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Report of the Working Party on Rail Transport on its sixty-sixth session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport held its sixty-sixth session on 8 and 9 November 2012 in Geneva.
2. The session of the Working Party was attended by the following countries: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine. A representative of Iran (Islamic Republic of) attended under Article 11 of the Terms of Reference of UNECE. A representative of the European Union (DG Move) was present.
3. The Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), the Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank (WB) and the UNECE TER Project Central Office were represented. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Club Feroviar, Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), European Intermodal Association (EIA), International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) and International Union of Railways (UIC). Representatives of the following organizations and industry groups attended at the invitation of the secretariat: Allen and Avery, CMS Cameron McKenna LLP, Democritus University of Thrace, Eastern Japan Railways, European Investment Bank (EIB), Plaske JSC, Réseau Ferré de France (RFF).
4. In accordance with the decision taken at its sixty-fifth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/216, para. 25), the session was chaired by Mr. K. Kulesza (Poland). Mr. H. Groot (Netherlands) served as Vice-Chair.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)¹

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/217

5. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/217).
6. The representative of Russian Federation noted that the content of the second paragraph of the explanatory text to agenda item 11: “Towards unified railway law in the pan-European region and along Euro-Asian transport corridors”, should be understood in the context of the work done and the consensus reached by the Group of Experts towards unified railway law.

III. Adoption of the report of the sixty-fifth session (agenda item 2)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/216

7. The Working Party adopted the report of its sixty-fifth session.

¹ All informal documents and presentations made at the session are available on the following website: www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2.html.

IV. Railway infrastructure financing and Public-Private Partnerships (agenda item 3)

Documentation: Informal document No. 1

8. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat of the ad hoc workshop on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) schemes and railways financing held on 7 November 2012 with the cooperation of the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and the International Union of Railways (UIC). The discussion addressed issues such as types of PPP schemes that could be implemented in railway infrastructure, case studies and best practices in railway infrastructure financing, priorities and obstacles expressed by railways organizations.

9. The workshop agreed on the following main recommendations:

(a) Governments should thoroughly analyse every business case including its validity, profitability and risk assessment;

(b) Governments should make their investment proposals with PPP schemes attractive for investors;

(c) Governments should avoid complex structures and therefore surprises for them and for their investors;

(d) Governments should strengthen their regulatory institutions;

(e) Governments should choose the appropriate mechanisms to evaluate their possible PPP projects;

(f) Governments should manage incentives for train operators in case the track construction has an impact on vehicle parameters;

(g) Governments should note that International Financial Institutions could provide lending for investments under PPP schemes by considering – among others – the following risks: unforeseen technical problems; optimistic timetables, cost estimations, demand forecasts; insufficient political support; incomplete land acquisition processes; complex projects with large number of technical interfaces;

(h) A central body could concentrate and disseminate best practices, case studies and lessons learned on railways investments under PPP schemes worldwide.

10. The Working Party took note of the conclusions and the recommendations of the workshop and thanked the speakers for their excellent presentations. The Working Party considered railways financing under PPP schemes an important parameter for railways development. The Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare a background note on PPP schemes and railways financing which should include secretariat proposals for possible further development of these issues for consideration at the next session.

V. European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC Agreement) (agenda item 4)

A. Status of the AGC Agreement and adopted amendment proposals

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/63/Rev.1

11. At present, the AGC Agreement has 27 Contracting Parties.² Detailed information on the AGC Agreement, including the up-to-date and consolidated text of the Agreement (ECE/TRANS/63/Rev.1), a map of the AGC network, an inventory of minimum standards stipulated in the Agreement as well as all relevant Depositary Notifications are available on the website of the Working Party.³

12. The secretariat prepared and presented to the Working Party maps showing Contracting States to the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) and the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) Agreements as well as to the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects that would facilitate further the communication with countries not yet members of the AGC Agreement.

13. The Working Party took note of the efforts made by the secretariat to increase the number of Contracting Parties to the AGC Agreement mainly through participation in different workshops and/or meetings. More specifically: participation of the secretariat at a joint UNECE-ECO Workshop on Unified Railway Law (26 June 2012, Ankara), the 17th session of the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC) (6 June 2012, Almaty) and the ESCAP Seminar promoting the use of the Trans-Asian Railway through improved awareness of commercial requirements (23–24 October 2012, Bangkok).

B. Amendment proposals (updating and extending the AGC network)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/1

14. The Working Party was informed of the status of amendment proposals already considered at its sixty-third session as contained in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/1 relating to Denmark, Germany and Sweden (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/212, para. 4).

15. The Working Party decided to await the outcome of the consultations between Denmark, Germany and Sweden on realigning AGC railway lines in these countries. Appropriate amendment proposals will be considered and Contracting Parties to the AGC Agreement may adopt such amendment proposals at its next session in accordance with article 11 of the AGC Agreement.

² Albania; Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Republic of Moldova; Montenegro; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey and Ukraine.

³ www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2_AGC_text.html.

C. Amendment proposals (minimum infrastructure and performance standards)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2012/5-ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/1

16. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat that the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) applicable in the European Union were generally in line with the present minimum AGC and AGTC technical characteristics, but contained at least twenty more technical parameters that were considered essential for trans-European rail systems and had been prepared by the European Railway Agency (ERA) under the so-called Interoperability Directive 2008/57/EC.

17. The Working Party recognized that the scope of the TSI which are mandatory in the European Union for newly built infrastructure went well beyond the objective and the minimum requirements enshrined in the Pan-European AGC and AGTC Agreements and should, therefore, not automatically be transposed to these agreements.

18. The Working Party took note of a document prepared by the secretariat containing a review of the technical characteristics of the AGC and AGTC rail networks. It invited experts and the secretariat to prepare appropriate amendment proposals to the AGC Agreement in close cooperation with the Working Party on Intermodal Transport (WP.24), which is responsible for the AGTC Agreement.

VI. Rail Security (agenda item 5)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/2, Informal document SC.2 No. 1 (2009)

19. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat on the background note (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/2) that suggested the development of an International Rail Security Observatory. The background note reviewed all the existing initiatives on rail security and concluded that a need exists for a central body which would play the role of the coordinator and facilitator on rail security definitions and data terminology harmonization, data collection and dissemination and best practices sharing.

20. The Working Party considered the background note prepared by the secretariat and requested the secretariat to cooperate with relevant public and private stakeholders and organizations dealing with rail security and to prepare this agenda item for its next session. This preparation should be based on an exchange of knowledge and best practices in this field of work. The Working Party agreed with the proposal made by the secretariat that the workshop back to back with the sixty-seventh session of the Working Party will be dedicated to rail security.

VII. Trans-European Railway (TER) Project (agenda item 6)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/3

21. The TER project manager presented a report on the activities implemented by the TER Project over the reporting period (2011–2012).

22. The Working Party noted that the work of the TER Project had focused on finalization and publication of the TER Master Plan Revision. TER Master Plan Revision monitoring mechanisms were set up, which form an inseparable part of the TER Master Plan revision follow-up action plan. In particular, the monitoring activities will concentrate on the progress reached in the implementation of the Master Plan Revision infrastructure

projects, updating of the revision traffic data and traffic forecasts, development of the backbone network and on its status.

23. The present and future challenges concerning the TER Project could be summarized as follows:

- (a) Extension of the TER Project to observer countries (Belarus, Republic of Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine);
- (b) Extension of the TER Project to countries participating in the revision of the Master Plan, i.e. Albania, Azerbaijan and Montenegro;
- (c) Full integration of new member countries (Armenia and Serbia);
- (d) Dissemination and promotion of results and outputs of the TER Master Plan Revision Final report;
- (e) Monitoring the implementation of the TER Master Plan Revision;
- (f) Financing the development of the rail transport infrastructure;
- (g) Focus on rail safety and security issues;
- (h) Strengthening the staff of the TER Project Central Office in Bratislava;
- (i) Solving the managerial situation of the Project as from 1 January 2014, when the assignment of the present Project Manager will terminate;
- (j) Master Plan for the future high-speed rail network in Central and Eastern Europe.

24. The Working Party took note of the information provided and invited the secretariat and the project manager to provide an update on relevant developments in the TER project at its next session.

25. The representative of the Russian Federation commented that at para. 15 of the TER report (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/3) the term "Istanbul strait" should be replaced by the term "Bosporus Strait" as this term was used in the Montreux Convention Regarding the Régime of the Straits of 1936 and was widely recognized by international law.

26. The representative of Turkey stated that the use of the term "Turkish Straits" or "Straits of Istanbul and Çanakkale" has historical, political and legal justification, such as respect for past and present general practice, due regard to Turkey's sovereign rights over this particular issue and to its jurisdiction according to the established principles of international law. There is also a considerable accumulation of agreements and principles developed by the United Nations concerning the standardization of geographical names which states inter alia that when a geographical feature is completely within sovereignty of a country then official name given by the authorized national organization should be used in international documents. Concerning the terminology in the 1936 Montreux Convention, it is useful to remind that Montreux was enacted only with the purpose of regulating navigation through the Straits. Turkey has been strictly implementing this Convention for 75 years and intends to do so in the future. Beyond this purpose, however, Montreux does not purport to establish names for localities or States Parties for that matter. Otherwise, we would have been forced to refer to some signatory countries with names such as the Kingdom of Bulgarians, the King of the Hellenes, the Emperor of India or the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics without paying attention to the fact that only States themselves are authorized to determine how they are called and governed. In fact, the term "Turkish Straits" or "Straits of Istanbul and Çanakkale" have been continuously used in many international documents, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

resolutions and documents. A case in point is the Turkish Straits Regulations registered within IMO in 1994 and again in 1998.

27. The Working Party agreed that the decision on the term to use with respect to this strait was outside the scope and mandate of the Working Party. Therefore, the Working Party agreed to take note of the positions of the Russian Federation and Turkey and asked that both positions be reflected in the report of the meeting.

VIII. Euro-Asian rail transport (agenda item 7)

Documentation: Informal document No. 2

28. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat about the results and the main conclusions of the phase II study of the Euro-Asian Transport Linkages project (EATL project) including the following:

(a) Intercountry cooperation in the EATL project promoted by UNECE that encourage cooperation among the 27 countries along the Euro-Asian land bridge for the coordinated development of Euro-Asian inland transport links;

(b) Country demanded, tangible results and proposals for the development and operation of safe, secure and efficient Euro-Asian transport solutions addressing both physical and non-physical obstacles to transport;

(c) Investment strategy for developing 311 priority transport infrastructure projects along main Euro-Asian routes with a total cost of 215 billion United States dollars, together with an analysis of non-physical obstacles to transport, an elaboration of focused studies, the development of a GIS database and related applications, as well as policy recommendations;

(d) Focused work plan, including studies and analyses, promoting transport infrastructure and facilitation initiatives and actions, organizing meetings and capacity-building events.

29. The Working Party took note of the latest developments of the EATL project and of the Ministerial meeting “Making the Euro-Asian Transport Network Operational” that will take place during the next Inland Transport Committee (ITC) on the 26 February 2013.

30. The Working Party recognised that the EATL project is a significant project for the development of railways and asked member States to actively participate in the possible phase III of the project.

31. The Working Party took also note of a project proposal submitted by the secretariat for the development of the National Rail Authority of Afghanistan.

IX. High-Speed Trains (agenda item 8)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/4

32. The Working Party was informed about the background note prepared by the secretariat for the development of a Master Plan for high-speed trains in the ECE region. The creation of high-speed networks coincides with the revitalization of rail during the past two decades. However, there is no regional high-speed rail master plan at the Pan-European level: in practice, the vast majority of UNECE countries are planning the development and construction of high-speed railways taking into account only national needs.

33. The elaboration of a strategic plan of priority actions for the ECE region, reflecting not only transnational concerns but also national and regional development strategies for high-speed rail transport infrastructures is necessary.

34. The objectives of the proposed Master Plan for high-speed trains in ECE region are the following:

- (a) Harmonization of technical parameters regarding the terminology “high-speed trains”;
- (b) Identification by the Governments of investment priorities;
- (c) Establishment by the Governments of a timetable for their realization;
- (d) Assessment by the Governments of the costs involved and appropriate financing arrangements;
- (e) Development of an integrated high-speed rail transport backbone network for the ECE region;
- (f) Analysis of the economics and preparation of a cost benefit analysis model that would evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of a future high-speed line.

35. The tasks that should be elaborated as part of the Master Plan are the following:

- (a) Review of related work (TEM Project and TER Project, European Union (EU), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries);
- (b) Review of the market initiatives (CER, UIC, etc.) and their interconnection with the UNECE work;
- (c) Presentation of the socioeconomic framework of the UNECE countries and alternative scenarios of growth;
- (d) Identification of methods of work (definitions – assumptions);
- (e) Identification of criteria that determine the “high-speed train” infrastructure;
- (f) Identification of criteria of priority infrastructure needs;
- (g) Inventory of bottlenecks, missing links and other priority transport infrastructure needs and assessment of their development costs;
- (h) Elaboration of a realistic Master Plan based on investment priorities;
- (i) Addressing funding questions and financing arrangements;
- (j) Addressing border crossing questions;
- (k) Conclusions, recommendations and dissemination of results.

36. The Working Party agreed that for the successful implementation of these activities, the contribution of national coordinators and/or national experts is extremely important. Therefore, countries should nominate focal points/national coordinators for the project. In addition, an expert/consultant on the development of infrastructure master plans may need to be hired. The Working Party asked the secretariat to exploit all the possibilities for hiring such an expert/consultant.

37. The Working Party took note of the background document prepared by the secretariat on the development of a high-speed trains master plan. The Working Party adopted the proposed by secretariat work plan for the development of a master plan for high-speed trains, requested the secretariat to proceed to its implementation and inform the Working Party on developments at its next session.

X. Intelligent Transport Systems and other technological applications for Rail Transport (agenda item 9)

38. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat of a UNECE Road Map on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) that included 20 global actions (2012–2020) to promote the use of ITS.

39. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat and asked the secretariat to prepare this agenda item for the next session by following up the global actions relevant to the Working Party.

XI. Productivity in rail transport (agenda item 10)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/5

40. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat on the background document productivity in rail transport (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/5) in which a historical review of the indicators was given and the rail productivity indicators for 2011 were analysed. In order to have an appropriate basis for drawing conclusions from productivity indexes, the Working Party on Rail Transport, at its fifty-first session in 1997 (TRANS/SC.2/188, paras. 17–18), underlined the importance of social, technical, economic and political frameworks for rail productivity and at its fifty-fourth session (TRANS/SC.2/194, para. 23) adopted the productivity indicators as analysed at the background document.

41. During its fifty-sixth session, the Working Party (TRANS/SC.2/198, para. 13) asked member Governments to reply to a questionnaire on a range of quality indicators in railway productivity for passenger and freight transport.

42. The secretariat considered:

- (a) the importance of rail productivity indicators as a tool for measuring and exchanging best practices;
- (b) the relevant decisions by the Working Party on calculating and interpreting these rail productivity indicators (quantitative and qualitative);
- (c) the significance of both quantitative and qualitative rail productivity indicators;
- (d) the data or missing data for some countries which led to miscalculations or misinterpretations;
- (e) countries' feedback on explaining the results of some indicators.

43. The secretariat suggested preparing a questionnaire for the above-mentioned quantitative and qualitative rail productivity indicators, translated into three languages and distributed every year to the Governments in due time to secure the accuracy and completeness of data. The results from the replies to the questionnaires will be prepared by the secretariat as a formal document for its future session of the Working Party.

44. The Working Party took note of the results of rail productivity indicators as prepared by the secretariat based on data received by UIC. The Working Party adopted the proposal made by the secretariat regarding the development of a questionnaire in cooperation with the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) on rail productivity indicators and requested the secretariat to prepare it and send it to countries for completion. The Working Party asked the secretariat to prepare an analysis of rail productivity indicators for its next session based on the replies to the questionnaire.

XII. Towards unified railway law in the pan-European region and along Euro-Asian transport corridors (agenda item 11)

Documentation: Informal document No. 6, ECE/TRANS/2011/3, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2011/4, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2011/9, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2012/2, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2012/5, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2012/6.

45. In accordance with its terms of reference, approved by the Executive Committee (EXCOM), the Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law held two formal meetings, (2–3 July 2012, 19 October 2012) and an informal “Friends of Chair” (2 March 2012) to launch short-term work under step A of the UNECE Position Paper. Step A consists of preparing an Inter-governmental Document (Joint Declaration) to provide political support on Unified Railway Law and the main principles for so-called General Terms and Conditions for rail transport contracts (GTC EurAsia).

46. At the fourth session of the Group of Experts (19 October 2012, Geneva), consensus was reached on a final draft of a “Joint Declaration on the promotion of Euro-Asian rail transport and activities towards unified railway law” and on main principles of optional model rules for Euro-Asian rail transport contracts (GTC EurAsia) (Informal document No. 6).

47. The Working Party took note of the informal documents prepared by the secretariat. The Working party approved the work done by the Group of Experts and thanked the experts participating in the group for their efforts and excellent work.

48. Subject to minor modifications, the Working Party adopted the text of the Joint Declaration on the promotion of Euro-Asian rail transport and activities towards unified railway law and approved its transmission to the forthcoming session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) (26–28 February 2013).

49. The Joint Declaration is expected to be signed during the Ministerial Meeting “Making the Euro-Asian Transport Network Operational” on 26 February 2013 as part of the ITC session.

50. The Working Party recommended ITC to continue the work of the Group of Experts for the period 2013–2014 and requested the secretariat to prepare appropriate Terms of Reference based on the position paper and articles 2 and 5 of the Joint Declaration for approval by ITC and to consider needed resources for this period.

XIII. Railways Reform (agenda item 12)

Documentation: Informal document No. 3

51. The Working Party took note of the background document prepared by the secretariat. The Working Party thanked the speakers for their excellent presentations. The Working Party considered railways’ reform an important part of railways development. The Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare a background note based on the presentations and include proposals for further development of the issue for consideration at the next session.

XIV. Facilitation of international rail transport in the pan-European region (agenda item 13)

A. Facilitation of rail border crossings

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/6

52. The Working Party at its last session requested the secretariat to prepare a background note on possible implementation mechanisms of Annex 9 (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/216, para. 43). The Working Party was informed by the secretariat on facilitation of rail border crossings (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/6) which suggested implementing monitoring mechanisms for the new Annex 9 of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982) (Harmonization Convention). Upon the understanding that the proper implementation of the Harmonization Convention is under the responsibility of Contracting Parties, the secretariat and relevant working bodies of the international organizations concerned (OSJD, OTIF, etc.) could play an important role in assisting countries in complying with the legal provisions of the new Annex through the following actions:

(a) Development and distribution to all UNECE member States of a list / questionnaire which would identify and determine the current situation at rail border crossing in UNECE countries who are contracting parties to the Convention based on the needs and provisions of Annex 9 of the Harmonization Convention;

(b) Report to the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) and SC.2 on the replies to this questionnaire and describe the current situation before implementing Annex 9;

(c) Discussion and preparation of an action plan during the SC.2 sessions on facilitating border crossing procedures for international rail transport based on the initial input received by the OSJD;

(d) Countries should be invited to periodically transmit country reports outlining major achievements and setbacks in implementing the decided action plan;

(e) Development by the secretariat, in cooperation with OSJD, OTIF, UIC, European Union, CIT of a comparison study monitoring the implementation of Annex 9 and identifying the results of its implementation every two or three years.

53. The Working Party took note of the background document (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/6) prepared by the secretariat on possible implementation monitoring mechanisms of the provisions in the new Annex 9 to the "Harmonization Convention" for the facilitation of rail border crossings in the pan-European region. The Working Party adopted the proposed by the secretariat on implementing monitoring mechanisms and requested the secretariat:

(a) to prepare and distribute the proposed questionnaire;

(b) to prepare a background document – action plan based on the replies from the questionnaire and on information received from different international organizations.

54. These would be reviewed and considered by the Working Party on its next session.

B. Harmonization of technical specifications of different railway systems

55. The Working Party took note of information provided by OSJD on progress made in improving technical interoperability between the 1,435 mm standard and the 1,520 mm broad gauge railway systems and asked the organization to provide information regarding developments on this issue at its next session.

XV. Rail Review (agenda item 14)

Documentation: Informal document No. 4

56. The Working Party took note of the background document prepared by the secretariat on the structure of the biannual publication “rail review” (Informal document No. 4). The Working Party asked the secretariat to add freight rates and ticket analysis as an additional chapter and adopted as amended the suggested structure of the publication.

57. The Working Party requested the secretariat to take appropriate actions towards preparing this publication and inform the Working Party of any developments at its next session.

XVI. Climate Change mitigation and adaptation (agenda item 15)

58. The Working Party took note of a UNECE project called ForFITS (For Future Inland Transport Systems) that aims to develop a software tool that will allow for the estimation of emissions in transport and the evaluation of transport policies for CO₂ mitigation at the regional, national and/or local level. In addition the Working Party took note about the work of the expert group on climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks. The Working Party asked the secretariat to provide relevant information for climate change mitigation and adaptation at its next session.

XVII. Activities of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 16)

59. 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 group’s terms of reference were adopted by the Working Party on its sixty-fifth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/216, paras. 45–47).

60. The Working Party was informed about the Executive Committee’s (EXCOM) decision not to consider during 2012 the establishment of the “Safety at level crossings” multidisciplinary group of experts (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2011/6). The secretariat informed the Working Party that once EXCOM approves the establishment of the expert group, it would proceed expeditiously to arrange for the first meeting in cooperation with the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) and the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1). The secretariat expects that the EXCOM will be ready to consider the possible endorsement of this Expert Group early next year.

XVIII. Activities of the European Union in rail transport (agenda item 17)

Documentation: Informal document No. 5

61. The Working Party was informed by the representative of European Union on its most recent developments in rail transport that include the following:

- (a) adoption of a decision that strengthens the certification and authorization process of lines and trains equipped with the European Train Control System (ETCS);
- (b) the two-day conference in Copenhagen on the European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS);
- (c) the adoption of a staff working paper that brings forward ideas for developing transport security policy at EU level;
- (d) the recast of the first railway package;
- (e) the European Parliament's final agreement on new rules to open competition in the rail market.

62. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to Mr. Frank Jost, EU representative for its comprehensive report and requested an update on EU activities in rail transport for its next session.

XIX. Activities of international organizations in rail transport (agenda item 18)

63. The Working Party was informed by the representative of OSJD on its latest activities:

- (a) on transport policy and development strategy: implementation of comprehensive measures aimed at improving transportation and developing OSJD's transport corridors, facilitating border crossing for the international passenger and freight railway traffic;
- (b) on transport law: the ad hoc working group on the Agreement on International Passenger Traffic (SMPS) revision completed the draft general regulations for the contract of international carriage of passengers and the draft rules of the international carriage of passengers and luggage;
- (c) on freight traffic: improving the existing international agreements and treaties in the field of managing combined transport in the Europe – Asia and transit freight tariffs;
- (d) on passenger traffic: management of passenger trains, drafting and approval of timetables, train makeup procedures, ensuring the necessary conditions and services for passengers and development of passengers traffic.

64. The Working Party was informed by the representative of CIT on its latest activities:

- (a) CER-CIT report on the implementation status of the Regulation on Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations (EC Regulation 1371/2007; PRR);
- (b) CIT participation at the XXI Plenary Meeting of the Coordinating Council on Trans-Siberian Transportation;
- (c) The CIT-UIC Passenger Claims Departments' Conference held on 27 September 2012 in Bern;

(d) The CIM/SMGS Legal Group and Group of Experts deliberation on the further development of the CIT/OSJD project.

65. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to Mr. Victor Zhukov, Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) and Mr. Erik Evtimov, Deputy Secretary General International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) for their comprehensive reports and requested an update for next year's session.

XX. Other business (agenda item 19)

66. There were no proposals under this item.

XXI. Date of next session (agenda item 20)

67. The Working Party's sixty-seventh session is tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva on 23, 24 and 25 October 2013.

XXII. Summary of decisions (agenda item 21)

68. As agreed upon and in line with the Working Party's decision taken at its fifty-second session (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/190, para. 6), the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chair and Vice-Chair prepared the present report.
