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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON INTERMODAL TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS AT ITS FIFTY-FIRST SESSION [1]
(Geneva, 19-20 March 2009)

CONTENTS

[1] All documents mentioned in this report are available and can be downloaded from the relevant UNECE website <http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html> or from the ODS system of the United Nations <http://documents.un.org/>.

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I. ATTENDANCE

1. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria; Belgium; France; Germany; Netherlands; Portugal; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Switzerland; Turkey; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The European Commission (EC) was represented. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Labour Office (ILO) and the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) was represented. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: European Intermodal Association (EIA); Groupement européen du transport combiné (GETC); International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA); International Multimodal Transport Association (IMMTA); International Organization for Standardization (ISO); International Rail Transport Committee (CIT); International Road Federation (IRF); International Road Transport Union (IRU); International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR); International Union of Railways (UIC). The German Institute of Shipping Economics and Logistics (ISL) participated at the invitation of the secretariat.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

2. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/122).

III. UNECE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE (ITC) AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda item 2)

3. The Working Party was informed about the results of the seventy-first session (24-26 February 2009) of the Inland Transport Committee that was held in conjunction with a UNECE Conference on the Impact of Globalization on Transport, Logistics and Trade and organized jointly with the UNECE Committee on Trade.[2] The Conference was to provide an input to the forthcoming International Transport Forum entitled Transport for a Global Economy (Leipzig, 27-29 May 2009).

4. The Working Party took note of other current activities conducted in the field of port hinterland transport by the Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports (Geneva, 23 June 2009). The Working Party also pointed out that, except for rail transport, no further substantive activities had been planned regarding transport security. Finally, with reference to transport statistics, it noted that another pan-European rail and road traffic census programme would be carried out in 2010 covering E-roads (AGR) and important international railway lines (AGC).[3]

5. Reviewing its role and functions, the Working Party decided to ask a virtual group of experts to prepare a guide or road map on the future work and operation of the Working Party. This road map will be considered by the Working Party at its forthcoming October 2009 session, together with its programme of work for 2010-2014.

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[2] ECE/TRANS/206.

[3] <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp6/wp6.html>.

IV. EUROPEAN COMMISSON (DG TREN) (Agenda item 3)

6. The representative of the EC informed the Working Party on the progress made in the implementation of the Freight Logistics Action Plan that had been adopted in October 2007 as part of a larger freight transport package that also included other issues, such as freight-oriented rail networks, new port policies, motorways of the sea and a European maritime space without borders. In this respect, a study on possible modifications of the rules on weights and dimensions of heavy commercial road vehicles as established in Directive 96/53/EC had been carried out for the European Commission.[4]

7. The European Commission also initiated a broad review process of the trans-European transport network policy (TEN-T) taking account of future political and economic challenges, such as climate change objectives and economic and social cohesion.[5]

V. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS (Agenda item 4)[6]

8. Further to the detailed information provided at its October 2008 session (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/121, paragraphs 17-30), the Working Party took note of the results of a survey of 113 European intermodal transport operators (including 8 companies providing accompanied transport services (RoLa) that had been undertaken by UIC as part of its DIOMIS project.[7] In 2007, a total of 18.07 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) was transported using intermodal road-rail transport, of which 17.11 million (94.7 per cent) was unaccompanied and 0.96 million (5.3 per cent) accompanied. This represented an increase of 37 per cent between 2005 and 2007 for total intermodal transport in Europe.

9. In 2007, around 75 per cent of all accompanied intermodal transport was operated by only two companies across the Alps.[8] Container hinterland intermodal transport (maritime containers) accounted for 57 per cent (9.76 million TEU) and continental intermodal traffic for 43 per cent (7.35 million TEU) of total unaccompanied transport in 2007.

10. In 2007, the share of UIRR companies in total European intermodal transport was 30 per cent (5.13 million TEU) for unaccompanied and 82 per cent (0.78 million TEU) for accompanied intermodal transport.

11. As already predicted in October 2008,[9] the increase in intermodal transport in Europe came to a sudden halt in 2008. UIRR companies reported a decrease in transport in the order of 1 per cent compared to 2007 amounting to 2.94 million consignments or 5.88 million TEU

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[4] <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/strategies/studies/doc/2009_01_weights_and_dimensions_vehicles.pdf>.
[5] <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0044:FIN:EN:PDF>.
[6] All informal documents and presentations made at the session are available on the following website: <http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/wp24-presentations/24presentations.html>.
[7] The survey undertaken within the project "Developing Infrastructure and Operating Models for Intermodal Shift (DIOMIS)" covered 30 European countries, including Turkey and Ukraine.
[8] OKOMBI (Austria) and RALPIN (Switzerland).
[9] ECE/TRANS/WP.24/121, paragraph 22.

equivalents.[10] This compares to increases of 9 per cent in 2007 and 15 per cent in 2006. While the first 6 months of 2008 still showed healthy increases, the second half of 2008 recorded a dramatic decline in traffic as a result of the worsening economic crisis and, in particular, the reduction of transport demand in port hinterland traffic and by the automotive industry.

12. In 2008, UIRR companies transported 3.79 million TEU internationally compared to 2.09 million TEU in national traffic. While international transport decreased slightly by 2 per cent, national transport continued to increase by 2 per cent. The difference in performance between international and national traffic was particularly marked for accompanied transport where international transport increased by 3 per cent whereas national transport recorded an increase of 30 per cent. Altogether, accompanied transport increased by 12 per cent while unaccompanied traffic decreased by around 2 per cent.

13. Traffic volumes on the main intermodal transport corridors across the Alps also reflect the worsening economic climate in Europe. In 2008, non-accompanied intermodal transport across Switzerland declined by 1.4 per cent (in terms of tonnes). While in the first half of 2008, traffic still grew by 0.1 per cent (via the Gothard) and by 9.5 per cent (via the Lötschberg), the second semester showed a decline in the order of 8.6 per cent for the Gothard and 1.2 per cent for the Lötschberg. In November and December 2008 the decline in total non-accompanied intermodal transport across Switzerland had been in the order of 13 per cent.

14. Preliminary figures for the first two months in 2009 show further dramatic decreases of European intermodal transport in the order of 25 per cent and more. Predictions about traffic performance in 2009 are at present not possible given the present financial and economic uncertainties and the unpredictability of the length and impact of the current economic crisis on the commodity producing industry in Europe.

15. Intermodal transport operators have already adjusted their transport offers, introduced better coordinated transport procedures and reduced over-capacity and costs on certain routes. However, reductions in train frequency below one daily journey in each direction per working day may induce the risk of loosing the market altogether. Nevertheless, intermodal transport operators that had purchased whole block trains from railway undertakings and had taken the risk of marketing these capacities might be compelled to discontinue the operation of these block trains if market demand continues to decline further. In particular, small intermodal transport operators may be hit first as they had fewer possibilities to temporarily cross-subsidize transport offers.

16. The Senior Vice-President of the Russian Railways (RZD) informed the Working Party about the development of freight transport by rail in the Russian Federation and of container transport along the Trans-Siberian route. In 2008, RZD held 61 per cent of the total rail freight market of the Russian Federation, down from 65 per cent in 2007 (74 per cent in 2003). In 2008, container rail transport had increased by 6.3 per cent and reached 2.5 million TEU, 46 per cent of which was domestic transport. Transit transport of containers accounted for only 6.3 per cent of such traffic (155.400 TEU). Along the international East-West rail transport corridors between Europe, China and Mongolia 715.000 TEU were carried in 2008, an increase of 12 per cent

[10] One UIRR consignment (accompanied or unaccompanied) is equivalent to two twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU).

compared to 2007. RDZ feels that a journey time of around 12 days could be achieved within the next few years in commercial railway container transport between China and Europe. This might create a viable market niche for time-sensitive cargoes between the markets for air (1 day) and maritime transport (30 days).

17. The Working Party was also informed by the representative of IRU about typical problems at terminals identified by the road transport industry. In particular, unnecessary and unplanned waiting times for pick-up and delivery of loading units at terminals would often make intermodal transport a costly and often incalculable venture. IRU had developed a fact sheet of terminal bottlenecks that identified as major problems inadequate management of terminal operations as well as communication gaps among parties involved, in addition to delays in the arrival and departure of intermodal trains. Furthermore, terminal locations would need to be optimized with adequate road access and should respond to business-needs.

18. The Working Party also took note of information provided by ISO on current activities in the fields of freight container vocabulary, automatic identification and security covering both mechanical and electronic seals.

19. The Working Party invited a virtual group of experts to analyse the impact of the current financial and economic crisis on intermodal transport and to report at its forthcoming session in October 2009.

VI. MODERN TRANSPORT CHAINS AND LOGISTICS (Agenda item 5)

A. National and subregional logistics action or master plans

20. The Working Party was informed about recent experiences made in Germany with the National Freight Transport and Logistics Masterplan that had been prepared under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs and approved by the Federal Cabinet in July 2008. The Masterplan intends to set the direction for transport policy as a whole in Germany, to enhance the competitiveness of the logistics industry and to ensure an optimum design, funding and use of the freight transport system. It is also a guide or road map to facilitate economic structural change towards sustainable development and to increase public perception of the importance of freight transport and logistics for economic development. Therefore, the Masterplan is not only addressed to public authorities (at federal, regional and municipal levels), but also to the industry (transport operators, shippers, associations, logistics companies) and to the general public (final consumers).

21. The German Masterplan has been developed in a participatory process involving more than 700 experts from various Ministries, other public authorities, associations, universities and industry groups. This network of experts constitutes an advisory consortium that will continue to be consulted during the implementation of the Masterplan. Financial means in the order of 10.2 billion Euro have been earmarked at the federal level for investments in road, rail, inland waterways and combined transport to support the 35 measures identified in the Masterplan in the fields of (a) optimum use of transport infrastructure, (b) avoidance of unnecessary journeys, (c) modal shift towards rail and inland waterways, (d) upgrading of transport arteries and hubs,

(e) sustainable and safe transport, (f) training of freight transport industry personnel and (g) promotion of Germany as a centre for logistics.[11]

22. The Working Party was also informed about an independent network of companies and authorities that work jointly on sustainable, safe and reliable mobility in the Netherlands. The so-called "Connekt" network is a public-private initiative made up of 110 members from national, regional and local governments (incl. road administrators, policymakers, suppliers), industries (incl. transport suppliers and users, telecom companies, private road administrators), transport users (transport companies, automobile associations, interest groups), universities and consultants.

23. "Connekt" provides a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience and for the identification of strategies, such as in the field of freight transport and logistics. The objective of the Dutch Freight Transport Strategy developed by "Connekt" is to ensure access to and from the main ports, to reconcile mobility and environmental objectives and to stimulate the industry to optimize supply chain management. Actions identified relate to minimizing transport volumes and weights, improving logistical efficiency and reducing use of fossil fuels. Freight transport solutions developed within the framework of "Connekt" provide for new and better intermodal transport services by rail and inland waterways in the Netherlands, for the consolidation of cargo using clearing-houses and for the creation of an institute for logistics in the Netherlands.[12]

24. Finally, the Working Party was informed by the representative of ISL of the advantages and good practices in the establishment of logistics centers or freight villages as nodes in international logistics chains in Europe. Strategic location in the proximity of economic centers, easy access to road and motorway networks, availability of intermodal terminals and logistic service providers, incl. customs, as well as 24-hour operations were all assets that contributed to the success of logistics centers, such as in Bremen and Berlin, and were taken into account in the development of new centers, such as in Prilesie (Minsk).

B. Design and management of freight and intermodal transport and the role of governments

25. The Working Party recalled that its programme of work contained the following work element: "Analysis of modern transport chains and logistics that allow for an integration of production and distribution systems providing a rational basis for governmental decisions on transport demand, modal choice as well as on efficient intermodal transport regulations and infrastructures and taking into account transport safety and security requirements" (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/117, annex).

26. With a view to further defining and structuring these activities, the Working Party had invited interested experts to share their know-how and experiences between the sessions of the Working Party. The secretariat had been requested to assist the Chairman in arranging such inter-sessional work for interested experts, by moderating a virtual expert group communicating via e-mail (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/119, paragraphs 26-34).

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[11] For more information on the German Masterplan see: <http://www.bmvbs.de/dokumente/-,302.1046512/Artikel/dokument.htm>. An English version is available at the UNECE secretariat.

[12] For more information on the "Connekt" concept and network in the Netherlands see: <http://www.connekt.nl/en/home>.

27. In line with this request, the secretariat, in cooperation with a virtual expert group on transport chains and logistics and contributions from GETC and Austria (Informal documents WP.24 Nos. 5 and 6 (2008)), has prepared a study on the design and management of freight and intermodal transport and the role of governments (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2008/4).

28. Reviewing the study, the Working Party considered the various concepts of logistics and supply chains as well as their growing impact on freight and intermodal transport. It recognized that modern supply chain management systems and logistics would become of paramount importance for the competitiveness of the economies in the UNECE region. These developments will fundamentally reshape the way goods are supplied, produced, delivered and returned. Driven by consumer demand and the globalization of production and trade, supply and distribution chains are getting longer. Just-in-time (JIT) and just-in-sequence (JIS) supply, production and distribution systems increasingly require reliable, flexible, fast and efficient transport systems and will have a crucial impact on modal choices made by the industry (road, rail, inland water, sea and/or air transport).

29. The Working Party recognized that the planning, organization, control and execution of freight transport operations as part of supply chain management as well as the organization of intermodal transport operations were primarily business activities. The Working Party felt however that governments had a very important role to play in this field as logistical processes organized by the private sectors do not necessarily constitute optimal solutions for the overall economy or the country as a whole. Governments need to set and maintain the institutional framework as well as the rules of the game to ensure that the design and management of freight transport and intermodal transport services are carried out in line with national transport policy objectives and respect also other economic, social, environmental and spatial policies, rules and regulations set and enforced by public authorities.

30. The Working Party identified three fields where governmental action was needed. Described in ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2008/4, those fields cover:

(a) Transport policies that set the appropriate regulatory, institutional and administrative framework conditions at national (also provincial and municipal) and international levels;

(b) Transport infrastructure for efficient modal and intermodal transport services. This includes adequate land use planning that allows the industry to establish and develop adequate port facilities, intermodal terminals and distribution centers in line with economic, social, environmental and spatial requirements;

(c) Research, education and awareness to better understand the impact of supply chain management and logistics on transport demand and modal choice, to provide for adequate know-how and experience of industry professionals and to provide information and transparence about the role of freight transport and logistics to the general public.

31. The Working Party felt that it might be able to play a supportive role in these areas through an exchange of information and best practices among countries in the UNECE region and by providing expertise in regulatory or capacity building policies and measures.

32. In line with its mandate and area of competence, the Working Party endorsed the conclusions drawn by its virtual expert group as contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2008/4 with

the exception of the proposed activities in paragraphs 63 (4) and 65 (3) of that document. It felt that the proposed activities could provide a value-added at the inter-governmental and pan-European levels and should be pursued by the Working Party in coordination with other international organizations, particularly the European Commission.

33. The new activities relating to transport chains and logistics approved by the Working Party are reproduced in the annex to this report.

34. The Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare, for consideration at its forthcoming session in October 2009, a revised draft programme of work for 2010-2014 that contained the approved new activities of the Working Party in the field of transport chains and logistics.

35. Finally, the Working Party reiterated its view that Eastern European, Caucasus and Central Asian countries would particularly benefit from participating in this work as logistical developments and modern supply chains increasingly influenced transport choice and demand, as well as the impact of governmental policies.

VII. RECONCILIATION AND HARMONIZATION OF CIVIL LIABILITY REGIMES IN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 6)

36. Recalling the discussions at its previous sessions as summarized in ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2009/3, the Working Party was informed by the representatives of UNCTAD and IMMTA about the latest developments, the content and possible impact of the new Convention on Contracts for the International Carriage of Goods Wholly or Partly by Sea. This Convention had been prepared by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and had been adopted by the General Assembly on 11 December 2008.

37. The new convention, to be called “The Rotterdam Rules”, will be opened for signature following a signing ceremony to be held on 23 September 2009 in Rotterdam. Entry into force will require ratification by 20 States. Any State acceding to the new convention will have to denounce other maritime conventions to which it may be a party, i.e. the Hague, the Hague-Visby or the Hamburg Rules, before ratification of the Rotterdam Rules becomes effective.

38. The Working Party noted that the new convention would apply to all contracts of carriage by sea that include an international sea leg, no matter how short the sea leg and how long the land leg may be. The Convention will apply to the carrier who may not necessarily be responsible for the total door-to-door transport, as long as loss, damage or delay of cargo cannot be localized or if no other convention, such as the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) or the Convention concerning International Transport by Rail (COTIF), is applicable. The carriers’ liability is limited to 3 Special Drawing Rights (SDR) per kilogram of cargo or to 875 SDR per package. While the liability of the carrier is limited, the new convention introduces a mandatory and unlimited liability for the shipper in case he provides inaccurate information and in case of breach of obligations regarding the carriage of dangerous goods. It thus tends to shift responsibilities from the carrier towards the shipper.

39. The new convention is very complex and covers legally untried areas, such as the transfer of rights, arbitration and jurisdiction clauses. It does not provide for mandatory and harmonized

liability provisions for door-to-door transport due to opting-out clauses allowing freedom of contract for so-called “volume (service) contracts” that are used widely, particularly in maritime liner trade.

40. The new convention will, if it were to come into force, create another layer of international law applicable to potentially many European intermodal transport operations, particularly in port hinterland traffic with provisions that are not in harmony with modal CMR or COTIF rules applicable to international road and rail transport in Europe. Also, the new convention does not provide for a concentration of risk for loss, damage and delay, irrespective of its cause and the modal stage where it occurs, on one party (i.e. the contracting carrier) as had been suggested earlier by the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/111, paragraphs 14-18).

41. Thus, the new convention does not seem to be a step in the direction towards a simple, transparent, uniform and strict liability system for modern transport chains providing a level playing field among unimodal and intermodal transport operations.

42. In this context, the representative of EC informed the Working Party about progress made on a legal study covering multimodal transport documents and liability systems that had been commissioned by EC as part of its Freight Logistics Action Plan.

43. The Working Party welcomed the detailed information provided by the representatives of UNCTAD, IMMTA and EC. It decided to revert to this issue at its forthcoming October 2009 session to consider, in cooperation with the European Commission (DG TREN), the possible impact and value-added of the new convention for intermodal transport in Europe. The Working Party invited UNECE member States and professional organizations to examine how, under the present circumstances, an appropriate civil liability system, covering also short sea shipping, could be devised addressing the concerns of European intermodal transport operators and their clients.

VIII. MONITORING AND ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL POLICY MEASURES TO PROMOTE INTERMODAL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 7)

44. This item was not considered due to lack of time.

IX. IMO/ILO/UNECE GUIDELINES FOR PACKING OF CARGO IN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT UNITS (Agenda item 8)

45. The Working Party recalled that in 1996 it had finalized, in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Office (ILO), international guidelines for the safe packing of cargo in freight containers and vehicles covering also the requirements of all land transport modes (TRANS/WP.24/R.83 and Add.1).[13] It had been suggested that the guidelines should be updated from time to time and supplemented by additional elements, such as provisions on fumigation (TRANS/WP.24/71, paragraphs 32-36). In 1997, ITC had approved these guidelines and had expressed the hope that these guidelines would help reduce personnel injury while handling containers and would minimize physical hazard to which cargoes were exposed in intermodal transport operations (ECE/TRANS/119, paragraphs 124-126).

[13] <http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>.

46. The representative of ILO informed the Working Party that his organization as well as IMO had decided to review and update the guidelines that are used extensively by the transport industry to secure cargo in containers and other intermodal loading units.

47. The Working Party agreed to contribute to the review and update of the guidelines. It requested the secretariat to coordinate with ILO and IMO in this respect and to report back on new developments and procedures envisaged at its forthcoming session in October 2009. This new activity would also need to be incorporated into the programme of work of the Working Party.

X. INTERMODAL TRANSPORT BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA (Agenda item 9)

48. In the absence of representatives of the intermodal transport observatory in Ukraine, the secretariat of Pan-European corridor III (Berlin-Kiev) informed the Working Party about the latest developments on infrastructure construction and improvements in technical interoperability on this important east-west transport corridor.

XI. BORDER CROSSING FACILITATION PROCEDURES RELATING TO INTERMODAL TRANSPORT IN A PAN-EUROPEAN CONTEXT (Agenda item 10)

49. The Working Party was informed of progress made in the application of the common CIM/SMGS[14] consignment note. According to the representative of CIT the common consignment note is applicable today on more than 20 west-east traffic axes along five pan-European corridors, particularly between Germany and Ukraine and between the Czech Republic/Romania and the Russian Federation. It is planned to extend the use of the common CIM/SMGS consignment note to China, Mongolia and Kazakhstan. In addition to the preparation of standardized claims handling mechanisms, work continued on the electronic version of the common consignment note and should be completed before 1 July 2009 when submission of an advance electronic cargo declaration would become mandatory for import and export of goods to and from countries of the European Union (EU Regulations 648/05 and 1875/06).

50. The Working Party appreciated the continuing efforts of CIT and OSJD towards the facilitation of border crossing procedures on east-west intermodal transport corridors with the final aim of achieving a unified pan-European or Eurasian rail transport law as these activities were fully in line with the strategic work elements in this field adopted by the Working Party in September 2005 (TRANS/WP.24/109, paragraph 18; ECE/TRANS/WP.24/115, paragraphs 24-30).

[14] CIM = Uniform Rules Concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (Appendix B to the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF)); SMGS = Agreement on International Goods Transport by Rail.

XII. EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC) (Agenda item 11)

A. Status of the AGTC Agreement (Agenda item 11 (a))

51. The Working Party noted that the AGTC Agreement had 32 Contracting Parties.[15]

52. Detailed information on the AGTC Agreement, including the up-to-date and consolidated text of the Agreement (ECE/TRANS/88/Rev.5),[16] a map of the AGTC network, an electronic inventory of standards stipulated in the Agreements, as well as all relevant Depositary Notifications, are available at the website of the Working Party.[17]

B. Status of adopted amendment proposals (Agenda item 11 (b))

53. The Working Party noted that amendment proposals to annexes I and II to the AGTC Agreement, adopted at its forty-ninth session (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/119, paragraphs 40-45 and annex), that update and extend the geographical scope of the AGTC network would come into force on 23 May 2009 as indicated in Depositary Notification C.N.76.2009.TREATIES-1 of 23 February 2009.

54. In accordance with Depositary Notification C.N.623.2008.TREATIES-4 of 3 September 2008, the objection period for amendment proposals to articles 14, 15 and 16 of the AGTC Agreement, also adopted by the Working Party at its forty-ninth session, would expire on 3 September 2009. Provided there were no objections, these amendments would enter into force on 3 December 2009.

C. New amendment proposals (updating and extending the AGTC network) (Agenda item 11 (c))

55. The Working Party recalled that, at its forty-ninth session, it had adopted the amendment proposals contained in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2008/3, Add.1 and Add.2, with the exception of proposals pertaining to (15) Austria, (19) Hungary, (35) Armenia, (37) Georgia and (39) Turkmenistan (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2008/3/Add.1) for which the consultation process had not yet been concluded (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/119, paragraphs 40-44). These remaining proposals are contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2009/1.

56. The Working Party was informed by the representative of Austria that the amendment proposal pertaining to (15) Austria should be withdrawn for the reasons indicated in ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2009/1. The representative of Turkey voiced his agreement concerning the amendment proposal pertaining to line C-E 70 in (39) Turkmenistan.

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[15] Albania; Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Kazakhstan; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Republic of Moldova; Montenegro; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine.

[16] It should be noted that only the text kept in custody by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as depositary of the AGTC Agreement, constitutes the authoritative text of the Agreement.

[17] <http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>.

57. The Working Party requested the secretariat to contact once more the Contracting Parties directly concerned on the remaining amendment proposals in order to conclude the required consultation process and to allow the Working Party to take a final decision on these important international combined transport lines at its next session.

D. New amendment proposals (minimum infrastructure and performance standards) (Agenda item 11 (d))

58. The Working Party considered whether it would be appropriate to review the minimum infrastructure and performance standards and parameters in Annexes III and IV to the AGTC Agreement. As these standards and parameters date back to the late 1980s, they might need to be brought in line with modern rail and intermodal transport requirements.

59. The Working Party noted that, as indicated in ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2009/2, several of the 15 countries that had responded to a secretariat survey on this subject had felt that some of these standards and parameters in the AGTC Agreement might need to be updated, focusing possibly on those applicable for the construction of new railway lines. Furthermore, the list of important combined transport terminals might need to be updated, possibly as a first step, independently of those terminals already contained in Annex II of the AGTC.

60. In order to obtain a comprehensive picture of the proposed size and ranges of the standards and parameters for existing and new international combined transport lines as well as related installations contained not only in the AGTC, but also in the AGC Agreement, the secretariat was requested to solicit also the views of rail infrastructure managers, terminal operators and railway undertakings. Once these data are available, the Working Party, in cooperation with the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2), will consider these standards and parameters to prepare appropriate amendment proposals to the AGTC Agreement (SC.2 for the AGC Agreement).

XIII. PROTOCOL ON COMBINED TRANSPORT ON INLAND WATERWAYS TO THE AGTC AGREEMENT (Agenda item 12)

A. Status of the Protocol (Agenda item 12 (a))

61. The Working Party noted that the Protocol to the AGTC Agreement had been signed by fifteen and ratified by eight countries,[18] but was not yet in force. Its text is contained in ECE/TRANS/122 and Corrs.1 and 2.[19] Detailed information on the Protocol, including the text of the Protocol and all relevant Depositary Notifications are available on the website of the Working Party.[20]

B. New amendment proposals (Agenda item 12 (b))

62. This item was not considered due to lack of time.

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[18] Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Denmark; Hungary; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Romania; Switzerland.

[19] It should be noted that only the text kept in custody by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as depositary of the AGTC Agreement, constitutes the authoritative text of the Agreement.

[20] <http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>.

XIV. DATE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 13)

63. The Working Party decided to hold its forthcoming October session on 12 and 13 October 2009 in Geneva. The spring 2010 session of the Working Party was tentatively scheduled for 16 and 17 March 2010.

XV. REPORT (Agenda item 14)

64. As agreed and in line with the decision of ITC (ECE/TRANS/156, paragraph 6), the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chairman, has prepared this report for formal adoption at the forthcoming session of the Working Party in October 2009.

Annex

MODERN TRANSPORT CHAINS AND LOGISTICS: DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF FREIGHT AND INTERMODAL TRANSPORT

Activities for inclusion into the 2010-2014 programme of work of the Working Party

International transport policy and regulatory measures

(1) Monitoring and analysis of national measures to influence the design and management of freight transport with a view to enhancing the use of intermodal transport and preparation of a tool-box of policy measures and mechanisms that, depending on national circumstances, could be utilized to this end. Relevant ECMT resolutions on combined transport should be taken into account.

(2) Review and possible amendment of the 2005 “Model” Action Plans and Partnership Agreements, including performance parameters for the development of intermodal transport, with logistical requirements, benchmarks and responsibility parameters.

(3) Analysis of the draft UNCITRAL convention and review of UNECE work on civil liability regimes and provisions for intermodal land transport in a pan-European context.

International transport infrastructure and performance measures

(1) Review of the existing infrastructure and performance standards in the AGTC Agreement, including its Protocol on inland water transport with a view to raising interoperability standards and establish benchmarks for an efficient design and management of freight transport and international intermodal transport services. The difficulties and costs in modifying such standards should be taken into account.

(2) Review of AGTC minimum standards for terminals with a view to optimizing transshipment and logistical procedures and inclusion of mechanisms for the optimum location, construction and operation of terminals, freight villages and distribution centers, border-crossing and gauge interchange stations as well as ferry links/ ports.

(3) Inclusion of logistical requirements into the AGTC (also possibly AGR and AGC) to increase capacity and efficiency of port hinterland transport services.

Exchange of information on research, education and awareness

(1) Exchange of best practices on new concepts, design, weights and dimensions of intermodal loading (transport) units taking account of existing weight and dimensional limits enshrined in national, international and sub-regional (European Union) regulations.

(2) Exchange of best practices in the preparation and implementation of national logistics action or master plans.

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