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Twenty-third session

Geneva, 7–8 September 2010

Report of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics on its twenty-third session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics held its twenty-third session from 7 to 8 September 2010. The session was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Erdem Direkler (Turkey). Representatives of the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States participated: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Kyrgyz Republic, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Monaco, Netherlands, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United States of America and Uzbekistan.

2. Representatives of the following countries also attended under Article 11 of the Terms of Reference of the UNECE: Australia, Egypt, Haiti, Maldives, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, South Africa, Viet Nam.

3. Representatives of the following United Nations (UN) organizations and specialized agencies attended the meeting: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The UNECE Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects were also represented.

4. The European Union (EU) was present.

5. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European Investment Bank (EIB), European Railway Agency (ERA), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and World Trade Organisation (WTO).

6. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Hellenic Chambers Transport Association, International Air Transport Association (IATA), International MultiModal Transport Association (IMMTA), International Road Federation (IRF), International Road Transport Union (IRU), International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) and International Union of Railways (UIC).

7. Representatives of the following bodies attended the meeting at the invitation of the secretariat: École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (HEID), IHS Fairplay, Ingénieurs du Monde, Institute for Environmental Sciences, Institute of Environmental Protection, Institute for the Management and Logistics, International Chamber of Shipping, International Metalworkers' Federation, InWEnt-International Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH - Capacity Building International, Jacobs Engineering UK Ltd., JSC Rosgosstrakh, MEL - Erasmus University Rotterdam, National Technical University of Athens, Netherlands Maritime University, Praximondo, Southpanafrican International Spi, Stanford University, Swiss Re Europe S.A., University of the Aegean, University of Geneva, Via donau – Österreichische Wasserstrassen GmbH (Austrian Waterway Management Company) and World Council of Churches.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/47 and ECE/TRANS/WP.5/47/Corr.1

8. The agenda was adopted.

III. Monitoring of the developments relevant to pan-European transport networks (agenda item 2)

A. The European Commission briefing on the progress made in the development of the Trans-European Transport Network

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/46 – Report of the twenty-second session; Informal document No. 7 – Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) Policy Review; Informal document No. 9 – Proposal on TEN-T Network Planning

9. A representative of the European Commission (EC) provided the Working Party with a review of the TEN-T policy and focused in this connection on the TEN-T planning methodology. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the EC for the briefing and invited the EC to continue providing an update on its activities related to Pan-European Corridors at its twenty-fourth session in 2011.

B. Trans European Motorway and Trans European Railway projects

Documentation: Informal document No. 5 – Report on Trans European Motorway (TEM) and Trans European Railway (TER) activities

10. The TEM and TER project manager presented a report on the activities carried out over the reporting period 2009–2010. The Working Party appreciated the update on the implementation and ongoing revision of the TEM and TER Projects' Master Plan in 2010 and invited the Projects' manager to provide an update on relevant developments in the TEM and TER projects at its twenty-fourth session in 2011.

IV. Hinterland Connections of Seaports (agenda item 3)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/210 – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) publication on Hinterland Connections of Seaports

11. The Working Party reiterated its appreciation for the publication of the report and recalled the Inland Transport Committee (ITC)'s approval of the report on hinterland connections of seaports, in which it invited its working parties responsible for the tasks mentioned therein (Road Transport (SC.1), Rail Transport (SC.2), Transport Statistics (WP.6), Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) and Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30)) to consider whether and how these tasks could be implemented (ECE/TRANS/208, para. 32).

V. Euro-Asian Transport Links (agenda item 4)

A. Report of the Expert Group on Euro-Asian Transport Links

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2010/1

12. The Chair of the fourth session of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) and the secretariat informed the Working Party of the results of the Group of Experts' deliberations.

13. The Working Party appreciated the progress made by the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links and underlined the fact that developing Euro-Asian inland transport links would be a long-term undertaking, requiring a great deal of effort and perseverance, and enhanced coordination and cooperation among all countries along the EATL. In order to ensure the continuation of work carried out, thus far, by the Group of Experts for which financing beyond 2011 is indispensable the Working Party asked the secretariat to explore possibilities of ensuring funding of the project's activities with governments and potential donors, including the government of the Russian Federation. It also asked the ITC to support the Working Party's work in this field.

B. Other Euro-Asian transport initiatives

14. The Working Party appreciated the presentation of Lithuania on the land-bridge connection between Asia and Europe via the Southern Baltic region.

15. The representative of ECO invited UNECE to jointly elaborate and implement a Geographical Information System (GIS) project in ECO countries as part of EATL, Phase II. The project will be jointly supported by ECO and UNECE.

VI. Transport in the Mediterranean Region (agenda item 5)

A. Report of the Mediterranean Transport Study Centre

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2010/2 – Transport in the Mediterranean region

16. The representative of the Transport Study Centre for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO) introduced a report on recent activities of CETMO for consideration by the Working Party. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the CETMO secretariat for its comprehensive report and requested an update on CETMO activities for its next session in 2011.

B. The Euro-Mediterranean transport network

Documentation: Informal document No. 6 – The state of transport in the Euro-Mediterranean Region (TMN-T latest developments); Informal document No. 8 – The Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network

17. A representative of EC informed the Working Party on the establishment of a Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network and its connection with the future TEN-T. This report was complemented by the representative of CETMO with his report on the extension of major trans-European axes into neighbouring countries. The Working Party appreciated the presentation by EC and CETMO on their activities pertaining to the development of a Euro-Mediterranean transport network and asked to be briefed about further developments at its next session in 2011.

VII. Transport trends and challenges (agenda item 6)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/2010/5; Informal document No. 4 – National Transport Trends in 2009

18. The Working Party took note of the national reports (Informal document No. 4) as well as the review of the transport situation in UNECE member countries and of emerging

development trends (ECE/TRANS/2010/5) prepared by the secretariat. In view of the review to be undertaken in 2011 the Working Party asked member countries to respond to the secretariat's questionnaire on the transport situation in 2011 and expected developments in 2012.

A. Transport trends and challenges in Germany

Documentation: Informal document No. 10 – Transport Trends and Challenges in Germany

19. The Working Party appreciated very much the report provided by Germany, which highlights the improvements realized in the national transport sector during the recent economic downturn and its aftermath. The Working Party pointed out that it would like to receive a similar national report next year. It asked the secretariat to identify a country which would be ready to present a report on the measures it has taken with a view to improving the transport services on the national networks.

B. Transport trends and challenges in the road sector

Documentation: Informal document No. 3 – Transport trends and challenges in the road sector

20. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to IRU for an excellent presentation on the analysis of recent road transport trends and challenges which may be observed in order to recover road transport activities to pre-crisis levels. In view of the lively discussion centred on the occurrence of bankruptcies of road transport companies in the course of the economic crisis the Working Party asked the representative of IRU to address this question in a report to be prepared for its twenty-fourth session.

C. Transport trends and challenges in the rail sector

21. There was no report presented regarding recent rail transport trends and challenges to the recovery of rail transport activity to pre-crisis levels.

D. Transport and competitiveness

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/2010/10; Informal document No. 1 – Transport and competitiveness; Informal document No. 2 – Conclusions of Round Table on supply change challenges (2 December 2009)

22. The Working Party took note of the reports prepared by the secretariat and expressed its appreciation for the work carried out. The Working Party discussed the objectives of the project and the various activities to be undertaken in order to implement the action plan foreseen in the project. In view of the overall importance of the subject under consideration the Working Party asked Governments to identify and nominate experts in the field of supply chains to become members of the Task Force.

VIII. Technical assistance to countries with transition economies (agenda item 7)

Documentation: Informal document No. 11 – Technical Assistance to Countries with Transition Economies

23. A member of the secretariat acquainted the Working Party with improvements foreseen in the infrastructures of TEM and TER Projects. The Working Party invited Governments and relevant international organizations and institutions to contribute to the UNECE Trust Fund for Assistance to Countries in Transition (TFACT) and indicate the type of assistance which may be forthcoming.

IX. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 8)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/208; Informal document No. 12 – The United Nations Development Account (UNDA) Project on Facilitating climate change mitigation in transport through addressing its energy-environment linkage

24. The Working Party took note of the Committee's decisions related to its work areas and asked the secretariat to be informed about such decisions at its twenty-fourth session in 2011.

25. A member of the secretariat informed the Working Party of a number of aspects of the UNDA Project on Facilitating climate change mitigation in transport through addressing its energy-environment linkage. The Working Party supported the UNDA Project and asked Governments to participate actively in its execution.

X. Election of officers for the Working Party's sessions in 2011 and 2012 (agenda item 9)

26. The Working Party elected Mr. Seref Tabak (Turkey) and Mr. Björn Oriwohl (Germany) respectively Chair and Vice-Chair for its sessions in 2011 and 2012.

XI. Other business (agenda item 10)

27. The representative of the Russian Federation proposed to give more thought as to the best way to organize cooperation in the area of auxiliary transport infrastructure; he pointed out that the Russian Federation was ready to support such cooperation.

XII. Date of next session (agenda item 11)

28. The Working Party's twenty-fourth session is tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva on 6 and 7 September 2011.

XIII. Joint United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/United Nations Conference on Trade and Development Workshop “Climate Change Impacts on International Transport Networks” (agenda item 12)

Documentation: Programme of the Workshop; ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2010/3

29. The joint workshop demonstrated the complexity of the substantive issues involved and the urgent need to prepare appropriate policy actions, as well as the need for exchange of information about best practices among member Governments. In this regard, the Hellenic Chambers Transport Association informed the Working Party that in case there was no offer from a government, the Greek Chambers of Commerce would be ready to explore the possibility of hosting another such UNECE-UNCTAD event on climate change impacts and adaptation needs of transport networks in the form of an international conference toward the end of 2011 or the beginning of 2012, most likely on a Greek island and in this way to facilitate capacity building and sharing of best practices to address this complex issue.

30. Since the number of the Working Party members present during the discussion of the follow-up to the workshop did not offer a good representation of the Working Party constituency, the WP.5 Chairs (in-office and successor) and the newly elected vice-chair agreed to defer the specific question of follow-up, including the set up of an expert group with limited duration, to the seventy-third session of the Inland Transport Committee. The terms of reference of a Group of Experts on Climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks, as set out in Annex II of document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2010/3 have been fine-tuned and are reproduced in the annex. In preparation of the deliberations of the Inland Transport Committee, the secretariat was invited to carry out comprehensive consultations with member Governments about the potential ways of follow-up.

XIV. Adoption of the report (agenda item 13)

31. The report of the twenty-third session, including the decisions, was established by the Chair with the assistance of the secretariat, for submission to the Inland Transport Committee.

Annex

Terms of reference of the Group of Experts on Climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks

1. The Group of Experts will define the scope of activities of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics and its involvement in this area.
2. The Group of Experts, based on existing resources of the secretariat, along with additional financial support provided by participating countries and in close collaboration with other international organizations concerned, will take stock of the available data and analyses of climate change impacts on international transport networks in the ECE region and beyond.
3. The Group of Experts will collect information on all relevant planning, management, organizational and other initiatives for an adaptation of transport networks to climate change with a view to raising awareness and sharing and drawing on good practices and different national strategies.
4. The Group of Experts will prepare in a coordinated manner recommendations or proposals to member Governments for the consideration by the Inland Transport Committee with a view to improving the adaptability of transport networks to climate change in some areas, including infrastructure; risk-assessment methodology; evaluation of adaptive measures; risk management; training tools; and cross-border information sharing by national transport authorities.
5. The above recommendations should aim to improve long-term sustainability of international transport and set best examples of national policies addressing the issues of vulnerability of transport networks amongst member Governments, including developing and landlocked countries, as well as small island States.
6. It is proposed that the Group should be composed of experts in the relevant fields, including in particular international transport and climate change, appointed by member Governments as well as competent representatives of relevant international governmental and non-governmental organizations and academia.
7. The Group of Experts is expected to start its work in May 2011, following the approval by the Inland Transport Committee and the UNECE Executive Committee. It will terminate its activities within two years with a submission of a full report of its accomplishments, including policy-oriented recommendations. The report will be considered by the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics and, if approved, submitted to the Inland Transport Committee for its endorsement.
8. If a government decides to host the International Conference on Adaptation of Transport Networks to Climate Change that was proposed by the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics at its twenty-third session, the Group of Experts will also act as a steering committee for its preparation.
9. The Group of Experts will be assisted in its work by the UNECE secretariat and will report to the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics. The UNCTAD secretariat would be invited to join efforts and assist the work.