATL routes and their performance

Prioritization of 230 infrastructure investment projects with agreed methodology

Identification and preliminary analysis of non-physical obstacles

Organization of 4 expert group meetings and 6 national capacity-building workshops

Remaining Challenges

Setting up a coordination and monitoring mechanism

Further assessment and prioritization of planned infrastructure investments

Enriching the extant GIS database with traffic density estimates

Improving the data available on transit and border-crossing operations

Harmonizing transport legislation and administrative procedures

Providing effective technical assistance to landlocked countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia