



MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
AND COMMUNICATIONS OF
THE REPUBLIC OF
LITHUANIA



**Joint Co-Chairmen's Statement
of the 1st ASEM Transport Ministers' Meeting (ASEM TMM)**

19-20 October 2009, Vilnius, Lithuania

1. The 1st ASEM Transport Ministers' Meeting was held on 19-20 October 2009, Vilnius, Republic of Lithuania. The Meeting was opened by Dalia GRYBAUSKAITĖ, President of the Republic of Lithuania.
2. The Meeting was attended by Antonio TAJANI, Vice-President, EU Commissioner for Transport, by Transport Ministers of the ASEM member countries and by Jack Short, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum.
3. Following the HANOI Declaration on the Closer ASEM Economic Partnership at the fifth Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) held in Hanoi on 8-9 October 2004, ASEM member countries committed themselves to fostering a closer ASEM economic partnership including an enhanced cooperation in the field of transport as well. This dialogue should bring solid outcomes in trade facilitation between the regions contributing to the global economic dialogue.
4. A new context of global trade and demand for transport services has evolved since the first ASEM Summit was launched in 1996. One of the features of the current growth of traffic between Europe and Asia is that a number of countries have become important players in the continent of Eurasia especially with increasing reliance to air transport.
5. During the last decade the development of efficient, integrated Euro-Asian land transport links promoted by international bodies, such as UNECE, UNESCAP and ITF, was also witnessed. One of the underlying reasons was a necessity to develop balanced and sustainable transcontinental transport systems to support intensively used maritime links between Europe and Asia.
6. Over the years the European Union has developed its transport policy aiming at sustainability and mobility of European societies. One of the features of the current European policy is the outreach to the whole continent of Eurasia. Asian countries also invest a lot in transport infrastructure in order to meet the demand of transport services.
7. Sharing of experience and identifying mutual interests in the dialogue on transport between Europe and Asia is a very important component of the economic cooperation between ASEM member states. In order to assure successful cooperation within the economic pillar, to implement the principles of the HANOI Declaration to further pursue new initiatives relating to the facilitation and promotion of trade and investment, ASEM could provide a platform for transport issues to be discussed.

Objectives of Transport Ministers' Meeting

8. With the perspective of cooperation in transport development the first ASEM Ministerial Meeting on Cooperation in Transport focused on the following objectives:

- meeting challenges raised by growth of trade and movement of people (regionally and between Europe and Asia);
- finding solutions for balancing freight transport flows through the promotion of integrated approach towards the efficient use of different modes of transport (intermodality and co-modality).

Transcontinental Transport Issues

9. The main topics of the meeting included co-operation on the use of existing transportation possibilities, facilitating trade flows through effective, environment-friendly, safe and secure transport systems.

10. The issues of global logistics (multimodal transport development; cooperation in tariffs and customs procedures in the context of WTO; border crossing and documentation), as well as transport infrastructure development issues (enhancement of infrastructure capacity; identification of bottlenecks; promotion of integrated Euroasian land transport connections, facilitation of trade and movement of people by road, railway, maritime links and airport hubs; investment in transport infrastructure development; experience sharing in Public Private Partnership) and the climate change and the global environment issues were highlighted at the meeting.

11. The importance of transcontinental railway transport links was highly recognized. The potential should be better exploited to facilitate intermodal operations and improve regional economics. In this regard enormous improvements in railway sector productivity and services should be made.

Asia-Europe Transport Development Forum (TDF)

12. TDF took place on 19 October 2009, in Vilnius, in parallel with the first ASEM Transport Ministerial Meeting, thus giving a unique opportunity for the transport business community to address major challenges facing European and Asian countries in terms of transport connections along the world's most important trade routes, logistics business, and sustainable transport development.

13. The conclusions of the TDF, backed by the opinion and consensus of high-ranking speakers and participants from Europe-Asia transport business industry were presented to the Ministers on the second day of the Ministerial Meeting. The recommendations will contribute to the formation of the future transport policy between the regions of Europe and Asia.

14. TDF recommends to further continue ASEM Transport Ministers' Meetings initiative in order to successfully implement the dialogue on transport under the ASEM format.

15. TDF recommends the ASEM Ministers of Transport to closely cooperate in order to facilitate the development of intermodal transport and co-modality thus contributing to the creation of more sustainable transport systems as well as to strengthen the cooperation to develop transport infrastructure of regional and international importance, thus creating the ground for better competitiveness in the long term and to encourage private public partnerships (PPP) in the development of transport infrastructure.

Vilnius Declaration

16. Ministers commended in particular the adoption of the Vilnius Declaration on Closer Asia-Europe Transport Co-operation, which sets out guidelines of cooperation and relations in transport for the years to come. The Vilnius Declaration is attached as Annex.

Vision of the future Euro-Asian transport system

17. Ministers discussed the importance of common vision for the development of transportation between Asia and Europe. Special focus on building efficient interoperable Euro-Asian transport system was paid. Ministers agreed that the new dialogue is necessary to strengthen the main drivers of the future transportation and logistics between Europe and Asia. Important role of transport to contribute to the stimulation of economy in the short, medium and long terms was acknowledged.

18. The Ministers will meet again for the 2nd ASEM Transport Ministers' Meeting in 2011. It is suggested that the next meeting should be convened in China and the Delegation of China agreed to give a positive consideration.