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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics
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agenda item 10)

COHERENT SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURES

Note by the secretariat

The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics and the Inland Transport Committee, during their sixth and fifty-sixth sessions respectively, considered the item on the "Possible Approach by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to set up a coherent European System of International Transport Infrastructures" (TRANS/WP.5/12, paras. 45-47; ECE/TRANS/103, paras. 47-49).

In view of the need to ensure greater coherence between the various international road, rail and combined transport networks laid down in the AGR, AGC and AGTC Agreements as well as the work carried out in the TEM and TER projects, the Committee endorsed the decision of the Working Party to draw up a document annually showing the modifications included in the above networks and the progress made in the projects.

In line with the above-mentioned decisions, the Working Party at its eighth session decided to set up such a document on a coherent European system of international transport infrastructures for its next session in order to continue discussions of a greater coherence between transport infrastructure networks (TRANS/WP.5/18, para. 76). On the basis of that decision and the one taken at the Working Party's twelfth session (TRANS/WP.5/26, para. 67), the secretariat has prepared a note presenting an updated list of recent modifications to the AGR, AGC and AGTC transport networks, as approved by SC.1, SC.2, and WP.24 at their last sessions, as well as the recent developments in the TEM and TER projects.

1. MODIFICATIONS TO THE AGR, AGC AND AGTC TRANSPORT NETWORKS

1.1. AGR

The amendments to annex I approved by the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) at its ninety-second session (October 1998), entered into force last April 2000. These amendments, reproduced in TRANS/WP.5/1999/10, have extended the AGR network to Central Asia and the Caucasus. The secretariat is currently preparing a new official map of the E road network. (TRANS/SC.1/365, paras 11-15).

1.2. AGC

The Working Party on Rail Transport, at its fifty-second session (October 1999) approved the following amendments to the AGC network (TRANS/SC.2/192, annex 1):

- In Hungary:
E-71 Replace the name of the station "Murakeresztúr" by "Dombóvár".
Add the line E-691 Murakeresztúr-Gyékényes
- In Poland and Lithuania:
Add the line E-75 Warszawa-Bialystok-Sokółka-Suwalki-Trakiszki-Mockava-Šeštokai-Kaunas-Šiauliai-Šarkiai-(Meitene)

While the amendments In Hungary merely clarify the AGC lines in the Hungarian border with Croatia, the new E-75 line represents a major step to extend the AGC network to the Baltic States. This line is intended to be further developed northbound to Estonia and Latvia.

Additionally, SC.2 continues working in the extension of the AGC network to Central Asia and the Caucasus.

1.3. AGTC

At its thirty-second session in September 1999, the Working Party on Combined Transport (WP.24) approved the following amendments to Annex I of AGTC:

- In Hungary
Add the lines C 54/1(Episcopia Bihor-) Biharkeresztes-Berettyóújfalu-Püspökladány
C-E 691 Murakeresztúr-Gyékényes
Replace in railway line C-E 71 the town "Murakeresztúr" by: Dombóvár",
- In Romania
Add the line C 54/1 Pascani-Suceava-Salva Dej-Cluj Napoca-Oradea-Episcopia Bihor (-Biharkeresztes)

The new line C 54/1 links line C/E52 in Hungary with line C/E 95 in the vicinity of the Romanian border with Moldova, running mostly parallel to line C/E 54. The other changes in Hungary are the same proposed to AGC, in order to clarify the AGTC lines in the vicinity of the Hungarian border with Croatia.

The Russian Federation has submitted proposals to extend the AGTC towards the Caucasus and Asia. These proposals will be considered by the Working Party at its next session, in October 2000.

2. TEM AND TER PROJECTS

No relevant changes to the TEM and TER networks have been made since the last year. The latest changes to the TER network have had the objective of including some lines of the TINA network, mainly concerned the extension of the network to include Lithuania. Other proposals, extending the network in the Russian Federation towards the Caucasus and Central Asia, have thus far not been adopted.

3. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FOLLOW-UP

Recent amendments in the three networks, AGR, AGC and AGTC have been following the same priorities:

- Their extension towards the Caucasus and Central Asia region (including its development in the Russian Federation).
- Their extension to the Baltic countries.
- The inclusion of some minor links in Central and Eastern Europe.

Thus far, coherence in the extension proposals among the different networks has mainly relied on the countries concerned. Generally speaking, there are no contradictions between the already-approved proposals for AGR in the Caucasus and Central Asia, and the last proposal developed for AGC, although some particular alignments could have been better co-ordinated.

There are no major contradictions between the last developments in AGC and AGTC. The AGTC network is in general denser than the AGC network, which might be contradictory with the fact that AGTC is a rail network specialized in Combined Transport whereas AGC is a general network for both, passenger and freight.

Apparent incoherence among the three networks may be explained by the different concepts underlying the parameters chosen in their respective annexes:

- AGR's annex II proposes different categories for roads, ranging from all-purpose, one carriageway roads to motorways. This undoubtedly facilitates the inclusion of any road of international significance even if their current standards are low, and its traffic level is not high-enough to justify its transformation into a high-standard motorway.
- AGC's annex II imposes very high standards, thus focusing on the most important, heavily-used rail links for passenger and freight. Although the fact is that these standards are not met in most of the AGC network, they may dissuade countries from including some

relevant international links, as traffic flows will never justify even in the long term their upgrading to AGC standards.

- AGTC's annex II proposes less ambitious standards than AGC's, in the understanding that freight transport operations probably do not need too high operational speeds. This probably encourages countries to include more lines in the AGTC network.

There are therefore three different approaches to network definition:

- For roads, the main consideration to include a road in the AGC network seems to be the relevance of the link for international traffic.
- For rail, the main purpose is to develop a relatively high-speed network.
- For combined transport, the focus is put on operational issues (lines that can offer a certain level of service in terms of operational speed, terminal and border-crossing operations, etc).

In fact, the Working Party might wish to discuss whether some common guidelines should be defined in order to reinforce the coherence of the three networks and their synergies. There is a wide variety of possibilities to do so:

- Developing some criteria for the identification of transport links of international relevance.
- Establishing desirable thresholds for the quality of service in the different international networks.
- Identifying major transport nodes in the region that could be defined as the main interchange points between modal networks.

The Working Party is invited to examine this question and to establish an ad hoc group that could look at this question in detail and make a proposal for its next session.
