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IRU's NELTI: creating new business opportunities on the Eurasian landmass

Almaty – Unveiled on the occasion of the 5th IRU Euro-Asian Road Transport Conference, the final results of the [IRU's New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative \(NELTI\)](#) show that reopening the Silk Road to trade by road transport constitutes a viable, cost-effective alternative to traditional, increasingly saturated trading routes and that remaining impediments to significantly increasing such trade flows are of a procedural nature, not infrastructural.

Launched in September 2008 with the support of international organisations and national governments, the IRU's NELTI Project piloted regular commercial deliveries over 6 months by transport companies from 8 countries, to further the UN Millennium Development Goals and the Almaty Action Plan by assisting Eurasian landlocked countries' industries to have access to the major world markets, as no country is landlocked for road transport.

On average, some 20 vehicles per month operated under the IRU NELTI Project. The overall distance covered by hauliers exceeded 1,560,000 km. The average distance covered by each vehicle on a round-trip was approximately 10,740 km (5,370 km each way). The overall volume of goods carried exceeded 4,200 tonnes, which corresponds to an average load of 14.4 tonnes per vehicle each way (28.8 tonnes per round-trip).

Products shipped under this IRU NELTI Project were extremely varied, ranging from food products (confectionary, capers, sugar, fruit and vegetables, dried fruits etc.) and semi-manufactured products (wool, yarns, rubber, spare parts etc.) to medicines, industrial equipment, military shipments, and consumer goods.

Final results analysed by the Dutch Transport Research Institute NEA, show a high competitive potential in the development of NELTI routes, but highlight that almost 40 % of road transport time along the Silk Road is lost at borders due to inappropriate border crossing procedures which impede trade growth along the entire Eurasian landmass, and not to lacking infrastructure as is commonly, yet wrongly perceived. In addition, approximately 25 % of the transport costs were due to payments and levies, both official and unofficial, borne by the hauliers en route and at border crossing points.

IRU General Delegate to the CIS, Igor Rounov, highlighted, "Streamlining border-crossing procedures through the ratification and strict implementation of the UN multilateral trade and road transport facilitation instruments, as well as by using the web-based applications recently developed by the IRU, namely the IRU TIR-EPD and SafeTIR, would significantly reduce transport times and costs, thereby further increasing the competitiveness of road shipments along IRU NELTI routes without spending a single penny on additional infrastructure. "

- See [IRU NELTI's final report](#)
- See [Conference highlights](#)