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**INTERSECRETARIAT WORKING GROUP ON
TRANSPORT STATISTICS (IWG)**

**Report of the Second Informal Meeting on the Common Questionnaire
for Transport Statistics
(26-27 April 2000, Paris)**

NOTE : The Second Informal Meeting on the Common Questionnaire was convened by the Intersecretariat Working Group on Transport Statistics (IWG) and hosted by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT). The meeting was held in Paris from 26-27 April 2000, under the auspices of the ECMT's Group of Statisticians. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Claudine Laguzet, responsible for the Sous-Direction de l'Observation Statistique des Transports at the French Ministère de L'Equipement, des Transports et du Logement.

1. The Chairwoman opened the meeting, underlining the importance of the Common Questionnaire for Transport Statistics, developed by the Intersecretariat Working Group beginning in 1992, and used since then as a tool for the coordination and harmonization of transport data at the international level, and intended to reduce the response burden of the member States of the three organizations (ECE, Eurostat and ECMT).
2. The group noted that this was the second session of the Informal Meeting on the Common Questionnaire, the first session having taken place in November 1997 in Geneva. The impetus for the second session was the need to modify the Common Questionnaire in order to ensure its relevance to the changes in the transport sector. In addition, the meeting aimed to target problems identified by member countries in completing the Common Questionnaire, which is sent out annually to all of the member States of the ECE, Eurostat and ECMT.

3. The Chairwoman stressed the importance of considering both the CQ and the Glossary for Transport Statistics, not as fixed products, but as dynamic tools that needed constant fine-tuning to keep pace with the changes in the transport sector. She said the CQ was used to collect transport data on three continents, and the corresponding Glossary for Transport Statistics was available in all languages of the European Union, as well as Arabic.

4. Ms. Wachs of the ECE said that the CQ should not be too rigid, so that it could reflect changes in the evolution of the transport sector, yet at the same time, should not be changed too often, so that countries could depend on a relatively fixed format and content, so that they could adapt their administrative structures accordingly, to be able to complete the CQ in a comprehensive manner. For this reason, it was suggested that, after the changes agreed at the meeting were included, the CQ would be frozen for five years, with no substantive additions or deletions.

5. Eurostat and ECMT demonstrated their computerized database systems linked to the Common Questionnaire. Both organizations said that they would cooperate with the UN/ECE in developing a similar database system so that the three organizations could transmit data received from their respective member countries electronically, allowing for verification and manipulation of data for publishing purposes.

6. Mr. Lock of Eurostat introduced new environmentally-related variables to be incorporated into the forthcoming (2000) sending of the Common Questionnaire (for submitting of 1999 data) (see the report of the IWG, TRANS/WP.6/2000/2).

TOUR DE TABLE

7. The representative of **Denmark** said that he would like to see an earlier presentation of data, including possibly graphs and charts, so that countries could see where they stood vis-à-vis other countries. The ECE secretariat noted that in the past this issue had been raised in connection with its annual publication, the Annual Bulletin of Transport Statistics for Europe and North America, but that Governments had said that they preferred timely data over more in-depth analysis. He also said that Denmark wanted to try an introduce GESMES (EDIFACT) for inputting of data, to lessen the response burden. In addition, he expressed the need for a common definition on pipeline transport.

8. The representative of **Belgium** said that they still submitted data on paper because they only had Excel 95 and insufficient resources for an upgrade so asked the Eurostat to convert the CQ for them. He said that Statistics Belgium obtains data from various sources, e.g. rail authorities, and thereafter copies the figures into the CQ. For road, 1998 data would follow in a few months, and IWT data as well as pipelines shortly thereafter (but only through 1994). Regarding the CQ, he said that for motorcycles there was no information available on cylinder capacity, and no national data on tramways, because this data was all regionalized. For passenger transport also, he said there was very little data.

9. The representative of **Estonia** said that the road sector presented problems in that the breakdown of vehicles by age were broken down differently than in the CQ, as follows : < 3 years, 3-7 years, 8-10 years, and > 10 years. Regarding goods transport, the customs office does not differentiate between transport by Estonian hauliers and foreign hauliers.
10. The representative of **Finland** said that there were no problems with data availability, but that the time-frame for completion of the CQ was too short.
11. The representative of **Romania** said that most of the data was available, but that there were problems in the road transport sector due to the lack of cooperation from private companies in providing data.
12. The representative of **Portugal** said that it was difficult to obtain data on train mileage (veh-km) because companies do not have such data, including origin-destination data. It was also difficult to separate out fully loaded wagons from block trains. For road vehicles, they did not have breakdowns by age, rather date of first registration.
13. The representative of **Latvia** said that, in railway data, they do not separate wagons by classes, and also do not have data on international transport (from which country to which country). In addition, it was difficult to differentiate between hire and reward and on own account. By next year, they would have better data on goods transported by origin-destination, and containers in ports.
14. The representative of **Norway** said that there were no serious problems with most data collected by the Common Questionnaire as it is now. However, there was some trouble getting data from railway companies, compared with 10 years ago, due to privatization. Data is not given a high enough priority, and the accuracy is questionable.
15. The representative of **Poland** said that the Central Statistical Office was cooperating with the Ministry of the Interior on developing a vehicle registry system for 2002.
16. The representative of **Slovakia** said that they had some particular problems with the road freight section in the CQ, but from 2000 data would be available.
17. The representative of the **Czech Republic** said that there were no specific problems, except that trolleybuses were considered as railway vehicles, so no differentiation was made between these categories.
18. The representative of the **United Kingdom** said that they had some technical problems in completing the CQ, especially the road section. In order to break it down into the relevant components for completion, they had developed their own electronic questionnaire. Regarding the railway section, there was limited information available on rolling stock, since privatization. She said they would like to see the CQ dovetail with the new EU Directive on Rail Transport data. Also, in the United Kingdom, road vehicle stock is analyzed by gross vehicle weight instead of load capacity. She also said she would like to have a summary of response rates to the CQ, to get an idea of where each country stands in relation to other respondents. The IWG agreed to carry this out.

19. The representative of **Slovenia** said that the Ministry of Transport was in charge of completing the CQ, but they requested it be completed by the Statistical Office, so it should be sent to them. There were no major problems on rail, but would appreciate definitions on “short-distance transport by rail“. In addition, there were problems with intermodal maritime transport.

20. The representative of **Sweden** said that they needed more time between receiving the CQ and sending it in. Also, there are some data already sent to Eurostat in compliance with EU Directives (transport of goods by road, and soon through the new Railway Directive). In addition, regarding the new proposals from DGTREN, it was impossible to know the length of rivers, lakes and coastal waterways.

PROPOSALS BY DG TREN

21. The representative from Eurostat introduced a proposal developed by DG TREN to incorporate new variables into the CQ. New definitions would be needed for each of the newly-introduced definitions. At a subsequent meeting of the Intersecretariat Working Group on Transport Statistics, it was decided that, for the September 2000 sending of the CQ, only a limited number of these proposals would be included, with the remainder to be taken up at the upcoming fifty-first session of WP.6.

22. Regarding the Eurostat proposal on rail transport, the representative of the International Union of Railways (UIC) said that it had already had this data in a slightly different form. The UIC offered to provide comments to Eurostat on the proposal which may be considered by WP.6

23. The representative from Eurostat noted ongoing projects (call for tenders) related to the work of the CQ and the Glossary, and warned countries that in the next sending of the CQ they might be asked to filling in missing historical data.
