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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

##### Thirty-seventh session

Geneva, 25–27 September 2024

Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda

##### Development of transport networks and links:

##### Euro-Asian Transport Links

### **2024 overview of ongoing and planned operationalization activities in support of the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul corridors**

**Submitted by the governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan**

## I. Background

1. At the second session of the Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridor (hereinafter referred to as Coordination Committee) which took place on 5 and 6 June 2023 in Istanbul (Türkiye), members agreed to create and maintain a joint table of activities which for information sharing purposes will be updated ahead of each following Coordination Committee session providing a comprehensive overview of the work being undertaken in support of both corridors.

2. The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) at its thirty-sixth annual session (Geneva, from 4 to 6 September 2023) welcomed the overview of ongoing and planned operationalization activities in support of the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul corridors, submitted by the Governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Türkiye, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, members of the Coordination Committee. WP.5 encouraged the Committee Members to continue updating this coordination table regularly (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/74, para. 23). This document provides a revised and updated version of the joint table of activities, previously contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/2, reflecting the latest developments since last year's WP.5 session.

## II. Corridor Coordination table

3. The below table, populated by the members of seven of the countries currently part of the Coordination Committee, and by the Permanent Secretariat (PS) of the Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA), contains references to:

(a) National/ bilateral/ subregional initiatives and work streams being undertaken by individual governments (national railway undertakings, authorities in charge of transport and infrastructure and customs agencies) which are of relevance to the entire corridors;

(b) International/regional activities and/or regulatory work being undertaken, where appropriate, in the framework of relevant Working Parties under purview of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) or by PS IGC TRACECA of direct relevance to the entire corridors.

### National and international activities in support of the Coordination Committee work

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Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The launch of a second infrastructure reconstruction phase at the Port of Baku.</li> <li>Modernization works on the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) route.</li> <li>A total of 61 kilometres of railway line, 98 kilometres of contact network line, 172 kilometres of 10 kV wire, and 338 kilometres of fibre-optic cable were laid. Additionally, 160,000 cubic meters of gravel were processed, 120 kilometres of curbstones were installed, and 41 kilometres of pedestrian and vehicle roads were asphalted.</li> <li>Zangezur corridor: road and railway infrastructure construction underway.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Azerbaijan Railways (ADY): Conceptual design of transportation management system and implementation of quick wins (GPS tracking, fuel economy etc.)</li> <li>Port of Baku: integration of its port management information system with similar type systems at the ports of Aktau, Kuryk and Turkmenbashi.</li> <li>Work on the use of CIM/SMGS and its future electronic version. On 22 May 2023, a memorandum was signed between the railway administrations of Azerbaijan, Türkiye, Kazakhstan, Georgia and Ukraine on piloting of the CIM/SMGS electronic consignment note.</li> </ul>	<p>Currently, the Azerbaijan Caspian Shipping Joint-Stock Company (JSC) provides real-time information on the movement of Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro-Ros) and ferries for all its vessels in the Caspian Sea. More details can be found here: <a href="https://ships.asco.az/en">https://ships.asco.az/en</a></p> <p>Tariffs provided by Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR/TMTM) can be used as a basis.</p>	<p>Border crossings in Azerbaijan have been modernized and expanded in recent years, significantly speeding up all transport and logistics processes. Within the framework of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway project, an agreement has been reached among the governments of Georgia, Türkiye, and Azerbaijan on advanced data exchange to facilitate customs transit procedures.</p>	<p>The Port of Baku is the first port in the region to develop the Zero-Emissions 2035 Climate Change Action Plan (EcoPort). In 2019, it was awarded the EcoPorts certificate by the European Sea Ports Organization, which was successfully re-ratified in 2021.</p>
Georgia	<p>The ongoing railway modernization project's overall completion rate is</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Georgian Railways (GR) is accelerating the digitalization of the</li> </ul>	<p>Altynkol-Batumi/Poti tariff TEU TITR – \$USD 1,597</p>	<p>As part of the agreement between the governments of Georgia, Türkiye, and</p>	<p>Feasibility study on the development of Ro-La (rolling highway) of road</p>

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	<p>currently at 97.85 percent. The completion of the modernization project will lead to a greatly enhanced infrastructure for railroad operations in a very challenging, high-gorge area of the country, which will lead to reduced travel time and enhanced safety levels. The annual throughput capacity will rise from 27 to 48 million tons. The project will be finalized in 2024.</p>	<p>Trans-Caspian Corridor by initiating electronic data sharing with other railway operators along the route. Currently, the GR Freight Transportation system seamlessly synchronizes with the Georgian Revenue Service, ensuring automatic updates on cargo status. Moreover, digital SMGS documents, signed with electronic signatures, can now be submitted to customs authorities. The GR Freight Transportation system also integrates pre-filled information from neighbouring railway operators, streamlining document processing at border crossings</p>	<p>Altynkol-Kars- Istanbul tariff TEU TITR – \$USD 2,257</p>	<p>Azerbaijan to enhance customs transit procedures under the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway project, a technical specifications document has been developed. By mid-April 2024, the trilateral working group finalized a roadmap for the technical implementation of data exchange.</p> <p>The Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway line employs the CIM/SMGS consignment note, streamlining transportation processes and expediting wagon transfers at border crossings between Georgia and Türkiye, thereby significantly reducing delivery times. Integration of Georgian Railway (GR) and customs operational systems enables electronic exchange of information on goods subject to customs control. Declarations, customs clearance, and inspection processes are conducted in the same electronic format. At the Gardabani border station, advanced scanners have been installed for effective inspection and monitoring of wagons arriving from Azerbaijan.</p>	<p>trucks by rail transportation is planned in Georgia. If implemented, the project will contribute to reducing carbon footprint from the transport sector.</p>

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Iran (Islamic Republic of)	<p>The current rail connection from Iran (Islamic Republic of) to Türkiye, via the Razi Border Station, requires crossing Van Lake on two ferry boats. This process is time-consuming and sometimes faces limitations. To address these issues and enhance the transit capacity of the Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul railway corridor, a new rail project has been initiated. This project, named Marand-Cheshmeh Soraya-Igdir-Kars, will connect Iran and Türkiye through a new border point at Cheshmeh Soraya. The feasibility study for the Iranian section, Marand-Cheshmeh Soraya, covering 220 kilometres, has been completed, and the government has approved its construction. Transport ministers and railway heads from both countries have already conducted negotiations on this project.</p>	<p>At the eighth meeting of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway in September 2023, the Railways of Iran proposed a new annex on electronic data interchange for the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network. This proposal was adopted, and the annex, titled "General Principles on Electronic Information Exchange/Data Interchange among Railways and Between Railways and Control Agencies along the Trans-Asian Railway Network," has been added to the agreement. The United Nations Treaty Section in New York has issued a depository notification. The amendments, including the new annex, are published under code XI-C-5.a and can be accessed here: <a href="https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CN/2023/CN.518.2023-Eng.pdf">https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CN/2023/CN.518.2023-Eng.pdf</a>.</p> <p>Currently, electronic data exchange between Islamic Republic of Iran Railways and Turkish railways primarily involves the list of exchanged wagons. Plans for electronic data exchange with</p>	<p>Transporting cargo from the two rail border crossings with Turkmenistan, Sarakhs and Inche Borun, to the Turkish border at Razi takes 4–5 days. According to the protocol between Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Türkiye, the transport tariffs on this route are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General cargo: €0.012 per ton/kilometre</li> <li>• 20-foot container: €0.18 per container/kilometre</li> <li>• 40-foot container: €0.23 per container/kilometre</li> </ul>	<p>Priority is given to transit trains on the Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridor. Additionally, customs systems are linked with wagon weighing facilities at border crossings to increase the commercial speed of trains. Islamic Republic of Iran Railways and Turkish railways have agreed to increase cargo transport volumes between the two countries to one million tons annually.</p>	<p>The policy of the government of Iran (Islamic Republic of) is to strengthen rail transport and shift the movement of cargo and passengers towards rail. This shift aims to reduce road congestion and fatalities, save fuel consumption, and decrease pollution.</p>

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		<p>Turkmenistan Railways are underway, with several correspondences already initiated. Additionally, Islamic Republic of Iran Railways has recently welcomed Kazakhstan's proposal for electronic data exchange among ECO countries.</p> <p>In international rail transport with neighbouring countries, both CIM and SMGS consignment notes are used. Islamic Republic of Iran Railways is prepared to implement a common CIM-SMGS consignment note if other transit countries agree and the necessary infrastructure is established.</p>			
Türkiye	<p>There is a total of 13,919 km of railway network, including 11,668 km conventional, 2,251 km high-speed railway lines. 58 per cent of the lines are signaled and 51 per cent are electrified.</p> <p>Ongoing projects include: The Çerkezköy-Kapıkule high speed railway project, which will connect the line coming from the Baku-</p>	<p>As of 2016, the consignment notes are transferred electronically to the customs administration. The CIM and CIM/SMGS consignment notes also serves as a "Transit Accompanying Document" regarding customs procedures in Türkiye. Since September 2021, CIM/SMGS common consignment note has been used for rail freight transportation operations via</p>	<p>After arrival at the border and customs controls, the trains are dispatched to their destination swiftly as per the domestic timetables. Bilateral and multilateral negotiations and joint competitive tariffs are determined for transportations to Iran (Islamic Republic of) and via the BTK line.</p>	<p>Transport operations on the BTK railway line and on the Trans-Caspian corridor are carried out via the Canbaz/Kartsakhi border crossing. Transshipment operations are carried out at Akhalkalaki station in Georgia located 29 km inland. A 1.435 mm-gauge railway line from Türkiye to Akhalkalaki is in place. The Akhalkalaki transfer station is being upgraded to meet</p>	<p>During transport operations on the BTK line and the Middle Corridor, there may be seasonal difficulties between Kars and Akhalkalaki during heavy winter conditions. There may also be climate change induced difficulties for transport from Iran (Islamic Republic of) for the crossing of the Van Lake (due to decreased water levels).</p>

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	Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway to Europe.	Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) middle corridor railway line.		rising demands for conventional and bulk cargo.	
	The Kars-Iğdır-Dilucu railway project, which would provide the Zengezur corridor a connection to the Türkiye section.	For both corridors, the en-route countries can be encouraged to use the common CIM/SMGS consignment note.		BTK railway line has been closed from 24 May 2023 until 20 May 2024 due to the track renewal works between Marabda and Akhalkalaki in Georgia. Upon completion of the works the handling capacity will have increased significantly.	
	The Divriği-Kars Railway rehabilitation project, which is the continuation of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars (BTK) railway line.	During the period 2018–2023 an interconnection has been established between Iranian Railways (RAI) and TCDD Transportation JSC for the purpose of electronic rail freight data transfers between both administrations.		Transport operations with Iran (Islamic Republic of) are carried out via the Kapıköy/Razi border crossing.	
				Transport operations to Europe are performed via the Kapıkule/Svilengra crossing on the border with Bulgaria and via the Uzunköprü/Pityon crossing on the border with Greece. As of 2019, consignment notes also serve as a "Transit Accompanying Document" regarding customs procedures in Türkiye. Due to electronic integration between TCDD Taşımacılık A.S. and the customs administration of Türkiye, all information is transferred digitally.	

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Kazakhstan	<p>(a) The construction of a 74 km railway bypass line in Almaty commenced on 14 November 2023.</p> <p>(b) On 17 November 2022, construction began on the second tracks of the 836 km Dostyk-Moyynty railway section.</p> <p>(c) Work is currently underway to develop a feasibility study for constructing a container hub at the Port of Aktau.</p> <p>(d) The construction of the multifunctional marine terminal "Sarzha" at the port of Kuryk is ongoing.</p>	<p>To work on introducing harmonized transport documents such as the CIM/SMGS common consignment note.</p> <p>To facilitate the introduction of harmonized transport documents like the CIM/SMGS common consignment note, efforts have been made to enhance logistics services based on the "single window" principle. This included technical integration work between the IT systems of National Company (NC) Kazakhstan Temir Zholy (KTZ) and the Customs module of the Global Digital Trade Corridor (DTC) platform - Tez Customs - developed by Global DTC Kazakhstan Ltd (a member of the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA)).</p> <p>To achieve this goal, a Roadmap for collaboration between KTZ and Global DTC Kazakhstan Ltd for implementing the DTC platform was approved on December 5, 2023. Continued efforts in this direction are ongoing, and upon successful</p>	<p>(a) Providing of a fair and favorable tariff policy on the route.</p> <p>(b) Organization of a shuttle service on under TITR</p> <p>A rail freight shuttle service on the territory of Kazakhstan is being implemented following a fixed time schedule and tariff on the rail section Altynkol-Aktau port, departing from Altynkol station three times a week with an overall transport time of not more than 90 hours for a total distance of around 3,700 km.</p>		<p>With reference to ongoing transport infrastructure projects (a-d) listed in column 1, the economic impact is expected to be as follows:</p> <p>(a) The implementation of the project will reduce the delivery time of goods to 24 hours and relieve the Almaty railway junction by 40%, as well as develop suburban passenger transportation in the Almaty agglomeration.</p> <p>(b) The implementation of the Dostyk-Moyynty project will increase capacity by five times (from 12 to 60 pairs of trains) and increase the speed of container trains to 1,500 km per day.</p> <p>(c) Implementation of this project will create additional capacity of seaports by 300 TEU/containers per year.</p> <p>(d) The new multifunctional terminal will consist of a grain terminal, a universal terminal, a liquid cargo terminal, general cargo terminal, and a liquid cargo terminal.</p>

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		implementation, partner countries along the TITR/TMTM corridor will also be invited to adopt this experience.			
Kyrgyzstan	<p>In accordance with Resolution No. 258 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic dated May 20, 2022, the main directions for the development of railway transport in the Kyrgyz Republic for the period 2022-2026 have been approved, setting forth the goals and objectives for this sector.</p> <p>The Kyrgyz railway network, totaling 424.6 km in length, comprises two geographically separated sections: the northern section, spanning 323.4 km from Balykchi to Turksib (Kazakhstan), and the southern section, extending 101.2 km and connecting Kyrgyzstan to the railway networks of neighboring countries, including Kazakhstan.</p> <p>The development priorities for railway transport in the Kyrgyz Republic include establishing an internal</p>	<p>Priorities include modernizing the hardware and software infrastructure of the Kyrgyz Railway and transitioning to an automated freight transportation management system utilizing advanced technologies and integrated software and hardware systems. Additionally, expanding the capabilities of the automated system to implement electronic consignment notes, modern customer service technologies for freight transportation, and the generation of electronic financial and statistical reports is a key focus.</p>	<p>The State Enterprise NC Kyrgyz Temir Zholy actively participates in the tariff policy of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Baltic countries. Each year, it establishes favourable tariff conditions for cargo owners to attract additional cargo, thereby promoting the development of transit multimodal and export-import cargo transportation.</p>	<p>Following an agreement between the State Enterprise NC Kyrgyz Temir Zholy and JSC Kazakhstan Temir Zholy on electronic data exchange for international freight transportation, the exchange of electronic consignment notes has been implemented. This interchange facilitates the formation of a database containing SMGS consignment notes, enabling the provision of information services to government agencies.</p>	<p>The effective functioning of railway transport is crucial for the sustainable growth of Kyrgyzstan's national economy. To develop the internal railway network, main railway lines connecting the north and south are being constructed, integrating with interstate railway services and international transport corridors.</p>

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Uzbekistan	<p>railway transportation network, enhancing the country's transit potential, and renewing and modernizing railway infrastructure and rolling stock.</p> <p>To date, the total length of the main railway lines of Uzbekistan Temir Yollari JSC is 7,400 km, of which 3,500 km have been electrified.</p> <p>The first large-scale project was the construction of the Navoi-Uchkuduk-Sultan-Voystag-Nukus railway line. Despite the difficult economic situation at that time, this project was successfully implemented in 2001 and the connection between the northern regions and the center of the country was achieved.</p> <p>The railway line Tashguzar-Boysun-Kumkurgan, which crosses a 1,800 m high mountain range, became a major breakthrough. The project was fully implemented in 2009.</p> <p>In August 2016, a new electrified Angren-Pap</p>	<p>Since May 2022, the Ministry of Transport, Uzbekistan Temir Yollari JSC, and the State Customs Committee have implemented an electronic information exchange system for goods arriving by rail. By the end of 2022, they had provided preliminary information necessary for customs formalities, and from 2023 onward, a transit declaration system for goods entering Uzbekistan was initiated.</p> <p>Key advantages of the transit declaration system include the use of electronic documents, centralized payment accumulation across all border departments, and the ability to make payments through a unified system.</p> <p>In March 2024, the E-transit system was integrated with Uzbekistan Temir Yollari JSC's Single Window information system, thereby facilitating streamlined</p>		<p>JSC Uzbekistan Temir Yollari (Uzbekistan Railways) has 18 interstate junction points with all neighboring countries of the region, of which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Kazakhstan - 3;</li> <li>(b) Kyrgyzstan - 4;</li> <li>(c) Tajikistan-4;</li> <li>(d) Turkmenistan-6</li> <li>(e) Afghanistan - 1.</li> </ul> <p>The customs clearance time for one train at railway border crossings is 2 hours.</p> <p>At the same time, at railway border crossings between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the time for customs clearance of one train is 45 minutes.</p>	<p>JSC Uzbekistan Temir Yollari has become a key branch of the country's economy.</p> <p>It implements large-scale projects for the construction of new railway lines and the modernization of existing ones, it contributes to the construction of bridges and overpasses and to the creation of new modern industrial facilities.</p> <p>JSC Uzbekistan Temir Yollari has the ambition to boost the transit potential of Uzbekistan, connecting the Eurasian continent from north to south, and from east to west.</p> <p>In terms of cargo turnover in the world, Uzbekistan wants to become a regional leader.</p> <p>The railway sector today accounts for 60per cent of all freight traffic and 75 per cent of passenger traffic.</p>

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	<p>railway line at an altitude of 2,200 m above sea level was launched, with a total length of 123 km including a 19 km tunnel.</p>	<p>customs clearance processes for the electronic SMGS consignment note.</p> <p>Additionally, within the Trans-Caspian corridor framework, electronic information exchange for transit goods with Kazakhstan has been operational since 2024.</p> <p>Additional electronic information systems of Uzbekistan include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Single portal of interactive public services - <a href="https://my.gov.uz/ru">https://my.gov.uz/ru</a></li> <li>(b) Customs services “E-Tranzit” - <a href="https://cargo.customs.uz">cargo.customs.uz</a></li> <li>(c) Portal for e-ticket sales for passenger trains - <a href="https://e-ticket.railway.uz">https://e-ticket.railway.uz</a></li> <li>(d) Cargo owner service portal - <a href="https://e-nakl.railway.uz/">https://e-nakl.railway.uz/</a></li> <li>(e) Portal for monitoring of train movements - <a href="https://smpo.uzgps.uz/">https://smpo.uzgps.uz/</a></li> </ul>			

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		(f) Information system for automated recognition of registration numbers and weights of goods in wagons and containers.			
PS IGC TRACECA		(a) Virtual testing of the e-CIM/SMGS Consignment Note prototype (3-7 June 2024). Closed session.		Workshop on customs issues along TRACECA routes (2 July 2024). Closed session.	
		(b) Parallel testing of the e-CIM/SMGS Consignment Note prototype (3/4 quarter 2024). Closed session.			