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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport

(Thirty-ninth session, 14-15 April 2003,  
agenda item 7 (a))

**ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN UNECE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF  
UNECE BODIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE  
WORKING PARTY**

**New developments in the field of combined transport in UNECE member countries**

**Transmitted by the Government of Poland**

Note: The secretariat reproduces below a communication transmitted by the Government of Poland.

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## FAST RAILWAY FREIGHT TRANSPORT BETWEEN EUROPE AND FAR EAST

Presently, the trade between Europe and Asia is carried out mostly by sea. 250 million tons of goods is transported yearly by sea, taking routes around Asia, across the Indian Ocean, the Suez Canal and through the Mediterranean Sea. Significant part of this volume is carried in the form of container cargo. 3 million containers only from the Korean port of Pusan are sent to Europe each year.

Sea transport takes about 30 days, not including the time of waiting and reloading. On the contrary, transport of freight from Europe to Asia by land takes only half of this period. Therefore, since 2001 the talks on shifting some of freight volumes from sea to inland routes, i.e. using Trans-Siberian Railway Trunk Line and the so-called LHS wide-gauge line ending next to Katowice (South of Poland), have been pursued.

As a result of the analysis of various alternative routes and railway connections, it was recognised that the shortest and most effective links for transit relations with the Far East are located on the extension of the Trans-Siberian Railway Trunk Line: Pusan – Nahodka – Karymskaya – Irkutsk – Novosibirsk – Omsk – Yekaterinburg – Moscow – Minsk, with a branch Ukraine – Kiev – Hrubieszów – Sławków).

The Russian Federation has been systematically upgrading both railway and the supporting infrastructure of the Trans-Siberian Trunk Line, aiming at establishing smooth railway connection between the Central European Countries, Russia and the Far East countries. Assumption is that that eventually 600 thousand of containers will be transported, instead of present mere 40 thousand pieces. Thus, large logistic centres dealing with cargo distribution on Euro-Asian transit route, including the Polish section of the LHS wide-gauge line (from Hrubieszów to Sławków) is necessary.

The LHS Line constitutes one of the most westward-located component of the wide-gauge railway network. It enables transit traffic of trains without necessity of changing wagons boogies. The LHS Line ends in a reloading terminal at Sławków near Katowice.

Sławków is situated on the crossing of the two strategic Trans-European road corridors, included in the AGC and AGTC European agreements:

- Corridor No. III (Berlin – Dresden – Bielawa Dolna - Wrocław – Katowice – Medyka – Lvov – Kiev) and
- Corridor No. VI (Gdańsk – Toruń – Poznań – Grudziądz – Warszawa – Zebrzydowice – Zilina – Ostrava).

The Sławków Terminal itself is located in the best possible way on the railway network: in a place where European-gauge (Maczki shunting yard) and wide-gauge (Sławków shunting

yard) railway networks come together.

Other transport links are also favourable:

- road connections:
  - distance of 5 km to National Road No. 94,
  - distance of 10 km to the A4 motorway, section Katowice-Kraków,
  - distance of 8 km to the A1 motorway, section Warszawa - Bielsko-Biała;
- proximity of airports:
  - distance of 44 km to Katowice Pyrzowice airport,
  - distance of 57 km to Kraków Balice airport;
- inland water connections:
  - distance of 50 km to Gliwice port.

Taking into consideration these favourable geographical and location conditions, it is planned to transform terminal in Sławków into national logistic centre, managing operations on the Trans-Siberian Railway trunk line. Including the wide-gauge LHS line into national priority lines is thus foreseen.

To revitalise traffic on the wide-gauge LHS Line, the pilot train connection for heavy goods vehicles was launched from Ukraine (Kiev) to the Polish border (Hrubieszów) and Sławków. Large interest among road hauliers is anticipated.

There are good reasons to foresee that the wide-gauge railway line will be an alternative to the sea route from Vladyvostok to the West European countries.

It should be stressed once more, that for ships from the Far East harbours to reach Europe by sea it takes more 1 month time. On the contrary, goods loaded in Vladyvostok on the Trans-Siberian Railway Line can reach Sławków within 2 weeks.

Yearly, from the Far East harbours some 8-10 million containers are sent to the West. For example, some 7,6 million containers were dispatched to Europe in the year 2000. It is estimated that within next 20 years the volume of goods is likely to grow threefold. Taking over only small portion of this traffic can make the newly built logistic terminal in Sławków one of the biggest “dry-port” in Europe.

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