

MIDTERM REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VIENNA PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR LLDCs FOR THE DECADE 2014-2024 IN THE EURO- ASIAN REGION

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The United Nations Conference Centre
Bangkok

Ladies and gentlemen!

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On behalf of the Permanent Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA let me welcome you and express gratitude to our colleagues from the **UN-OHRLLS** for the invitation to take part in this important event which will certainly promote strengthening of cooperation in the field of improvement of trade-economic relations and development of interregional transport communications.

Let me briefly familiarize you with our activity aimed at promoting the expansion of trade-economic relations and transport communications between Europe and Asia.

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The international transport corridor TRACECA is officially recognized by the leading international institutions as a natural transit bridge connecting Europe and Asia.

The promising idea of this transport corridor development is substantiated by the fact that in ancient times the “Great Silk Road” passed along the current TRACECA routes. Therefore, the name “Great Silk Road of the 21 century” given to TRACECA became popular amongst the international community.

The international transport corridor “Europe-the Caucasus-Asia” (TRACECA) occupies a favourable geographic location, one part of it situating in Europe, the other – on the border with the East Asian countries, and offers goods owners and producers as an alternative to intercontinental transoceanic corridor its overland routes passing through the countries of the Black Sea and Caspian Sea basins, the South Caucasus or through Iran and Turkey thereby ensuring exchange of commodities in the whole Eurasian continent. Transit attractiveness of the corridor creates a huge potential for freight flows attraction and so for economic development of the countries in the region.

3 For 26 years the TRACECA institutions have been carrying out continuous activity on the development of transport communication in the corridor and for this long-standing TRACECA experience one cannot but emphasize a considerable contribution of the TRACECA member

states to the development of international cooperation in the field of transport.

More than 1 billion tons of various foreign trade goods have been transported along the corridor routes since the beginning of our activities.

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Today our efforts are conditioned by the necessity of further development and increase of the effectiveness of the TRACECA transport corridor. The specific measures in this dimension are defined in the TRACECA Master Plan for the 7-year period, the document which served the basis for the Strategy for development of the international transport corridor Europe-the Caucasus-Asia for the period 2016-2026, unanimously adopted by the TRACECA member states at the Twelfth Meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA held on 1 June 2016, in Odessa (Ukraine).

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As of today within the TRACECA Programme 85 projects to the total amount surpassing 187 million euros have been financed.

Among them, we can name specified completed projects related to the concept of viability and sustainability of the transport corridor development, such as “Harmonization of Border Crossing Procedures”, “Unified Policy on Transit Fees and

Tariffs”, “Common Legal Basis for Transit Transportation”.

The completed projects favoured the attraction of large investments of international financial institutions and more than 40% of the budget was allocated for the support and development of the transport infrastructure along the corridor.

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Transport networks of many TRACECA countries need modernization. In this connection TRACECA maintains cooperation with international financial institutions as well as encourages and promotes the participation of private sector in financing and managing of transport projects. Public-private partnership directed towards the development of transport infrastructure is becoming a new practice in TRACECA countries.

With the aim of ensuring more active information exchange and cooperation of TRACECA countries with potential investors within TRACECA framework there was created a standing mechanism realized by means of **TRACECA International Investment Forums**. We are convinced that this mechanism guarantees distinct and consistent coordination between TRACECA and investors. Under the umbrella of TRACECA there were held two Investment Forums with participation of concerned international investors and donors. The success and effectiveness of the arranged Forums is

substantiated by the fact that several projects have currently found investors.

Moreover we are presently preparing the next TRACECA Investment Forum to be held in May this year in Bucharest and we are happy to invite all our partners interested in this area.

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Along the established TRACECA road routes there are 46 internal border crossing points. The achievement of significant results along with infrastructure improvement may become possible through removal of existing artificial barriers and application of modern logistic methods which allows an increase of freight traffic volumes by road along the TRACECA corridor.

Development and implementation of the document on combined transport, provided that TRACECA countries ratify the TRACECA Agreement on the Development of Multimodal Transport, will make it possible to facilitate traffic along the whole corridor.

Adoption of unified rules corresponding with international practice reflected in customs codes and subsequent introduction of these rules to by-laws will considerably facilitate transit traffic in the whole corridor.

Effective implementation of the “Single Window” concept will ensure the appropriate level of cooperation of separate authorities and institutions in the countries.

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Besides, within the framework of the IGC TRACECA relevant expert groups were commissioned to participate in the preparation of a subject guide “TRACECA Guide for Border Crossing”.

The aim of its development consists in gaining knowledge regarding the instruments which allow carrying out more efficient measures of border control – both in terms of effectiveness increase, and trade facilitation, since the necessity of enhancing proper control at border crossing points is our actual task.

We hope that the work in this respect will serve for further development of the dialogue and become a great help in the improvement of practice in the field of boundary regime directed towards promotion of trans-boundary handling of commercial goods complying with legal requirements of internationally accepted rules and laws.

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The improvement of transport component is of key importance for TRACECA countries most of which are landlocked countries. Therefore we are

interested in successful realization of the Vienna Action Programme for 2014-2024.

Facilitation of regional trade and trans-boundary traffic is one of the key factors of the economic development which in its turn promotes strengthening of regional stability and cooperation. Besides, ensuring regular trans-boundary traffic and reliability of the regional transport networks within the framework of the improvement of international transport corridors play a significant role in overcoming the difficulties typical of our region like for example the lack of direct access to the world ocean and as a consequence leading to the geographic dependence on transit services through the territory of the adjacent countries.

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We appeal to the international financial institutions to participate in this dimension. During contacts with the bank representatives and other business circles concerned in the long-term investment we emphasize the importance of the steps undertaken for the improvement of the international corridors as a catalyst of the regional and local social and economic development of the territories crossed by these international main routes. Specifically, we continue our negotiations with the ADB regarding the intensification process of implementation of priority projects for the TRACECA corridor and assigning sufficient financing.

This activity directly contributes to the development of competitiveness and attractiveness of the corridor, favours further liberalization of foreign trade and creation of favourable conditions for traffic.

Thus, taking into consideration the significant role of sustainable transport in promotion of trade development, increase of interconnectivity and interoperability of infrastructure components, development of financial cooperation and exchanges on the regional and global levels referring to several important areas of our activity, we realize the importance of active support of the private sector investments, including via promotion of public-private partnerships and loans blended finance for the development and support of infrastructure in the field of intermodal and multimodal transport, railways and roads, sea routes, logistics included, in our countries. Therefore there were developed specific Action Plans as the key focus of our activity.

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We proposed that our colleagues from the UN-OHRLLS should make a corresponding memorandum of understanding between our organizations and suppose that it is necessary to mutually discuss the issues of employment of unused resources, increase of the volumes and diversification of trade. We hope to achieve arrangements on intensification of our joint activity in

transport and economic cooperation, holding of joint working sessions on a regular basis.

One of the key focuses of developing cooperation may be transit facilitation. Coordination in this field will lead to freight traffic increase between our member states and internationally. The present level of overland transport communication between Europe and Asia does not correspond with the potential of the economies in the regions and available opportunities.

Currently the ITC TRACECA is the natural and the most reliable out of the existing transit bridges between Europe and Asia from the point of view of ensuring security and safety of carried goods.

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Summing up my speech I would like to express hope that our mutual efforts will make a constructive contribution to providing high-quality, efficient and reliable transport communications between Europe and Asia.

Let me thank the **UN-OHRLLS** for the invitation and organization of the Meeting, wish everybody success and express readiness to continue cooperation in maintenance of the initiatives and promotion of trade and transport development.

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Thank you for attention!