



# Global Gateway Investors Forum for EU-Central Asia Transport Connectivity

Indicative Programme

SQUARE Brussels - Mont des Arts, 1000 Brussels, Belgium

**Day 1 | Monday, 29 January 2024**

08:45 - 09:30 **Registration & Welcome Coffee**

09:30 - 10:30 **Opening session (Copper Hall)**

*The Transport Investors Forum takes forward the conclusions of the EU-commissioned [Study on Sustainable Transport Corridors between the EU and Central Asia](#) conducted by the EBRD and published in June 2023. It aims to translate political commitments of the EU and Central Asian countries into tangible operational deliverables. The opening session will provide political steer, setting the scene and framing the ambitions of further developing the Trans-Caspian Transport Network as part of the increased and deepened EU-Central Asia relations.*

Keynote remarks:

- Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission

Address by:

- Josep Borrell Fontelles, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission
- Bakyt Torobaev, Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of the Ministers, Kyrgyzstan
- Jamshid Khodjaev, Deputy Prime Minister, Uzbekistan
- Marat Karabayev, Minister of Transport, Kazakhstan
- Azim Ibrohim, Minister of Transport, Tajikistan
- Batyr Annayev, Deputy Director General of the Agency of Transport and Communications under the Cabinet of Ministers, Turkmenistan
- Georges Gilkinet, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Mobility, Belgium as EU Presidency

Moderated by:

- Jennifer Baker, Independent Reporter and Presenter

10:30 - 11:00 **Coffee break**

11:00 - 12:30

## **Supporting sustainable transport connectivity in Central Asia and prospects for Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor (Copper Hall)**

*During the Forum, several concrete commitments will be announced by the international community to deliver on sustainable transport connectivity in Central Asia. This panel gathering high-level representatives from governments and International Financial Institutions will discuss transport connectivity in Central Asia, development of transport networks with and within the region, investment climate in Central Asia and prospects for the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor.*

Keynote speaker:

- Adina Vălean, Commissioner for Transport, European Commission

Speakers:

- Teresa Czerwińska, Vice-President, European Investment Bank (EIB)
- Mark Bowman, Vice-President for Policy and Partnerships, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Anna Mihneva-Natova, Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications, Bulgaria
- Charles Cormier, Regional Director for Infrastructure, World Bank
- Eugene Zhukov, Director-General for Central and West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank

Moderated by:

- Tamsin Rose, Independent Moderator

12:30 - 13:45

## **Buffet lunch (Magritte Foyer)**

13:45 - 15:00

## **Parallel thematic sessions**

### **1.1. Land transport infrastructure as an opportunity to reduce transit time between Central Asia and Europe (Copper Hall)**

*Among transport links between the EU and Central Asia, the EU study on sustainable transport connections with Central Asia (published in June 2023) analysed the performance and capacity of cross-continental land-based connections. Identified challenges elevate both time and cost of transiting goods via the Trans-Caspian corridor and contribute therefore to high unpredictability – which is often cited as the key hindrance for private sector operators. Improving land-based transport infrastructure is key to enhance the operational efficiency and economic attractiveness of the Trans-Caspian corridor.*

*This session looks at connectivity challenges in terms of rail, road and multimodal transport links and logistics, and opportunities for improvement to reduce transit time and cost. By looking at the various perspectives of national*



*authorities and experienced transport and logistics operators, the discussion will look at key investment needs and potential solutions and will formulate recommendations for follow-up.*

Speakers:

- Tilek Tekebaev, Minister of Transport and Communications, Kyrgyzstan
- Henrik Hololei, Hors Classe Adviser, European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships
- Zsuzsanna Hargitai, Managing Director for Central Asia, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Aibek Kapar, Deputy CEO for logistics, KTZ Express JSC
- Max Jensen, Head of Division for Regional Transport Programmes, European Investment Bank (EIB)
- Jens Gräfer, Head of International Affairs, Deutsche Bahn AG

Moderated by:

- Maja Bakran Marcich, Deputy Director General, European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport

## **1.2. Connecting across borders: how trade facilitation is pivotal to unlock EU-Central Asia trade & investment potential (Silver Hall)**

*This session will explore strategies to attract investments and increase trade between Europe and Central Asia through improved “soft” connectivity. While long term investments in hard infrastructure along the Trans-Caspian international trade route as the major link between Europe and Central Asia are required, the operational capacity of the corridor can be improved only by addressing procedural bottlenecks and inefficiencies that limit its overall performance, such as lack of harmonized procedures, insufficient automation of border processes, poor inter-agency and cross-border coordination or delays at border crossing points.*

*In this session, participants will zoom in on key trade facilitation solutions, best practices and opportunities to cut the time and cost of trade between Europe and Central Asia. Building upon the current initiatives, trends and lessons learned, the discussion will explore the way forward to reduce the complexity of trade and customs operations, accelerate the digitalisation of trade and transport documents, and deepen cross-border cooperation to decrease administrative burdens along the supply chains.*

Speakers:

- Mamanbiy Omarov, First Deputy Minister of Transport, Uzbekistan
  - Sanzhar Bolotov, Deputy Minister of Economy and Commerce, Kyrgyzstan
  - Michael Schiffer, USAID Assistant Administrator for Asia, United States
  - Birgit Viohl, Head of WTO Trade Facilitation Facility
  - Leila Batyrbekova, Chair of the Europe and Central Asia Transport and Trade Logistics Association
  - Mikheil Nibladze, Managing Director, Cerberus Frontier market investment platform
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Moderated by:

- Pierre Bonthonneau, Head of Trade Facilitation Unit, International Trade Centre (ITC)

15:00 - 15:30

### **Coffee break**

15:30 - 17:00

### **Parallel thematic sessions**

#### **2.1. South Caucasus and Türkiye: the strong connectivity link between Central Asia and Europe (Copper Hall)**

*The South Caucasus and Türkiye hold pivotal strategic significance on the route connecting the EU with Central Asia, through the Black and Caspian Seas and Türkiye. In a concerted effort to enhance connectivity and bolster transit capabilities, the countries within this region are actively formulating a range of transport policies and undertaking strategic investments. These initiatives receive support from the EU as well as local and international partners, all contributing to the joint effort to enhance the Trans-Caspian Transport corridor. This session will particularly delve into the progress and prospects in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Türkiye, emphasising the central role of these countries in terms of wider regional connectivity.*

*The objectives of the session will be to discuss among others the implementation of the extended Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and related investment plans in the Caucasus region and Türkiye, transport links between the extended TEN-T network and Central Asia, and key policies, ongoing and planned investments and financing opportunities to improve transport connectivity in the region.*

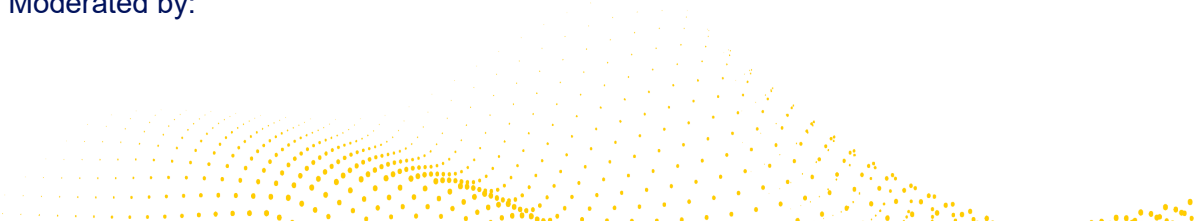
Keynote speaker:

- Guram Guramishvili, Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Georgia

Speakers:

- Armen Simonyan, Deputy Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, Armenia
- Maja Bakran Marcich, Deputy Director General, European Commission's Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport
- Burak Aykan, Director General, Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, Türkiye
- Fariz Aliyev, Head of Transport Policy Department, Ministry of Digital Development and Transport, Azerbaijan
- Gregoire F. Gauthier, Senior transport and logistics expert, World Bank
- Arturas Piliponis, Ernst and Young, Team Leader, EU4Digital Facility

Moderated by:



- Diana Jabłońska, Head of Unit for Georgia, Moldova, Economic Investment Plan, European Commission's Directorate-General for Neighbourhood & Enlargement Negotiations

## **2.2. Soft connectivity II: Making the Corridor Work: Interoperability and Harmonisation for Connectivity (Silver Hall)**

*The adoption and proper implementation of common standards and rules play an important role in enhancing cross-border movement of goods. Regional agreements and multilateral initiatives are important enabling conditions to harmonise regulatory regimes and ensure rail or road interoperability. Countries along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor (TCTC) have pursued soft trade reforms in recent years, resulting notably in improved information availability, better internal border agency co-operation and greater involvement of the trade community. However, significant bottlenecks to trade and transit remain due to the co-existence of unharmonised regulatory regimes. The multiplicity of regulatory frameworks and sometimes incomplete enforcement result in unpredictable shipment times, compliance difficulties and increased costs.*

*This session will provide the opportunity to discuss current challenges and concrete solutions related to rail and road interoperability. Multilateral actors, freight transporters and public sector representatives from the TCTC countries and the EU will share their perspectives and experiences and suggest ways to harmonise and enforce rules that will enhance rail and road transport interoperability.*

### Speakers:

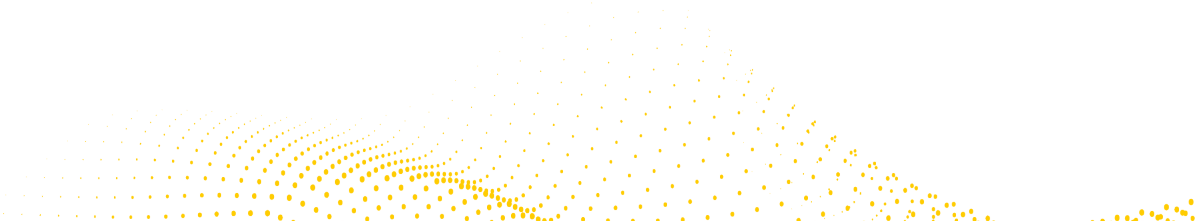
- Grégory Lecomte, Head of Eurasia division's Central Asia Unit, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- Tatiana Rey-Bellet, Director, TIR and Transit, International Road Transport Union (IRU)
- Asset Assavbayev, Secretary General, Intergovernmental Commission of the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA) programme
- Gaidar Abdikerimov, Secretary General, Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR) association
- Tabea Klang, Managing Director, Deutsche Bahn Cargo Eurasia
- Arif Aghayev, Advisor to the Chairman, Azerbaijan Railways
- Josselin Petit, Advisor, European Rail Freight Association (ERFA)

### Moderated by:

- William Tompson, Head of the Eurasia Division, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

17:00 – 17:15

**Break**



- Edvardas Bumšteinas, Head of Division for Asia and the Pacific, European Investment Bank

17:15 – 18:30

## **Perspectives from Central Asia (I)**

### **3.1. Maximising the Efficiency of the Middle Corridor: Kazakhstan's Approach and Current Progress (Silver Hall)**

*The Middle Corridor is experiencing ever-growing flows of goods. In 2023, the volume of transportation on the Middle Corridor via ports of Aktau and Kuryk grew by 66% compared to 2022, and reached 2.76 million tons. Kazakhstan has stepped up its efforts to maximise the efficiency of the corridor. We believe that improving connectivity between Kazakhstan's transport network and the Trans-European Transport Network on one hand, and developing a cooperation between the Middle Corridor and the continental routes on the other will increase the economic resilience across the region and will boost world trade beyond the geographical boundaries of the Corridor.*

*The event will allow to present Kazakhstan's policy shift, actions and plans with regard to ensuring efficient service and managing greater volumes along the Middle Corridor. The speakers will discuss the progress aimed at elimination of bottlenecks, investment attraction, cooperation with the corridor's stakeholders and its investors, as well as improving cross-border transport operations.*

*The discussion will refer to the operation of the recommendations of the EBRD study on sustainable transport connections between Central Asia and Europe.*

Opening address by:

- Margulan Baimukhan, Ambassador of Kazakhstan in Belgium, Head of the Mission to the European Union

Keynote speaker:

- Marat Karabayev, Minister of Transport, Kazakhstan

Speakers:

- Mark Bowman, Vice-President, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- Edvardas Bumšteinas, Head of Division for Asia and the Pacific, European Investment Bank
- Yerlan Koishibayev, Deputy Chairman, Management Board for Logistics of the Kazakhstan Temir Zholy NC JSC
- Aleksander Klim, Chairman, Supervisory Council of the DAR RAIL LLP
- Abay Turikpenbaev, Chairman, Executive Board of the Aktau Port
- Leng Yew Ming, CEO, KPMC Ltd
- Nurzhan Marabayev, General Director, Semurg Invest LLP

Moderated by:

- Leila Batyrbekova, Secretary General, Europe & Central Asia Transport and Trade Association (ECATA)



### **3.2. Tajikistan - Investing in Climate Resilient and Environmentally Sustainable Transport Infrastructure (Hall 100)**

*Tajikistan intends to produce 100% of its energy by 2032 by using “green energy” sources and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum by 2037. As recently announced by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Emomali Rahmon, by developing a “green economy” Tajikistan will truly become a “green country” in 2037. A systems approach to sustainable transport infrastructure is crucial to achieve this goal.*

*This session, co-organised with the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), will discuss the opportunities and challenges of investing in climate resilient and environmentally sustainable transport infrastructure, which requires redesigning, modernising, and improving transport infrastructure. It builds on the strong collaboration between the Government of Tajikistan and UNDRR, which saw in 2023 the launch of the Early Warnings for All initiative implemented in Tajikistan and 29 other pilot countries worldwide. This initiative, launched by the UN Secretary General to improve early warning systems by 2023, will include in the case of Tajikistan the introduction of new technologies for warning in transport infrastructure to contribute to both resilience and reduction/prevention of harmful effects of hazards.*

#### **Speakers:**

Opening remarks:

- Azim Ibrohim, Minister of Transport of the Republic of Tajikistan.
- Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director-General, European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Partnerships

Roundtable:

- Andris Ameriks, Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair of the Committee on Transport and Tourism
- Abhilash Panda, Deputy Chief, Intergovernmental processes, Interagency cooperation and Partnerships Branch, UNDRR
- Bakhtiyor Faiziev, Associate Director and Senior Banker for Sustainable Infrastructure Group, EBRD
- Mavzuna Mansurova, General Director of the “Favran logistics” LLC

Moderated by:

- Natalia Alonso Cano, Chief, UNDRR Regional office Europe Central Asia

### **3.3 Improving Regional Connectivity: Uzbekistan's Strategic Role in the Central Asia-Europe Middle Corridor (Copper Hall)**

*The national session on Uzbekistan, jointly organized by EUROUZ.eu, will center on Uzbekistan's strategic allocation of resources to strengthen the*



*connectivity between Europe and Central Asia. The session will cover vital topics such as the interoperability of the Middle Corridor, channeling investments into essential infrastructure projects, and the advantages of enhanced cooperation within Central Asia and between Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan in establishing new global supply chains.*

Opening address by:

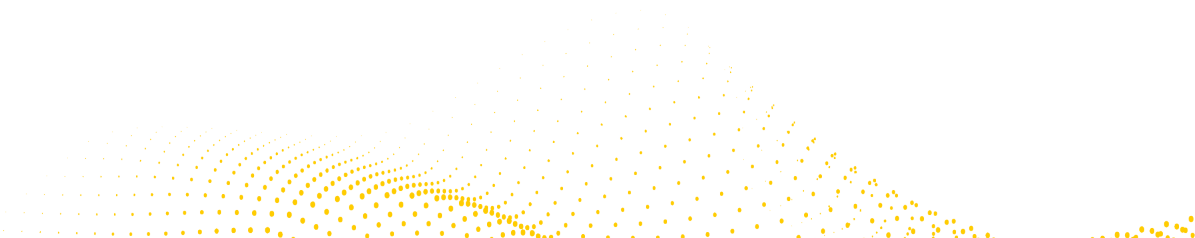
- Jamshid Khodjaev, Deputy Prime Minister, Uzbekistan

Speakers:

- Mamanbiy Omarov, First Deputy Minister of Transport, Uzbekistan
- William Tompson, Head of the Eurasia Division of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Zsuzsanna Hargitai, Managing Director for Central Asia of EBRD
- Eugene Seah, Chief Operating Officer, Port of Baku, Azerbaijan

Moderated by:

- Oybek Shaykhov, Secretary-General, European-Uzbek Association for Economic Cooperation (EUROUZ)





08:30 – 09:00

**Welcome Coffee**

09:00 - 10:30

**Perspectives from Central Asia (II)**

**4.1. The role of the Kyrgyz Republic in the development of sustainable transport connectivity between Europe and Central Asia (Silver Hall)**

*The Kyrgyz Republic, in alignment with the Investors Forum's efforts to attract investments in transport corridors, is hosting a dedicated special session which underscores the Kyrgyz side's commitment to actively contribute to and participate in the broader initiative. The session is strategically designed to attract investments and to demonstrate opportunities for the implementation of the "Torugart - Makmal - Jalal-Abad" railway construction project. This undertaking holds significant importance in the realm of construction and infrastructure within the Kyrgyz Republic.*

Keynote speakers:

- Tilek Tekebaev, Minister of Transport and Communications, Kyrgyzstan
- Luc Pierre Devigne, Deputy Managing Director for Europe and Central Asia, European External Action Service

Speakers:

- Azamat Sakiev, General Director of the State Enterprise "NK" Kyrgyz Temir Zholu" (presentation)
- Peteris Ustubs, Director for the Middle East, Asia and Pacific, European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships
- Edvardas Bumsteinas, Head of Division for Asia and the Pacific, European Investment Bank

Moderated by:

- Alberto Turkstra, Central Asia expert and Project Manager, Diplomatic World

**4.2. Turkmenistan's Gateway: Exploring Transit Hub Opportunities (Copper Hall)**

*Considering that the intensification of multifaceted cooperation between the Central Asian States and Europe based on mutual respect and benefit meets the common interests of the region and is an important factor for sustainable development, great attention is paid to strengthening cooperation between the business communities of the participating countries, including the development of the transport complex. This session will focus on expanding and developing business connections,*



*ties between representatives and business circles in the field of transport, attracting investments in the implementation of mutually beneficial projects, cooperation in transport and other priority areas.*

Opening address by:

- Batyr Annayev, Deputy Director General (*equivalent to Minister*), Agency for Transport and Communications under the Cabinet of Ministers, Turkmenistan
- Henrik Hololei, Hors Classe Adviser, European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships

Speakers:

- Begmyrat Ishangulyev, Deputy Chairman, *Turkmenemiryollary* (Turkmen Railways) Agency of the Agency for Transport and Communications under the Cabinet of Ministers, Turkmenistan
- Zsuzsanna Hargitai, Managing Director for Central Asia, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
- Seyitguly Bayseidov, Deputy Chairman, *Turkmedenizderyayollary* (Turkmen Maritime and River Transport), Agency of the Agency for Transport and Communications under the Cabinet of Ministers, Turkmenistan
- Hans Hesén, Sales Director, Royal IHC
- Merdan Bashimov, Director General, Open Joint-Stock Company "Transport and Logistics Center of Turkmenistan"
- Patrick Jeanne, Senior Manager of Government and Industry Relations, Cargolux

Closing remarks by:

- Batyr Annayev, Deputy Director General (*equivalent to Minister*), Agency for Transport and Communications under the Cabinet of Ministers, Turkmenistan

Moderated by:

- Samuel Doveri Vesterbye, Managing Director, European Neighbourhood Council

10:30 - 11:00

**Coffee break**

11:00 - 12:30

**Parallel thematic sessions**

**5.1. Quick Wins, High Impact - Short-term Investment Possibilities for Trans-Caspian Transport Connectivity (Copper Hall)**

*This session provides a comprehensive overview of achievable opportunities, including the assessment of short-term projects for which planning is completed or in progress, and their immediate impact on enhancing connectivity within the Trans-Caspian Network. It establishes an understanding of recent advancements, ongoing challenges, and other crucial aspects of the short-term projects basket to move ahead. Through an interactive session, the aim is to foster private sector participation in project development, discuss effective financing strategies, understand*



*and discuss how prioritised projects align with the aspirations of Central Asian governments and ongoing geopolitical developments.*

Speakers:

- Ramiya Sarayeva, Director General, Kazakhstan Association of National Freight Forwarders
- Zhibek Abdullaeva, Deputy Director, Kyrgyz Investment Agency
- Suhrob Nurullo, Head of Foreign Investment Cooperation Department, Tajikistan
- Batyr Annayev, Deputy Director General of the Agency of Transport and Communications under the Cabinet of Ministers, Turkmenistan
- Alimukhamedov Ravshan, Deputy Director of the Transport Ministry / digital transport centre, Ministry of Transport, Uzbekistan
- Olga Sclovsciaia, Regional Head Central & Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency, The World Bank Group.

Moderated by:

- Peteris Ustubs, Director for the Middle East, Asia and Pacific, European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships

## **5.2. Crossing the Caspian Sea: turning the bottleneck into a key connection (Silver Hall)**

*Among transport links between the EU and Central Asia, the EU study on sustainable transport connections with Central Asia (June 2023) analysed maritime transport connections across the Caspian Sea and related challenges which contribute to high transit time and limited cargo handling capacity between Central Asia and Europe. In fact, unpredictable weather conditions, shallow draft and lack of vessels have resulted in the Caspian Sea being considered as one of the key bottlenecks along the Trans-Caspian Corridor.*

*This session looks at these various challenges when it comes to crossing the Caspian Sea, including capacity and operations in the key ports of Aktau, Kuryk, Turkmenbashi and Baku, but also shipping, shipbuilding, fleet expansion, shipyards and other maintenance facilities, and related logistics matters such as warehousing and storage which all contribute to turning the key bottleneck into a key connection. By looking at the various perspectives of national authorities and experienced transport and logistics operators, the discussion will look at key investment needs and potential solutions and will lead to recommendations for follow-up.*

Speakers:

- Gaziz Baimukhamedov, General Director, ERSAI Sea Port
- Seyitguly Bayseidov, Deputy Chairman, Turkmenenderyayollary (Turkmen Maritime and River Transport) Agency, Agency for Transport and Communications of the Cabinet of Ministers, Turkmenistan



- Irakli Danelia, Business Development Manager, Central Asia and Caucasus, Maersk (TBC)
- Roman Mogilevskii, Senior Economist, Asian Development Bank

Moderated by:

- Lamina Kerdjoudj, Secretary General, Federation of European Private Ports Companies and Terminals (FEPORT)

12:30 - 14:00

### **Buffet lunch (Magritte Foyer)**

14:00 - 15:30

### **Parallel thematic sessions**

#### **6.1. Onward Journeys: Unlocking Medium-term Potential in Transport Connectivity (Copper Hall)**

*This session presents medium-term investment opportunities, focusing on engaging the private sector and highlighting the next wave of promising projects poised to come to implementation stage in a few years' time horizon. It addresses the challenges in implementing medium-term projects and potential to improve connectivity among Central Asian countries and towards Europe, ensuring enhanced regional integration. The session explores financial support and strategies to ensure the feasibility of these projects, outlines the necessary stages for their maturity, and engages in interactive discussions to identify key stakeholders to drive these projects towards successful completion.*

Speakers:

- Marjeta Jager, Deputy Director-General, European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships
- Joachim Fritz, Country Director, GIZ Office Kazakhstan
- Hisakatsu Okuda, Chief Representative, Deputy Director Central Asia, Japan International Cooperation Agency
- Roman Sorkin, Vice President Sales Central Asia and South Caucasus, Skoda Group
- Madina Anet, Business Development Director, Semurg Invest LLP, Kazakhstan

Moderated by:

- Edvardas Bumsteinas, Head of Division for Asia and the Pacific, European Investment Bank

#### **6.2. Designing a Coordination mechanism to follow-up on the Investors' Forum (Silver Hall)**

*The overall objective of this session is to follow up on the EU's commitment to launch a long-term platform aimed at mobilising investors and key actors towards attaining the EUR 18.5 billion necessary for the completion of the 33 infrastructure projects identified as well as effective results on the 7 soft connectivity measures. The core mandate of the Platform should be the implementation of the Study in accordance with*



*the key priorities agreed at the Forum with the long-term objective of “Making the Trans-Caspian transport corridor a sustainable, safer and faster route linking Europe and Central Asia in no more than 15 days”. The EU will present and discuss with the audience its key ideas on the main tasks of the Platform, from the political to the concrete and operational level.*

Speakers:

- Myriam Ferran, Deputy Director General, European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Partnerships
- Tamar Satterwhite, Senior Attorney, U.S. Department of Commerce
- Gerlind Heckmann, Director for Promotion and financing of foreign trade and investment; Ukraine – Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, Germany
- Daniyar Seidaliyev, Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kazakhstan
- Lyaziza G. Sabyrova, Regional Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration, Central West Asia Department, Asian Development Bank

Moderated by:

- Peteris Ustubs, Director for the Middle East, Asia and Pacific, European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Partnerships

15:30 - 16:00

### **Closing session (Copper Hall)**

*The closing session will present the conclusions of the breakout workshops, announce key deliverables and financial commitments coming out of the Forum, and look at next steps.*

Speaker:

- Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President, European Commission

Moderated by:

- Henrik Hololei, Hors Classe Adviser, European Commission’s Directorate-General for International Partnerships

16:00 - 17:00

**Networking time** around a coffee

