

The latest session of the Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group was held on 7 and 8 March 2005 in Paris and was hosted by ECMT.

The meeting adopted “model” action plans and partnership agreements to facilitate the conclusion of cooperative arrangements among Governments and with the private sector for efficient international intermodal (road/rail) transport services. The “models”, containing also operational benchmarks to measure performance, have been prepared on the basis of the good experiences made with similar arrangements concluded by countries and the transport industry to increase productivity, reliability and punctuality of intermodal transport services across the Alps, in particular through Austria and Switzerland. These “models” will now be transmitted to the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) for approval at their meeting in Moscow (24-25 May 2005) to be used at the pan-European level.

The meeting also adopted amendments to the AGTC Agreement extending the network of intermodal transport lines and operational standards to the countries in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South-Eastern Europe.

Finally, an opinion on the proposal of ISO to standardize 45 ft (13,7 m) long containers was adopted pointing out that such containers would conflict with the maximum authorized length for road vehicles in most UNECE member countries and could thus not be transported on the European road network.

The next meeting of the Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group will be held from 25 to 27 September 2005 in Geneva and will be hosted by UNECE. The provisional agenda for this meeting as well as the relevant registration form for delegations will be available on this site as of early July 2005.

For more information, contact the UNECE Transport Division (wp.24@unece.org).