



International Conference Silk Road connecting China with Europe via Baltic

Concluding statement

The international conference took place in Vilnius and Klaipeda on the 5th to 6th of September 2016 under the title "Silk Road connecting China with Europe (via Baltic)", it gathered over 70 participants from 8 countries: Germany, China, Lithuania, Sweden, Russia, France, Latvia and Belgium. The largest delegation was from China - even 15 highest-level authorities of transport and logistics companies and heads of government institutions participated in the conference.

The aim of the international Conference was to promote the dialogue between the transport and logistics stakeholders of the Baltic Sea Region and China on the issues based on the outcomes of the first CIFA and EWTCA Conference in Qingdao on 23 September 2015, as well as, in order to implement the provisions of a newly prepared Transport Action Plan of the EU Baltic Sea Region Strategy concerning the EU transport connections with the third countries. It serves as the basis for transport and logistics business promotion in BSR and along Europe-Asia transport links via Baltic, seeking to:

- jointly build smooth, efficient and secure transport and logistics networks connecting China with Europe (via Baltic);
- improve interoperability of logistics centres and transport hubs including major seaports (in order to produce new services and products) along the transport routes connecting China with Europe (via the Baltics);
- create a large transport junction connecting China with Europe (via the Baltics);

- call transport business stakeholders and the respective railway authorities to work on starting regular railway operations connecting China with Europe (via the Baltics);
- establish a joint body for the negotiations on cooperation-related issues and seek the consensus;
- initiate R&D activity and promote transport and logistics clusters development along the transport links connecting China with Europe (via the Baltics);

Connectivity between the two macro-regions should take into account new innovative intermodal and multimodal supply chain solutions that serve both as alternatives and complements to the traditional transport routes and means to deal with the growing trade volumes between Asia and Europe. In this context, the new international multimodal transport corridors and routes need to be efficient, secure and economically and environmentally sustainable. These routes could also serve to promote new "green" transport technologies.

The agenda of the conference had very ambitious goals which complied with the current challenges related to the development of the Silk Road branch China - Europe via the Baltic Sea Region. These goals and tasks of the conference are directly related to the new guidelines and provisions concerning BSR transport links with the third countries in the Action Plan of the EU BSR strategy's transport policy.

During the first session (in Vilnius) discussion best practice examples and recommendations were presented on how these examples could be adapted in our BSR space, the researches facilitating the search for rational solutions, elimination of infrastructure bottlenecks and non-physical barriers along Asia - Europe surface transport connections. Participants discussed broadly about: the potential of the Silk Road connecting China with Europe (via the Baltics) and its impacts on trade between the Baltic Sea region and China; Strategy of companies from Baltic Sea Region and China related to business opportunities realized by using the new "Silk Road" landbridge China/Europe vice versa; BSR attractiveness for foreign investors on localisation of industrial projects; reorganization of value chain along global transport corridors, and Application and development of IT along EWTC.



Chinese delegation



During the session (in Klaipėda) „Silk Road connecting China with Europe (via the Baltics)“ business representatives from China, Lithuania, Germany and Sweden discussed specific issues related to cooperation in forming the network by focusing on the development of the East-West transport corridor in the Southern part of the Baltic Sea Region as one of the potential sections of the Silk Road. Klaipėda session was directed toward the beginning of implementation of cooperation goals which have been agreed in the Qingdao conference on 23 September 2015.

The principle „win -win“ (stressed by Chinese delegation) would be the basic principle for the development of China - Europe transport route via the Baltic Sea. At the same time, such items as: the efficiency of multimodal (intermodal) interchanges, the attempts to organize nonstop trans-shipment, one document service, one stop (Single Window) information system architecture should be in the EWTCA Agenda of future cooperation with CIFA.

The face-to-face meetings in Klaipėda, as well as, following visit of Chinese delegation to Sweden (Karlskrona) provides an excellent opportunities to identify partners for development of Silk Road link to Europe via Baltic.

A delegation consisting of representatives from “Sinotran Tianjin Branch”, the China International Freight Forwarders Association, Logistics operators, Port Agents etc., had a fruitful conference with the Port of Karlskrona, major Shippers in Sweden, as well as the largest rail operator in Scandinavia-Green Cargo and the Shipping Company DFDS Seaways, Volvo. The Chinese delegation also established new relations with Swedish exporters and logistic operators via presentations and networking during the visit.

Finally, during the Conference was agreed that EWTCA and CICETE (China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges) will join their efforts on building a sub- mechanism for the cooperation on transportation facilitation and logistics development amongst MCSR CA (United Nations Maritime-Continental Silk Road Cities Alliance) city members and EWTCA members in near future. The sub-mechanism may follow the rules MCSR CA regulates for the specialized committees

The main outcomes of the conference (in Vilnius and Klaipėda) and visit to Sweden.

European EWTCA partners and Chinese CIFA partners agreed:

- The principle „win -win“ should be the basic principle for the development of China -Europe transport route via the Baltic Sea.
- CIFA will try to coordinate Chinese partners to promote the efficiency of multimodal (intermodal) interchanges, the attempts to organize nonstop trans-shipment, one document service, one stop (Single Window) information system architecture that should be in the Agenda of future cooperation between EWTCA and CIFA.
- EWTCA and CIFA should strengthen information sharing in the future.
- In realizing this idea it is necessary to identify the key transport hubs and seaports along the Silk Road branch to Europe via Baltic, as well as on this basis to establish partners network for the cooperation (including operators).
- To establish a negotiation and coordination mechanism among the related nations and enterprises under the common principle.
- Chinese partners proposed such partnership network could consist of: CIFA , EWTCA, and companies in Europe and China, like Sinotrans, CRIMT, CRRC, VPA Logistics, Klaipėda port, DFDS, Karlskrona, Green Cargo and etc.

EWTCA and MCSR CA Secretariat both agreed that the two organizations need to join their efforts on building a sub-mechanism for the cooperation on transportation facilitation and logistics development amongst MCSR CA city members and EWTCA members in near future.



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Face-to-face meetings