

82nd session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee
(Geneva, 25 February 2020)

High-level policy segment
“Environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport”

Session III: International cooperation for climate and environment solutions and the role of ITC as the United Nations Platform for Inland Transport

Statement by
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Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honoured to speak here today on behalf of the Secretariat of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

The OSCE is the world’s largest regional security organization, with 57 participating States across North-America, Europe and Asia. We have a **long-standing partnership with the UNECE** and we have cooperated in many areas, including in the **transport sector** and on **environmental issues**. I wish to mention the **Environment and Security Initiative, the ENVSEC Initiative**, a cooperative framework that today includes the UNECE, UNDP, UNEP and the OSCE. Under this framework we have worked together for more than 15 years, and we have, for example, jointly explored and addressed the **links between climate change and security**.

Climate change is a threat to transport systems and it is a potential threat to security, also because there are links between transport and security. Transport is essential for economic growth and for sustainable, inclusive connectivity. Climate change results in an **increase of extreme weather events** that may impact on **transport infrastructure** and on **energy infrastructure** that transport systems rely on. The interruption of transport and energy connectivity are security threats and the OSCE responds to these threats, for example, through the development of a **virtual training centre for the protection of critical energy infrastructure**, which was launched just recently.

On the other side, **emissions from the transport sector** contribute significantly to climate change. We all know that we have to find ways to reduce the emissions from a growing transport sector. The OSCE is working with the governments of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan in the development of a **digital route that will connect ports across the Caspian Sea**. At the same time we are assisting these countries in **greening the ports** for example through increased use of **renewable energy in ports operations and for transport systems**.

Being able to track and trace cargo, having price transparency and e-payment options as well as being able to fully measure and reduce the **carbon footprint of cargo** will greatly enhance competitiveness, security and reliability of the transport corridor through the Caspian Sea. We are planning to expand this initiative to dry ports in Central Asia and further west to facilitate development of a **Green Corridor from Asia to Europe**.

The best way of dealing with environmental challenges is to identify them early and if possible avoid them. The UNECE hosts the Secretariat of the Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). These are instruments to do exactly that: **identify environmental risks and develop strategies to respond to risks**. The UNECE and OSCE have repeatedly joint forces to promote these instruments and assist States in our regions to include them in national legislation. Currently we are jointly working with the governments of the countries in Central Asia to create **awareness on Strategic Environmental Assessments** in general and in particular in the context of climate change and to **develop national capacities**.

International cooperation is essential to tackle environmental challenges. I gave a few examples of how the OSCE is working with partner organisations and governments in addressing security issues that have relevance also to inland transport. We are **open to discuss** further cooperation on these issues with the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and other interested parties.

Thank you for your attention.