



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
18 August 2011

Original: English

---

## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

##### Fifty-fourth session

Geneva, 2–3 November 2011

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Follow-up to the 2010 Theme: Opportunities and challenges  
for intermodal transport by inland waterways**

### Report of the informal group of experts

#### Note by the secretariat

#### I. Mandate

1. As decided by the Working Party at its last session and in line with the road map on future work and operation of the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/127, para. 70; ECE/TRANS/WP.24/125, paras. 18–22 and 40–41), the informal group of experts on opportunities and challenges for intermodal transport by inland waterways met in Strasbourg (France) on 16 and 17 May 2011 for a follow-up meeting on the 2010 theme. A summary report of this session is provided below.

#### II. Session and technical visit at Strasbourg

2. The informal group of experts held its follow-up session on the 2010 Theme at Strasbourg on 16 and 17 May 2011 and held consultations with staff of the Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR) followed by a technical visit of the Port of Strasbourg.

3. The group of experts was particularly interested in discussing the role of intermodal transport on the Rhine and its tributaries and measures to further increase its attractiveness and competitiveness as well as its complementarities with road and rail transport as part of seamless door-to-door transport systems.

4. In the pan-European region, intermodal transport by inland waterways, mainly transport of ISO containers, is to a large extent port hinterland traffic to and from major European North Range sea ports. Most of such traffic is carried on the Rhine and its

tributaries where, in 2007, around 1.6 million twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) were moved by inland water vessels.

5. Since 1995, container transport on the Rhine has nearly tripled. The boom in container traffic on the Rhine shows that, given favorable inland water conditions and infrastructures, intermodal transport using inland waterways could be highly competitive.

6. The group of experts discussed with the Secretary-General of CCNR, Mr. Jean-Marie Woehrling and his staff the development of inland water transport on the Rhine, particularly the transport of containerized cargo and was informed of the still largely untapped capacities available on the Rhine 24 hours a day.

7. It took note of the very elaborate system of international regulations applicable to inland water transport on the Rhine. These regulations were based on the Convention of Mannheim that enshrined freedom of navigation, equal treatment of ships of all nations, exemption from any taxes and duties based solely on navigation, absence of physical or administrative obstacles to navigation and a commitment of all riparian States to maintain the navigability of the waterway.

8. The ensuing technical visit to the port of Strasbourg was led by Mr. Laurent Darley, Director of port operations, and included a visit to the ancient port as well to the modern container terminals of the port of Strasbourg. The Strasbourg port area covers 40 hectares and handled 9.2 Million tonnes of cargo in 2010, an increase of nearly 16 per cent compared to 2009. Container traffic by inland waterways amounted to 115,000 TEUs in 2010 and has increased by nearly 38 per cent compared to 2009.

9. The group of experts was very satisfied with this follow-up session and the accompanying technical visit as it had allowed a deeper understanding of the role of intermodal transport on inland waterways and complemented the information gained during the discussions in the framework of the 2010 theme of the Working Party.

10. The group of experts expressed its appreciation to CCNR and the port of Strasbourg for the excellent organization of its discussions and for the hospitality provided.

11. The detailed programme of the session and technical visit of the group of experts at Strasbourg is attached.

12. The Working Party may wish to evaluate this first cycle of thematic discussions that had been introduced in 2010 as part of the road map on future work and operation of the Working Party. The cycle comprised preparation of a theme for substantive discussions by an informal group of experts, substantive considerations with eminent experts during the annual session of the Working Party and concrete follow-up of this subject through a session and technical visit by the group of experts.

## Annex

**UNECE Group of Experts**  
**Groupe d'experts de la CEE-ONU**  
 Opportunities and challenges for intermodal transport by inland waterways  
**Possibilités et difficultés du transport intermodal par voie navigable**

<b>16 mai</b>	<p><b>Visit: Central Commission for Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR)</b>  <b>Visite : Commission Centrale pour la Navigation du Rhin (CCNR)</b></p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/> <p><b>Welcome: Bienvenue :</b>  <b>M. Jean-Marie Woehrling, Secrétaire Général</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>Presentation of activities undertaken by CCNR</b>  <b>Présentation des activités de la CCNR</b></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><b>Intermodal transport by inland waterways (Rhine)</b>  <b>Transport intermodal par voie navigable sur le Rhin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Market observation : Traffic (passengers, freight, containers, etc.)</b>  <b>Observation du marché : Développement du trafic (passagers, fret, conteneurs, etc.)</b></li> <li>• <b>Regulations: Vessels, operations, infrastructure, dangerous goods, etc.)</b>  <b>Réglementation (bateaux, mode exploitation, infrastructures, matières dangereuses, etc.)</b></li> <li>• <b>Procedures and hindrances at border crossings</b>  <b>Conditions et obstacles lors du passage aux frontières</b></li> </ul>
<b>17 mai</b>	<p><b>Visit of the port of Strasbourg</b>  <b>Visite du port autonome de Strasbourg</b></p>