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Working Party on Rail Transport

REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON RAIL TRANSPORT
ON ITS FIFTY-THIRD SESSION
(6-8 October 1999)

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
Attendance	1
Adoption of the agenda	2
Activities of ECE bodies and international organizations of interest to the Working Party	3-10
(a) Economic Commission for Europe	3
(b) Inland Transport Committee	4-8
(c) ITC subsidiary bodies	9 and 10

Please note that the distribution of documentation for the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) is no longer "restricted". Accordingly, the secretariat has adopted a new numbering system whereby all working documents other than Reports and Agendas will be numbered as follows: TRANS/SC.2/year/serial number. Reports, Agendas, resolutions and major publications will retain their previous numbering system (i.e. TRANS/SC.2/189).

CONTENTS (cont'd)

	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
Follow-up to the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment	11-13
Study of the situation of the railways in member countries	14-17
Determination of railway infrastructure capacity including aspects related to the fee for the use of the infrastructure	18 and 19
Productivity in rail transport	20 and 21
Railway safety: risk assessment techniques	22 and 23
Facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport	24-34
(a) Follow-up to the ITC resolution on the Reduction of the Border Stopping Time of Shuttle Trains in International Traffic (ITC resolution No. 248)	24-26
(b) Information on the progress made in the facilitation of border crossing for shuttle trains in the region of the South-East European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)	27 and 28
(c) Annual monitoring on the progress made in the facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport	29-34
Development of a European conventional and high-speed railway network	35
European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC)	36-55
(a) Situation regarding the application of the AGC	36-39
(b) Amendments proposed to Annex I of the AGC Agreement	40-46
(c) Data collecting efforts on the AGC network.....	47-50
(d) Location of important marshalling yards within the European railway network	51-53
(e) Safety provisions in long rail tunnels	54 and 55
European Research Programme for Transport	56-58

Trans-European Railway (TER) Project	59 and 60
Application of summer time	61 and 62
Assistance to countries in transition	63 and 64

CONTENTS (cont'd)

	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
Information on developments in various railway fields	65
Railways' practices and combined transport development	66-69
Draft Programme of Work for 2000-2004	70 and 71
Election of Officers for the sessions of the Working Party in 2000 and 2001	72
Other business	73 and 74
Date of the next session	73
Documentation	74
Adoption of the report	75 and 76

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Annexes

- Annex 1: Amendments adopted to Annex 1 of AGC
Annex 2: Draft Programme of Work for 2000-2004
-

REPORT

ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport held its fifty-third session from 6 to 8 October 1999. The session was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. Kosteas (Greece). Representatives of the following ECE member States participated: Belgium; Croatia; Czech Republic; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland and Turkey. The Commission of the European Community (CEC) was also represented. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations also took part in the session: Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSZhd); Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). The following non-governmental organizations were present: International Union of Railways (UIC); International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/191.

2. The Working Party adopted the agenda as circulated in document TRANS/SC.2/191.

ACTIVITIES OF ECE BODIES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

(a) Economic Commission for Europe

Documentation: E/1999/37-E/ECE/1374.

3. The Working Party was informed about the results of the fifty-fourth session of the Economic Commission for Europe (4-6 May 1999) particularly in the fields of Transport and Environment and the South-East European Co-operative Initiative (SECI).

(b) Inland Transport Committee

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/128 and Add.1.

4. The Working Party was acquainted with the activities which had been dealt with at the sixty-first session of the Inland Transport Committee (8-11 February 1999) to the extent that they are related to the area of work of interest to the Working Party as contained in paras. 65-74 of the Committee's report.

5. The Working Party was informed that, at its sixty-first session, the Committee adopted the resolution on the reduction of border stopping times for shuttle trains in international traffic, as reproduced in annex 1 to its report (ECE/TRANS/128, paras. 71-73) (see also paras. 24-26 of this report).

6. Following the recommendation of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC), the Working Party agreed to cooperate with the Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport (WP.30) in the field of facilitation of border crossing procedures for railway transport. In this connection, the SC.2 asked

the secretariat to convene an informal group including the SC.2 and WP.30 bureaux by the end of the year, in order to develop a programme of work on this topic and to reach practical and achievable solutions.

Note: Text underlined indicates a decision taken during the session.

7. The representative of OTIF briefed the Working Party on the results of their fifth General Assembly, held in Vilnius, 26 May-3 June 1999, and particularly on the signature of the 1999 Protocol, which modifies the 1980 COTIF Convention. In accordance with this Protocol, which will enter into force in about 4 years, it is expected that OTIF will play a more active role in border-crossing facilitation, particularly putting in place a new Rail Facilitation Committee.

8. Following the recommendation of the ITC, the Working Party agreed to examine the question concerning working hours of railway personnel and its impact on the operation of international through trains. In this connection, the SC2 asked the secretariat to address the European Commission (EC), the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the Community of European Railways (CCFE) in order to collect information on the studies and initiatives already made, and to convene subsequently an informal group including the SC.2 bureau and representatives from the EC, the UIC and the CCFE, in order to develop a programme of work on this topic.

(c) ITC subsidiary bodies

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/83; TRANS/WP.24/85; TRANS/WP.6/135.

9. The Working Party was informed about the interest of the Working Party on Combined Transport in examining the difficulties that railways' practices maybe imposing on the development of combined transport (see also paras. 65-68) and the activities of data collection carried out by the Working Party on Transport Statistics (see also paras. 46-49).

10. The Working Party examined the new version of the railway tables contained in the annual bulletin on transport statistics, and asked Governments to send their comments to the secretariat by 15 of November.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Documentation: JMTE/1998/4.

11. The Working Party was informed about the results of the Second Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment (Geneva, 6 July 1999), and particularly about its purpose to organise a meeting of national focal points, lead actors and other experts in January 2000 to assist the Joint Meeting in the tasks of identifying key priorities in the Programme of Joint Action; establishing, on the basis of those priorities, a revolving work plan, provide guidance for the implementation of the Programme of Joint Action, preparing the 2002 mid-term review, and evaluate the opportunities for new non-legally binding actions as well as the feasibility and necessity of a new legally binding instrument.

12. At its fifty-second session, the Working Party agreed to include in its

programme of work the item III (d) at the international level in the Programme of Joint Action, which was endorsed by the Inland Transport Committee at its sixty-first session. In this connection the Working Party noted that its activity concerning working hours (see para. 8) could be a valuable contribution to the question of interoperability as mentioned in that item of the programme of work.

13. In the context of the follow-up to the Regional Conference on Transport and Environment, the possibility of including the subject of interoperability in the agenda for its next meeting was raised. However, the Working Party felt that such consideration would be premature.

STUDY OF THE SITUATION OF THE RAILWAYS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/1 and Add.1-4; Informal papers from UIC, the European Commission, and the Governments of Kazakhstan, Italy and Poland.

14. In respect of past and future development of rail traffic in member countries, the UIC representative said that historical data showed different trends: in Western Europe, a constant increase could be observed, whereas in Central and Eastern European Countries, after a sharp decline in traffic flows in the early 1990s, signs of recovery were apparent. According to the information presented by Governments, international freight traffic and domestic passenger traffic seemed to show good expectations of further development.

15. The Working Party also pointed out that the separation of operation and infrastructure in the rail sector has made further progress, although significant difficulties are appearing in many countries. It also welcomed the emergence of new railway operators in some countries. Investment priorities, as reported by the Governments, present different patterns, according to the specific situation in each country.

16. Following the request of the Working Party, the representative of UIC agreed to present at the next session a contribution on the relevance of railways in the transport market, comparing the concept of "market-share" to the traditional approach based on "modal-split".

17. The Working Party expressed its appreciation for the information submitted to the current session and recalled that, according with the decision taken at its fifty-second, session, Governments will be asked to provide information on this issue for its 2001 session, but are welcomed to present any significant information for the next session (TRANS/SC.2/190, para. 18).

DETERMINATION OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY INCLUDING ASPECTS RELATED TO THE FEE FOR THE USE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/2.

18. The Working Party took note of the proposals contained in the Communication of the European Commission COM(98)480, and the information orally provided by the UN/TER Project Central Office on their activities in

this field.

19. The Working Party agreed to include this item in the agenda for its next meeting, and asked the Governments, and particularly the Netherlands, to report on the progress made in the determination of fees for the use of the infrastructure.

PRODUCTIVITY IN RAIL TRANSPORT

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/3 and Add.1; informal papers by UIC, the UN/TER PCO and the European Commission.

20. The representative of the UIC commented on the differences in the value of productivity indicators between countries, concluding that technical, economic, political, geographic, etc. conditions in each country are the main reason for such differences. The Working Party was also briefed about current efforts to develop more meaningful rail efficiency figures, based on financial data, and particularly about the study on European Railways Performance Indicators carried out for the European Commission.

21. Following the presentation of the UIC representative, the Working Party agreed that the productivity indicators that have been collected thus far are of limited value for making international comparisons among railways. Nevertheless, the Working Party decided to continue collecting this information in the future, and asked the representatives of the UIC and the Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSZhd) to provide 1998 data for its next session, following the new format already used this year in document TRANS/SC.2/1999/3. It also requested the secretariat to collect information on new developments in the search for more satisfactory indicators taking also into account the experiences of the TER Project and to report on this at its next session.

RAILWAY SAFETY: RISK ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/4 and Add.1.

22. The Working Party examined the additional information provided by the Government of the Netherlands (TRANS/SC.2/1999/4), as well as the note of synthesis prepared by the secretariat (TRANS/SC.2/1999/4/Add.1).

23. Following the proposal of the secretariat (TRANS/SC.2/1999/4/Add.1), the Working Party agreed to include this item in the request for information that is sent to the Governments every two years. Accordingly, the Working Party asked the Governments to report, for its 2001 session, on the following issues:

- railway accidents (based on definitions used in UIC statistics);
- methodologies used to establish investment priorities in the field of railway safety;
- traffic of dangerous goods on the network of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC);
- marshalling yards used more by dangerous goods transport.

FACILITATION OF BORDER CROSSING IN INTERNATIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT

- (a) Follow-up to the ITC resolution on the reduction of the Border Stopping Time of Shuttle Trains in International Traffic (ITC Resolution No. 248).

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/5.

24. The Working Party learned that the ITC, at its sixty-first session, feeling that the Working Party should supervise the implementation and monitoring of the resolution, requested to be informed at its next session on the progress made in the implementation of its resolution No.248 (TRANS/SC.2/190, para. 40 and ECE/TRANS/128, paras. 71-73 and annex 1).

25. The Working Party requested the Governments to report at its next session on the progress made in the implementation of resolution No. 248.

26. The Working Party agreed to develop a monitoring system on the reduction of stopping times at the borders, on the basis of the proposal presented by the secretariat (TRANS/SC.2/1999/5). It was suggested that the monitoring effort should primarily focus on East-West, long-distance traffic. The Working Party agreed to establish an informal group including the Working Party's bureau, the UIC and the OSZhD in order to identify the shuttle trains and the border crossing points to be included in the system, as well as the information to be collected periodically.

- (b) Information on the progress made in the facilitation of border crossing for shuttle trains in the region of the South-east European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)

Documentation: informal paper from the Chairman.

27. The Chairman informed the Working Party on the progress made by the SECI Working Group on facilitation of border crossing for shuttle trains on the Sopron-Bucharest-Sofia-Thessaloniki/Istanbul line, and particularly on the decisions for action taken at the last meeting of this Working Group, held in Sofia on 20-21 September 1999.

28. The Working Party took note of the information provided by its Chairman and requested him to keep it informed at its next session on progress made on the SECI region.

- (c) Annual monitoring on the progress made in the facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/6 and Adds. 1-3; TRANS/WP.5/1999/16; Informal papers from UIC and the secretariat.

29. The Working Party examined the information provided by Governments, and noted that, since 1994 (when this information was first collected), there seems to have been a general improvement of the situation, although the data available does not allow to measure the significance of this improvement.

30. The Working Party requested Governments to continue reporting on the 4 items that have been followed since 1994, as reproduced in para. 43 of TRANS/SC.2/190.

31. With the aim of improving its knowledge on the progress made in this field, the Working Party agreed to collect more detailed information on border-crossing stopping times in the following border-crossing points:

(E-20) Germany-Poland

(E-20) Poland-Belarus

(E-20) Belarus-Russian Federation

(E-55) Germany-Czech Republic

(E-61) Czech Republic-Slovakia

(E-61) Slovakia-Hungary

(E-52) Lökösháza (Hungary)-Curtici (Romania)

(E-95) Giurgiu (Romania)-Ruse (Bulgaria)

(E-70) Svilengrad (Bulgaria)-Kapikule (Turkey)

(E-885) Kulata (Bulgaria)-Promachon (Greece)

(E-15) Belgium-France

(E-90) France-Spain

(E-70) France-Italy

(E-25) France-Switzerland

(E-50) Switzerland-Austria

(E-50) Austria-Hungary

32. Data referring to average stopping time of freight and passenger trains should be collected for the next 2 years, and should refer to 3-month periods. The detailed definition of the data to be provided will be made by the secretariat after consultation with the countries concerned.

33. The Working Party was informed that, in the framework of the UN/TER Project, a report on this issue should be issued by the end of the year. It was agreed that this information should be taken into account as a valuable support to the monitoring of the situation at the borders.

34. The representative of the UIC pointed out that significant improvements have been made in this area, especially within the EU after the elimination of border controls. One of the remaining problems, which affects CEECs-CIS traffic, is the different gauges of the networks. The Working Party took note of the tests in progress in this area, as reported by the German Government at the last session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (TRANS/WP.5/1999/16).

DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN CONVENTIONAL AND HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY NETWORK

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/7 and Adds.1-5; Informal paper from the European Commission.

35. Following the examination of the information submitted by the Governments and the UIC, the Working Party agreed that in the future, developments in the High-Speed Train (HST) network should be dealt with separately from those in the conventional network, and that it would be sufficient to examine this issue every two years.

EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON MAIN INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY LINES (AGC)**(a) Situation regarding the application of the AGC**

36. The Working Party recalled decision F (43) adopted at the forty-third session of the Commission inviting "the Governments of ECE member States to consider taking all necessary steps in order to become Parties to the AGC" (E/1988/36-E/ECE/1170, chapter IV) and noted that the following countries are at present Parties to the AGC, bringing the total number of Contracting Parties to 21: Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina (succession); Bulgaria; Croatia (succession); Czech Republic (succession); France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Luxembourg; Republic of Moldova (succession); Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia (succession); Slovenia (succession); The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (succession); Turkey; Ukraine; Yugoslavia.

37. The Working Party took note that on 6 August 1999 the Treaty Section of the Office of Legal Affairs at the UN Headquarters received the instrument of accession to the AGC Agreement from the Government of Belgium. Accordingly the Agreement will enter into force for Belgium on 4 November 1999 (depository notification C.N.715.1999.TREATIES-1 of 9 August 1999).

38. The representative of Portugal informed the Working Party of procedures under way regarding the accession of his country to the AGC Agreement.

39. The Working Party noted the situation with respect to the application of the AGC Agreement in member countries and invited those Governments which had not yet acceded to the Agreement to examine the possibility of doing so.

(b) Amendments proposed to Annex I of the AGC Agreement

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/8; TRANS/SC.2/1999/8/Add.1/Corr.1; TRANS/SC.2/1999/13; TRANS/SC.2/1999/9.

40. The Working Party was informed that the secretariat had received notifications from the Governments of Hungary (TRANS/SC.2/1999/8) and Poland (TRANS/SC.2/1999/8/Add.1/Corr.1) proposing amendments to Annex I of the AGC Agreement.

41. In respect of the proposal made by the Government of Hungary the Working Party noticed that it affected only the Hungarian territory.

42. Regarding the notification received from the Government of Poland the Working Party noted that it contained (i) a proposal concerning a line on Polish territory as well as (ii) a proposal on behalf of the Lithuanian

Government, which was not yet a Contracting Party to the AGC, to include a line in Lithuania. In this connection the Working Party also took note of the fact that the lines proposed are part of the Pan-European Transport Corridor I.

43. In accordance with Article 11, para. 3 of the AGC Agreement, the Working Party (in the presence of the following Contracting Parties: Croatia, Czech Republic; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Poland; Russian Federation; Slovakia; and Slovenia) adopted the amendments to Annex I of the AGC Agreement as contained in annex 1 to this report.

44. At its fifty-second and sixty-first sessions, respectively, the Working Party and the Inland Transport Committee, respectively, continued discussion of the extension of the AGC network to Caucasian and Central Asian ECE member States. The Working Party recalled that this is also an essential contribution for the development of the inland Euro-Asian links, as agreed by the Pan-European Transport Conference in Helsinki in 1997.

45. Following the request of the Working Party at its fifty-second session (TRANS/SC.2/190, para. 58), the secretariat has circulated among the Governments concerned the draft proposal for the extension of the AGC network to the Caucasus and Central Asia Regions, as presented in document TRANS/SC.2/1999/9. The Working Party took note of the proposals submitted by the Governments of Armenia, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation (TRANS/SC.2/1999/13), and agreed that it would be preferable for the Working Party to approve the new lines proposed once the concerned ECE Governments in the central Asian and Caucasus region have agreed upon the extended network in its entirety. Consequently, the Working Party asked the secretariat to address again those countries that have not yet replied, and to prepare a new draft integrating the comments received for its next session.

46. Furthermore, the Working Party asked the secretariat to keep in close contact with ESCAP on this issue.

(c) Data collecting efforts on the AGC network in 1995

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/9; TRANS/SC.2/1999/10 and Adds.1-3; TRANS/SC.2/1999/11; Informal paper by the secretariat.

47. The Working Party took note of the 1995 data provided by the Governments of Armenia, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Germany, Portugal, the Republic of Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, and Turkey, which has been circulated in documents TRANS/SC.2/1999/10 and Adds.1-3, and requested Governments that have thus far not done so to provide for its next session data on total train traffic on the AGC network in 1995.

48. Moreover, the Working Party was informed about the initiatives taken in other transport sectors to improve the presentation of the data available in infrastructure parameters and traffic flows, and particularly about the 1995 and 2000 Road-Census projects, the 1997 update of the "Yellow Book" (infrastructure conditions in the AGC and AGTC networks), and the contents of the UN/TER database.

49. The Working Party agreed that it would be useful to improve the presentation of the data available on the AGC network. Accordingly, it asked the secretariat to prepare, with the support of UN/TER PCO and WP.6, an updated version of the table on rail traffic data in the AGC network, and to explore the possibilities to develop a GIS system for the exploitation of the information, thus far available, making full use of the experience made in this respect by the UN/TER PCO.

50. With the aim of having more comparable data among the railway and the road sectors, the Working Party agreed to collect information on infrastructure and traffic conditions on the AGC network for the year 2000. Accordingly, it asked the secretariat to convene an informal group including the UN/TER PCO in order to draft a detailed data collection proposal to be examined at its next session.

(d) Location of important marshalling yards within the European railway network

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/12.

51. At its fifty-second session, the Working Party asked the secretariat to send the list of marshalling yards to the countries that had not attained the initial objective of reducing the number of yards (TRANS/SC.2/190, paras. 64 and 65).

52. The Working Party examined the answers received by the secretariat (TRANS/SC.2/1999/12) and noted that a significant number of countries had not replied to the request of revising their original proposals.

53. The Working Party asked the secretariat (i) to re-send the list of marshalling yards to the countries concerned that have not yet replied with a view to reducing the number of yards and (ii) to distribute, subsequently, the list as an annex to resolution No. 66 in a Revision No. 2 of document TRANS/SC.2/165/Rev.1.

(e) Safety provisions in long railway tunnels

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/20.

54. The Working Party discussed to some extent the proposals contained in the note prepared by the secretariat on safety provisions in long railway tunnels (TRANS/SC.2/1999/20). It learned that other initiatives were in progress at different organizations on this issue, and it was felt that this was a field in which the ECE could make significant contributions, with the aim to harmonise safety conditions throughout the European rail network, but that more information would be necessary before taking further action in this area.

55. With a view to collecting technical information on this issue, the Working Party agreed to establish an informal group including the SC.2 bureau and representatives from the UIC and the OSZhD to identify the potential areas to be addressed by ECE on this topic and to, possibly, convene a workshop on safety in long rail tunnels. In doing so, the secretariat should take into account any relevant work carried out elsewhere.

EUROPEAN RESEARCH PROGRAMME FOR TRANSPORT

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/14; TRANS/SC.2/1998/11; Informal paper by the European Commission.

56. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the European Commission on this issue, on the research projects in the field of railway transport and the contents of the "Sustainable Mobility" package included in the new 5th Framework Programme on Research and Development (1999-2003).

57. The Working Party asked the EC to report at its next session on the progress made by the railway research projects included in its 5th Framework Programme on Research and Development.

58. The Working Party also requested the secretariat to collect information from the governments on their research activities in the field of railway transport to be considered at its 2001 session.

TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER) PROJECT

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/15.

59. The Project Manager of the UN/TER informed the Working Party of the principal activities which had been carried out recently in the UN/TER project and referred particularly to the development of the UN/TER database and the importance of the project for the development of rail transport in the region.

60. The Working Party asked the UN/TER PCO to make a detailed presentation of the contents of the UN/TER database at its next meeting.

APPLICATION OF SUMMER TIME

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/16 and Add.1-4.

61. The Working Party also took note of a document prepared by the secretariat on an overview of summer time arrangements in Europe (TRANS/SC.2/1999/16/Add.1). According to this document, all the European countries are currently applying the above-mentioned arrangements, with the exception of Iceland.

62. In order to continue its discussion of summer time arrangements, the Working Party asked Governments and the EC to provide the secretariat with information on summer time arrangements, if any changes to the rule already adopted by the European countries (change of summer time on the last Sunday of March and the last Sunday of October) are made. The secretariat will subsequently produce an updated summary table for consideration by the Working Party.

ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION

Documentation: TRANS/1999/11.

63. The Working Party took note of the list of workshops contained in the programme of work adopted at the sixty-first session of the Committee (TRANS/1999/11).

64. The Working Party was informed that, following the revision of RID and ADR agreements, new regulations concerning the transport of dangerous goods will enter into force on 1 July 2001. The details for the implementation of these regulations, particularly in the request to transport companies to incorporate safety advisors to their staff, are still to be defined at the national level.

INFORMATION ON DEVELOPMENTS IN VARIOUS RAILWAY FIELDS

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/17 and Add.1-3.

65. The Working Party considered the information received and, in view of its usefulness, asked to continue collecting it on the following issues:

- (a) environmental questions related to railway operations;
- (b) safety in railway transport;
- (c) use of computers in rail transport operations, in particular in the management of rail goods traffic;
- (d) introduction of new transport technologies and application of modern techniques to railway operations, in particular regarding the interface between rail transport and other transport modes.

RAILWAYS' PRACTICES AND COMBINED TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/18; TRANS/WP.24/83; TRANS/WP.24/85.

66. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the discussions held on this topic by the Working Party on Combined Transport (WP.24) at its thirty-first and thirty-second sessions (13 April 1999 and 6-8 September 1999). At both meetings, a number of representatives expressed their concerns about the relative decline of combined transport, and felt that the main reasons for this decline were unsatisfactory levels of service quality, particularly unreliability on the part of railway operators and only in second place a result of uncompetitive price levels. Accordingly, WP.24 invited SC.2 to comment on this situation (TRANS/WP.24/83, paras. 38-40).

67. The representative of the International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR) gave information on the decline that combined transport seems to be facing since the middle of 1998, and expressed the concern of her organization about the difficulties they are facing derived from existing railways' fares and level of quality. To this last question, she announced that a monitoring on the quality of the railway service in some corridors had been undertaken by UIRR, and offered some preliminary data on that development.

68. The representative of the UIC pointed out that combined transport operators and railways have been close partners in the development of combined transport, and should co-operate in the search of solutions, looking at all the aspects involved and taking into account the increasing pressure on

railways to develop more commercial-oriented management.

69. The Working Party asked the secretariat to convene an informal group in order to collect more factual data on the barriers for the development of combined transport, and to subsequently examine whether further development of legal and technical instruments could be necessary in the future to improve the current situation. The informal group will consist of the WP.24 and SC.2 bureaux, the UIC and the UIRR.

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2000-2004

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1999/19.

70. The Working Party decided to add a new item on safety in long railway tunnels to its programme of work, as an activity of a limited duration under item 2.5.1, I. The Working Party agreed to modify the activity described in 2.5.2 (f), so that the report expected be produced every two years.

71. The Working Party adopted its draft programme of work as reproduced in annex 2 to this report.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE SESSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY IN 2000 AND 2001

72. Mr. E. Kosteas (Greece) and Mr. G. Szabo (Hungary) were re-elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively, for the sessions of the Working Party in 2000 and 2001.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Date of the next session

73. The Working Party noted that its fifty-fourth session was tentatively scheduled to be held from 3 to 5 October 2000.

(b) Documentation

74. The Working Party deplored the fact that some documentation for the present session had not been made available in the 3 official languages, including a number of papers prepared by the secretariat. It asked the secretariat to undertake the necessary steps to remedy the situation.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

75. In accordance with the decision taken by the Working Party at its fifty-second session (TRANS/SC.2/190, para. 6) the report on its fifty-third session has been established by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman with the assistance of the secretariat for submission to the Inland Transport Committee.

76. The decisions adopted by the Working Party during the sessions are contained in the following paragraphs of this report: 6, 8, 10, 13, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 35, 39, 43, 45, 47, 49, 50, 53, 55, 57, 58, 60, 62, 65, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, and 75.

Annex 1

EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON
MAIN INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY LINES (AGC)

Amendments to Annex I of the AGC
adopted at the fifty-third session of
the Working Party on Rail Transport

Proposed by Hungary:

Hungary

E-71 Replace the name of the station "Murakeresztúr" by "Dombóvár".

Add the following line:

E-691 Murakeresztúr-Gyékényes

Countries directly concerned:

Hungary^{1/}

Proposed by Poland:

Poland

Add the following line:

E-75 Warszawa-Bialystok-Sokółka-Suwalki-Trakiszki-(Mockava)

Countries directly concerned:

Poland^{1/}, Lithuania

Lithuania:

Add the following line:

E-75 (Trakiszki)-Mockava-Šeštokai-Kaunas-Šiauliai-Šarkiai-(Meitene)

Countries directly concerned:

Poland^{1/}, Lithuania

^{1/} Countries directly concerned which are Contracting Parties to the AGC

Agreement.

Annex 2

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2000-2004

PROGRAMME OF WORK 2000-2004

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.5: RAIL TRANSPORT

02.5.1 Rail transport infrastructure Priority: 1

- I. *Review of the situation concerning the implementation and possible amendments to the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC)*

Description: Study of possibilities for the improvement of international rail transport.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Rail Transport will carry out the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) Consideration of the AGC Agreement with a view to possibly: implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters; taking into account new east-west traffic flows; raising environmental, energy and safety standards; taking into account the ECE Conventions on the Environment.

Output expected: Report on amendment of the AGC network; Report on the development of a European conventional and high-speed railway network. (2000) Priority: 1

- (b) Consideration of the influence of intermodal transport techniques, especially those concerning investment, as well as the harmonization of rolling stock and speed on railways to facilitate the integration of these techniques into the railway system and to create general interoperability. Output expected: Report on investment in rail infrastructure and railway rolling stock in member countries. (2000) Priority: 1

- (c) Periodic review of the list of marshalling yards of international importance with a view to cutting down their numbers.

Output expected: Updated report on the location of important marshalling yards within the European railway network. (2000) Priority: 2

1/ The text of the programme of work reproduced below is based on the content of the programme of work approved by the Inland Transport Committee appearing in Addendum 1 to the report of its sixty-first session (ECE/TRANS/128/Add.1).

With a view to facilitating comparison of the descriptive part of the attached programme with the text adopted by the Committee, the secretariat has indicated additional project elements or elements replacing the old text in bold characters, while the text proposed for deletion has been reproduced in square brackets.

- (d) As a follow-up to the Conference on Transport and the Environment, development and implementation of programmes to build up an efficient European Rail Freight Network by improving and promoting the:
- modernization and extension of rail and combined transport infrastructure;
 - interoperability and coordination between rail systems;
 - upgrade and wider use of environment-friendly rolling stock;
 - logistics and services;
 - establishment of international rail freight companies.

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (e) Periodically survey passenger and goods traffic on the various sections of lines of the AGC network in order to provide support for transport planning; the second survey is based on data for 1995 Output expected: Report on total train traffic on the AGC network in 1995. (2000) Priority: 2
- (f) **Consideration of questions concerning safety in railways tunnels.** Output expected: Report on the current situation and prospects for the development of new standards. (2000) Priority: 2

II. *Special project: Trans-European Railway (TER)*

Description: Within the framework of the UN/ECE, the TER countries have established an appropriate administrative and financial framework, with the aim of developing a rail network as part of an integrated European international rail system.

Work to be undertaken

- (a) Consideration of specific project developments to promote international rail traffic. (Continuing); Output expected: Annual progress report on activities carried out within the TER project. Priority: 1
- (b) Consideration of possibilities for financing of TER in order to promote the upgrading and construction of internationally important rail lines. (Continuing) Priority: 3
- (c) Consideration of possible utilization of the results achieved under the project in other UN/ECE activities in the field of rail infrastructure including the implementation of AGC and AGTC in order to benefit from mutual experiences. (Continuing) Priority: 2

III. *Interregional Cooperation*

Description: Cooperation with other regional commissions and international bodies involved in development of interregional links.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party will be kept informed of exchanges of information between the secretariats of the regional commissions and other international bodies in order to benefit from experiences gained in other regions of the world. (Continuing) Priority: 3

02.5.2 Harmonization of requirements concerning international railway transport including rail safety and facilitation of its operations Priority: 1

Description:

- (a) Simplification and harmonization of administrative formalities, particularly, for documents and procedures at border-crossing.
- (b) Harmonization of and search for standardized requirements concerning the utilization of railway infrastructure including computerization aspects.
- (c) Elaboration of proposals and preparation of studies aimed at strengthening, consolidating and extending the position of rail transport on international transport markets.
- (d) Analysis of problems relating to the harmonization and improvement of rail safety.
- (e) Consideration of prospects for the adoption of legal regulations applicable to the transport of goods and passengers by rail so as to establish a standard legal system (harmonization of the SMGS/SMPS and CIM/CIV systems).

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Rail Transport will carry out the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) Consideration of specific difficulties encountered at border-crossings in the transport of passengers and goods by rail with a view to accelerating border crossing operations and establishing a programme to deal with problems common to several routes.
Output expected: Report on bi- and multilateral contacts of Governments and railways to improve the crossing of borders in international rail traffic. (2000) Priority: 1
- (b) Consideration of follow-up of the implementation of recommendations and preparation of new texts or amendments to existing texts, if necessary, notably concerning the facilitation of border crossing with the aim to improve international rail traffic. Priority: 1
- (c) Review of requirements concerning railway operations and regulations, reduction of transport time and improvement in the precision of movements in the international carriage of goods, new operative developments in rail transport, the integration of services of different railways. Priority: 2
- (d) The study of the possibilities for harmonizing the application and periods of summer time with a view to upgrading transport quality in rail transport. Output expected: Report on the application of summer time. (2000) Priority: 1
- (e) Analysis of Government policies concerning rail safety to contribute to an improvement of safety in international transport.

Output expected: Report on the risk assessment technique in rail transport. (2000) Priority: 1

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

(f) Analysis of the various elements of productivity in rail transport and the possibilities to increase rail productivity in particular for international transport. Output expected: **Bi-annual** report on the development of productivity in rail transport in member countries. (2000) Priority: 2

(g) Consideration on the basis of reports by the international organizations concerned of the progress accomplished on the harmonization of legal regulations applicable to the contract for the transport of goods and passengers by rail to examine whether the compatibility of the regulation concerned can be ensured. Output expected: Report by international organizations concerned on the progress made in the elimination of difficulties arising from different legal systems in international rail transport. (2000) Priority: 3
