
Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)

17th Session
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Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Operation of road and rail networks in the SPECA region and
identification of major bottlenecks**

(Item 4.4 of the Agenda)

Note by UNECE/UNESCAP

1. The SPECA road and rail networks have been adopted by SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing at its 11th session held in March 2006 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
2. The networks have been formulated on the basis of road and rail networks and corridors defined by UNESCAP (Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway Networks), UNECE (within the framework of the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR), of 1975, the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC), of 1985 and the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), of 1991), Economic Cooperation Organization, CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), TRACECA (Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia), and OSJD (Organization for Railways Cooperation).
3. In 2009, the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation programme (CAREC)¹ supported by ADB, including SPECA countries, established corridors performance measurement and monitoring system with the Time/Cost-Distance methodology. Collected data and analysis were reported to the CAREC ministerial conference. Bottlenecks along the corridors² were also identified for improvement.

¹ By 2012 February, 10 countries participate in CAREC (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

² The six corridors are:

Corridor 1: Europe–East Asia (Kazakhstan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China and Kyrgyzstan);

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4. CAREC adopted detailed Implementation Action Plan focusing on the development of the relevant six corridors, which will facilitate transport and trade within and through SPECA countries and provide important links among the world's rapid growing markets around the SPECA region.

5. Considerable progress has been achieved with regard to the upgrade and development of the road and rail network infrastructure in the SPECA region. The need for integration of transport modes and operationalization of intermodal network also continues to be increasing. In this connection, during the regional seminar held in Busan dated on 14-17 June 2011, Kazakhstan reported that in 2010 the railways of Kazakhstan (KTZ) operated 1,126 container block-trains, up 12 per cent over 2007 and handled 410,860 TEUs, up 10 per cent over 2007³. In addition to running container block-trains serving its own international trade, especially with Germany and China, KTZ cooperates with railways of neighboring countries to organize the transit of Asia-Europe land bridge services through its network, in particular from China to Germany and Russian ports to Uzbekistan. In 2010, KTZ dispatched 195 trains carrying Chinese goods destined for Western Europe⁴ with capacity for more. In July 2011, an intermodal service was launched between Chongqing and Duisburg (Germany). Hauling laptops and LCD screens the train was routed through Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, Belarus and Poland and covered the over 11,000-km distance in under sixteen days.

6. The above highlights the role of Kazakhstan as a gateway for transit traffic to other Central Asian countries. Chinese Railways operates 7 trains per week to Central Asia from the port of Lianyungang through the Alanshankou/Dostyk border point and another 2.5 and 1.5 trains per week from Qingdao and Tianjin, respectively. In 2010, 229,104 TEUs were handled at the Alanshankou/Dostyk border crossing point, up 25 per cent over 2009⁵.

7. To further develop its rail network as a major routing option for Asia-Europe traffic and improve the efficiency of international trade to/from Central Asia, KTZ is completing a new line aiming to open a second rail border crossing point with China at Korgas. In conjunction

Corridor 2:	Mediterranean–East Asia (Azerbaijan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan);
Corridor 3:	Russian Federation–Middle East and South Asia (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan);
Corridor 4:	Russian Federation–East Asia (Mongolia, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region and Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China);
Corridor 5:	East Asia–Middle East and South Asia- (Afghanistan, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan); and
Corridor 6:	Europe–Middle East and South Asia (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan).

³ Source: Kazakhtransservice JSC, 2011.

⁴ Source: Railway Gazette International, “*On the tracks of the silk road*”, December 2011.

⁵ Source: KAZTRANSERVICE JSC, June 2011

with the line, the two countries have developed a new International Border Cooperation Centre that will act as a "free port" focusing on trade and investment opportunities. The centre provides warehousing and rail-served logistics facilities.

The Project Working Group may wish to

- Welcome the progress achieved with regard to the organization of container block train services in the SPECA region;
- Actively participate in the planning and organization of demonstration runs of transport operation along the selected corridors.