

Why Syria is a strategic option in supply chains



Syria's geography, through a network of international roads and land and sea crossings with connection distances of no more than 500 kilometers, condenses the equations of cost and time in favor of supply and logistics chains between Asia and Europe. This short land corridor directly links Mediterranean ports to the Jordanian, Iraqi and Gulf hinterlands, while also giving Turkish goods headed south or east direct overland access in less than 24 hours, alongside emerging activity that is gradually picking up in the ports, which have attracted early investments from major companies to rehabilitate them and turn them into platforms for exporting goods to countries around the world.

But geography alone is not enough. This commercially ideal distance on the map today lies in an exhausted country in transition, whose infrastructure and road networks have suffered destruction and difficult structural challenges. The new administration is confronting these with intensive efforts to revive these arteries and present Syria as a safe haven for secure supply chains and a reliable corridor for energy supplies through the Mediterranean coast, ultimately ensuring a fast and safe route linking movement toward Europe and sparing international trade any disruptions that may occur in the Red Sea or the Strait of Hormuz.

To varying degrees across roads, ports and railways, the country has been witnessing maintenance, restoration and rehabilitation work since the overthrow of Bashar Assad's rule. Transport lines have already begun moving on the ground

through Turkish transit convoys crossing Syrian territory, trucks departing from ports toward Jordan, and the flow of Iraqi oil through Syrian territory for export to global markets.

Syrian activity intersects with growing regional and international trends to reintegrate Syria into transport and energy maps from Washington, which proposed a four-year plan aimed at turning Syrian territory into an energy transit corridor, to talks among Syria, Jordan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia to revive a regional trade corridor, all the way to Iraq's decision to raise its oil exports transiting through Syria from 50,000 to 420,000 barrels per day.

This report maps the corridors, ports and strategic connection hubs on Syrian territory, analyzes their competitive advantages in terms of shipping time, location, cost and the diversity of available routes, discusses with experts and researchers the possibility of Syria's geography becoming a food silo or a logistics hub for supplies serving both the Arab and European hinterlands, and explores who stands to benefit from turning Syria into a land bridge for global trade.

Overland routes under rehabilitation

Syria's international road network is divided between north-south and east-west axes that together form the main structure of regional transit movement, linking land borders with ports and major provinces. Foremost among them is the M5 highway, considered the country's most important north-south artery because it connects the Jordanian border (Nassib crossing) in the south to the Turkish border (Bab al-Salama crossing) in the north, passing through Daraa, Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, thus forming the main bridge for trade movement between the Gulf and Türkiye.

Running east-west, the M4 highway is a cross-country transit axis linking the Yaroubiyah crossing on the Iraqi border to the port of Latakia on the Mediterranean through Hasakah, Raqqa, Aleppo and Idlib. Meanwhile, the M1 links Homs to Latakia and is a main corridor for transporting and unloading goods from the ports into the inland interior, while the M2 road (Damascus-Beirut) connects the capital Damascus to the Lebanese border through the Masnaa crossing.

Within this road system, two cities stand out as major distribution and logistics control nodes. The first is Homs, which represents the central node where the coastal roads, Iraq routes and the international north-south axis converge. The second is Aleppo, which forms the major northern node, where the M5 heading to Türkiye intersects with the M4 coming from Iraq and Syria's Jazira region.

The local and regional importance of these roads has not spared them severe

damage. The transport sector is as worn down as other sectors, and there are no precise statistics on the scale of the damage because of varying levels of deterioration and the multiplicity of areas of control before the fall of Bashar Assad's regime. The transport minister in Syria's caretaker government, Bahaeddin Sharm, said Syria's transport sector had suffered damage exceeding 70%.

The World Bank estimates the cost of rebuilding the physical assets of infrastructure at about \$82 billion, including facilities and core systems such as road networks, railways, ports, energy and water supplies, communications and information technology. But this remains an estimated cost fraught with uncertainty.

Traffic accident statistics reflect the poor state of Syria's roads. Civil defense teams at the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management responded to 2,944 accidents across various provinces in 2025, resulting in 2,661 injuries and 165 deaths.

From the start of 2026 through May 15, there were 1,509 accidents that injured 1,334 people and killed 81 others, according to statistics obtained by NoonPost from Wissam Zeidan, director of the ministry's Search, Rescue and Firefighting Department.

Zeidan attributed the main causes of these accidents to weak road infrastructure, speeding, reckless driving — especially by motorcycle riders — technical failures in worn-out vehicles still in operation, and weak enforcement of traffic laws.

The country is witnessing a package of maintenance, rehabilitation and restoration work on internal, international and main interprovincial roads, as well as plans to launch projects in cooperation with countries and international organizations. These include the start of a survey on the international road between Damascus and the Nassib crossing in both directions, in cooperation between the Ministry of Transport and Kuwait's Joint Group Contracting Co. as part of a project to assess the condition of roads in Syria.

Last April, the General Establishment for Road Transport in the Ministry of Transport began maintenance work on the Damascus-Aleppo international highway, including rehabilitation of damaged sections, to be carried out in phases to avoid closing it. This was preceded by an announcement of emergency maintenance work on the M4 and M5 highways, on stretches extending from Saraqib to Ariha and on to Latakia, and from Aleppo through Saraqib and Maarat al-Numan toward Hama, in addition to promises of road maintenance projects in Syria's Jazira provinces.

Nour Eddin Brimo, director of media relations for Latakia province, told NoonPost

that maintenance work on the Latakia-Ariha highway had reached advanced stages, including repairs to damaged bridges such as bridge B46, where preparations are currently underway to begin pouring concrete, maintenance of bridge B49, repairs to expansion joints, pouring New Jersey barriers, and landscaping work along the roadside, across various stretches between Latakia and Idlib. He described them as “precise and specialized” works.

On the regional connectivity front, a trilateral memorandum of understanding emerged between Syria, Jordan and Türkiye aimed at enhancing cooperation and integration in the transport sector among the three countries and “developing an integrated regional transport system that contributes to facilitating the movement of people and goods, raising the efficiency of supply chains, and strengthening the region’s position as a logistics hub linking regional and international markets, thereby enhancing its competitiveness on the map of global trade.”



The transport ministers of Syria, Jordan and Türkiye sign a memorandum of understanding to develop transport sectors and logistics connectivity, April 7, 2026 (Anadolu)

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan also announced that his country is holding talks with Saudi Arabia and a number of countries in the region to revive a regional transport corridor extending from Türkiye through Syrian and Jordanian territory to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

Growing activity in the ports

Syria's Mediterranean ports, especially Latakia and Tartous, are a central anchor in any discussion of Syria's role in supply chains, as these ports provide a maritime outlet that can be linked to overland transport networks toward Iraq, Jordan and Türkiye, reinforcing Syria's position as a link between Arab and European markets.

This importance put the two ports early on investors' radar. In Latakia, France's CMA CGM signed a 30-year investment agreement worth 230 million euros to modernize infrastructure and raise the port's operational capacity. The UAE's AD Ports also entered an investment in the container terminal as part of a plan to increase its operating capacity.

In Tartous, meanwhile, DP World secured a 30-year contract to invest in and develop the port under an agreement that includes investments of up to \$800 million. The Syrian Ports Authority also signed a contract with Türkiye's KUZZEY STAR to establish an integrated ship basin under a 30-year investment period, with a commitment to inject no less than 190 million dollars over five years.

Mazen Alloush, director of relations at the General Authority for Ports and Customs, said the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and the disruptions that accompanied it marked an important turning point in how countries in the region and global transport companies view Syria — as a strategic corridor capable of playing a pivotal role in trade and energy flows between the Arabian Gulf, the Mediterranean and Europe, and as one of the more stable and flexible alternative routes.



The port of Latakia receives a ship carrying 4,200 tons of sugar, May 11, 2026 (General Authority for Ports and Customs)

Alloush added in remarks to NoonPost that since the beginning of 2026, the port of Latakia has received more than 244 vessels of various types, including container ships, general cargo vessels and raw materials carriers, with total throughput exceeding 1.85 million tons of imported and exported goods. The port of Tartous, meanwhile, received 298 vessels during the first four months of the year, including 266 cargo ships, with total throughput exceeding 2.75 million tons.

Alloush said these figures reflect a real shift in regional trade flows and that Syria has begun gradually reclaiming its natural role as a regional logistics corridor, especially with the activation of transit lines coming from Iraq and the Gulf toward the Mediterranean. He noted growing interest from transport and shipping companies and commercial entities in benefiting from Syrian ports and overland and maritime transit routes.

Among the clearest practical indicators of this trend was the launch last April of the first transit shipment of cars arriving from the United Arab Emirates through the port of Latakia toward European markets. It included more than 200 cars bound for Spain and Belgium as part of an integrated logistics route linking the

Arabian Gulf to Europe via Syria.

He also pointed to the arrival at the port of Tartous of the vessel DANDUN from Romania carrying a shipment of timber designated for overland transit to Iraq, in the first operation of its kind in 14 years, considering this step a reflection of the return of regional transport and supply chains through Syrian territory.

He explained that subsequent bookings for additional vessels with large cargoes reflect growing confidence among shipping companies in the ability of Syrian ports to absorb regional trade flows and provide effective logistics services.

According to Alloush, overland transit through border crossings with Iraq and Jordan has seen growing activity in recent months, especially with the integration of the port of Latakia's operations with the Nassib border crossing and Syria's crossings with Iraq, reinforcing Syria's position as an integrated regional transit hub.

He added that the ports are now capable of receiving multiple types of vessels after years of decline, with relatively large ships entering, noting that the measures taken to facilitate operations are numerous and include:

Simplifying customs procedures and speeding up clearance operations.

Raising the technical and logistical readiness of berths and yards.

Working to reduce vessel waiting times and increase unloading and loading speed.

Introducing organizational improvements to facilitate the movement of trucks and goods to and from the ports.

Attempts to revive the railways

The Syrian Ministry of Transport is seeking to revive the railway sector, describing it as one of the vital pillars on which modern economies are built, given the high efficiency it provides in transporting goods and raw materials, reducing costs and enhancing integration among productive sectors. For decades, rail transport in Syria served as a driver of agricultural and industrial activity and trade movement.

The war inflicted extensive damage on the rail network, in addition to contracts and corruption cases during 2023 and 2024 in which financial damage exceeded 19 billion Syrian pounds. Transport Minister Yarub Badr said Syria needs \$5.5 billion to repair and modernize the railways in line with international standards, explaining that 1,052 kilometers are in service out of a total of 2,800 kilometers, and expecting the transport sector's infrastructure to take between three and five years to return to full operation.



Maintenance work on the railway line linking Tartous station and the port of Tartous, Dec. 18, 2025 (Ministry of Transport)

Badr pointed to Syria's focus at this stage on repairing the axis linking the phosphate mines to the export port in Tartous in order to return it to service as soon as possible, in addition to reactivating the line linking the port of Latakia to the dry port in Aleppo. Meanwhile, Osama Haddad, director general of the Central Railway Services Co., noted that only about 20% of the locomotive fleet is operational, limiting the ability to carry out a comprehensive maintenance program.

The movement of goods and grain by rail has seen gradual activity that is still in its early stages. The most notable examples, according to NoonPost's monitoring, were:

Port of Latakia-Kafr Buhm silos (Hama): Launch of the first wheat transport operations after years of suspension. (May 2025)

Port of Latakia-Jableh mill: Arrival of the first train loaded with wheat after the fall of the regime. (June 2025)

Port of Latakia-Aleppo: Launch of the first freight train loaded with grain after an interruption of about 15 years. (January 2026)

Port of Latakia-the industrial city of Adra (Damascus countryside): Launch of the first trial trips to transport goods after a 14-year halt. (May 2026)

Port of Tartous-Homs-Sbeineh silos (Damascus): Arrival of the first train loaded

with wheat after years of interruption. (June 2025)

Port of Tartous-Nasiriya silos (Damascus): Transport of a wheat shipment via railway lines. (February 2026)

Port of Tartous-Shinshar silos (Homs) and Nasiriya (Damascus): Transport of a wheat shipment via railway lines. (April 2026)

The railway and regional connectivity file was present in most meetings of the Syrian transport minister, who indicated that future projects would include converting dry ports into integrated logistics stations to strengthen Syria's position as a regional link.

Last April, Badr announced that the ministry was preparing a comprehensive regional map for rail connectivity among Türkiye, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, including a precise description of existing lines and proposals for projects to revive them. He explained that rail connectivity with Jordan via the Hejaz Railway is being managed through understandings with Amman and Ankara to maintain and rehabilitate damaged sections, stressing that it could be repaired before the end of 2026 if promised Turkish support is implemented.

He pointed out that work is underway in cooperation with the World Bank to provide technical and financial support for Syria's railway lines, with an estimated value ranging from \$65 million to \$200 million in grants, with priority focused on reactivating the railways as a transit corridor linking Türkiye with Syria, Jordan and Iraq.

Time and cost calculations: Strategic advantages

Daifallah Abu Aqoula, head of the Jordanian Association of Customs Clearance and Goods Transport Companies, believes that transporting goods from the Gulf states to Europe via Jordan and Syria can be economically viable in many cases, but it is not a complete alternative to maritime shipping so much as a complement and competitor in specific sectors.

Abu Aqoula told NoonPost that the overland corridor through Jordan and Syria has an advantage in terms of time. Maritime shipping from the Gulf to European ports usually takes between 15 and 30 days depending on the port and shipping line, while overland transport through Jordan and Syria to Turkish ports or directly to Eastern and Central Europe may take only four to eight days under ideal operating conditions, making it suitable for high-value or time-sensitive goods such as pharmaceuticals, electronics, spare parts and fresh products.

As for cost, he said it depends on the type of goods, distance and shipment size. Cases in which overland transport is competitive include high-value goods, urgent shipments, less-than-truckload shipments (LTL), and goods headed to

Türkiye, Eastern Europe and the Balkans.

He said maritime shipping remains less costly for full containers of large volumes, raw materials and low-value goods, and large, recurring shipments, making the sea the cheaper option per ton in most cases, while overland transport outperforms it in time and flexibility.

According to Abu Aqoula, the Jordanian-Syrian overland corridor has five strategic advantages:

Leveraging geography, as Jordan and Syria form the shortest land bridge between the Arab Gulf states, Türkiye and Europe, and this corridor is one of the most important potential overland routes in the region.

Reducing supply chain time, thereby lowering storage costs, reducing capital frozen in inventory, and raising supply chain efficiency.

Reducing dependence on congested maritime routes, especially in cases of closure or disruption of sea lanes, rising maritime freight rates and geopolitical crises.

Stimulating transit trade, benefiting from transit fees, customs clearance services, transport and logistics services, storage and re-export. The Syrian-Jordanian free zone also benefits from being a regional logistics center.

Linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean, as the Jordanian-Syrian corridor can form an axis connecting Aqaba port-Jordanian territory-Syrian territory-Turkish and Mediterranean ports-European markets.

By contrast, he pointed to a number of challenges that must be addressed for this corridor to become genuinely competitive, including facilitating customs procedures, unifying transit systems among countries, reducing waiting times at borders, improving road and border-center infrastructure, providing appropriate insurance guarantees for goods, and creating a unified electronic platform to track shipments.

He stressed that the overland corridor linking the Gulf, Jordan, Syria and Europe will not replace maritime shipping, but it can become the faster and more flexible option for many goods. If infrastructure is developed and border procedures simplified, it could turn into a global strategic logistics corridor linking the Gulf to Europe and generating significant returns for Jordan and Syria from transit trade and logistics services.

Promising geography, many challenges

Hossam Abu Omar, a member of the Syrian Economists Syndicate, believes Syria's geographic location gives it important assets to play a pivotal role in

regional supply chains, especially with growing international interest in diversifying trade and energy routes. He noted that the disruptions witnessed in the Strait of Hormuz have once again highlighted the need for alternative or parallel corridors that can be relied upon.

He told NoonPost that Syria lies at the intersection of two main trade axes: the first extends from Türkiye through Syria and Jordan to the Gulf states, while the second links East Asia and Iraq to Syria's Mediterranean ports and from there to Europe. He pointed to the importance of Syria's seaports and the possibility of developing free zones, dry ports, storage centers and logistics services.

The economist said the Syrian market itself represents an additional pull factor. Aleppo retains historic industrial weight at the regional level, while Damascus serves as a commercial center, in addition to the expected demand for materials and goods needed for reconstruction operations in the coming years, all of which reinforces Syria's place on the supply chain route between East and West.

Despite the assets Syria possesses, he believes its transformation into a main corridor in supply chains still faces a host of challenges, foremost among them achieving full security stability, in addition to the need to rehabilitate infrastructure including roads, ports, railways, bridges and communications networks projects that require major investment and financing.

Added to these challenges is the need to develop the legal and procedural environment by simplifying customs procedures, stabilizing fees, and providing clear regulatory frameworks that encourage trade and investment. Syria also faces competition from existing and well-established trade routes, which compels it to offer competitive advantages related to cost, transit speed and the efficiency of logistics services. Yet the decisive factor remains the extent to which countries and companies adopt this route within international trade networks and supply chains, according to the economist.

For his part, Daifallah Abu Aqoula, head of the Jordanian Association of Customs Clearance and Goods Transport Companies, pointed to Syria's exceptional geographic location, which qualifies it to serve as a link between the Gulf, Jordan, Türkiye and Europe. But he said this role remains limited because of a set of challenges hindering its transformation into a main regional corridor for supply chains.

According to Abu Aqoula, the most prominent of these challenges are the need to develop transport infrastructure and raise the efficiency of border crossings by reducing waiting times, unifying procedures, and applying electronic systems and a single-window model, in addition to reducing transport costs and fees. Investors and transport companies focus on the final cost of the trip, and any

additional fees or lengthy procedures may push carriers to seek alternative routes.

He added in remarks to NoonPost that the challenges also include developing the logistics services sector and establishing modern centers, warehouses, consolidation and cooling zones, and strengthening multimodal connectivity among road, sea, rail and air transport, alongside accelerating digital transformation in tracking, clearance and data exchange. The greater the digitization, the more competitive the logistics corridor becomes.

He also pointed to the need to confront regional competition from existing corridors in Türkiye and the Gulf states, and to develop free zones — especially the Syrian-Jordanian one — so they can serve as re-export platforms and logistics service hubs, along with the need to attract greater investment in infrastructure and technology.

Abu Aqoula stressed the importance of regional coordination among Syria, Jordan, the Gulf states and Türkiye to ensure smooth supply chains, alongside modernizing Syria's overland freight fleet, which suffers from aging vehicles and higher fuel consumption that raises costs and limits efficiency. This calls for financing programs, encouraging investment in modern fleets, and strengthening tracking systems and technical services in order to enhance the corridor's future competitiveness.

Mazen Alloush, director of relations at Syria's General Authority for Ports and Customs, for his part stressed that Syria possesses all the geographic assets that qualify it to be an important partial alternative to traditional corridors, and that the most important thing today is that these capabilities are gradually beginning to turn into practical reality through improvement and rehabilitation operations, in addition to cargo figures at the ports that, he said, indicate rapidly rising maritime activity.

Alloush told NoonPost that revitalizing port traffic cannot be separated from the network of land crossings, as this integration forms a complete system that enhances the smooth flow of trade and opens broader horizons for the national economy in the coming phase.

Iraqi oil tests the corridors

Over the past two months, Iraq has moved to export crude oil through Syrian territory to global markets. Then, on June 2, the Council of Ministers approved the Oil Ministry's contract with the Syrian side to use the ports of Baniyas and Tartous for the transport, storage and handling of Basra crude of all grades, along with the establishment of an office to manage export operations through this route. A plan was also approved to increase the quantities of oil transported by

truck through neighboring countries to 420,000 barrels per day.



A transit shipment arriving from Turkish territory and heading to Iraq crosses through the Yaroubiyah border crossing, May 22, 2026 (General Authority for Ports and Customs)

Iraq's turn toward the Syrian route was an option imposed by regional tensions and pressures linked to the US-i war against Iran, which was reflected in the decline of some oil export channels. Oil convoys made up of dozens of trucks then began crossing through the Yaroubiyah and al-Tanf crossings to the Baniyas refinery, in preparation for re-export through the Mediterranean.

Syrian political researcher Anas Shawakh, an expert in the petroleum sector, believes Syria's role as a transit corridor for trade has become an actual and important reality within the available capabilities. He noted that the Iraqi Council of Ministers' decisions reflect codification, legislation and executive procedures for the oil transport process, and confirm indicators of sustainability not tied to the immediate circumstances of the Strait of Hormuz.

Shawakh told NoonPost that the success of this route can be measured through the ongoing transport operations, which reflect the Syrian government's ability to manage, organize and secure overland oil movement. He added that the expected expansion of these operations could contribute to rehabilitating transport and logistics infrastructure, opening the way for increased cooperation with Iraq and perhaps other countries, in addition to achieving broader economic benefits for Syria.

A potential logistics hub: Who benefits?

Free zones in Syria play a pivotal role in stimulating trade and investment by providing a flexible environment for customs exemptions and facilitating storage, manufacturing and re-export operations, while dry ports are considered a logistical extension of seaports that help ease pressure on traditional ports and connect them to domestic and regional markets with greater efficiency in transport and distribution.

Syria has 10 free zones distributed across a number of provinces and crossings. The Ports and Customs Authority also plans to establish a zone in the city of Idlib that will include an industrial and commercial free zone and a dry port. It has signed a memorandum of understanding with Türkiye's POMAKO to implement and operate the project.

Last May, the Ports Authority signed an agreement with CMA CGM to operate two dry ports within the free zone in Adra in the Damascus countryside and the free zone in Aleppo according to international standards. The Syrian General Establishment for Railways and Latakia International Container Terminal Co. also signed a memorandum of understanding to study linking the port of Latakia to three inland dry ports in Aleppo, Homs and Damascus through the rail transport network — projects that contribute to strengthening Syria's position as a regional logistics hub and a potential food silo.

Hossam Abu Omar, a member of the Syrian Economists Syndicate, believes describing Syria as a "food silo" understates its capabilities and the importance of its location, noting that it is qualified to become an integrated logistics and food hub. But that depends on developing a comprehensive system that includes seaports and rehabilitating and expanding storage infrastructure represented by silos, warehouses, storage centers and refrigerated facilities.

Statistics from the Syrian Grain Corporation indicate there are 37 silos, including 16 destroyed, and 98 smaller silos, including 64 destroyed, in addition to 14 warehouses and 27 open-air storage centers.

He told NoonPost that building this system requires equipping storage areas to global standards, including massive refrigerated facilities and dry ports away from the coast to ease pressure on seaports, alongside establishing food-processing factories and related manufacturing, so that Syria's role is not limited to transit alone.

The economist added that the success of this transformation is tied to applying quality standards, health oversight, laboratories and integrated cold chains, noting that Syria's location close to Arab, Turkish and European markets gives it a strong opportunity to become a regional logistics and food hub.

He pointed out that the entry of global maritime transport and logistics companies into the ports of Latakia and Tartous carries an important indication of Syria's direction toward building a more sustainable transport, ports and logistics services system. He noted that these companies' participation in dry port projects helps introduce international expertise in transport, customs clearance and storage, laying the foundation for developing the sector according to advanced models.

He believes these steps reflect seriousness in the development path, but they are still in their early stages, and achieving broad economic results requires time and a package of successive investments across several sectors. Reaching the level of effective exports toward the Arab or European hinterland, he said, requires further expansion and bold investment.

“If Syria's geographic location is invested in optimally, and infrastructure, border crossings and logistics services are developed, alongside modernizing the Syrian freight fleet and raising its operational efficiency, and linking that to the Syrian-Jordanian free zone, Aqaba port and the Gulf, Turkish and European markets, then the Gulf-Jordan-Syria-Türkiye-Europe corridor can become one of the most important trade and transit corridors in the Middle East, and form a strategic bridge linking the Red Sea to the Mediterranean and providing a fast and effective alternative for regional and international supply chains, with positive repercussions for the Jordanian and Syrian economies and for trade movement between Asia and Europe.”

Dr. Daifallah Abu Aqoula – head of the Jordanian Association of Customs Clearance and Goods Transport Companies

The importance of trade corridors and their economic effects extends to a wide network of countries and sectors connected to them. The more successful a new route is in reducing transport time and diversifying transit options, the wider the circle of beneficiaries becomes from governments, ports, shipping companies and logistics services to the markets that depend on the regular flow of goods and energy, according to World Bank reports and studies.

If Syria succeeds in entrenching its position as a corridor for trade and energy, the circle of beneficiaries will include the transit countries themselves – foremost Syria and Jordan – alongside Iraq, the Gulf states, Türkiye and Europe. While the countries along the route reap returns from transport and logistics services, exporting and importing countries benefit from a shorter and more diversified route for the movement of goods and energy.