# AZERBAIJAN, UKRAINE, IRAN, GEORGIA, POLAND TO CONTINUE CO-OP ON SOUTH-WEST ROUTE

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By Azad Hasanli – Trend

The heads of railway authorities of Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Iran, Georgia and Poland signed a protocol following a meeting of the Coordinating Committee for the Development of the South-West International Transport Route Sept. 7, the Ukrainian Railways said.

The document was signed by Javid Gurbanov, chairman of the Azerbaijan Railways CJSC, Evgeny Kravtsov, acting chairman of the board of the Ukrainian Railways JSC, Władysław Szczepkowski, director for corporate affairs at the Polish State Railways JSC, Mamuka Bakhtadze, director general and chairman of the board of directors at the Georgian Railways JSC, and Saeed Mohammadzadeh, head and chairman of board at the Iran Railways.

The South-West route has great potential, Gurbanov said. We want to develop the route and it is principal now to attract a bigger volume of cargo transportation. For this purpose, each of the participating countries is developing its railway and port infrastructure.

In his turn, Kravtsov said the signing of the protocol was preceded by two years of intensive cooperation among the project participants.

Following the meeting, Bakhtadze said the project participants will introduce through rates, which will help attract additional cargo to the international route.

Meanwhile, Szczepkowski said the project participants will popularize the route in the transportation market, adding that a South-West corridor website is already operating (http://southwest.adyexpress.az/int/).

In his turn, Mohammadzadeh added that the Iranian side promotes the development of the route and develops the infrastructure inside the country.

Along with the Trans-Caspian and North-South corridors, the South-West corridor is of great importance for Azerbaijan. The South-West corridor is supposed to run from India to Europe through the Persian Gulf, Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and the Black Sea. At an initial stage, it is planned to transport 10 million tons of cargo via this route with the possibility of increasing the transportation volume by several times in the future.

An agreement on the South-West corridor was signed in 2016 by Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran and Ukraine in Baku. The corridor will make it possible to slash the time of cargo transportation from India to Europe by two or three times.

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Kaynak/Source: