



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/SC.2/2005/5
1 September 2005

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Rail Transport

(Fifty-ninth session, Paris (France), 24-25 November 2005,
agenda item 5 (c))

FACILITATION OF BORDER CROSSING IN INTERNATIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT

Border-crossing facilitation project in the SECI
(South-east European Co-operative Initiative) region

Note by the secretariat

In the context of the SECI activities on rail transport, the Ad hoc Working Group on the Reduction of Border Stopping Times of Shuttle Trains, at its thirteenth meeting, continued to make progress on the improvement of bilateral agreements regarding rail transport between SECI countries. This included the modification of numerous operational items, in particular, at border crossing stations in order to reduce overall transport time of passenger and goods trains. Furthermore, agreement was reached on (i) a monitoring system of rail traffic at border stations, and (ii) the definition of a “block train”. At its fourteenth meeting, work started on (i) a draft model for an intergovernmental agreement which will serve as a basis for international rail transport between SECI countries, and (ii) performance indicators for border crossing procedures. The Ad hoc Working Group also contributed substantively to the organization of a demonstration run of a block train between Istanbul and Cologne which took place on 9 May 2004.

At its fifteenth meeting, the Working Group considered rail related items to be included in the Trade and Transport Facilitation Programme in South-eastern Europe (TTFSE II) of the World Bank. On the basis of the World Bank's positive experience made with the TTFSE road project which produced tangible benefits, a number of EU neighbouring countries in South-eastern Europe expressed the wish to formulate an analogy to the road project, a similar programme which should focus on rail transport. In this connection, the Working Group proposed a great number of investment possibilities which would improve rail transport in the SECI countries concerned and which could be retained for the TTFSE II rail project.

At its sixteenth and seventeenth meetings, the Working Group, inter alia, specified the contributions it could make to the proposed TTFSE II programme, took stock of the progress made in reducing border stopping time of shuttle trains, highlighted elements to be included in a draft model agreement, rationalized border-control procedures for passenger and freight trains and examined a list of performance indicators to be taken into account in the context of the TTFSE II project.
