

**Who are we?**

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of five United Nations regional commissions, administered by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The UNECE Transport Division works to facilitate the international movement of persons and goods by inland transport modes. It aims to improve competitiveness, safety, energy efficiency and security in the transport sector. At the same time, it focuses on reducing the adverse effects of transport activities on the environment and contributing effectively to sustainable development. It is:

- Centre for multilateral transport standards and agreements in Europe and beyond, e.g. regulations for dangerous goods transport and road vehicle construction at the global level
- Gateway for technical assistance and exchange of best practices
- Promoter of multi-country investment planning
- Substantive partner for transport and trade facilitation initiatives
- Historic centre for transport statistics

**How do we work?**

- Provide secretariat services to the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and its subsidiary bodies
- Give technical assistance to countries in transition
- Undertake analytical work on critical transport issues
- Support the development of infrastructure investments of regional importance

**Members**

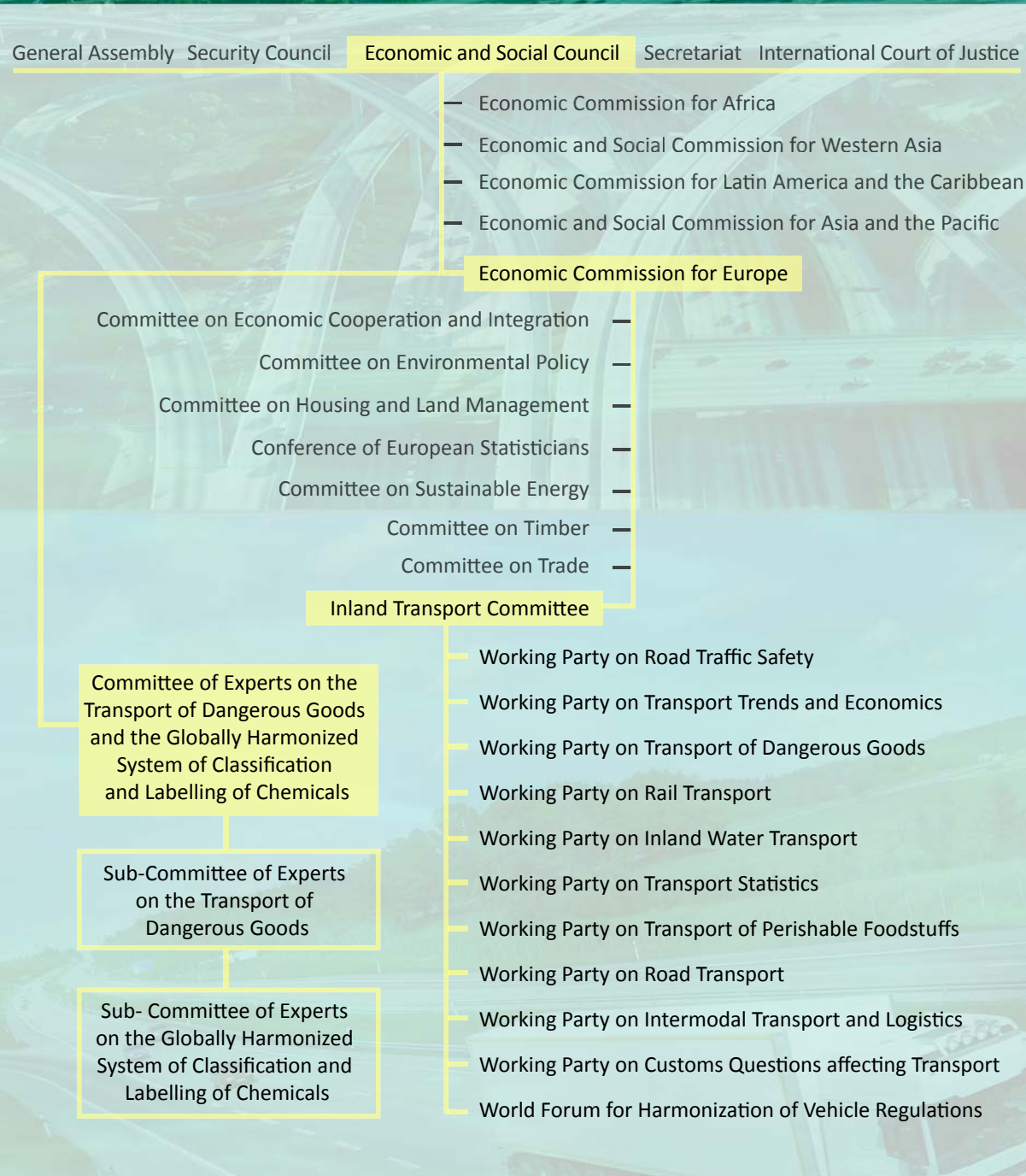
UNECE has 56 Member States: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan

**History**

UNECE was established in 1947 with the mandate to help rebuild post-war Europe, develop economic activity and strengthen economic relations between European countries, and between Europe and the rest of the world. During the Cold War, UNECE served as a unique forum for economic dialogue and cooperation between East and West. Despite the complexity of this period, significant achievements were made, with consensus reached on numerous harmonization and standardization agreements.

In the post-Cold War era, UNECE acquired not only many new Member States, but also new functions. Since the early 1990s the organization has focused particular attention on analyses of the transition process, using its harmonization experience to facilitate the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into global markets.

For more than six decades, the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) has provided a platform for intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate and develop international transport while improving its safety and environmental performance. The main results of this persevering and critical work are reflected in more than 50 international agreements and conventions which provide an international legal framework and technical regulations for the development of international road, rail, inland navigation and intermodal transport, as well as dangerous goods transport and vehicle construction. Considering the perspectives of both the transport service providers and their regulators, UNECE offers a balanced approach to and treatment of facilitation and security issues alike.



**Centre for International Transport Agreements**



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**Sustainable transport development**

The transport sector contributes up to 10% of gross domestic product (GDP) and provides mobility, prosperity and jobs in UNECE member countries. The negative effects of transport include however air and noise pollution, congestion, landscape degradation as well as traffic accidents and other harmful health effects, particularly in urban areas. Transport is also responsible for 23% of world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuel combustion, three quarters of which is caused by road transport alone. Also, the sector is 95% dependent on oil and accounts for 60% of all oil consumption. In addition, traffic safety in all modes of transport is a condition for sustainable development, and particularly, road traffic safety which is a development issue, impacting on all areas of life: social, economic and financial.

This calls for internationally harmonized regulatory, technical and behavioural measures and policies to ensure that our transport system continues to provide for personal mobility and serves our people and future generations. At the same time, transport must ensure the efficient and secure functioning of our economies and international trade which are the foundations of prosperity, without becoming a burden on humans and the environment.

The UNECE Transport Division works toward this goal by setting international standards and targets for more efficient, clean, safe and affordable land transport - be it through road, rail, inland water, intermodal transport and logistics, or through any of the work areas described below.

**Road traffic safety**

Addressing road traffic safety in an effective way requires both a multi-sectoral and a multi-disciplinary approach, even within transport. UNECE, through its specialized working parties, offers such a multi-dimensional approach through the “integrated safety chain” of the three key road safety facets: infrastructure, vehicle and driver.

UNECE’s Road Traffic Safety Forum (WP.1) has specialized in creating a multilateral legal framework. The Convention on Road Traffic, done in Vienna in 1968, sets up commonly agreed rules on all factors influencing international road traffic and its safety, including the driver and the vehicle, and is the reference for many national Road Traffic Codes all over the world. The Convention on Road Signs and Signals, also done in Vienna in 1968, sets up more than 200 commonly agreed reference road signs and signals, prescribes common norms for traffic light signals and uniform conditions for road markings. The implementation of the two conventions is complemented by two sets of best practices, known as the Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1.) and the Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals (R.E.2).

Thanks to UN Development Account support, UNECE is coordinating a joint project with the other UN regional commissions to assist governments in transition economies in setting regional and national road casualty reduction targets and achieving them by 2015.

**Global warming and transport**

UNECE Transport offers an integrated approach to address climate change issues both in breadth, through cooperation with the other sectors, particularly with energy and environment, and also in depth, by promoting measures for existing and new fleets of vehicles, as well as for modal splits and better transport infrastructure, including modern traffic management systems. The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) promotes strategic shifts from fossil fuels to hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>) and electricity. Introducing these measures to the existing fleet should take ten more years due to the long lifetime of vehicles. Thus, the regulatory activity is based on the timeframe for introducing new vehicles to the market, as follows:

- Short term (2015)
  - ↳ Energy efficiency by engine technology, Tyre Pressure Monitoring Systems, rolling resistance
  - ↳ Use of sustainable bio-fuels
- Mid term (2015-2025)
  - ↳ Plug-in hybrid vehicles
- Long term (2025-2040)
  - ↳ Electric and Hydrogen vehicles

**Vehicle regulations**

The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) offers a framework for globally harmonized technical regulations for vehicles, including mutual recognition of vehicle type approvals and uniform conditions for periodical technical inspections. This allows for certification with mutual recognition, with the goal being “certified once, accepted everywhere”. The benefits of this system are tangible for the environment, vehicle and pedestrian safety, as well as for trade. Two main agreements govern this work: the 1958 and 1998 Agreements. The 1998 Agreement provides a global framework, grouping major players such as North America, Europe, Japan, South Korea, China, India, etc. The 1958 Agreement also provides global technical harmonization with the exception, for the time being, of North America, China and India. However, it is the indispensable administrative certification tool which allows complete global harmonization. Examples of such regulations include specifications for engine emissions, fuel quality and efficiency, brake assist systems, electronic stability control and child restraint systems. Three key partners support this process: The European Union has decided to replace some of its directives on type approval with those of the regulations developed by the World Forum. Similarly, Japan and South Africa actively promote the 1958 Agreement to the Asia Pacific region and the Southern African Developing Community, respectively.

**ITS**

Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) offer non-traditional solutions in an effective way. UNECE’s main focus on ITS regulations has so far been through the World Forum which has been dealing with vehicle to vehicle and vehicle to infrastructure communication. Technical specifications for autonomous emergency braking and lane departure warning systems are just two examples of products from the World Forum.

**Dangerous goods and special cargo**

UNECE provides the secretariat for the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (TDG) and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). It provides recommendations on classification, listing, use of packagings and tanks, their construction and approval, their marking and labelling, as well as consignment and operational procedures for international transport. These recommendations are implemented not only at country level but also through international instruments by other international organizations such as the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization. UNECE ensures that these Model Regulations are reflected in European inland transport legislation: ADR for road transport; ADN for inland waterways, and RID for rail. Furthermore, the European Union has aligned its legislation on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures to the GHS. Transport of perishable foodstuffs also requires specific conditions in order to preserve public health, and UNECE provides for such conditions through an international instrument called the ATP.

**Transport Infrastructure Development**

UNECE provides an intergovernmental forum for coordinating inland transport infrastructure

planning in the pan-European region. This work is carried out on the basis of four major UNECE transport infrastructure agreements, establishing the E-networks for road, rail, inland waterways and combined transport lines. These infrastructure agreements provide UNECE Governments with a legal framework to construct and develop coherent international networks for the various modes of inland transport. In addition, three regional projects support internationally harmonized and coordinated long-term investment planning that is more and more combined with related facilitation measures. These are the Trans European Motorway (TEM), the Trans European Railway (TER), and the Euro-Asia Transport Links (EATL) project.

**Transport economics**

Working closely with member Governments and international partners, UNECE work on economic aspects of transportation is complementary to its legal and regulatory work. Through studies, internationally agreed recommendations and guidelines, UNECE provides sound methodological tools and ready-made solutions for a wide range of applications. These cover not only direct transport-economics related aspects, such as cost-benefit analysis, financing of transport infrastructure projects, identification of bottlenecks and missing links and quality of transport services, but also deal with globalization-induced trends and competitiveness which create new challenges for global transport supply chains.

**Statistics**

In close cooperation with EUROSTAT and OECD/ITF, UNECE collects and disseminates on-line comprehensive annual transport statistics focusing on rail, road, inland waterways and intermodal transport based on internationally agreed definitions. Similarly, the UNECE on-line data base on road traffic accidents in Europe and North America provides extensive data on accidents and casualties by nature of the accident, user and age group and involvement of alcohol. Every five years, detailed traffic counts are undertaken on main international roads and railway lines (E-road and E-rail traffic censuses), with the next round of censuses scheduled for 2010.

**Border crossing facilitation**

Countries that lack reliable and harmonized transport and border crossing regulations and procedures, or user-friendly, well-equipped and, possibly, jointly operated border crossing infrastructures, are at an increasing disadvantage in the global economy. To contribute to the improvement of countries’ competitiveness, UNECE puts at their disposal an extensive set of legal and practical transport and border crossing facilitation tools. These cover areas such as reduced waiting times at borders, temporary importation of vehicles or containers, simplification of customs and other border procedures. The TIR customs transit system has proved to be an efficient way of transit facilitation, thus saving costs and increasing the reliability and predictability of transport services.

The International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention), is the first facilitation agreement of its kind to provide for harmonized and simplified border procedures, single window application and overall smoother transactions. For participating countries and their businesses, it is thus a major source for efficiency gains.

**THE PEP – a multi-agency initiative to promote sustainable urban transport development**

The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) works for healthier and more environmentally friendly urban transport. Its focus is on an exchange of best practices.