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**Alexey Likhachev, Rosatom Director General, and Liu Wei, China’s Minister of Transport, convened the first meeting of Subcommittee on Russia-China Cooperation on the Northern Sea Route**

*The meeting took place in* [*Tavricheskiy Palace in St. Petersburg*](http://www.saint-petersburg.com/palaces/tavricheskiy-palace/)

The Subcommittee on Cooperation on the Northern Sea Route (NSR) of the Russia-China Committee for the Preparation of Regular Meetings between the Heads of Government had its first meeting in St. Petersburg on 25 November 2024. Alexey Likhachev, Rosatom Director General is the head of the Russian party of the Subcommittee and Liu Wei, China’s Minister of Transport, leads the Chinese delegation.

In his opening address, Alexey Likhachev, Rosatom Director General, stated: “Despite this being the first meeting of the Subcommittee, we have already formalized a number of agreements between our nations regarding the safety of navigation. We are working towards constructive collaboration on other significant matters. I believe we have established a strong basis for the future endeavors of this Subcommittee”.

The Chinese Transport Minister, Liu Wei, also stated that the two parties had reached a number of significant agreements regarding their future collaborative endeavors.

**Background**

Russia considers the comprehensive development of the Russian Arctic to be its national strategic priority. In order to succeed in the tasks the country has undertaken, it is crucial to increase traffic along the Northern Sea Route. This logistics corridor is being developed due to regular shipping, the construction of new nuclear-powered icebreakers, and the renovation of the relevant infrastructure. Rosatom companies are actively contributing to this endeavor.

The Northern Sea Route (NSR) is the shortest shipping route that connects the western part of Eurasia with the Asia-Pacific region. It starts at the Kara Gate Strait between the Barents Sea and the Kara Sea, and ends at Cape Dezhnev, at the entrance to the Bering Strait. The NSR spans 5,600 kilometers, passing through several Arctic Ocean seas, including the Kara, Laptev, East Siberian and Chukchi Seas. The NSR serves ports in the Arctic and along the major Siberian rivers including six major seaports: Sabetta, Dikson, Dudinka, Khatanga, Tiksi and Pevek.

The decision to establish a subcommittee was announced in May this year following the state visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to China and his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2023. On 21 August 2024, China and Russia signed a protocol to establish a subcommittee in accordance with the agreements made by the leaders of the two nations. Vladimir Panov, Subcommittee Executive Secretary representing Russia and Special Rosatom Representative for Arctic Development identified some key areas for cooperation including shipping safety, planning and ensuring the increased cargo traffic along the Northern Sea Route, supporting the development of logistics routes, and sharing information on ice conditions, meteorological conditions, and other relevant factors. Both China and Russia have developed substantial potential for cooperation on the Northern Sea Route. This year, Chinese shipping companies have nearly doubled the number of voyages along the NSR. At the St. Petersburg Economic Forum in June, Chinese business representatives and Rosatom signed an agreement to establish a joint venture for shipbuilding and a year-round container service along the NSR connecting Chinese and Russian ports.

In 2018, the Russian government appointed Rosatom the infrastructure operator for the Northern Sea Route (NSR). Rosatom is tasked with overseeing the federal project «Development of the Northern Sea route» being also involved in the project for the NSR development until 2035, as well as the initiative for socio-economic development in Russia until 2030. One of Rosatom's main goals is to turn the Northern Sea Route into a highly efficient transportation link connecting Europe, Russia, and the Asia-Pacific region. Under a federal project called the Great Northern Route, work is underway to create a new shipping corridor that will run from St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad to Vladivostok.