

Facilitating Global Trade: Connectivity Across Borders

Wednesday, 2 May, 16:30-18:00

SESSION OUTLINE

Crossing borders has always been a problem in transport. In the 1980's and 1990's steady progress was made to simplify procedures and reduce delays and costs especially in Europe, where many borders disappeared, but also in other regions. The terrorist attacks of September 2001 resulted in a sharp increase in security measures for international travel and trade. Moreover, in some regions, like the former USSR or South East Europe, a set of new borders was created. In summary, new security requirements, as well as existing procedures mean that international transport still faces a wide range of obstacles and costs in crossing borders.

There are a number of positive examples where stringent security measures applied after 2001 were instituted, while maintaining relative fluidity in cross-border flows (e.g. Canada/US), or, forward-looking security and export-oriented approaches adopted by some customs agencies (e.g. Australia). However customary obstacles observed in border-crossing procedures during past decades still persist. These include delays resulting from the different controls required at borders; problems resulting from lack of coordination between different authorities within and between countries; integrated infrastructure for parking or approach lanes for road transport; lack of interoperability for railways; limited use of electronic communication technologies, which, when used, do not always comply with international standards; and finally, specific problems of bribery and corruption. Lack of leadership at borders remains an issue. Several examples show the severity of the problems still encountered in different parts of the world, such as EU/Russia, Mexico/US, and India/Bangladesh borders.

The session will bring together key stakeholders to examine:

- How Transport Ministers' previous recommendations on overcoming border crossing obstacles have been implemented;
- Key remaining issues and policy challenges in overcoming deficiencies in border crossings;
- Good practice and recent developments which can be shared;
- Areas where further action needs to be taken to facilitate fluidity of border crossings.

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