



# SPEECH OF MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS MR. BINALI YILDIRIM

5TH E&E CONGRESS IN ISTANBUL  
OPENING SESSION  
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Distinguished Guests and Media partners,

I would like to welcome all guests coming from all parts of the globe to this 5th E&E Congress organized by Eurasphalt and Eurobitume every 4 years. I am also pleased that this 5th congress takes place in Istanbul, a city where continents meet.

Those people of the same age as me would remember that, in our early days, we had only macadam roads and knew nothing of asphalt. The trucks were coming and they put the stones on the roads and they covered it with sand, so this is the only type of road we remember. Such roads were not decent, with the first rains the stones would dislodge, get covered with mud and there remained no road at the end. Times have changed now. There have been major evolutions in road construction and infrastructure. Today, the goal is not just accessibility, getting from here to there. Nowadays the public demands from the roads comfort, security, sustainability, environmental friendliness and quality. People expect such measures in service now. In this 3-day event, you will be discussing these issues in depth in various sessions, as Mr. Madella has already mentioned. Results of R&D in asphalt and bitumen and the new materials will be disseminated to the participants, as well as during the exhibition of the congress. Naturally, "roads" have become ever more important in a globalised and changing world. People are no longer content with what they see in their own country, they are curious to know what other countries have, to see what the developed countries have accomplished. What are the needs of underdeveloped countries, what are regional needs, what is missing? People are trying to gather knowledge through every mechanism and generate common resources to satisfy socio-economic and regional needs and to aid global peace. The goal of this congress reflects these global needs. We have 1000 participants in this congress, who are not only from Europe, but also from other continents. Each of them individually has his own success story and experience of success. They will share all those stories and experiences with each other during the 3 days and try to find the answers to these questions: What can we do to create a better and more habitable world?

"Roads" are civilization, culture; they are our voyage, economy, history, love, meetings and where longing becomes uniting. Roads mean something to everyone. But without roads and water there is no life; no peace; and the future of humankind is under the threat of extinction, or in great jeopardy. Without roads, half of the world population, 6.5-7 billion, will perish from thirst and starvation. What our blood flowing through our veins mean for life, the roads mean for culture, civilization and humankind. It is this sector that provides this important service, for the benefit of public investment. For this reason you have no right to construct roads without paying sufficient attention to these factors. You could do it before the 1950's, when there were not fully developed technologies, nor improved materials and just limited facilities.



The war was just over. But today you have everything in your hands. So you have to do all kinds of infrastructure work in a much better way and you have all available techniques, improving day by day. Every day you should continue implementing the new technologies and materials; and continue to consider the environment, public needs, etc. I see that the main theme of this conference is "Sustainable roads to success", meaning perpetually improving road construction techniques to obtain sustainable, durable and comfortable roads. To be able to achieve this concept all the new techniques, from hot mix to warm mix, all new alternative materials, etc, will be discussed in this conference during these 3 days.

Dear Guests, as the Ministry responsible for all transport modes (railways; airports; highways; waterways) and communication facilities in the Republic of Turkey, we have been opening the roads in Turkey as if opening the clogged veins of a body for the last 9 years, with approximately 110,000 staff. During this term, 72% of 70 Billion Dollars of investment has been spent on roads. So, what have we gained by implementing this programme?

We have reached 21,500km of dual carriageway road, from 6,100km before, so it has been increased more than 3 times in this period. This means that we have added 15,500 km of dual carriageway roads. This is the biggest and grandest road construction movement in the course of Turkish Republic history.

When I mentioned in some South Eastern European countries that we had constructed 1,500-2,000 km annually of dual carriageway roads in previous years, they felt the need to state that I made an error by adding an extra "0". Yes, indeed, we have constructed 1,500-2,000 km of dual carriage way roads every year and this is a real success story. "To service the 1,500 km roads is no easy task; one third of these roads are paved with hot mixture asphalt ..." But, we realized that, because our country and its people needed it, so we promised them and delivered.

Indeed, when we look at the numbers, they confirmed what we did. Whereas in previous years, where we had only 5 million tons per annum of hot mix asphalt, recently we have had over 20 million tons per annum. Last year hot-mix asphalt production reached 26 million tons. That shows our priority for 'quality' is moving with great speed. Turkey has become the 3rd highest among European countries in terms of asphalt production with this volume.

There are ongoing efforts to improve the quality. The Turkish asphalt industry has also grown with the dual carriageway road construction, along with increasing numbers of contractors and suppliers. The number of firms producing and applying asphalt has exceeded 200 and the number of plants used for asphalt production is over 450. So we see that the "dual carriageway roads approach", which we started 9 years ago, has led to an asphalt industry that is improving and getting bigger.

As result of having increased the performance and the workability of the road network, thanks to the dual carriageway roads, we also have other different positive results. What have we gained then in a year by these dual carriageway roads? This is the answer: 171 million hours of saved time, 1 billion litres of fuel and 2.3 million tons of reduced CO2 emission, thanks to the quality and the comfort of the uninterrupted traffic flow ensured as a result of 15,500 km of dual carriage way roads. If we are to assess this in terms of money from only 2 items, time and fuel, since the reduced emissions are priceless, we have saved 9.4 billion TL, equivalent to 5.5 billion US dollars. But what have we paid for these dual carriageway roads? 35 billion USD! If we are to divide this number by 4.5, it means that all these roads will pay themselves off in 5 years. This part is the economical part of the case.



Let's come to the other part. As you know, traffic accidents on the roads are the nightmare of all countries. Every country is trying to do its best to decrease the number of accidents, especially the number of fatalities. There are, of course, many factors affecting those accidents: they might be because of human factors; road geometries; surface quality; lack of IT systems, etc. But we are all aware that the most important factor is the 'education of the person'. That is the most important one, but we also know that it takes long time to educate drivers. We are aware that we should make investment in the human being, but we should also focus on what we can do to decrease the traffic accident rate, other than that human factor, by using the different contributors such as the quality of the roads; geometry of the roads; safety signs, IT systems, etc. So, by using all those tools we attached lots of importance to reducing traffic accidents and we reduced the rate of mortality in these traffic accidents, thanks to dual carriageway roads. In the last 5 years: even though there has been a 100% increase in traffic and 100% increase in traffic accidents, there has been a total of a 41% decrease in mortality rates. That means that the dual carriageway roads are 'saving lives'. When we look at the exact numbers, back in 2003 the mortality rate was 5.72 per 100 million vehicle/km, in 2011 it was down to 3.37. The average for EU countries is 3. We still have much to do to decrease the mortality from the road accidents, but we also know that the driver error is the main cause of 87% of road accidents. So we will continue to construct roads, but also continue to invest in the education of the human - drivers' education - as the first priority. We have to teach them to respect each other on the road and that roads have "rules", not "kings".

Dear Guests, as the Ministry responsible for all transport and communication in the Republic of Turkey, we held a Transportation Council Meeting in 2009 with the intention of specifying our goals for 2023, which would be the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic. The aims we mentioned were that we would do whatever was necessary to be among the top ten countries for transport in the world, determined by socio-economic indices at the end of this period. Today we are the 17th country in this list.

So, we discussed our responsibilities in this concept during that event. We will grow economically and sociologically and we need to have more roads, we need different transport modes and we need further integration between those different transport modes. At the end of the extended study we did the results should be, by 2023:

- 21,500km dual carriageway roads will extend to 36,500 km.
- 2,200 km highways will extend to approximately 10,000 km, by adding 7,500 km.
- All dual carriageway roads will be paved with either hot mix or warm mix asphalt or long life, durable pavement asphalt.

We have managed to extend the length of roads with hot bituminous mix (HMA) pavement from 6,000 km to 13,700 km. In next 10 years, through to 2023, on the centenary of our republic a total of 70,000 km will be paved with asphalt. This means we have to pave 3,000-4,000km with hot mix asphalt every year.

By the way, I have to share something with you. Asphalt pavement construction might be considered an easy task. However, as you know, it is not simply stirring bitumen and aggregate and putting it on the road. It is a rather more difficult job to construct a road from the beginning, if you do it in a proper way; if you underestimated the task by doing it very simply, the road will end up strewn with potholes in two days, that cause the public disappointment and the money spent would be wasted.

If you are to ask me "how all these promises of perfect tasks are going to be done", yes, this should be questioned. Our competitors are also asking us. We are not content to say to them simply: 'what we have done



in the past 9 years is the proof what we will do in the next 9 years'.

However, we have to add that capital investments are hard issues now; they need so much money. The income for it is not direct and not visible. Infrastructure investments are seen as hard and perceived as a money-consuming sector by the budget-makers. But never forget: if there were no 'infrastructure and roads', there would be no budget, no turnover; no welfare; nothing if you do not invest in infrastructure. Thus, first you need a road infrastructure in order to proceed with profitable business. It is not a direct business in itself to gain money; but it is an indirect sector to allow the generation of turnover in the many other sectors. For this reason, it is essentially important. We are well aware that the general budget will not suffice for our targets, thus we arranged for 10 billion dollars worth of investment out of a total of 70 billion dollars, to be accomplished via a build-operate-transfer model through a public-private partnership (PPP). We will use such financial measures in the future more often. We wish that real revenue could be used for the prosperity and future of countries, for the comfort of human beings, for building better roads, not imaginary trade. Citizens invest in the New York stock market without necessarily being aware of what they are actually buying. They are playing a game and competition by themselves. Then, the balloon pops and everything is nothing more than an illusion. So this case covers no trade, no economy, no production, nothing at all. Everything is based on imagination. Then you end up having a global crisis. But, worst off all, the remedy is not paid by them, but by all humans. However, if you construct roads, it would be a real product, it would be real production; it would bring relief, it would help civilization, it would be trade. In short, roads in every circumstance are the sine qua non of true comfort.

Dear Guests; when we look at the geographic condition of Turkey, it is a country that connects two continents Asia and Europe. Indeed not 2, but 3.

Since, if you come from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, that is a highway to take you to Africa. Therefore, we are in a country where 3 continents meet. From its position Turkey always plays a role as a peace-bridge and a platform for reunification of east-west civilizations, instead of their conflicts. It continues nowadays its mission of providing peace between the eastern and western civilizations, as it did in the past. It carried lots of culture in his history and served civilization at the beginning of its history. Thanks to its geographic advantages, it has played an important role along the East-West corridor, being the silk and spice main roads of history for several generations. So today is the day when we sustain and re-build these corridors that helped different civilizations in its history, with modern techniques to carry all this historical activity tomorrow, to help 'all human beings'. Let this congress serve as a step towards this goal.

We have no difficulty anymore with the east-west corridors in our country, we have at least 5 corridors from west to east with lengths of 2,500 km.

But now we have a very serious goal to achieve: to make a way that connects the Caucasus and Far East to Europe through Turkey. The new aim is to connect the Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea by opening the north-south corridor. When we achieve it, from the North, where Ukraine and Russia, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia exist; on the other side Bulgaria and Romania, which has a coastline to the Black sea, transportation to the Mediterranean and thus to Africa and to the world would be easier and also to the Middle East and Basra and the Persian Gulf. But we have to consider that this is quite a difficult task; because in Turkey the north and south are such complex and hard regions to work. In the North we have the Black Sea Mountains and in the South we have the Caucasus Mountains, meaning that we have to go up 3,000 metres from sea level. But in any case it is our aim to complete at least 16 north-south corridors in 10 years to be able to join the 2 seas. To help this aim, 2 weeks ago



we laid the foundations of the 2x15 km Obit tunnel that would be the longest tunnel in Turkey and amongst the longest in the world. It will be finalized in 4 years.

As I conclude my words, I would like to underline that a significant number of participants form our ministry, the general directorates of Highways, from other companies and expert participants from all over the world are here today. My expectations from this congress are that:

1- Firstly, it should encourage the improvement in status of 'asphalt technology'. Bitumen should be removed from its pinnacle as having the 'value of gold'. It should be removed from being a scarce resource. Unfortunately, there is a very serious problem with access to the resource and there is a problem about its cost. Not officially, but unofficially, there is a monopoly problem. These all should be considered. If not, the "road of civilization" would be delayed. And this would cause suffering and inconvenience to people. Because they need transport with comfort and in a sustainable way in the short term.

In order to provide sustainable transport we should carry this out with no further delay. This should not be an issue only in Turkey or in Europe, but all over the world. We should be providing solutions to this problem all over the world.

The political approaches and the solutions should be elevated by generating a realisation that it is a global responsibility. The Associations like yours should be able to lead the public. You should continue to be their voices, their ears, their eyes and their conscience. Only then will you be able to fulfil and carry out your mission.

2- There should be alternative applications in asphalt. I see that the warm concept will be discussed alongside others. But the alternatives should be expanded. It should be made sure that asphalt costs are not above road costs, asphalt should become a part of road construction costs. This is essential for the industry's' future. The ideas on this issue are more than welcome for us.

3- Recycling is very important. Environmental awareness and sensitivity are increasing in the whole world. People are getting suspicious about everything, whether cell phones cause cancer, or asphalt is being questioned about whether it is carcinogenic or not. The emissions to air make us ill - or not? All those are understandable suspicions. To be able to eliminate such concerns we should increase recycling. We have started this application as the General Directorate of Highways. We also want to increase this application more in future years. In that way we not only decrease the cost, but also we would consume less natural materials. So, recycling should be stressed in this congress.

4- Finally, I would like to wish the organizers, EAPA and Eurobitume, every success in this conference. Dear guests, welcome to our country once more. I would also like to thank ASMUD, which has played a very important role in this immense organization and made it possible for it to be held here. I wish the congress every success. Not least, here today there are participants who are our Ministry's shareholders, whom I thank very much for their support and interest in this congress.

I also would like to invite our guests to enjoy sightseeing while you are in Istanbul, an open air museum of a global city, since these opportunities do not happens always.

Thank you