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Report of the Working Party on Road Transport on its 107th session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) held its 107th session in Geneva from 22 to 23 October 2012, chaired by Mr. B. Oudshoorn (Netherlands). The following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States were represented in the meeting: Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.
2. The following non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were also represented: Council of Bureaux (CoB) and International Road Transport Union (IRU).

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

3. SC.1 adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/397).

III. Adoption of the report of the 106th session (agenda item 2)

4. The Working Party adopted the report of its 106th session (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/396).

IV. Activities of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 3)

A. Activities of UNECE bodies and other United Nations organizations

5. The Working Party was informed about the ongoing process of UNECE reform, a planned Euro-Asian Transport Links Ministerial meeting at the 2013 Inland Transport Committee (ITC) session and the results of the last session of the ITC.

B. National delegations

6. National delegations provided information about road transport developments in their respective countries. The delegation of Hungary informed SC.1 about the decision to introduce a new toll system based on the distance travelled instead of on the existing "vignette". The new road toll system will start on 1 July 2013 and will initially only be applicable to heavy goods vehicles. A tender procedure is currently being carried out to implement the new system while consultations are being conducted with the Hungarian Road Hauliers Association. The collected road toll will be used in accordance with Directive 1999/62/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 June 1999.
7. The Government of Turkey announced that the country will soon deposit instruments of accession to become a Contracting Party to the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP) Agreement and the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic. The Ministry of Transport has changed its name – having incorporated maritime transport – to "Ministry of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications".
8. Ukraine reported that its government is proceeding with accession to the InterBus Agreement and is considering accession to the Protocol to the CMR.

C. International organizations

9. A representative of IRU provided information about global road transport developments; the results from NELTI 3 completed in partnership with the Economic Cooperation Organization and the launch of NELTI 4 in the countries of the League of Arab States; IRU's efforts to provide dedicated training in the area of the transport of dangerous goods; the opening of a new IRU regional office in Morocco; and the creation of an IRU working group on intermodal transport.

V. European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) (agenda item 4)

A. Status of the Agreement

10. SC.1 was informed about accession of Tajikistan (on 28 December 2011) and the acceptance by all AETR Contracting Parties of a reservation made by Georgia upon its accession to the Agreement.

B. Amendments to the Agreement

11. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the status of amendments to AETR Article 12, para. 5 and Article 14, para. 1 which had been approved by SC.1 at its 105th session (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/392, para. 34) and were to be forwarded to the UN Office of Legal Affairs. As the secretariat had been unable to identify the Contracting Party which originated this amendment proposal, SC.1 decided to request that the AETR Expert Group consider the issue of amending Articles 12 and 14. In addition, these amendment proposals could be considered by SC.1 once other modifications are also agreed upon. SC.1 requested the secretariat to take this issue off the agenda of future SC.1 sessions.

C. AETR Expert Group

12. The secretariat provided an update on the work of the AETR Expert Group, in particular, informing SC.1 about two meetings of the AETR Expert Group on 2 March 2012 and 6 June 2012. The secretariat also outlined a background paper describing the main AETR issues and options, informed SC.1 about a survey on the prevailing legal instruments applicable to road transport operations and the progress in renewing an MOU (ie. signing the MOU supplement) between the UNECE and European Commission services.

13. Many delegations expressed concerns about AETR Expert Group documents not being available in the three official UNECE languages. The unavailability of translated documents delays the progress in reaching consensus. Thus, effective decision-making is expected to take place only during the AETR Expert Group session in December 2012.

14. The secretariat informed SC.1 that the next meetings of the AETR Expert Group are scheduled to take place on 24 October 2012 and 3 December 2012.

D. Implementation of the digital tachograph

15. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the progress in implementing the digital tachograph. Virtually all non-EU AETR Contracting Parties have made measurable and significant progress. Only one country has yet to take steps to begin the implementation procedure.

VI. European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) (agenda item 5)

A. Status of the Agreement

16. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the unchanged status of the AGR Agreement.

B. Amendments to the Agreement

17. The secretariat recalled that the Working Party at its 105th session considered and approved amendments to the AGR on procedures relating to road safety impact assessments, road safety audits, the management of road network safety as well as safety inspections (based on European Commission Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management). The secretariat reminded SC.1 that — according to Article 7 of the AGR — SC.1 can only consider amendment proposals requested by a Contracting Party. The secretariat is unable to forward the amendment proposal to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs until a Contracting Party is identified as the originator of the amendment proposal. The meeting invited an AGR Contracting Party to officially submit this amendment proposal.

18. SC.1 considered ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2012/2 – a document submitted by the Government of Hungary – that proposed extending E66 from Szekesfehervar to Szolnok. SC.1 agreed to adopt the proposal and requested the secretariat to notify the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs to take the necessary steps as per Article 8 of AGR. The adopted proposal is appended to the report of this session.

19. SC.1 discussed the possibilities of incorporating selected “e-mobility” issues into the AGR Agreement (e.g. alternative fuel issues are increasingly important). SC.1 decided to discuss this issue further by exchanging information about national activities and initiatives in this area at the next session.

VII. Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) Project (agenda item 6)

20. The Working Party was informed about the status of the TEM project. A detailed presentation is available on the UNECE website.

VIII. Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) (agenda item 7)

A. Status of the Convention

21. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the unchanged status of the Convention. The Government of the Netherlands postponed its presentation about a proposal to study the experience with CMR using a questionnaire. The questionnaire will be developed further in close cooperation with IRU.

B. Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR)

22. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the unchanged status of Protocol to the Convention.

C. Additional Protocol to the CMR concerning the Electronic Consignment Note

23. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the current status of Additional Protocol. It reminded SC.1 about Article 5 of the Additional Protocol that stipulates that parties interested in the performance of e-CMR will agree on the procedures and their implementation. IRU urged all CMR Contracting Parties to accede to the Additional Protocol and noted that “electronic signature” is a key obstacle to a greater use of e-CMR. SC.1 agreed to discuss the issues of domestic and international use of e-CMR at the next session.

IX. Facilitation of international road transport (agenda item 8)

A. International Motor Insurance System (Green Card)

24. The Working Party was informed by President of the Council of Bureaux (COB) about recent developments in the “Green Card System.” Information was provided about financial stability of COB members; geographical scope of the Green Card System; the creation of a special working group to assist COB’s efforts to fight insurance fraud; membership issues (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Montenegro and Kosovo); cooperation between COB and Economic Cooperation Organization; COB’s “Protection of Visitors’ Agreement”; and a position paper about uninsured driving. More details are provided in ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2012/1.

B. Proposal for a global multilateral agreement on the international regular transport of passengers by coach and bus (OmniBUS)

25. Switzerland — on behalf of the informal group of experts on OmniBus mandated by SC.1 — provided an update of activities with respect to the work concerning a proposal for multilateral agreement on the international regular transport of passengers by coach and bus (OmniBus). Several governments supported the proposal and wished to proceed as rapidly as possible with a view to finalizing it. The secretariat noted the need to consider the

resource implications of the future servicing of an OmniBus administrative committee. SC.1 agreed to proceed in the following manner: the secretariat — upon receipt of the formal submission of the “Proposal for a global multilateral agreement on the international regular transport of passengers by coach and bus (OmniBus)” by a government — will submit the text for translation into UNECE official languages, circulate the draft text, and will schedule a three day session to finalize the text approximately in June 2013 in Geneva. After that final session, the secretariat will distribute the revised text to all permanent missions of UNECE member States for comments by competent national authorities. The revised document — as well as any comments received by the secretariat — will form the basis of discussion at the next SC.1 session.

C. Quantitative restrictions imposed on international road transport of goods

26. The Working Party was informed about the results of an examination by an informal group of experts, led by Turkey, of the “Draft convention aligning bilateral agreements on international road transport with the mandatory rules of multilateral instruments governing international road transit”. SC.1 instructed the secretariat to send a letter (by e-mail) to all permanent missions of UNECE member States requesting comments on the “Draft convention”. The comments are to be forwarded to the secretariat with a copy to a Government of Turkey contact point. The deadline for comments is 1 December 2012. SC.1 also requested the secretariat arrange a room for a meeting of an informal expert group on 1 March February 2013 coinciding with the seventy-fifth session of the Inland Transport Committee.

D. The relationship between the origin of goods and transport operations

27. SC.1 discussed transport and border crossing issues related to the origin of goods, frontier controls and road transport permits. The Government of Poland presented Informal document No. 1 which described the issue of control of bilateral transport operations of goods by authorities of some countries outside the EU that appear to classify these transport operations incorrectly as third-country transport operations. After discussion, SC.1 decided to continue discussing this issue at the next session on the basis of contributions from interested parties with a goal of facilitating the legitimate international movement of cargo. The Government of Poland informed SC.1 that it may initiate the creation of an informal expert group to further this discussion. SC.1 urged the Government of Poland to submit a formal document providing information on the work of this informal expert group.

X. Safety at Level Crossings Expert Group (agenda item 9)

28. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat about the most recent developments in establishing the “Safety at level crossings” multidisciplinary group of experts. The secretariat expects that the UNECE Executive Committee to be ready to consider the possible endorsement of this Expert Group early next year.

XI. Other business (agenda item 10)

29. The Working Party was invited to consider participating in the annual Inland Transport Security Discussion Forum (15 February 2013) in Geneva. The subject of the Discussion Forum is “Secure Parking Areas”.

XII. Election of officers (agenda item 11)

30. The Working Party elected its officers for the period November 2012 – October 2014. Mr. B. Oudshoorn (Netherlands) was re-elected as SC.1 Chair; Ms. N. Tufekcioglu (Turkey) was elected as Vice-Chair and Mr. R. Symonenko (Ukraine) was elected as Vice-Chair.

XIII. Date of next session (agenda item 12)

31. The next SC.1 session is scheduled tentatively from 28 to 30 October 2013.

XIV. Adoption of decisions (agenda item 13)

32. The Working Party adopted a list of decisions taken at its 107th session.

Annex

Modifications to Annex I to the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR)

The Government of Hungary has proposed to extend E66 from Szekesfehervar to Szolnok. In doing so, it has proposed to amend Annex I to the AGR Agreement as follows:

E 66 Fortezza - St. Candido - Spittal - Villach - Klagenfurt - Graz - Veszprém - Székesfehérvár - Dunaújváros - Kecskemét – Szolnok

SC.1 adopted this amendment proposal as per Article 8 of the AGR Agreement.
