
It Is Envisaged To Carry Out 80% Of Cargo Transportation Between Armenia And Russia By Poti-Port 'Kavkaz' Ferry Link

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It is envisaged to carry out up to 80% of cargo transportation between Armenia and Russia by Poti-port "Kavkaz" ferry link, Igor Levitin - the Russian minister of transport, co-chairman of the Armenian-Russian intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation, stated on January 21.

According to him, the ferry operating on this route has made more or less regular trips since August 2007, and by the end of 2007, various goods of nearly 30 thousand tons were transported by the ferry. I. Levitin said that the ferry boat is more or less loaded on its route from Russia to Armenia, while its being loaded during trips in the opposite direction remains a problem to be solved by businessmen of the two countries.

The president of Black Sea Ferry & Investments (BFI) LLC Hokim Matchanov said that the ferry is required to make 4 trips a month but it makes 3 trips because of being underloaded. Prior to that, the ferry used to make a trip a month or every six weeks. In the initial period the ferry transported 4 railroad cars, later - 8 ones during each trip. BFI cooperates with all the eight forwarding companies of Armenia. According to H. Matchanov, transportation by Poti-port "Kavkaz" link is relatively expensive as the ferry is now loaded by 60% (by 100% when heading from Russia to Armenia, by 10% in the opposite direction). "Whenever we start increasing the ferry's load in Russia, some forwarding companies of Armenia launch anti-ferry campaign as they are reluctant to transport their goods by ferry," he said, underlining that transportation of goods by trucks is profitable within distances of up to 500 km.

In his words, foodstuffs, wheat, flour, juices, timber are mainly transported from Russia to Armenia. Cement, facing material, bentonite, salt cake, mineral waters are mainly transported from Armenia to Russia. He informed those present that it is still impossible to transport excise tax-liable goods (cigarettes, alcoholic drinks) by the ferry from Armenia to Russia due to the absence of a customs supervision zone at the check point of the port "Kavkaz". He added that such a zone will be created by late 2008 based on the intergovernmental agreement signed in Yerevan on January 21.

The president of BFI expressed an opinion that due to higher transportation speed, the ferry link will be competitive in case of opening railway communication through the territories of Georgia and Azerbaijan.
