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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links

**REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON  
EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS ON ITS FIRST SESSION  
(Geneva, 8 September 2008)**

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## **I. ATTENDANCE**

1. The Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links held its first session on 8 September 2008. The session was held under the chairmanship of Ms. E. Kushnirenko (Russian Federation). The Group of Experts elected Ms. K. Busching (Germany) and Mr. R. Zhao (China) as Vice-Chairpersons. Representatives of the following UNECE member States participated: Armenia, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Representatives of China and Mongolia also attended under Article 11 of the Terms of Reference of the Economic Commission for Europe. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations took part in the session: Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), Community of European Railways (CER), International Transport Forum (ITF), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) and Union of Road Transport Associations in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region (URTA-BSEC).

2. The following non-governmental organizations were also present: International Road Federation (IRF), International Road Transport Union (IRU), International Union of Railways (UIC), Black and Azov Seas Ports Association (BASPA) and Plaske JSC, as well as representatives of UNECE TEM and TER Project Central Offices.

## **II. INTRODUCTION (Agenda item 1)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/42, ECE/EX/2008/L.5

3. The secretariat provided background information about various developments leading to the creation of the Expert Group on Euro-Asian Transport Linkages. Accordingly, on 13-14 September 2007, the UNECE Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) decided to propose to the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) to assign the monitoring and coordinating responsibility of work related to the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) initiative to an expert group (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/42, p. 4, para. 10). On 19-21 February 2008, ITC agreed to establish the proposed Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links and adopted its terms of reference (ECE/TRANS/200, para. 29 and annex III). Subsequently, the UNECE Executive Committee approved the establishment of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links (ECE/EXE/2008/L.5).

## **III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Agenda item 2)**

4. The Group of Experts elected its officers: Ms. E. Kushnirenko (Russian Federation) as Chairperson, and Ms. K. Busching (Germany) and Mr. R. Zhao (China) as Vice-Chairpersons.

## **IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 3)**

5. The provisional agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.2/1) was adopted.

**V. DEVELOPMENT OF EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS (Agenda item 4)**

6. The Secretariat informed the Group of the main achievements of the EATL project in the period 2002-2007. The UNECE-UNESCAP in-house study ([http://www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/min\\_jointstatement.htm](http://www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/min_jointstatement.htm)) and a copy of the Joint Statement of Ministers of Transport ([http://www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/min\\_study.htm](http://www.unece.org/trans/MinisterialITC70/min_study.htm)) were made available. Background information concerning Phase I of the UNECE-UNESCAP EATL project can be found in document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/2.

**VI. REVIEW OF INITIATIVES BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE SYNERGIES WITH THE EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS - PHASE II (Agenda item 5)**

7. International organizations such as the UIC, TRACECA, BSEC, OSJD, IRU, OSCE and TEM/TER secretariats provided information concerning their own transport-related activities in the Euro-Asian region. Given clear synergies (and in order to avoid duplication) between the existing international initiatives and the EATL Phase II, some experts stressed the importance of cooperation and coordination.

**VII. EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS (EATL) PROJECT - PHASE II (Agenda item 6)**

8. The participants took note of a project proposal for EATL - Phase II elaborated by UNECE and UNESCAP on the basis of the conclusions and recommendations of EATL Phase I contained in the UNECE-UNESCAP Study on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Links.

**VIII. PROGRAMME OF WORK (Agenda item 7)**

9. The Expert Group discussed its programme of work, objectives, tasks and deliverables based on Informal Document GE.2 No. 1 (2008). While the main objectives and orientation of the program were found to be satisfactory, the participants believed that the programme needed to be more detailed. In this regard, members of the Expert Group were requested to provide additional comments about the programme of work contained in Informal Document GE.2 No. 1 (2008) to the UNECE secretariat by the end of October 2008. Based on the contributions received, and the comments expressed during the meeting, the secretariat will revise Informal Document GE.2 No. 1 (2008) and table it for further consideration at its next meeting.

**IX. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 8)**

10. The Expert Group was informed of a planned Euro-Asian Transport Links meeting in Shanghai in early 2009 and was invited to attend. The meeting will be hosted by the government of China and co-organized with the UNECE Transport Division.

**X. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda item 9)**

11. Following the Shanghai meeting, the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links will hold another session (tentatively scheduled) on 7 September 2009, immediately preceding the meeting of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics.

**XI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Agenda item 10)**

12. The draft report will be prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the chair and then sent to Members of the Group of Experts for comments before its finalization.

**XII. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 11)**

13. There was no discussion under this agenda item.

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