

PRESENTATION  
by  
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*Training-workshop for policy-makers  
from Landlocked Developing Countries and Transit Countries  
Session 4: Impact of COVID-19 on  
Transport Connectivity – Experiences, Lessons, Solutions  
Sub-region Experience  
1 October 2021*

Distinguished participants,

Transport connectivity is high on the agenda of our Organization, as it is essential to facilitate the movements of goods, services and people.

The *Economic Agenda* – which is the strategic document guiding the activities of our Organization, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of our Member States – puts on the first place “promoting sustainable transport systems which meet the economic, social and environmental needs of the people of the Black Sea Region, in order to reduce regional disparities and to link the BSEC Region’s transport infrastructure to European and Asian Networks”.

The Ministers of Transport of the BSEC Member States meet frequently and discuss development of transport infrastructure and procedures for facilitating transport.

Our Organization, like the other international organizations, has been adapting its activities to the challenging developments created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our conviction is that the appropriate response is increased interaction, enhanced cohesion, constructive dialogue and coordinated action.

Consequently, we have started online activities reaching out to our Member States to coordinate efforts in order to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic in transport and other key sectors of regional cooperation.

In our view, analysing the challenges impeding the effective connectivity among the BSEC Member States due to the Covid-19 pandemic and drawing the necessary policies for enhancing the preparedness against future emergencies is of vital significance in the wider Black Sea region.

In particular, the road transport issues have become crucially important, given, on the one hand, the ongoing Coronavirus social, sanitary and mobility restrictions on movement, which severely impacted commercial road transport operators, and, on the other hand, the necessity to maintain the supply chains open and functioning, especially for essentials such as food and medical equipment.

Our Organization has been focusing more on the real problems aggravating road-transport in the region, like border-crossing delays, lack of digitalization, and lack of information exchange.

In this context, our Organization pays much attention to the promotion of Single Window and Joint Control procedures in order to reduce waiting time for vehicles at national border-crossing points and to facilitate customs checks.

We have been actively coordinating efforts with our transport partner organizations, first of all, with the *International Road Transport Union* (IRU) and the *Union of the Road Transport Associations in the BSEC Region* (BSEC-URTA) in taking practical steps towards border-crossing facilitation and digitalization of transport documents.

We are closely monitoring transport developments in the BSEC Region in order to further promote the cooperation in this field among our Member States, in accordance with the prevailing epidemiological situation.

On 15 March 2021, the Secretaries General of IRU, TRACECA, BSEC PERMIS, the Cooperation Council of Turkic Speaking States (Turkic Council) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) met online and addressed the pressing issues related to the negative impact of Covid-19 on the road transport sector.

Their exchanges of views concluded with a *Joint Statement*, launching an urgent call to governments for providing impactful actions that will allow the road transport industry to drive the economic recovery post-Covid-19, and making a number of recommendations to governments to, *inter alia*:

- keep national and international mobility and supply chains operational, while ensuring safe working conditions for transport workers;

- encourage targeted financial support measures for road transport operators;
- encourage the use of digital tools that already exist;
- consider coordinated approaches for a digital Covid-19 negative test or vaccine passport for commercial drivers.

We uploaded to the Website of our organization a document with the links to the latest information concerning measures adopted by all BSEC Member States, in order to mitigate the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on internal and international transports.