



UNECE



UKRAINE

***Recommendations from the
XIIth International Seminar on Trade and Transport Facilitation
TRADE FACILITATION AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF MULTIMODAL
TRANSPORT AND TRADE IN A TIME OF CRISIS
(online, Odessa, Ukraine, 7 July 2022)***

The seminar was organized by Ukraine and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). It built on the eleven years of persistent work for trade facilitation in Ukraine, notably the Odessa region, in such areas as simplifying procedures, Single Window, port community systems, implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, and innovative projects on digital transport corridors, and data and document exchange in electronic format. The current complicated situation of post COVID resilience and war in Ukraine requires even more innovative solutions, using international standards and best practice. This crisis has created serious risks for sustainable development in and around Ukraine, destruction of nature, valuable assets, living and working conditions for millions of people, as well as risks for food security, economic activities, and lifestyle of many more millions of people in places ranging from Indonesia, the Middle East, and Africa to Western Europe. People in those countries rely on imports of grain, vegetable oils, raw materials, and many other products from Ukraine. Cross-border trade will need to function, even if along altered routes.

At the beginning of the seminar, the participants expressed their sorrow and observed a minute of silence in memory of the thousands of innocent victims, wounded, tortured, and killed, destroyed infrastructure, millions of refugees, and displaced persons as a result of the Russian invasion and war in Ukraine.

As presented by the Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine at the Conference on the Reconstruction of Ukraine in Lugano (Switzerland), 4-5 July 2022, freight road transportation across the borders of Ukraine increased by 17.4% in June 2022 in comparison with May 2022 (reaching 2.29 million tons), through ports on the Danube by 9%. The development of logistics capacities to expand Ukraine's export-import capabilities is a priority in the Recovery Plan, and the participants in the seminar took note of it.

Further, the speakers shared in their presentations information on the progress made in the application of the new package of standards and reference data models of the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), which aim at the digital transformation of data and document exchanges in multimodal transport. They covered the current efforts to respond to the challenges of changing routes from sea to land, by digitalizing the collection and exchange of information for transportation of goods along new transport schemes to European Union member countries. Speakers represented Governmental bodies and business community of Ukraine, Azerbaijan, and other countries, UNECE, the European Commission, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSJD), the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), the International Road Transport Union (IRU), the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), and others, and they were invited to this seminar.

The presentations at the Odessa seminar confirmed the importance of global UN/CEFACT standards for multimodal transport and trade in time of crisis to create visibility and trust across EU and non-EU countries. The EU 2020/1056 eFTI Regulation, expected to come into force on 21 August 2025, will mandate authorities in the 27 EU Member States to accept transport information in an EU harmonized format through certified eFTI platforms. Non-EU eFTI platforms can be certified in any of the 27 EU Member States. Economic operators do not have to wait until August 2025 and can use existing service providers to share real-time transport information within end-to-end supply chains and government authorities in most of the 30 countries that have adopted the 2008 e-CMR protocol.

The seminar led to the formulation of the following recommendations on the next steps in trade facilitation and the digitalization of data and document exchange for trade and multimodal transport in a very challenging situation:

1. Continue working on trade facilitation and digitalization of data and document exchange for trade and multimodal transport to assure sustainability in the effort to strengthen transparency and efficiency in trade procedures and eliminate corruption. Broaden public-private cooperation and partnership for the implementation of the developed standards and solutions.
2. Work on the digitalization of new land corridors to compensate for the blockade of ports. Focus on both immediate emergency solutions, using solutions already realized in Europe, while maintaining the work on alignment to the international, UN/CEFACT semantic standards and Reference Data Models as the basis for sustainable information exchange in the longer term, as well as the WCO Data Model. UNECE is invited to continue assisting the implementing in practice of the package of standards for multimodal data and document exchange and the results of pilot projects in Ukraine (<https://unttc.org/stream/electronic-trade-and-transport-documents-and-data>), notably by assisting the emergency projects. Further implement the standards in concrete projects on the digitalization of trade and multimodal transport data exchange. Enable corridor pilot projects to build interoperable data exchanges reusing available, published global UN/CEFACT Reference Data Models and standards that provide semantic structures, data exchange structures, and international code sets. Invite international organizations to work on the convergence of the data models.
3. Promote harmonization between modal specific operational data, including dangerous goods declarations, whilst not disturbing modal regulatory or convention requirements. Support digitalization of accompanying documents through QR codes, APIs to access platform hosted background data.
4. Make utmost use of the results of the work on trade facilitation and digitalization of trade and transport data and document exchange, already achieved in the Odessa Port Community System developed and maintained by PPL33-35 LLC for the work on digitalization and trade facilitation in the land corridors.
5. Collaborate with the EU Solidarity Lanes and other international initiatives for sustainable solutions in the digitalization of trade and multimodal transport data and document exchange. Support the DUET project suggested by experts for the digitalization of the information exchange.
6. Given the European integration perspective of Ukraine, integrate the EU legal acts on Electronic Freight Transport Information, European Maritime Single Window and European Single Window for Customs, including the underlying body of work on the harmonization and standardization of information exchange, in Ukrainian legislation. In this vein, the standardization and digitalization of business-to-business data and document exchange will significantly facilitate both the collection of information from business agents to regulatory agencies in the countries and the integration of information flows with the European Union, which uses the same UN/CEFACT and WCO standards in the EU Regulations on Electronic Freight Transport Information and Customs Single Window.
7. The Government of Ukraine is invited to strengthen its support for the Port Community System (PPL33-35 LLC) to help facilitate the efficient movement of goods between Ukraine and the European Union through Data Driven Solutions. The Government may wish to provide additional support and resources for Ukrainian border control agencies to implement these solutions and reduce delays at the borders. The Ukrainian Government may wish to encourage the European Union and EU Member States bordering Ukraine to put additional resources into their border agencies to help facilitate the efficient movement of goods and minimize delays due to regulatory procedures, while maintaining the highest level of risk management at the border.
8. Base this work on the principles of the Ukraine Recovery Conference, 4-5 July 2022, in Lugano, Switzerland [check for the latest version]:
 - a. **Partnership.** The recovery process is led and driven by Ukraine and conducted in partnership with its international partners. The recovery effort has to be based on a sound and ongoing needs assessment process, aligned priorities, joint planning for results, mutual accountability for financial flows, and effective coordination.

- b. **Reform focus.** The recovery process has to contribute to accelerating, deepening, broadening and achieving Ukraine's reform efforts and resilience in line with Ukraine's European path.
 - c. **Transparency, accountability, and rule of law.** The recovery process has to be transparent and accountable to the people of Ukraine. The rule of law must be systematically strengthened and corruption eradicated. All funding for recovery needs to be fair and transparent.
 - d. **Democratic participation.** The recovery process has to be a whole-of-society effort, rooted in democratic participation by the population - including those displaced or returning from abroad, local self-governance and effective decentralization.
 - e. **Multi-stakeholder engagement.** The recovery process has to facilitate collaboration between national and international actors, including from the private sector, civil society, academia and local government.
 - f. **Gender equality and inclusion.** The recovery process has to be inclusive and ensure gender equality and respect for human rights including economic, social and cultural rights. Recovery needs to benefit all, and no part of society should be left behind. Disparities need to be reduced.
 - g. **Sustainability.** The recovery process has to rebuild Ukraine in a sustainable manner aligned with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and the Paris Agreement, integrating social, economic and environmental dimensions including green transition.
9. Acknowledging the impressive progress on the digitalization of the FIATA multimodal Bill of Lading, in cooperation between FIATA and UN/CEFACT experts, following the recommendations of the previous two Odessa seminars, promote the FIATA Digital Strategy, notably to facilitate data exchange between freight forwarders and their stakeholders through interoperability, encourage relevant stakeholders in Ukraine and its partners to implement the eFBL, and FIATA and UN/CEFACT experts to develop the digitalization of other FIATA documents, aligned with the UN/CEFACT Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model.
 10. Maintain the efforts for the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement until the full implementation of all measures in Ukraine and its trading partners.
 11. Contribute to the discussions on digitalization of the air cargo industry, notably at the 41st ICAO Triennial Assembly in October 2022. Include aviation stakeholders (e.g., CAAs) in the development of national digitalization strategies and national trade facilitation committees. Consider participating in pilot implementation projects and share experiences. Undertake actions to provide a legal framework enabling digital transport and trade data and document exchange.
 12. Support the organization of the following follow-up events to ensure the sustainability of the initiatives raised at this seminar:
 - a. International conference on trade and transport facilitation in the SPECA region "Digital Transformation of Multimodal Transport and Trade Using United Nations Standards", scheduled for 13-14 October 2022 in hybrid format in Baku, Azerbaijan (t.b.c.),
 - b. An intermediary Odessa seminar to review progress and urgent requests by the end of 2022, focus on the legal enabling framework,
 - c. The next regular UNECE Odessa seminar in May 2023 to take stock of the implementation of these decisions and development of digital corridor exchange.