

CONCEPT NOTE & DRAFT PROGRAMME

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

“Strengthening security and inter-operability along Euro-Asian inland transport corridors”

Tbilisi, 12-13 December 2019

BACKGROUND

The envisaged increase of Euro-Asian inland transport requires the development of a set of operational and secure multimodal international transit transport corridors. The facilities and services that compose a multimodal transit transport corridor include not only roads, railways, waterways but also border crossing/ customs clearance points, dry ports, seaports, logistics centres, freight villages and intermodal facilities. In order to be effective and efficient, transit transport corridors need not only to have efficient and well-maintained transport infrastructure, they also require effective implementation of agreed legal frameworks, transit rules and policies on transport and trade facilitation. Addressing the numerous crime and security challenges faced by inland transport systems including theft of cargo and vehicles, attacks on train and truck drivers, trafficking in human beings, narcotics, SALWs, and other illegal substances as well as illicit trade, smuggling and contraband inland transport systems requires the establishment of a structured mechanism for the exchange of information on threats and risks on specific corridors (or freight routes) and the design of harmonized (transport route specific) security rules and regulations.

For almost two decades the UNECE has been providing support for the development and operationalisation of inland transport connections between Europe and Asia through the implementation of its transport infrastructure flagship initiative, the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) project, Phase I (2002–2007), Phase II (2008–2012) and Phase III (2013–2017). From Phase II onwards, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been a loyal partner in this endeavour. Phase III gathered 38 countries¹ from Europe and Asia, including not only many EU member States but also landlocked developing countries in Central Asia and the South Caucasus as well as countries in Asia such as Afghanistan, China, Mongolia and Pakistan. The

¹ The number of member States participating in the project has been increasing over the years. Participating countries in Phase III included: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, China, Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Mongolia, Pakistan, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Spain, Tajikistan, the Republic of North Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan.

EATL Phase III report, officially launched at the 81st session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (February 2019), suggests that while the Euro-Asian corridors are operational, they would benefit from further operationalization efforts to make them truly competitive for the inter-continental transport of high-value and time sensitive cargo. At the same time the report also noted that several remaining obstacles would need to be tackled, including infrastructural gaps as well as administrative/ regulatory challenges in order to make the corridors meet the requirements of modern supply chains. The report emphasises that this is only possible through collective corridor-based action, with participation by all countries concerned, ultimately, the performance of a transport corridor is only as strong as its weakest link.

Based on the findings of the **EATL Phase III report** and on recent discussions held in the framework of the **2019 UNECE Inland Transport Security Discussion Forum** co-organized by OSCE and UNECE (Geneva, 3-4 September) to which this workshop is an immediate follow-up, two dimensions of Euro-Asian inland transport corridor operationalisation were identified:

➤ **Euro-Asian transport inter-operability and infrastructure challenges:**

- Missing road & railway and inter-modal/transshipment infrastructure links on some EATL segments, outdated border crossing infrastructure and equipment in other places.
- Lack of harmonized operating and technical inter-operability standards for railway infrastructure & rolling stock (railway gauge, signalling and radio systems, train length and weight standards, block train intervals etc.) require further improvement. Other technical, administrative, linguistic and cultural barriers remain.
- Cumbersome border crossing, customs and transit procedures, lack of access to and implementation of UN legal instruments. Missing unified railway regimes along EATL railway routes – absence of one contract of carriage, one liability and one consignment note decreases reliability of the services.
- Poor ICT connectivity and ICT interoperability on EATL corridors as a result insufficient attention paid to impact of intelligent transport systems, digitalization of transport documents, computerization of Border Crossing Points, satellite track and trace services, introduction of autonomous vehicles on EATL routes efficiency.

➤ **Euro-Asian inland transport security challenges:**

- Limited awareness of the risks posed by increasingly digitalised transport networks with a wide range of data flowing across systems, tracking and monitoring both digital and physical networks across different inland transport modes.
- Limited awareness of the multiple security benefits of coordinated border management, cross-border and cross-sectoral cooperation and exchange of preliminary customs information and cargo risk profiles at the bilateral, regional and/or international levels.
- Insufficient in-depth knowledge of the importance of new technologies e.g. corridor-based tracking & tracing (such as in the railway sector) and the use of AI/block chain and innovative ICT applications to more effectively secure supply chains and manage inland freight routes.
- Unavailability of structured mechanisms for the exchange of information on threats and risks on specific corridors (or freight routes) and for engaging multiple stakeholders from different

disciplinary backgrounds including law enforcement, customs and border management agencies but also transport authorities and private sector operators.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The workshop will bring together government officials engaged in transport management and inland transport security policy development. Private sector practitioners determining and managing freight flows as well as freight security risks and threats, as well as independent corridor management experts, researchers and academia will be invited too. Participation is open to experts from across the entire OSCE-UNECE region and beyond.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

The workshop is being held as part of a series of events organised jointly by the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division and the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA)/ OSCE Secretariat. It is in full accordance with the OCEEA's and UNECE's joint efforts aimed at promoting connectivity by assisting their respective memberships with the development of secure and facilitated Euro-Asian transport and trade operations.

The purpose of the workshop is to provide a platform for the exchange of information on recurrent and emerging challenges in inland transport security and on different options and best practices to address the identified risks and threats. The workshop will shed light on the wide array of regionally and internationally accepted and harmonized corridor operationalisation standards, tools and instruments at the disposal of Governments interested in strengthening the security of their inland transport systems while at the same time allowing for efficient international, multi-modal transport operations and the smooth processing of legitimate freight flows. The workshop findings will pave the ground for future joint OSCE-UNECE activities in this area.

THEMATIC SESSIONS

12 December 2019 (10:00 – 17:00)

➤ **Session I – Setting the scene: How to further operationalise Euro-Asian transport corridors?**

Selected topics:

- Current state of affairs in Euro-Asian inland transport – defining the security and inter-operability challenges as well as ways in addressing them
- Establishing effective laws, policies, regulations and administrative procedures to increase attractiveness of Euro-Asian transport
- Establishing interoperability priorities, shared priorities, work plans and key performance indicators among different countries along specific transport corridors.

➤ **Session II – Security aspects of Euro-Asian transport operationalisation**

Selected topics:

- At the border measures to strengthen security of Euro-Asian cargo flows: establishment of customs risk management systems, secure and efficient transit systems, preliminary exchange of customs and traveller's data, or shared mechanisms for risk management, selectivity and profiling.
- Smart use of technology and development of Intelligent Transport Systems (e.g. corridor-based tracking & tracing).
- Development of cyber threat mitigation measures at national and international levels.
- AI/block chain and use of ICT applications to more effectively secure supply chains.
- Recommendations for further work of OSCE and UNECE in this field.

13 December 2019 (09:00 -13:30)

➤ **Session III – Addressing Euro-Asian transport inter-operability challenges**

Selected topics:

- How administrative bottlenecks can be solved through corridor specific cross-country regulatory coordination and harmonization efforts
- Benefits of introducing a unified railway regulatory regime, and a harmonized road transport consignment note such as CMR/ eCMR
- The use of the TIR carnet for multi-modal transport operations along Euro-Asian corridors
- How inter-operability challenges can be addressed through the development of corridor specific work plans, regionally agreed key performance indicators, pooling of rolling stock, railway wagons, containerised transport units etc.
- Recommendations for further work of OSCE and UNECE in this field

➤ **Session IV – The way forward – An institutionalised approach towards Euro-Asian transport routes management**

- Establishing structured multi-country coordination mechanisms for the efficient management of Euro-Asian inland transport systems, incl. through developing appropriate corridor specific interoperability priorities, operational targets and work plans
- Seeking synergies among interests of different stakeholders along a corridor (shippers, transporters, customs authorities, road authorities, security services, health authorities etc.).
- Establishing structured mechanisms for the exchange of information on threats and risks along supply chains (i.e. transport corridor based), involving multiple stakeholders such as law enforcement, customs and border management agencies but also transport authorities and private sector operators
- Recommendations for further work of OSCE and UNECE in this field
