

*Economic Commission for Europe
Workshop on Transport Infrastructure Corridors along Europe and Asia
in the framework the 30th Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics
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Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me first to sincerely thank the UNECE for inviting our Organization to this Workshop, a major event which addresses a highly important issue for the European and Asian States.

This is fact a new contribution of the UNECE, over its 70 years of existence that made the significant difference to the European and Asian Continents by facilitating trade and transportation and thus contributing to the prosperity and welfare of their peoples.

It is an honor and privilege for me to address this distinguished audience and to represent an Organization, that of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, which is the oldest regional entity promoting economic cooperation - in the broadest sense of the term - among its 12 Member States and beyond.

Established 25 years ago with the purpose to promote a lasting and closer cooperation among the States in the BSEC Region, our organization has endeavoured over the years to enhance the cooperation among its Member States.

The States of the region made progress in shaping a common vision and in building up a common agenda, in order that the regional cooperation in the BSEC framework really serve their common interests.

I refer to the *BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership*, adopted by the Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, subsequently endorsed by the BSEC Summit, held in Istanbul on 26 June 2012.

The *Economic Agenda* sets as one of its goals the **establishment of an efficient transport network** among our Member States.

To attain this goal, it mentions on the first place “promoting sustainable transport systems which meet the economic, social and environmental needs of the people of the Black Sea Region, in order to reduce regional disparities and

to link the BSEC Region's transport infrastructure to European and Asian Networks".

Most of provisions of the goal are in the active phase of their implementation and the dynamics of its work in the field transport cooperation is quite high.

For the participants in this Workshop, there is no need to underline that transportation is one of the sectors to which BSEC attaches particular importance.

After all, "Economic Cooperation" means exchange of goods and services, visits of persons, and, in general, greater connectivity. So, the sector of transports is, naturally and logically, attracting a great part of our interest.

In fact, since its inception, BSEC paid special attention to cooperation in transport, focusing on how to utilize effectively the intra-regional capacity and the growing transit potential of the Black Sea Region.

At the same time, I am pleased to note that since 1996 we closely cooperate with the UNECE on trade and transport facilitation.

On 2 July 2001 this cooperation was given a sound basis when heads of the Secretariats of our organizations signed the Cooperation Agreement between UNECE and BSEC.

Given the fact that the region covered by BSEC Member States is straddling the two continents - Asia and Europe - between which the aim of the Euro-Asian linkages, promoted by the UNECE, is to establish better, faster and easier linkage corridors, I stress that none of these corridors, including modern-day Silk Road, can avoid traversing the BSEC Region.

In this context, whatever progress BSEC was able to achieve in planning and implementing infrastructure projects that made the transport of goods and people easier and faster, these accomplishments were directly favoring the objectives of UNECE.

Our Organization has developed several important regional projects, mutually complementary, which are of major significance for the Black Sea Region, as well as for the Euro-Asian Region.

The BSEC road infrastructure project called "the Black Sea Ring Highway" refers to coordinated efforts of our Member States for upgrading to high standards of almost 7,5 thousand km of highway around the Black Sea, connecting its main ports and facilitating the transport of goods, containers and other freights to and from these ports.

Another major project called “Motorways of the Sea” refers to coordinated efforts for upgrading of port-infrastructure, implementation of good practices, increased compatibility and interconnectivity of traffic control systems, intermodality of transports, safeguarding free and fair competition in international shipping. We have 43 ports, not only in the Black Sea, but also in the Adriatic, the Mediterranean and the Aegean which have expressed interest in participating in this project.

Our constant efforts are aimed at diminishing red tape and bureaucracy when it comes to moving goods and people across land or sea borders, by harmonizing and simplifying procedures, formalities and the necessary documentation.

We might build the best of highways, yet if we do not streamline the above bottlenecks, we will continuously lose time, profit and patience.

In this regard, the UNECE experience and expertise have been always helpful in the BSEC bodies on trade and transport facilitation, development of road and maritime infrastructure, development of intermodal transportation.

I would mention that the Steering Committee on Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods has permanently on its agenda the issue of accession of the BSEC Member States to 42 UNECE agreements and conventions in the field of transport.

With regard to the development of public-private partnerships with professional international associations I am very pleased to inform you about the growing partnership of BSEC with IRU and BSEC Union of Road Transport Associations (BSEC-URTA) which is based on concrete joint projects and actions with regard to road transport.

In all activities we rely on the BSEC fruitful cooperation with UNECE, UNDP, OSCE, CEI, TRACECA, Danube Commission, IRU, IRF, BSEC-URTA, BASPA and other international organizations.

The Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States repeatedly underlined the importance of such cooperation and encouraged us to comprehensively develop and deepen it.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is our hope that BSEC can play a greater role in promoting the aims and objectives of the UNECE and for that reason we will be carefully studying the results and conclusions to which participants in this Workshop will arrive, so

that we can better achieve complementarity and synergy on the development of transportation in general, and the Euro-Asian Transport linkages, in particular.

We are fully aware of the role that BSEC assumed and of the responsibilities this role entails. For sure, we can be even more effective, for the benefit of all concerned.

I thank you for your attention.