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EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS*

Organization of demonstration trains on Euro-Asian
transport linkages

Transmitted by the Government of Turkey

1. Under the coordination of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and with the active support of the member countries, the first trial operation of a container train with about 20 container wagons started in January 2002 on the Istanbul-Tehran-Tashkent-Almaty main Trans-Asia Railway Line Section.
2. During the first meeting of the Steering Committee in 2003, which is in charge of monitoring the Almaty-Istanbul container trains in the Trans-Asian main corridor, a number of pertinent questions were considered. The meeting focused on settling questions concerning the timetable, border crossing procedures and tariffs as well as measures to be taken in respect of regular train traffic.

* The UNECE Transport Division has submitted the present document after the official document deadline due to resource constraints.

3. The second meeting of the Steering Committee of the container train on the Istanbul-Almaty route was held in Tehran, in May 2004. The following outstanding issues were considered during the meeting:

- Scheduling of the Container Train
- Tariff determination for 20 and 40 TEU containers
- Views on establishment of a Common Containers Pool (CCP)
- Means of payment for the entire route.

4. The eighth meeting of the ECO Railway Authorities was held in Istanbul in 2004, in order to improve regional cooperation in the field of railway transportation. The following issues were considered during this meeting:

- Pending issues related to runs of container trains in the Trans-Asian main corridor
- Revitalization and operating of the China-Middle East-Europe corridor (Silk Road) and establishment of a Working Group to monitor both the Istanbul-Almaty container train and the China-Middle East-Europe corridor
- Endorsement of the final MoU on ECO Railway Tariff Policy in International Freight Traffic.

5. The Memorandum of Understanding on ECO Railway Tariff Policy in International Freight Traffic was signed by ECO Railway Authorities in 2004 and put into force by ECO Council of Ministers by their decision in September 2004.

6. Work on clarifying and finalizing these issues is still continuing. In spite of the above-mentioned difficulties, the Istanbul-Almaty train is still running once a week in one direction and up to now 146 trains with 968 containers (on 938 wagons) have been dispatched from Istanbul to Central Asia. Furthermore, 59 trains with 595 containers (on 547 wagons) have been dispatched from Istanbul to Turkmenistan by another regular block train operated as of 26 December 2003.

7. In addition, to the European direction, a mixed train (between Ljubljana-Istanbul) and three block trains (between Cologne-Halkalı, Cologne-Derince and Cologne-Köseköy) are operating regularly.

8. Also, a new demonstration train called "Silkroad Turkish Export Goods Fair" was scheduled on the Istanbul-Ankara-Tebriz-Tehran-Mashad-Asghabat-Dushanbe-Tashkent-Bishkek-Almaty-Astana route between 24 April-31 May 2005 for once only to introduce the Turkish export goods to the ECO countries and Far East countries. This Fair is also expected to help in promoting the existing ECO container train which is running on the same route.

Organization of demonstration runs

European direction

9. The following block trains are operated between European countries and Turkey:

Halkali (Istanbul) – Sopron (Hungary)

10. It was initiated in 1998, for two days a week. In total, 208,212 tons of goods were transported in 15,829 containers in 2004. Goods were transported in 8,675 containers until August in 2005.

11. In 2005, 203 incoming (import) and 119 outgoing (export) runs were organized. In 2006, 120 incoming and 71 outgoing runs were organized.

Cukurhisar – Vienna (Austria)

12. It was initiated in 2002, with two runs per week. In total, 64,287 tons of goods were transported in 3,154 containers in 2004. Goods were transported in 1,483 containers till August in 2005. It is still running regularly. There were 55 outgoing runs in 2005 and 23 outgoing runs until August 2006.

Halkali (Istanbul)- Vienna (Austria)

13. It was initiated on 8 July 2005, for one run per week. In 2005 there were 30 incoming and 27 outgoing runs, while 43 incoming and 34 outgoing runs were organized until August 2006.

Köln – Köseköy – Köln (Germany) (Transfera/Omsan)

14. It was initiated on 6 April 2004, for four days a week reciprocally on the route Germany-Austria-Hungary-Romania-Bulgaria-Turkey. In 2005, 193 incoming and 189 outgoing runs were organized. In 2006, 78 incoming and 76 outgoing runs were organized until August.

Halkali – Duisburg – Halkali (Germany)

15. It was initiated on 5 April 2005, for one day a week reciprocally. In 2005, 42 incoming and 41 outgoing runs were organized and 17 incoming and 16 outgoing runs were organized in 2006.

Köln – Derince (Germany)

16. It was initiated on 6 April 2004, for three days a week. Up to now 38 runs were realized with conventional wagons.

Halkali – Ljubljana (Slovenia)

17. It was initiated on 30 September 2004, for one day a week. Up to now 70 conventional wagons have been accepted from Slovenia, and 3 conventional wagons have been dispatched to Slovenia.

Rotterdam/Duisburg – Halkali – Rotterdam (Holland)

18. The first trial of a container block train started on 6 May 2005 from Rotterdam. It is running reciprocally for one day a week. Up to now, 3 reciprocal runs have been realized.

Halkali – Lambach (Austria)– Halkali

19. It was initiated on 5 July 2005, for one day a week reciprocally. Up to now 15 runs were realized.

Asian direction

20. The following block trains are operated between the member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and Turkey:

Haydarpasa (Istanbul) – Almaty (Kazakhstan)

21. The first trial run was initiated on 20 January 2002 on Trans-Asia Corridor. The regular runs started on 22 June 2002. It is still running once a week in one direction (on Saturdays from Haydarpasa). Up to now 118 trains with 832 containers (in 802 wagons) have been transported from Turkey to the ECO member countries (Kazakhstan-257 container, Kyrgyzstan-10 container, Tajikistan-14 container, Turkmenistan-100 container and Uzbekistan-451 container).

Haydarpasa (Istanbul) – Turkmenistan

22. It was initiated on 26 December 2003, for one day a week. Up to now 43 runs with 559 containers (in 511 wagons) have been realized from Turkey to Turkmenistan.

Projects

23. The following block trains will be organized between European countries and Turkey:

Halkali – Ljubljana – Halkali (Block Container Train)

It was initiated on 2 November 2005, for two days a week.

Halkali – Nunberg – Halkali (Europe-Asia Block Freight Train)

Conventional wagons will be transported for one day a week.

Germany – Turkey – Iran (Block Freight Train)

Conventional wagons will be transported.

Halkali (Istanbul)- Wels (Austria) (Ro-La Train).

24. The work is still going on for initiating Ro-La (Rollender Landstrasse) runs between Halkali (Istanbul) and Wels (Austria). In this context, some joint studies were realized among Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Serbian, Slovenian and Hungarian railways, and private sector representatives such as UND and RODER.

25. At the meeting of the Combined Transport Working Group under the South-East Railway Group (SERG) held on 5-6 July 2005 in Istanbul, the route and parameters were determined for

Halkali-Wels Ro-La Train. Ro-La train timetable was planned through the negotiations between en-route countries.

26. The loading ramp and area concreting works have been finalized in Halkali (Istanbul,) and Ro-La schedule for TCDD track was finalised.

27. A meeting was held on 8-9 August 2006 in Istanbul in order for the General-Directors of en-route railways to discuss issues about rating a competitive price, organisation of promotional activities, evaluation of technical operability and possible problems. After the meeting, the participants agreed on the following:

- The Price and Operation Conditions of Ro-La Train:

The route of Halkali-Wels-Halkali Ro-La Train has been determined to pass along Corridor X (Turkey-Bulgaria-Serbia-Croatia-Slovenia-Austria and in the opposite direction)

- Train Route:

Halkali-Kapikule–Svilengrad/Dragoman–Dimitrovgrad/Sid-Tovarnik/M-Savski/Marof-Dobova/Jesenice-Wels

- The Operational Frequency of Ro-La Train:

At the first stage, the train will operate for one day a week. The number of runs might be increased according to users demand.

The en-route railway administrations decided that Ro-La train would perform a demonstration run on 21 September 2006 departing from Turkey.

Following the 3-month period of demonstration runs, the prices which were agreed in the above-mentioned meeting, will become valid. After that period, the commercial, operational and price conditions of the Ro-La train runs will be reconsidered.
