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Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)

REGIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT COMMITTEE (RRTC)

Sixth session

(Istanbul, 19 to 20 March 2003)

**DRAFT PROGRAMME AND PROVISIONAL AGENDA
FOR THE SIXTH SESSION**

Note: It has not been foreseen to hold a separate third meeting of the Group of Experts on Charging Policies. The outcome of the Group's second meeting, held in December 2001, will be considered by the RRTC under point 4 (g) of the agenda.

Wednesday, 19 March 2003

09.30 hours: Registration

10.00 - 13.00 hours: Morning session (coffee break at mid-session)

13.00 - 15.00 hours: Lunch break

15.00 - 18.00 hours: Afternoon session (coffee break at mid-session)

(1) ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Documentation: Draft programme and provisional agenda – Informal Document No.1 (2003); List of documents – Informal Document No. 2 (2003).

The Committee may wish to consider and adopt the provisional agenda prepared by Turkey and the UNECE secretariat. The Committee may also wish to take note of the list of documents for consideration at the session (Informal Document No. 2 (2003)).

Several documents of the Committee, including this agenda, are made available on the relevant UNECE web site: http://www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/seci/intro.htm

(2) COORDINATION OF WORK WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Committee may wish to be informed of activities of other international organizations, forums and initiatives working in the same or similar fields and with the same or similar geographical scope with a view to coordinating relevant work and avoiding duplication of efforts with those undertaken by the Committee.

In particular, the Committee may wish to be informed of recent activities undertaken by the Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in cooperation with the International Road Union (IRU) and the International Organization on Legal Metrology (OIML) concerning the International Goods Road Vehicle Weight Certificate; the European

Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the Black Sea Pan-European Transport Area (PETrA) especially with regard to the adoption and implementation of their respective transport facilitation legal instruments . The Committee may also wish to be informed on recent developments in the frame of the SECI/World Bank TTFSE program and its Trade Facilitation component.

(3) REVIEW OF RESERVATIONS TO ARTICLES 3 AND 8 OF THE MoU

Documentation: SECI Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); Reports of previous sessions of the Committee; Compatibility of existing bilateral agreements with articles 3 and 8 of the MoU – Informal Document No.3 (2003).

At its previous sessions, the Committee was informed by the representatives of Hungary and Slovenia that their countries maintained their reservations to Article 3, paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 on progressive liberalization of international road transport. Slovenia maintains also reservations to Article 8, paragraph 3 on charges for excess weight and dimensions on E-Roads.

The Committee may wish to be informed on progress made in this matter with a view to achieving a consensus on the implementation of the provisions of the MoU.

In accordance with the decision taken at the fifth RRTC session, the UNECE secretariat has prepared a study which comments on the conformity of some of the existing bilateral transport agreements between SECI countries with Articles 3 and 8 of the MoU. The Committee may wish to consider and discuss the preliminary results of this study.

(4) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE MoU IN LINE WITH THE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Documentation: SECI Memorandum of Understanding (MoU); Reports of previous RRTC sessions.

The Committee may wish to review progress made with the implementation of the provisions of the MoU taking account of the time frames provided in the MoU and in the programme of work that it has adopted.

**(a) Identification of roads servicing international traffic (E-Roads)
(in accordance with article 6 of the MoU)**

Documentation: Informal Document No.4 (2003)

In accordance with article 6 MoU, the RRTC adopted in October 2000 a Protocol to the MoU containing a list of those sections of the E-Road network in the SECI region on which lorries in international transport complying with the relevant regulations of the European Community on maximum dimensions and weights are allowed without payment of charges for excess weight and/or dimensions.

In accordance with article 6 MoU and with paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Protocol on

E-Roads, the UNECE secretariat distributed at the fifth RRTC session a new questionnaire (informal document No.12 (2001)) aiming at gathering comprehensive information on E-Road stretches in SECI countries which are being upgraded or which are planned to be upgraded in order to allow for the carriage of road vehicles in line with the EC regulations.

Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro have replied to this new questionnaire. This information is contained in Informal Document No.4 (2003). Delegations of the other SECI participating States who have not yet returned the new questionnaire are expected to do so at their earliest convenience. For their easy reference, information they submitted through the previous E-Roads questionnaire has been included in Informal Document No.4 (2003).

Based on the new information received, the Committee may wish to consider updating the E-Roads list attached to the Protocol to the MoU on the implementation of Article 6 of the MoU on Roads Servicing International Traffic (E-Roads). The UNECE secretariat will accordingly modify and update the relevant maps and information posted on the RRTC web site.

(b) Preparation of an international goods road vehicle weight certificate (in accordance with article 7 of the MoU)

Documentation: Conclusions of the first session of the Group of Experts on the IVWC (Istanbul, 5 December 2001); IVWC – Informal Document No.5 (2003); Summary of national consultations – Informal Document No.6 (2003); Code of Practice accompanying the IVWC – Informal Document No.7 (2003)

At its fourth session, the Committee adopted in principle the International Goods Road Vehicle Weight Certificate (IVWC) as well as the text of a Protocol to the MoU on the introduction of the IVWC (Informal Document No. 13 (2001)).

The Committee had felt that in particular attention should be given to the determination of the maximum permissible weighing errors as well as to other technical aspects to make sure that, independently of the weighing procedure used, the results obtained were identical. The Committee had also invited all delegations to review with national experts the provisions of the Protocol and to explore ways and means to ensure that its provisions and the certificate itself could be implemented in all Parties to the MoU as soon as possible.

With a view to resolving the last remaining technical details, the Committee convened an ad-hoc group of experts on this subject. The Group of Experts on the IVWC met in Istanbul on 5 December 2001 (Conclusions of the first session of the Group of Experts on the IVWC). The Committee may wish to be informed on the decisions taken at this meeting and their follow-up (Informal Document No.5 (2003)).

The Group of Experts decided that a Code of Practice should be prepared. The objective of this document would be to ensure uniformity in the way in which the weighing is conducted in different countries. The Committee will be informed on the results of work done until now on such a document (Informal Document No. 7

(2003)).

The Committee will also be informed on progress made with regard to the adoption of a draft Annex 8 to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1985), which also includes the IVWC.

The Committee may wish to be informed on the results of national consultations conducted by RRTC representatives with their national authorities on the adoption and the implementation of the IVWC (Informal Document No. 6).

The Committee may wish to review once more the Protocol to the MoU on the introduction of the IVWC and to finally adopt it. The Committee may also wish to consider ways of ensuring necessary coordination and monitoring of the IVWC implementation in SECI countries.

(c) Implementation of Article 3 of the MoU (Progressive liberalization and sustainability of international road transport)

Documentation: Implementation of article 3 MoU – Informal Document No.8 (2003); Combined transport – Informal Document No.9 (2003)

Article 3 of the MoU provides for progressive liberalization of market access for international road transport in SECI countries. The establishment of a quota-free regime for bilateral and transit transport between the SECI countries is considered to be the objective of the first phase. In this context, article 3 paragraph 3 provides for the application of a quota-free regime for “green” and “greener and safe” lorries between all SECI countries by the end of the year 2000.

The Committee may wish to examine the status of implementation of Article 3 of the MoU and especially of its paragraph 3, based on Informal Document No. 8 prepared by the UNECE secretariat.

While reviewing this document, the Committee may wish to recall that, at its fifth session, it had agreed on a commonly shared interpretation of the provisions of article 3 paragraph 3. According to this interpretation the quota-free regime and the permit requirement are not incompatible as long as no limitations on the number of such permits are imposed. Permits may still be used, for example, for statistical purposes. Also, a quota-free regime does not imply that “green” and “greener and safe” vehicles should be automatically exempted from paying road users charges or tolls.

The Committee may also wish to take note of a new Hungarian initiative aiming at promoting efficient and adequate combined transport services to ensure additional and complementary capacities in international road transport on certain sections of major international transport corridors in the SECI region in accordance with Article 3 para. 5 of the MoU (Informal Document No. 9 (2003)).

The Committee may also wish to be informed by the Hungarian delegation of a proposal to create an ad-hoc group of experts on combined transport and to organize a first meeting for such a group in Budapest in June/July 2003.

(d) Preparation of a Multilateral Framework Agreement (in accordance with Articles 11 and 12 of the MoU)

Documentation: Draft Multilateral Framework Agreement – Informal Document No.10 (2003)

The Committee took note at its fifth session of a presentation by the UNECE secretariat on possible approaches towards fulfilling the mandate given by Articles 11 and 12 of the MoU according to which the Parties to the MoU will “*strive towards a multilateral framework agreement on road transport, including additional and complementary measures increasing the transport capacities and promoting environmentally sound technologies, covering all SECI participating States... (which) should reflect the best prevailing practices as enshrined in bilateral road transport agreements... including also provisions on passenger transport.*”

It was also considered at the fifth session that countries’ representatives should enquire about the level of implementation in their country of binding international agreements in the field of goods and passengers transport, of road vehicles procedures and road transport operations and of procedures for drivers engaged in international road traffic.

The Committee may wish to discuss this issue and may in particular wish to identify elements that could be taken up in such a Framework Agreement. The Secretariat will present an Informal Document No.10, which may be used as a basis for the discussions.

Thursday, 20 March 2003

10.00 - 13.00 hours: Morning session (coffee break at mid-session)

13.00 - 15.00 hours: Lunch break

15.00 - 18.00 hours: Afternoon session (coffee break at mid-session)

(4) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE MOU IN LINE WITH THE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COMMITTEE (CONT’D)

(e) Maintenance of an International Road Transport Information System (in accordance with article 9 of the MoU)

Documentation: Information System (updated)– Informal Document No.11 (2003); Presentation of Crossboard – Informal Document No.12

In accordance with article 9 of the MoU the UNECE secretariat has established an RRTC website at the address: http://www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/seci/intro.html where information on road transport for the SECI participating States is posted.

The international information system on road transport contains data for each of the SECI participating countries on E-Roads and maximum permissible road vehicle characteristics, transportation costs, combined transport services, road transport control and enforcement authorities, on-line waiting times at border crossings and truck parking areas (maintained in cooperation with the International Road Transport Union). This information should to be up to date and the Committee members are invited to

verify on a regular basis the data published for their country.

To improve the day-to-day communication between RRTC representatives and other interested players, the UNECE secretariat will introduce a new, internet-based tool called Webcrossing. This interactive tool provides several facilities to registered users such as the possibility to post and modify documents and comment on them, the possibility to introduce a discussion topic, to have live meetings, etc. This tool may become a good complement to the RRTC website, allowing for closer and more frequent contacts between its registered members.

- (f) Accession to international agreements
(in accordance with article 4 of the MoU)**
Documentation: Informal Document No. 13 (2003)

The UNECE secretariat will provide a status report on the accession by the Parties to the MoU to the international agreements and conventions contained in the Annex to the MoU. The Committee may wish to be informed about difficulties in the implementation of these agreements and conventions in order to identify possibilities for assistance, if necessary.

- (g) Review of charging policies in the region
(in accordance with article 8 of the MoU)**
Documentation: Report of the second session of the Group of Experts on Charging Policies (Istanbul, December 2001)

The Group of Experts on charging policies held its second meeting from 6-7 December 2001 in Istanbul. The Committee will be informed about the results of the Group's second meeting and may wish to provide guidance on further work to be taken up by the Expert Group.

- (h) Review of visa facilitation procedures for professional drivers
(in accordance with article 10 of the MoU)**

Recalling its earlier discussions on the UNECE - SECIPRO Project on "Visa Regime Improvements for the Business Community in Southeast Europe", the Committee may wish to be informed on progress made in this area by the SECIPRO group of experts.

(5) PROGRAMME OF WORK (ACTION PLAN AND STRATEGIES) FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MOU

Documentation: Programme of work – Informal Document No.14 (2003)

The Committee may wish to review its programme of work, including its action plan and strategies for implementation of the MoU taking account of progress made in the various fields covered by the MoU and dealt with by the Committee.

The UNECE secretariat will reproduce the programme of work as adopted at the fifth session of the Committee (Informal Document No.14), indicating issues still to be taken

up, problem areas not yet covered as well as strategies for a more effective implementation of the provisions of the MoU.

**(6) VENUE OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE
(IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 12, PARAGRAPH 2 OF THE MoU)**

The Committee may wish to decide on the host country for its seventh session as well as on the session's date and venue.

(7) OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee may wish to consider any other business of relevance for its activities.

(8) ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

The Committee may wish to adopt the conclusions of its sixth session on the basis of a draft to be prepared by the UNECE secretariat.
