



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 159 – 13-17 February 2006

Well-functioning transport system essential for growth

Extract from the opening statement of Marek Belka, UNECE Executive Secretary, at the 68th session of the Inland Transport Committee, 7 February

«It is widely accepted that a well functioning transport system is essential for growth and competitiveness of economies. National economies depend on transport more than ever before, as they depend increasingly on international trade.

In this respect, the UNECE and its Inland Transport Committee fulfils a real need that is not performed by any other international organization. Indeed, the Committee provides the framework within which a large number of transport norms and regulations are agreed internationally with the participation of all its members. Many of these norms and regulations have been developed into Agreements and Conventions that are legally binding for countries that adhere to them, thus reflecting their



Achieving efficient international transport is not an easy task. It requires political commitment, but also very precise technical norms and regulations that ensure a high level of efficiency, safety and environmental protection and which are harmonized from one country to another.

importance. No wonder that the UNECE Governments in the framework of the reform have identified transport as a top priority area.» ❖

The whole opening statement is available at <http://www.unece.org/press/execsec/2006/mb060207.htm>

Guests of the week

Evgeny Mokeev, new Chairman of the Inland Transport Committee, Xavier Guerin and Jean-Claude Schneuwly, Vice-Chairmen



The UNECE reform has reaffirmed the high priority given to its transport sector. One of these priorities is related to border crossing – an important aspect of trade facilitation. People and goods should be able to circulate easily throughout the region. This problem is a typical issue to be dealt with in the context of a multilateral organization like the UNECE. In that context we have to deal not only with border controls and procedures but also with interoperability issues, particularly in rail transport, including technical standards and key transport documents that vary from one country to another and from one grouping of countries to another.

Priority areas

Activities related to legal instruments which constitute the strength and the fame of the UNECE will be pursued and reinforced, in particular the conventions related to the transport of dangerous goods, international road and rail transport, road safety and technology of vehicles.

Another area that has a high priority is the collaboration with the environment and health sectors in the context of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan European Programme (THE PEP), which the UNECE reform has placed in the forefront of our concerns. This programme is financed through voluntary contributions and it is expected that participation will increase.

Europe and Asia

The development of the transport infrastructure between Europe and Asia ↓

↓
Guests of the week (cont.)

is going to become an important element of our work. It will mean the further development of such projects as the Trans European Motorway (TEM) and the Trans European Railway (TER) projects. We will also promote cooperation among countries in the Euro-Asian region for the sound development of Euro-Asian transport links. The UNECE has a very wide experience in this context, especially in paving the way for the development of the famous corridors. We need to examine the criteria that should be used for financing, and evaluate the locations where the huge amount of money needed for these corridors should be invested. In this context, our role will also be to coordinate efforts and make sure that the investments are used well.

Security problems

Another problem which we will have to deal with is the security problems of inland transport. While many efforts have been made in air and maritime transport, security matters have not progressed at the same pace in the field of inland transport. As it did with safety in tunnels, the UNECE will have to focus on taking stock of the work done so far and on preparing recommendations to UNECE Governments.

Finally, the UNECE will have to take a broader view of transport problems. The technical approach to transport issues needs to be put in the context of transport strategies as a whole. ❖

For further information please contact:

Information Service
UN Economic Commission for Europe
(UNECE)
CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: +41(0)22 917 44 44

Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05

E-mail: info.ece@unece.org

Website: <http://www.unece.org>