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Working Party on Rail Transport

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**New convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers
for passengers and baggage carried by rail**

**International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of
Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage carried by Rail,
of 10 January 1952**

**Transmitted by the Committee of the Organisation for Co-operation
between Railways**

As you may know, this issue was considered in detail at the meeting of experts of OSJD Commission on transport policy and development strategy in view of the recommendations of the VII Interdepartmental conference (Saint Petersburg) and in view of the preliminary discussion by OSJD member countries of the issue on the creation of a new Convention on facilitation of border crossing for international railway transport of passenger and baggage. As good as all the meeting participants supported the proposal on the creation of a new Convention and it was decided to submit a request to UNECE to agree the issue of making a decision to draft a new Convention.

The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), at its 76th session in February 2014, welcomed the setting-up of Informal group of experts under UNECE in order to draft a Convention on the facilitation of border crossing for international railway transport of passenger and baggage and thanked OSJD Committee for hosting the first meeting of Informal group of experts at OSJD Committee on 8-9 September 2014.

The Russian Federation's representatives participating in the meeting of Informal group of experts submitted information for consideration to prepare new draft Convention on the facilitation of border crossing for international railway transport of passenger and baggage and informed on the progress of work on the issues of facilitation of border crossing, existing legal basis, chronological sequence of work on draft Convention as well as its assumed structure and content.

Possibilities were discussed as to development of new draft Convention and it was decided to prepare, at the first stage, a Concept of new draft Convention, which should provide co-operation in the whole Eurasian area.

At the meeting, draft Concept was presented and considered. It stipulates that new Convention shall:

- define the background that served as a reason for convention adoption, goal and objectives of the Convention;
- take into account the issues of facilitation of procedures for crossing external border of the countries (including external borders of the European Union);
- be a set of agreed views and approaches to co-operation on facilitation of border crossing for international railway transport of passenger and baggage;
- be based on the existing legislation of States Parties to the Convention and documents concerning organization and implementation of international railway passenger traffic, state control of passenger trains, passengers and baggage at the borders;
- be a basis for the development of international agreements and other regulatory legal documents of the States Parties to the Convention as well as interstate target-oriented

- programmes on the issue of facilitation of border crossing for international railway transport of passenger and baggage;
- not cover the Parties' obligations resulting from the already existing international agreements.

Subsequently, proposals and notes on draft Convention were submitted to OSJD Committee from the Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

At the meeting of Informal group of experts to be held at OSJD Committee (Warsaw, Republic of Poland) on 26-27 May 2015, draft Concept will be agreed in view of proposals and notes submitted by OSJD member countries. Following which, draft Convention will be prepared for its further consideration at the meeting of Informal group of experts in October 2015.

The meeting participants consider as advisable the continuation of work of Informal group of experts under UNECE in order to draft a Convention on facilitation of border crossing for international railway transport of passenger and baggage with the participation of representatives from UNECE, UNESCAP, EU and OTIF as well as from border control and customs authorities in the forthcoming meetings of Informal group of experts. Therefore, it was proposed to hold two meetings of Informal group of experts in February and September 2015.

Being conscious of benefits from the new Convention for the further promotion of international rail passenger traffic in the region and taking into account its role as the core of international transport agreements, OSJD Committee, while supporting this work, at the joint meeting of Plenipotentiary Representatives of Members of OSJD Ministerial Conference and Conferences of General Directors of OSJD Railways (9-12 December 2014, OSJD Committee, Warsaw) took a decision to hold two meetings of Informal group of experts in 2015. One meeting will be held at OSJD Committee (Warsaw, Republic of Poland) on 26-27 May 2015, the second one will be organized at OTIF central office in Bern on 21-22 October 2015.

At the same time, please, be informed that OSJD Committee scheduled the VIII Interdepartmental conference on the issues of facilitation of border crossing for rail transport "Rail Transport Border Crossing Practice" to be held in Gdansk, Republic of Poland, on 22-23 September 2015 with the participation of representatives from border control, customs authorities and other bodies performing state border control and other organisations concerned, at which the issues on implementation of Annex 9 and development of draft Convention on facilitation of border crossing for international railway transport of passenger and baggage will also be discussed.

OSJD Committee lays emphasis on the VIII Interdepartmental conference, with its main objective being, in conjunction with border control, customs authorities and railway departments, to discuss painful problems, exchange advanced experience and deliver a common approach to facilitation of border crossing for rail transport.

In view of the above-mentioned, taking this opportunity, OSJD Committee kindly requests you as well as Mr. A. Fedorov, Ms. E. Molnar and all the wishing representatives from the countries, railway administrations, border control and customs authorities to take part in the VIII Interdepartmental conference on the issues of facilitation of border crossing for rail transport "Rail Transport Border Crossing Practice" to be held in Gdansk, Republic of Poland, on 22-23 September 2015.

Information on the venue and conference work programme and other papers for the conference will be sent to you in addition.
