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Mr Maksym Burbak  
Ministry of Infrastructure of Ukraine  
14, Peremohy ave.  
Kyiv 01135  
Ukraine

Dear Minister, *Dear Maksym,*

I would like to thank you for your letters dated from 12 and 20 May and addressing several transport-related issues, thus paving the way for a new impetus for our relations in this field following the signature of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation for the initiative taken by Ukraine to improve the connections between your country and several EU Member States, namely Poland, Slovakia and Romania.

The EU aims to foster closer relations with its neighbours and acknowledges the importance of better connections in achieving deeper economic integration and closer political association. With the adoption of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and the Connecting Europe Facility regulations for the 2014-2020 period, the Union can support projects of common interest connecting the TEN-T with the infrastructure networks of neighbouring countries.

In my view, the construction of the European standard gauge line from Poland to Romania, via the territory of Ukraine (the "Euroline" project), has a strategic importance for the improvement of connections between Ukraine, Poland and Romania, but also for the wider Black Sea and Baltic Sea regions. The project is located on the TEN-T core network in Poland and Romania, as well as on the indicative extension of the TEN-T to Ukraine, as regards the comprehensive network for railways. The route described in your letter from 20 May passes through the border crossing points listed in the TEN-T Guidelines (Regulation (EU) 1315/2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network), which are Przemysl between Poland and Ukraine, and Vikshani between Romania and Ukraine. Therefore, the Commission considers that the "Euroline" project passing through the above-mentioned border-crossing points is well worth examining as it is of interest for the EU, as well as for the connections between the TEN-T and the transport infrastructure network of Ukraine.

In this context the European Commission would also be ready to engage in discussions on how the project would relate to the existing standard gauge line linking Slovakia, Hungary and Romania via Ukrainian territory. This line also connects with the core TEN-T network in Slovakia (Chop/Cierna nad Tisou) and with the comprehensive network in Romania (Dyakove/Halmeu) and is also part of the TEN-T network (as indicative) of Ukraine.

I take this opportunity to ensure you of the Commission services' availability to hold quadrilateral meetings with the transport authorities of the relevant countries for more detailed discussion regarding the projects, their market relevance and their possible final route. Also, the Commission takes note and supports the initiative of Ukraine to hold trilateral meetings between Ukraine, Poland and Romania, aiming to further develop their railway and road connections.

I take this opportunity to express my conviction that the overall cooperation between EU and Ukraine in the field of transport will be strengthened in the future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Siim Kallas', with a long, sweeping tail extending to the right.

Siim Kallas