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## Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety

Group of Experts on Safety at Level Crossings

First session

Geneva, 20 January 2014

### Report of the Group of Expert on Safety at Level Crossing on its first-session

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## **I. Attendance**

1. The Group of Experts on Safety at Level Crossing (GE.1) held its first session in Geneva on 20 January 2014, chaired by Mr. Martin Gallagher (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) (UK). Representatives of the following member States participated: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.

2. The representatives of non-ECE member States also participated: India. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: European Railway Agency (ERA), International Union of Railways (UIC), Operation Lifesaver Estonia, Community Safety Partnerships Ltd. (CSP), European Transport Safety Council, German Aerospace Center e. V. (DLR), Instytut Kolejnictwa and La Trobe University.

## **II. Introduction (agenda item 1)**

3. The secretariat provided a history of the establishment of GE.1. Ms. Eva Molnar (Director, UNECE, Transport Division) and Mr. J. Loubinoux (UIC) provided opening remarks. Mr. Loubinoux advised that while level crossing accidents are largely perceived as a rail problem by the public and media, almost all accidents at level crossings are due to motorists and pedestrians incorrectly using level crossings. He also provided statistics from the UIC safety database which included the number of level crossing accidents and fatalities and types of accidents in recent years. Ms. Molnar emphasized the importance of raising awareness of the dangers of road/rail interfaces i.e. the level crossings and of sharing good practices. She highlighted the present lack of economic analysis on the costs of level crossing accidents. Ms. Molnar and Mr. Loubinoux agreed that UNECE and UIC would continue to collaborate to improve safety at level crossings. They also urged the Group of Experts to expeditiously agree on a programme of work with timeframes and tangible outputs.

## **III. Election of officers (agenda item 2)**

4. The Group of Experts elected Mr. Martin Gallagher (UK) as Chair and Ms. Kirsi Pajunen (Finland) as Vice-Chair.

## **IV. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 3)**

5. The Group of Experts adopted the annotated provisional agenda for the first session (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/GE.1/1) with modifications on the dates of the second session and an addition of a seventh agenda item (i.e. Adoption of List of Decisions).

## **V. Programme of work (agenda item 4)**

6. Guided by its Terms of Reference (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2011/6/Rev.1), the Group of Experts decided on the following programme of work:

(a) A review and analysis of the economic costs of level crossing accidents based on data provided by countries (a subgroup to be led by Poland with assistance from ERA);

(b) The evaluation and analysis of the safety performance of types of level crossings in UNECE member States and in selected non-UNECE member States such as Australia, India, New Zealand and South Africa (a subgroup to be led by CSP with assistance from UK, France, Ireland and ERA);

(c) The development of a summary of best practices including education (a subgroup to be led by Finland with assistance from India);

(d) A survey of prevailing national legislation and/or legal arrangements at level crossings (to be initiated by the Instytut Kolejnictwa, (Poland), with assistance of the secretariat);

(e) A survey of technology and technological solutions to improve safety at level crossings (to be initiated by La Trobe University Centre for Technology Infusion (Australia), with assistance of the secretariat);

(f) The identification of the key causes and possible solutions related to human factors contributing to unsafe conditions at level crossings (to be initiated by Mr. Michael Cale and German Aerospace Center); and

(g) The creation of a list of network contacts to be made available on the website of the Group of Experts (to be provided by members of the Group of Experts with assistance from the secretariat); and

(h) The facilitation of exchanges of experience, in particular, at its second session by inviting members of the Group of Experts to provide information (e.g. presentations) about low cost solutions potentially transferable to low and mid-income countries, technical solutions and preliminary proposals relating to safety initiatives based on a system approach.

7. The Group of Experts proposed that the subgroups include as part of their remit of their deliverables measurements and evaluation including sustainability as well as to identify gaps for the future strategy and action plan.

8. The Group Expert agreed to discuss at its second session:

(a) key factors contributing to unsafe conditions at level crossings in areas such as infrastructure, national legislation, user behaviour, management, education and enforcement;

(b) the development of a road/rail interface strategy with a supporting action plan that will contribute to enhancing safety at level crossings;

(c) workshops to support the strategic plan; and

(d) its future strategic and operational research needs.

9. The Group of Experts also decided to invite the European Commission to its second session to give a presentation on its December 2003 "Safety at level crossings" report.

## **VI. Other Business (agenda item 5)**

10. The Group of Experts noted a presentation by the Russian Federation on the types of level crossings in its country.

## **VII. Date and place of next meeting (agenda item 6)**

11. The Group of Experts decided to hold its second session on 12 – 13 May 2014 in Geneva.
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