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**STATEMENT BY
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DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION OF THE
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT
THE CONCLUDING MEETING OF THE 25th OSCE ECONOMIC AND
ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**

Prague, 7 September 2017

**Greening the economy and building partnerships for security in the
OSCE region**

**Session V: Promoting connectivity and building trust
and business partnerships in the OSCE area**

Mr. Chairperson,
Distinguished Forum participants,

Allow me as representative of the Ministry of Transport to say a few words about the role of transport in economic connectivity and integration processes.

Developing the transport system is a very important factor in the effective functioning of the economy of States, domestic and international trade, and the economic connectivity of national economies.

The Russian Federation is developing co-operation in transport with partners in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and with Asian and European countries in bilateral and multilateral formats.

Within the EAEU, together with our partners Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, we are working actively on the creation of a single transport space, creating a common market for services within the EAEU and developing transport connectivity. The Presidents of our countries have set the task of eliminating existing restrictions in all means of transport by 2025. We are actively co-operating with partners today to achieve this objective.

The following impressive achievements in Eurasian transport integration can already be mentioned:

In road transport, bilateral and transit traffic is possible without permits and a programme of gradual liberalization of freight road transport in the EAEU continues to be implemented.

Regarding internal waterways, we are in the process of signing an agreement on navigation that is very important for our partners.

In air transport, we are taking concrete steps to develop air traffic, harmonize legislation, ensure fair and bona fide competition and, in the long term, create a common “Eurasian” airspace.

As far as railways are concerned, common rules have been adopted for the provision of rail infrastructure services and a procedure has been defined to regulate it, including a basic tariff policy, and the unification of rail tariffs and the elaboration and adoption of unified technical regulations are proceeding.

We also co-operate in the training of transport sector staff.

We are devising approaches together for co-operation with major international institutions such as the Silk Road Economic Belt. As a participant in this co-operation, Russia is contributing to strengthening connectivity in logistics, transport infrastructure and intermodal transport.

International transport transverses our countries by the shortest routes and with a common regulatory and customs space, which ensures that freight can be delivered with a minimum delay. The establishment of transcontinental transport corridors through the EAEU with harmonized characteristics will make it possible to optimize international economic structures and in this way to improve access to raw material sources and new market outlets while significantly reducing delivery times and simplifying the organization of controls.

The north-south and east-west corridors are among the most important for us. Together we are devising ways of increasing their competitiveness by improving customs legislation and tariff policy, simplifying freight transit documentation and elaborating a technological framework for co-operation in different transport modes.

The north-south international transport corridor is 7,200 km in length and has been created to speed up transit from India, Iran and other countries of the Persian Gulf to the north and west of Europe. On the agenda is the drafting and signing of an agreement on mutual recognition of customs controls of goods being transported along this corridor.

Efforts are currently being made to increase traffic between China and Europe in the west-east corridor on the railways of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus by providing shippers with a dependable and competitive service with fixed and transparent tariffs and guaranteed minimum delivery delays.

Moreover, a road transport route from Europe to western China is currently being planned, which passes through the territory of Russia and Kazakhstan and, in the future, Belarus. The Northern Sea Route is an important segment of the route from Europe to Asia. It could link up in future with the planned twenty-first-century Maritime Silk Road initiated by our Chinese colleagues.

The definition of optimal logistical systems for freight transport on the above-mentioned routes and the streamlining of the legal, technological and tariff regulations will help in efforts to achieve transport connectivity.

We believe that it is important that co-operation be developed between the EAEU and the European Union as the leading players in the transport services market in Eurasia. This co-operation is in the interests of building an effective Eurasian transport system that would create a single economic space from Lisbon to Vladivostok. I should like to point out in this connection that both the EAEU countries and the EU Member States are contributing within the Organisation for Co-operation between Railways to the elaboration of a new Convention on International Through Railway Traffic. Agreements on simplifying transit customs procedures, in particular a move towards linking the Russian and EU transit systems, could play a large and useful role.

Russia plays an active role in the transport activities of international regional organizations like the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. In the latter organization, for example, we are financing the project “Development of seamless rail-based intermodal transport services in Northeast and Central Asia for enhancing Euro-Asian transport linkages”.

We highly appreciate the initiatives by the OSCE to encourage dialogue on transport connectivity and to support projects for developing Eurasian transport links and the holding of seminars on best practices at border crossing points. We should like to recommend that the OSCE revive its consideration of all of these aspects, which have been regrettably neglected in recent years. In our opinion, the OSCE should make full use of its great experience from the accumulated transport commitments undertaken by the participating States with a view to adopting Ministerial Council decisions on these topics.

International transport co-operation deserves our shared attention since it strengthens the economy, stability and security in the OSCE area, represents one of the key elements of regional connectivity and facilitates the development and interlinking of integration processes.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that questions of international transport co-operation will be discussed substantively at the annual Transport Week, which is being held in Moscow in early December and which all interested parties are hereby invited to attend (<http://transweek.ru/2017/en>).

Thank you for your attention.