

Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities

Trade and Transport Facilitation



Why trade and transport matters

Well-functioning international, multi-modal transport systems are necessary preconditions for trade and have a favourable impact on the business and investment climate of countries and their economic development. Trade is a major factor for prosperity and stability. Over the years, the OSCE has addressed issues related to trade and transport facilitation and security.

Procedural impediments at border crossings hinder international trade and foreign investments, creating high costs for trade transactions and delays in the cross-

border movement of goods. Additionally, lack of integrity at borders and in customs services further deters trade and investment opportunities. Trade and transport facilitation

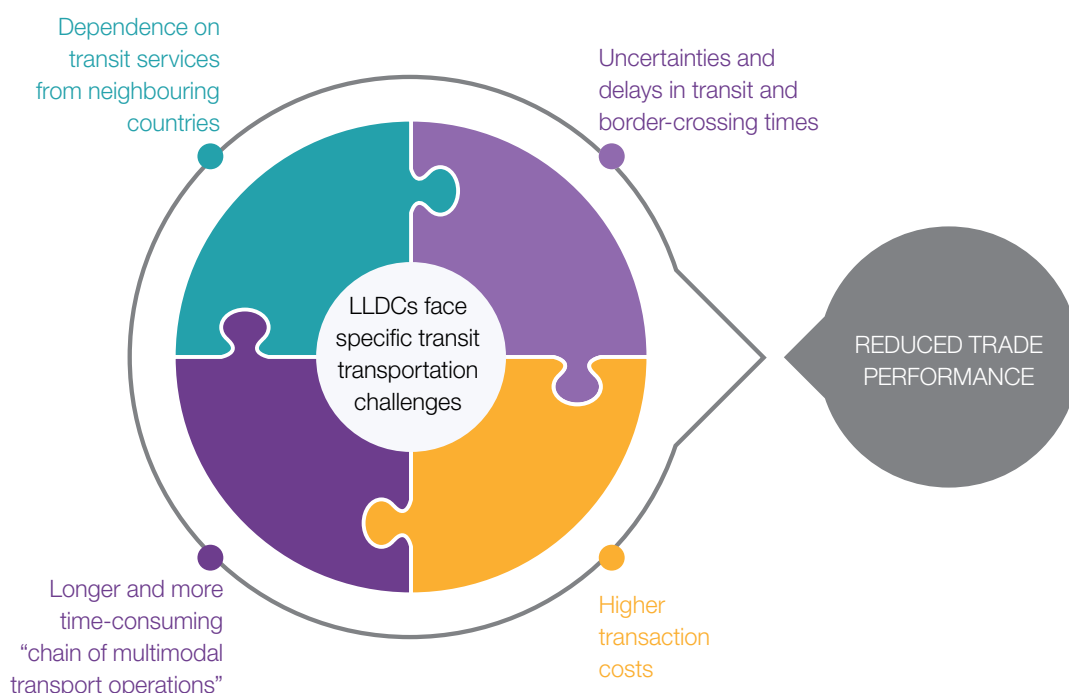
implies simplifying and harmonizing international transport procedures and information flows associated with them. It includes addressing the specific transit transportation challenges, which landlocked countries are facing and promoting the ratification and implementation of relevant international legal instruments.

At the same time, border crossings face a variety of security challenges emanating from international terrorism and transnational organized crime, which are serious threats to the stability and security in the OSCE region. These security challenges range from smuggling drugs, trafficking of human beings and small arms and light weapons to illegal border crossings.

Challenges

Out of the 32 Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) worldwide, ten are OSCE participating States and one is a Partner for Co-operation:

- Armenia
- Azerbaijan
- Kazakhstan
- Kyrgyzstan
- Moldova
- Mongolia
- Tajikistan
- North Macedonia
- Turkmenistan
- Uzbekistan
- Afghanistan (OSCE Partner for Co-operation)



Assisting LLDCs to more effectively tackle their specific transit transport-related challenges is among the priorities of the OSCE. While the international donor community, including financial and development institutions and donor countries, plays a major role in providing financial and technical support for the construction of transport infrastructure, the OSCE has focused on tackling non-physical obstacles to trade and transport.

What we do

In this area, the Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities (OCEEA) supports the adoption and implementation of legal instruments, provides political support for the development of international transport and logistics networks, promotes best practices and standards, assists participating States in combating corruption in customs and border services, and facilitates public-private dialogue.



International trade and transport play a vital role in the economic development of the OSCE participating States. The OSCE works across a variety of areas to facilitate international trade and foreign investment, and to minimise delays and risks to the cross-border movement of goods. (iStock)

Our mandate

- OSCE Maastricht Strategy Document for the Economic and Environmental Dimension, 2003
- OSCE Ljubljana Border Security and Management Concept, 2005
- Brussels Ministerial Council Decision on Future Transport Dialogue in the OSCE, 2006
- Helsinki Ministerial Council Decision on the Follow-Up to the Sixteenth Economic and Environmental Forum on Maritime and Inland Waterways Co-operation, 2008
- Vilnius Ministerial Council Decision on Strengthening Transport Dialogue in the OSCE, 2011
- Hamburg Ministerial Council Decision on Strengthening Good Governance and Promoting Connectivity, 2016

Capacity-building

The OCEEA offers participating States national and regional tailor-made technical assistance on topics related to border crossing facilitation and good governance in customs; trade facilitation; and fostering regional and interregional economic co-operation.

It provides guidance on implementing trade facilitation measures, aimed at making customs, administrative and regulatory processes more predictable and transparent, simplifying and harmonizing rules and procedures, strengthening cross-border and regional co-operation of relevant authorities including customs, and strengthening dialogue and co-operation between relevant government authorities and the private sector.

Numerous training activities on these topics for senior customs, trade and transport officials have been held at the OSCE Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe.

A platform for dialogue

The OSCE as a neutral actor is well placed to provide a platform for dialogue, facilitate the exchange of best practices and implement activities to enhance trade and transport connectivity and good governance in order to unlock opportunities for economic growth and development. Due to the very nature of connectivity in terms of cross-border activities, regional and interregional co-operation is a logical consequence which the OSCE Secretariat pursues both politically and in terms of ExB projects.

What we do

(continued)

Disseminating best practices

The OCEEA promotes the wide dissemination and implementation of best practices and standards developed by relevant organizations in the area of trade and transport, and by promoting better co-ordination in this field among participating States and partner organizations.



OSCE-UNECE Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings – A Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective

The handbook aims to assist OSCE participating States, particularly those which are landlocked developing countries with limited access to world markets and global supply chains, in developing more efficient border, transport and customs policies. It is designed to serve as a reference document for officials in transport, trade and finance ministries, customs agencies, transport, freight and logistics business communities, civil society and researchers.



2012 Inland Transport Security Discussion Forum Proceedings

This publication contains academic-style papers on transport security issues in the road, rail and inland waterways sectors. It offers an overview of current weaknesses and threats, and ways to improve co-ordination and the effectiveness of national and international efforts in making the inland transport sector more secure.

These publications are available on the OSCE website at <http://www.osce.org/publications/transport-and-trade>

Who we work with

The OCEEA co-operates and co-ordinates efforts with various stakeholders, including national governments as the main decision-makers, the private sector and industry associations as the main users of transport infrastructure and services and the main drivers of international trade, as well as international organizations and financial institutions.

The OCEEA assists governments in addressing challenges related to transport, customs and trade and implements its activities in close co-operation with the network of OSCE field operations and specialized partner organizations, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

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