



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

TRANS/2005/3  
10 December 2004

Original: ENGLISH

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

(Sixty-seventh session, 15-17 February 2005,  
agenda item 3)

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE,  
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AND  
OTHER UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND CONFERENCES**

**I. PROVISIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST TO THE INLAND TRANSPORT  
COMMITTEE ARISING FROM THE FIFTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE  
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The fifty-ninth session of the Commission took place from 24 to 26 February 2004 (see Annual Report E/2004/37 - E/ECE/1416). The following main topics and issues were examined and debated at the session: economic developments in the UNECE region; policies to stimulate competitiveness and growth; the UNECE reform; UNECE's cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); UNECE's achievements, constraints and perspectives; preparations for and follow-up to global and regional conferences; technical cooperation; report of the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW); and other business. All documents discussed at the session may be downloaded from the UNECE web site [http://www.unece.org/commission/2004/59th\\_index.htm](http://www.unece.org/commission/2004/59th_index.htm).

2. Discussion with regard to policies to stimulate competitiveness and growth took place at the two Round Tables held during the Commission session: Round Table I: focused on "Best practices and national policies that have proved successful in increasing competitiveness and growth" and Round Table II addressed "Regional Initiatives and Cooperation in the UNECE

Region and the Role of UNECE in Stimulating Competitiveness". Among the priorities or areas addressed by countries were the following: the role UNECE has played in promoting competitiveness and growth by promoting regional free trade, developing efficient infrastructure in transport and energy, encouraging transition to a knowledge-based economy, and by providing a forum for discussing and exchanging best practices, encouraging and contributing to initiatives at the regional and subregional level, and offering technical assistance, notably in meeting the new challenges posed by the advance of the knowledge-driven economy. The significant role of the EU Lisbon Strategy for economic, social and environmental renewal was also mentioned by a number of speakers.

### **UNECE reform**

3. The Commission examined this item on the basis of documents prepared by the UNECE secretariat as a follow-up to similar discussions held in 2002 and 2003. The Chairman of the Commission also put forward two proposals: one to carry out an external review of UNECE and another to adjust the programme planning process.

4. The Commission noted that, given the enlargement of the European Union (EU) and the new geopolitical reality within the region, its role and place in the new European institutional architecture needed to be reviewed to ensure its relevance and effectiveness.

5. In line with these views and taking into account the recommendations of the Committee for Programme and Coordination in support of the current United Nations and UNECE reform exercises, and building on the recommendation of the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work, the Commission decided to commission a comprehensive report on the state of UNECE with the aim of developing recommendations to determine what changes to the role, mandate and functions of UNECE are necessary. The report should be guided by the will of member States to avoid duplication, and ensure cooperation, complementarity and efficiencies among intergovernmental organizations.

6. The Commission endorsed the actions proposed by the secretariat, as well as the recommendations proposed by the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work:

- As concerns intergovernmental structures:
  - (a) The Commission will, at its annual sessions, discuss adjustment of its own intergovernmental structure if an eligible body proposes it;
  - (b) The UNECE principal subsidiary bodies will review biennially their intergovernmental structure, including related advisory groups, and report to the Commission at its annual session;
- As concerns the evaluation of the work of the principal subsidiary bodies, the Commission endorsed the proposals on best practice for evaluation as outlined in the report of the

Group of Experts on the Programme of Work, namely that the principal subsidiary bodies should play a key role in the evaluation process of the activities of UNECE. Therefore, the Group of Experts recommended that all principal subsidiary bodies should take steps to evaluate their programme of work/activities biennially. Such a frequency will fit in with the budget cycle. The principal subsidiary bodies should present a report about the steps taken following the results of the evaluation to the Commission at the end of every evaluation cycle.

The Committee is invited to express its initial views on the way to proceed with the biennial evaluation.

- As concerns the priority-setting mechanism for technical cooperation activities, the Commission endorsed the proposals by the Group of Experts to facilitate the setting of priorities for technical cooperation. It was recommended that each principal subsidiary body, at its annual session, should identify the priorities currently under-funded and inform the Group of Experts through the secretariat.

#### **Cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**

7. The 1997 UNECE Plan of Action already stated that UNECE should consolidate cooperation with OSCE. Both have a similar membership and complementary mandates. Recently, the New Strategy Document of OSCE has provided the basis for a new and deeper relationship between OSCE and UNECE. An inter-secretariat task force will prepare a detailed plan for cooperation. A memorandum of understanding between the two organizations has been prepared and signed.

8. The Inland Transport Committee may note that, according to the memorandum of understanding, the UNECE is expected to play the lead role in preparing the review of OSCE commitments for three clusters, one of which concerns “Integration, trade and transport” for which the transport sector has to prepare a contribution in 2005.

9. The Commission welcomed the formalization of relations with OSCE. It was noted that the UNECE work with OSCE should be reflected in the UNECE programme of work for 2006-2007.

#### **The work of UNECE: achievements, constraints and perspectives**

10. The Commission considered this agenda item on the basis of a report by its Executive Secretary (E/ECE/1412). The Chairpersons or Vice-Chairpersons of the principal subsidiary bodies made presentations focusing on the outlook and challenges ahead, in particular the impact of EU enlargement on their work. It was noted that there was a need for more involvement of the countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia in UNECE activities.

**Preparations for, and follow-up to, global and regional conferences**

11. The Commission noted the success of the First Regional Implementation Forum on Sustainable Development, held in January 2004, and looked forward to the debate within the Commission on Sustainable Development.

12. With regard to the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries on Transit Transport Cooperation, the Commission endorsed the proposal that, as a follow-up to the Conference, UNECE could within its present resources undertake the following activities :

(i) Continue to promote the accession to and implementation of international legal instruments, norms and standards on transport and trade in UNECE landlocked and transit developing countries;

(ii) Continue to promote, in cooperation with UNESCAP, the SPECA Programme and intensify its activities related to transport and border crossing facilitation;

(iii) Ensure an efficient implementation of the Development Account Project on Capacity Building for Developing Interregional Transport Linkages, including Euro-Asian Transport Links in cooperation with UNESCAP;

(iv) Provide advice and assistance on the implications of accession to the UNECE legal instruments on transport to non-UNECE landlocked and transit developing countries on their request, either directly or through other UN regional commissions;

(v) Participate in training activities organized by other relevant bodies and organizations with this aim.

13. The Committee may wish to reiterate its support for these activities in favour of landlocked countries.

**II. SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF 2004 OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

14. The attention of the Committee is drawn to the fact that no resolutions on the “Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling Chemicals” and “Europe-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar” have been adopted at the ECOSOC substantive session of 2004, since these issues are considered on a biennial basis.

15. The Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling Chemicals will meet on 10 December 2004 to consider the work of its Sub-Committees (Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals) over the 2003-2004 biennium. The Secretary-General

will submit a report on the work of the Committee on the 2003-2004 biennium to the Council at its 2005 substantive session which may consider it and adopt a new resolution on the work of the Committee. This resolution should lead to the publication in 2005 of a new fourteenth revised edition of the “Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations”; and of revised editions, or amendments to existing editions of “Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Manuals of Tests and Criteria” and the “Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals”.

---