



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/3  
14 May 2008

Original: ENGLISH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics  
Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports

**REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON HINTERLAND CONNECTIONS OF  
SEAPORTS**

**(First Session, Geneva, 18 April 2008)**

**I. ATTENDANCE**

1. The Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports held its first session in Geneva on 18 April 2008.
2. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: France; Germany; Greece; Lithuania; Spain; Turkey. The statistical office of the European Communities, Eurostat, was represented. The following governmental and intergovernmental organizations were represented: International Labour Office (ILO); United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Centre for Transportation Studies for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO), UNECE Trans-European Railway Project (TER). The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Baltic Ports Organization (BPO); International Road Transport Union (IRU), International Union of Railways (UIC); P & O Ferries Ltd.

**II. INTRODUCTION**

3. The secretariat stressed the importance of sharing the experience and best practices pertaining to hinterland connections of seaports for all countries of the ECE region and recalled that the UNECE Executive Committee, at its twenty-second session, held on 20 March 2008, had endorsed the decision of the Inland Transport Committee to establish a Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports and had approved its terms of reference. The Group of Experts welcomed

the UNECE initiative and noted that the preliminary work should be completed by the end of January 2009. The time needed to properly examine conclusions of the conference in Piraeus is too short for the elaboration of concrete recommendations in the final report by that date.

### **III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

4. The Group of Experts elected a Chairperson, Mr. Ioannis Protopapas (Greece) and a Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Emre Dincer (Turkey).

### **IV. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

5. The Group of Experts adopted the agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/1).

### **V. OVERVIEW OF ISSUES**

6. The Group of Experts took note of the presentation of major issues by the secretariat. Head of the Greek delegation Mr. Vlachos, Secretary General, Ministry of Mercantile Marine, emphasized in his address the strategic importance of the transport sector and the need to develop efficient integrated networks, including seaports, while assuring equal treatment and connectivity. He confirmed the offer of the Hellenic Ministry of Mercantile Marine to host an international UNECE conference on the Role of Seaports as a Link between Inland and Maritime Transport on 17-18 September 2008 in Piraeus, Greece. Subsequently, members of the Group discussed the main issues concerning the infrastructure and hinterland connections of seaports in the ECE region and considered the feasibility of addressing them during the time period specified in the terms of reference, taking into account the opinion prepared by the Chairman of the UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/2008/2).

7. Following presentations on the availability of data on seaports and hinterland connections by the representative of Eurostat and the secretary of the UNECE Working Party on Transport Statistics, the Group decided that the proposal for a database presented by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2008/GE.1/1) is not adequate and needs to be further elaborated. It was also agreed that a small group on transport statistics, consisting of representatives of France, Greece, Lithuania Spain, Turkey, UNCTAD, ILO, Eurostat and UIC would identify relevant data gaps and adequate short, medium and long-term responses, in cooperation with the secretariat and the UNECE Working Parties on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) and Transport Statistics (WP.6).

8. The Group of Experts decided that the secretariat will distribute a revised questionnaire to members of the small group by the end of May 2008, finalize the draft following the responses received within a 3-week period and distribute the questionnaire to UNECE member States in early July 2008. Responses to the questionnaire could be analysed by a consultant, providing that a suitable expert and adequate funding can be found by the secretariat.

### **VI. PROGRAMME OF WORK**

9. Following the introduction of the plan of work by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/2), the Group of Experts discussed the scope of its inquiry within the

terms of reference. In the light of its mandate and available resources, the Group decided to focus on the infrastructure to connect seaports to the hinterland and limit its inquiry to container (LO-LO mother ships and feeder services), barge, rail and road traffic as well as ferry transport (RO-RO, RO-PAX and RO-LA). Since container transport accounts for 70-80% of relevant freight traffic flows, this selective focus appears to be adequate to the objectives defined by the terms of reference.

10. There was an animated discussion concerning the geographical coverage of the Group's work. The Director of the UNECE Transport Division emphasized that as a matter of principle no UNECE country could be excluded and that it would be important to address relevant infrastructure gaps in new UNECE member States. It was agreed that good practices concerning the seaports and their hinterland connections would not have to be limited to the ECE region. In conclusion, the Group approved the plan of work proposed, amending only the dates of the Piraeus Conference from 18-19 September 2008 to 17-18 September 2008 (annex I).

## **VII. CONFERENCE IN PIRAEUS**

11. Following a report by the secretariat on the Roundtable on Port Competition and Hinterland Connections hosted by the ITF-OECD Joint Transport Research Centre in Paris on 10-11 April 2008, the Group of Experts discussed the draft programme of the Piraeus Conference on the Role of Seaports as a Link between Inland and Maritime Transport. Representatives of the host country emphasized that the conference could start with a high level (Ministerial) segment and continue with technical presentations of invited experts. The Group agreed with the above and asked the secretariat to start drafting a more elaborated conference programme based on the draft annexed to document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/6 and also annexed to the present report (annex II). The Group confirmed its willingness to act as a steering committee for the Piraeus Conference and decided that the conference preparatory meeting will take place in Geneva on 24 June 2008 to finalize the programme and logistic arrangements.

## **VIII. FINAL REPORT**

12. The Group asked the secretariat to elaborate a draft table of contents for the final report and submit it at the next meeting on 24 June 2008. The secretariat was asked to consider engaging an external consultant who would assist the Group in consolidating the required information and drafting the final report and recommendations, to be considered by WP.5 at its 2009 meeting.

## **IX. OTHER BUSINESS**

13. There were no issues discussed under this agenda item.

## **X. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

14. The next meeting will take place on 24 June 2008 in Geneva.

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**Annex I****DRAFT WORK PLAN OF ACTIVITIES OF THE  
GROUP OF EXPERTS ON HINTERLAND CONNECTIONS OF SEAPORTS****(April 2008 – February 2009)**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Objectives, Actions and Outputs</b>
First session of the Group of Experts	Geneva, 18 April 2008 (fully serviced meeting with interpretation services – E, F, R)	Election of officers; Approval of the work plan; Approval of the agenda for the Piraeus Conference and formation of the Conference Steering Group; Discussion of the Final Report content and deadlines
Meeting of the Conference Steering Group	Geneva, 24 June 2008 (informal meeting, English only)	Finalization of the Piraeus Conference programme and logistic arrangements
Piraeus Conference on seaport connectivity	Piraeus, 17-18 September 2008	Holding of a prestigious international conference in Piraeus; contributions by invited experts that will provide inputs to the Final Report of the Expert Group
Second session of the Group of Experts	Geneva, 28 Oct. 2008 (fully serviced meeting with interpretation services – E, F, R)	Consideration of the report on the Piraeus Conference and discussion of the first draft of Final Report
Third session of the Group of Experts	Geneva, 23 Jan. 2009 (if necessary)	Consideration of the Final Report with recommendations for the Inland Transport Committee
71 <sup>st</sup> session of the Inland Transport Committee	Geneva, 24-26 Feb. 2009	Presentation of the Final Report by Chair of the Expert Group

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## **Annex II**

### **Draft**

### **Conference Programme**

**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe – Government of Greece**

**Role of Seaports as a Link between Inland and Maritime transport**

**17-18 September 2008, Piraeus, Greece**

#### First day - Morning session

##### **Seaports - interface between maritime and inland transport**

Governments and international organizations will be invited to express their views on those important aspects of seaports which are relevant for ensuring an efficient link between maritime and inland transport modes, as well as about the relevance of seaports in transport infrastructure planning and development of national, regional and global transport systems.

#### Afternoon session

##### **Hinterland connections of seaports – bottlenecks or seamless links with road and rail infrastructure?**

Governments and non-governmental organizations (national, regional and global association of ports, and or modal associations) will be invited to exchange their views and discuss best practices and strategies in tackling bottlenecks in seaports as well as those in road and rail infrastructure networks that hinder efficient functioning of the integrated transport infrastructures at the pan-European level.

#### Second day - Morning session

##### **Port operations and management - key factor in transport supply chain**

Governments, international governmental and non-governmental organizations and major users will exchange views and discuss the importance of effective functioning and operations of various seaport services and their role in ensuring efficient and smooth transport supply chain operations.

#### Afternoon session

##### **Challenges in future developments of seaports in the globalized world**

Governments, academia and/or participants in this session will discuss future challenges to seaports developments and the need for a timely action and intensive international collaboration aimed at providing favourable legal and institutional framework to face these challenges.

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