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FORUM
OF THE CITIES
OF THE NEW
RAILWAY
SILK ROAD
PRINCIPLES
AND
AIMS
TURIN
CHARTER

TURIN MEDITERRANEAN CORRIDOR

- All of human history is tied to the evolution of mobility, which has occurred because of cities along trade routes, including river, land and sea routes.
- Every civilization had its own system of mobility. For the Romans, it was a road network; for the Venetians, Portuguese, and Spaniards, there were sea and ocean routes. The Tatars had a transcontinental postal network, and the Ottomans had caravan routes and ports.
- Every mobility crisis leads to negative economic and social consequences: When people and goods cannot travel freely, both the safety and stability of local and national communities are jeopardized.
- In a globalized world, cities assume a new essential identity for societies and territories, especially since they are the historical touchstones for those groups and regions. In this way, cities guarantee individuals a sense of belonging and represent whole areas, not just as their official capital cities and administrative seats, but primarily as touchstones in the collective consciousness.
- Both the development of transport and the creation of new transnational roads — roads connecting major cities, each with its own history, culture, industry and society — represent an enormous challenge for those cities and their management.
- New forms of transportation can change geography. Within the European Union, the TEN-T network is creating a “Euro Metro,” with cities as metro stops and transport corridors as metro lines. This is an innovative system enabling the growth of relationships and the

- circulation of people and ideas. For transportation of goods, a logistics network is being created to connect sea ports, intermodal points, and airports from north to south and from east to west, linking seas and traversing mountains with new rail tunnels.
- The Silk Road rail project extends from the West to the Far East and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, rediscovering a new Silk Road through the Middle East, Europe, Turkey and Russia (the METR region), where the role of the Mediterranean is becoming crucial. It has implications for transport and business and especially for social, cultural and political spheres. In those spheres, the most dramatically affected issue is human migration.
- This new Silk Road, which reproduces Marco Polo’s route by rail, starts in China and crosses Russia, the Caucasian-Anatolian Middle East, and the Balkans. This time, it doesn’t stop in Venice but connects Eurasian cities with those of the Mediterranean Corridor as far as the Iberian Peninsula and Gibraltar, where an underwater connection with Africa is being studied.
- Solving mobility-related problems in the METR region could contribute not only to developing trade systems and economies, but also to overcoming the fears and prejudices that fuel political, ideological, and religious extremism.
- A large infrastructure project requires a prolonged mobilization of important interests, seamless cooperation among institutions, international political action at the highest levels, and enormous resources. However, the most essential precondition is the creation of a deep

- consensus among various countries that are located far from one another and often in conflict (as it is now occurring in the METR region). These countries could be motivated to understand one another and to cooperate because of efforts of Eurasian corridor cities.
- From this viewpoint, the Railway Silk Road project, apart from being a transportation concept, is primarily a peace project aimed at uniting peoples, cultures, economies, and religions in places where history, geopolitics, extremisms and fundamentalisms create disunity and isolation. This is the idea of “cosmopolis” as opposed to the idea of “claustropolis,” to use Baudrillard’s words.
- The European and Eurasian corridors need pro-active and creative cities that will support, with an organized and uninterrupted approach, the decisions related to the new Silk Road’s geographic layout and environmental integration, with respect for the rights of local communities and with awareness of contemporary challenges.
- For this reason, Turin is proposing to give life to a “Forum of the cities of the New Railway Silk Road” to create the grassroots political and cultural conditions needed to launch projects, such as the development of the eastern end of the Mediterranean Corridor and of the western end of the Eurasian Corridor “Moscow — Beijing” in the framework of fundamentally important land connection between Atlantic and Pacific ocean. These grassroots conditions grow out of the suggestions in the white book “Metro of the METR” (presented by the MIR Initiative at the Turin International Book Fair in 2015).

The aims of the Turin Charter are as follows:

- To create a platform for cultural, social, economic, and political dialogue between the cities of the Mediterranean Corridor and those of the METR region in order to protect and promote the common interests of those territories and the cooperation of communities interested in this connection;
- To support a new level of mobility of goods and passengers through an extension to the east of the European network TEN-T by means of new high-speed and high-capacity corridors in the METR region, as well as to fight economic, political and social crises;
- To promote an initiative among cities on eco-friendly transportation development in view of 2050, via communication and connection projects conceived as peace tools through involvement of local communities;
- To support potential private and public partnerships between East and West for the study, design, implementation, and management of the infrastructures of the New Railway Silk Road.

In order to take off, the project can avail itself of the MIR Initiative as an organizational platform. It is already available with the support of the key decision-makers, interdisciplinary experts, and international intellectuals who collaborated on the creation of the white book.

FORUM OF THE CITIES OF THE NEW RAILWAY SILK ROAD

We, Mayors of the Cities along the corridors of the METR region (Middle East, Europe, Turkey, Russia), hereby declare our interest, willingness and common undertaking to establish the Forum of the Cities of the New Railway Silk Road, by recognizing the principles and aims of this Charter and by adopting the directions on the basis of its activities.

First signatory: Piero Fassino, Mayor of Turin

