



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/208
22 January 2008

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Rail Transport

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON RAIL TRANSPORT
ON ITS SIXTY-FIRST SESSION
(Paris, 20 November 2007)**

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. ATTENDANCE	1	3
II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)	2	3
III. FACILITATION OF BORDER CROSSING IN INTERNATIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 2)	3-9	3
A. Preparatory work for the International Conference on Facilitation of Railway Border Crossing (Agenda item 2 (a))	3-6	3
B. Monitoring of progress made in the facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport (Agenda item 2 (b))	7-9	4
IV. EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS (Agenda item 3)	10-14	5
A. Information on progress made in the UNDA project on developing Euro-Asian Transport linkages (Agenda item 3(a))	10-11	5
B. Organization of runs of container block trains on Euro-Asian transport links (Agenda item 3(b))	12-14	6

CONTENTS (CONTINUED)		<u>Paragraph</u>	<u>Page</u>
V.	SAFETY AND SECURITY IN RAILWAY TRANSPORT (Agenda item 4).....	15-17	6
VI.	EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON MAIN INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY LINES (AGC) (Agenda item 5).....	18-20	7
	A. Situation regarding the application of the AGC (Agenda item 5(a)).....	18-19	7
	B. Amendments proposed to Annex I of the AGC Agreement (Agenda item 5(b)).....	20	7
VII.	DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008-2012 AND BIENNIAL EVALUATION (Agenda item 6).....	21-23	8
VIII.	ACTIVITIES OF UNECE BODIES OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 7).....	24-26	8
	A. Economic Commission for Europe (Agenda item 7(a)).....	24-25	8
	B. Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies (Agenda item 7(b)).....	26	9
IX.	STUDY OF THE SITUATION OF THE RAILWAYS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES (Agenda item 8).....	27	9
X.	DETERMINATION OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY INCLUDING ASPECTS RELATED TO THE FEE FOR THE USE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE (Agenda item 9).....	28-29	9
XI.	INTEROPERABILITY AND HARMONIZATION OF CONDITIONS OF DIFFERENT RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS (Agenda item 10)	30-31	10
XII.	PRODUCTIVITY IN RAIL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 11)	32	10
XIII.	TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER) PROJECT (Agenda item 12)	33-34	11
XIV.	ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE SESSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY IN 2008 AND 2009 (Agenda item 13)	35	11
XV.	OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 14)	36-37	11
XVI.	ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Agenda item 15).....	43-44	11
<u>Annex</u>			
	Programme of Work for 2008–2012		11

I. ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport held its sixty-first session on 20 November 2007 in Paris, back-to-back with the last session of the ECMT Group on Railways. Mr. F. Croccolo (Italy) was Chairman and Mr. K. Kulesza (Poland) the Vice-chairman of the session. Representatives of the following UNECE Member States participated: Azerbaijan, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ukraine. Representatives of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSJD) were also present. A representative of the UNECE Trans-European Railway Project (TER) also attended the session. The following non-governmental organizations were present: Association of European Railway Staff (AEC), International Union of Railways (UIC) and International Rail Transport Committee (CIT). The representative of the TNO attended the session at the invitation of the secretariat.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/207

2. The provisional agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/207) was adopted.¹

III. FACILITATION OF BORDER CROSSING IN INTERNATIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 2)

A. Preparatory work for the International Conference on Facilitation of Railway Border Crossing

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/1

3. The Working Party took note of the progress made in the preparation for the organization of an International Conference on Facilitation of Railway Border Crossing Procedures, as well as in the preparation of the draft of (i) a new Annex 9 to the 1982 International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (“Harmonization Convention”), and (ii) a new International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers in the International Railway Passenger Traffic. It further noted that the UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) had not yet considered the two drafts, but that it intended to do so at its next session which will be held from 30 January – 2 February 2007.

4. The Working Party welcomed the information that the Russian Federation considers hosting the International Conference on Facilitation of Railway Border Crossing Procedures in the second half of 2008 and noted that holding the Conference at this time would allow sufficient time for finalization of a new Annex 9 to the 1982 Harmonization Convention as well as for preparation of the agenda, programme of action for improvement of border crossing procedures in international rail transport and other documents.

¹ Text underlined indicates a decision taken during the session and adopted by the Working Party.

5. Noting the useful work of the preparatory group which has worked on the text of a new International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers in the International Railway Passenger Traffic, the Working Party agreed that the proposal for a new Convention might create difficulties for those member Governments which are Contracting Parties to the original 1952 Convention, as there would exist two almost identical Conventions governing crossing of borders by international passenger trains. Therefore, the Working Party decided to recommend to all member Governments interested in amending, improving and bringing the text of the 1952 Convention up-to-date, which are not yet Contracting parties to it, to accede to the 1952 Convention and then initiate the relevant procedure. In this way, the Working Party felt the conflict between the two Conventions would be avoided, and the idea for the revision and amendments to the 1952 Convention would gain wider support.

6. In ensuing discussion, the Working Party welcomed the reaching of the agreement between the OTIF and OSJD on a consolidated text of the new annex 9 to the 1982 Harmonization Convention and invited all UNECE member Governments, including EU, to actively engage in the adoption of the text of the new annex 9 as well as to consider taking active part in the forthcoming International Conference. Noting the special relevance of border crossing facilitation for the non-EU UNECE member countries, the Working Party agreed that a well-prepared and organized International Conference would give a new impetus to efforts aimed at simplifying procedures and reducing border stopping time in international rail transport.

B. Monitoring of progress made in the facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/1; ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/2

7. Following its request at the previous session, the secretariat presented a note reviewing the most important international activities, initiatives and programmes aimed at monitoring and improving border crossing operations and stopping times in international rail transport. Noting a certain proliferation of activities and initiatives carried out by different international organizations, the Working Party decided to encourage all involved organizations to continue monitoring border crossing operations while making additional effort to carry out these activities in a coordinated and harmonized manner. In order to be timely informed about the ongoing and planned activities in this domain, the Working Party asked involved organizations and member Governments to continue providing information about their planned and current activities on monitoring border crossing procedures, and requested the secretariat to keep this item as an information on its agenda for future sessions.

8. Following the request by the Working Party at its previous session, the OSJD produced the results of its own data collection and analysis of border crossing procedures carried out at twenty border crossing stations in seven OSJD member countries. The results revealed that there are significant discrepancies among observed stations both in stopping times of trains as well as in required procedures, opening hours of border control services and other types of control. Noting these results, the Working Party encouraged the OSJD to continue monitoring, especially in view of the International Conference on Facilitation of Railway Border Crossing Procedures, where this type of data and information could be useful for drawing attention of the

Governments to the significance of their actions and benefits they could bring by simplifying and harmonizing border crossing procedures and reducing the border stopping times for international trains.

9. The Working Party also asked the TER representative to complete and update the review of border crossing data collected at selected borders of the TER member countries from 2001 to 2006 which have enabled TER Project to identify a number of bottlenecks and extensive border stopping times at several border crossing stations. The Working Party reiterated its recommendation to the TER office to undertake jointly with OSJD, CER, and the UIC, a more in-depth analysis of the underlying obstacles in selected number of rail border stations. The Working Party noted that presenting the results of such an in-depth analysis to the International Conference on Facilitation of Railway Border Crossing Procedures in 2008 would also contribute to better quality of discussions at the Conference and would facilitate formulation of regulatory, operational and organizational recommendations aimed at simplifying operations and reducing stopping times for border controls.

IV. EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS (Agenda item 3)

A. Information on progress made in the UNDA project on developing Euro-Asian Transport linkages

10. The Working Party was informed about the results of the implementation of the UNDA joint UNECE/UNESCAP Euro-Asian Transport Links project (EATL) on developing Euro-Asian transport links and plans for continuation of the work. In this context, it was informed about the forthcoming meeting of Ministers of 18 countries involved in the project which will take place on 19 February 2008 on the occasion of the seventieth session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee. The Ministers are expected to pledge their support to the results of the Project carried out from 2002-2007. The Working Party was also informed about a plan to establish a Group of Experts, which are expected to continue work on the Euro-Asian transport links project as of February 2008, and which will report to the UNECE Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics. Bearing in mind the very dynamic infrastructure developments in the context of Euro-Asian transport links, numerous national and multinational projects and initiatives, the Working Party agreed that closer coordination and collaboration among involved UNECE Working Parties is necessary. In this context, the Working Party noted that the Group of Experts which will be established in February 2008 represents a convenient mechanism which will provide a necessary framework for ensuring coordination on both the international level as well as among different Working Parties involved in activities related to Euro-Asian transport links, and invited interested Governments to consider nominating their experts to take part in the work of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian transport links.

11. The Working Party welcomed the exchange of information on activities related to development of Euro-Asian transport links. It agreed that continued coordination of all related activities and involved organizations was indispensable. It further felt that it provides a convenient forum for a regular exchange of information and follow up on important activities related to the rail component of the Euro-Asian transport links. The Working Party asked the secretariat to continue providing the relevant information about new progress in the project at its next session.

B. Organization of runs of container block trains on Euro-Asian transport links

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5//2007/3 and Add.1

12. The Working Party took note of the written information provided by the Governments of Turkey and OSJD on their experiences with demonstration runs of block trains. The Working Party stressed the importance of demonstration runs of container trains as a convenient way of showing the potential advantages of railways on selected Euro-Asian routes. Also noting that the workshop on “Experiences and lessons learned in organizing demonstration runs of container block-trains on Euro-Asian transport links” scheduled to take place immediately after the session, would provide the opportunity to look at the relevant issues in a greater detail, the Working Party decided to have discussion on specific aspects during the workshop.

13. Since container block-train runs have become regular rail services between many UNECE countries proving that railways could offer competitive services when runs of block-trains are thoroughly and properly planned and organized, the Working Party agreed that providing regular information on demonstration runs will no longer be required, but asked the secretariat to keep this item on its future agenda for information purpose.

14. The Working Party appreciated the brochure prepared on the basis of document (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2006/2) which summarized experiences gained in organization of demonstration runs of container block-trains on Euro-Asian transport links. Noting that the experience gained in their organization is accurately reflected in the secretariat’s brochure, the Working Party requested the secretariat to circulate the above-mentioned brochure to a wide audience, but before doing so, recommended that it would useful to enhance the document’s content by elaborating regulatory and legal aspects of organization container block-train runs in order to reach all potential users.

V. SAFETY AND SECURITY IN RAILWAY TRANSPORT (Agenda item 4)

15. The Working Party took note of the information on the most recent developments related to security in railway transport provided by the representative of the UIC. He informed the Working Party that the UIC security platform established in 2006 was expected to improve the capacity of the UIC to take into account railway security issues and to build the work already done by UIC in this area. Several technical working groups have been created in order to deal with the specific issues (the Schengen “acquis” and immigration, freight chain security, evolution of security technologies, passenger train security, station and critical infrastructure security, major events’ management, fraud and tickets forgery, security crisis management, terrorism). He underlined that the focus is on three main areas: new technologies, regulatory aspects and human factors.

16. The representative of the International Transport Forum informed the Working Party about the Round Table on security risk perception and cost-benefit analysis which will be organized in November 2008. The representative of Germany also informed the Working Party about the ongoing work of the UNECE Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Inland Transport Security which is expected to complete its work in 2008 with recommendations to the UNECE Governments.

17. The Working Party will continue to follow-up on developments in these two areas on the basis of information provided by the EC, International Transport Forum, UIC, and other international organizations and bodies which are actively involved in developing regulatory and operational elements of safety and security related measures in railway transport. Taking into account the above information, the Working Party decided to consider again the question of safety and security at its next session in 2008. It further invited the UIC to organize a Workshop on Railway security issues, in cooperation with the secretariat, on the occasion of the next session of the Working Party in 2008 in order to raise awareness and stress the importance of tackling the issue of security in rail transport among Governments. In order to avoid possible overlap and duplication, the Working Party drew attention that the relevant results of the work of the UNECE Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Inland Transport Security should be fully taken into account in preparation of the Workshop on Railway security issues at its next session.

VI. EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON MAIN INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY LINES (AGC) (Agenda item 5)

A. Situation regarding the application of the AGC

18. The Working Party recalled decision F (43) adopted at the forty-third session of the Commission inviting "the Governments of ECE member States to consider taking all necessary steps in order to become Parties to the AGC" (E/1988/36-E/ECE/1170, chapter IV) and noted that the following countries were at present Parties to the AGC, bringing the total number of Contracting Parties to 28: Albania, Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Montenegro; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey; and Ukraine.

19. The Working Party noted the situation with respect to the application of the AGC Agreement in member countries. Noting the significance of the AGC for a coherent development of railway infrastructure in the UNECE region and, to that end, of a larger number of member countries acceding to the Agreement, the Working Party invited the Executive Secretary of the UNECE to encourage those Governments which had not yet acceded to the Agreement to examine the possibility of doing so.

B. Amendments proposed to Annex I of the AGC Agreement

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/5

20. The Working Party approved the updated version of Annex I of the AGC (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/5), and asked the secretariat to produce a consolidated version of the Agreement.

VII. DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008-2012 AND BIENNIAL EVALUATION (Agenda item 6)

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/2007/6

21. The Working Party considered the possible implications of the recent restructuring of the ECMT and planned abolition of its Group on Railways on its programme of work. It noted that continuation of certain activities, which until now existed in the programme of work of the ECMT Group on Railways, might be of interest to member Governments, and that there might be a possibility to transfer particularly relevant and important activities into the programme of work of the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport. The Working Party felt that it could deal with a selected number of priority policy topics, treating those deemed to be most relevant in a timely and efficient manner. Furthermore, the Working Party expressed interest for a closer cooperation with the Joint Research Centre of the OECD and the International Transport Forum, especially regarding the rail transport related research.

22. In view of this, the Working Party reiterated its call to all member Governments to consider which issues could eventually be taken up by the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport in its future programme of work and inform the secretariat about their proposals.

23. Furthermore, the Working Party discussed the proposed and indicators of achievement aimed at facilitating the measurement of its expected accomplishments for the biennial evaluation 2008-2009 and agreed to replace the text under "Indicators of achievement" (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/6, para.7.) with the following text:

- (b) Indicators of achievement
 - (i) Number of countries, IGOs and NGOs participating in the annual meeting of the Working Party on Rail Transport and level of satisfaction as expressed in surveys;
 - (ii) Number of amendments to the AGC Agreement as well as updated and amended lines in its Annex I which the Working Party has put in effect;
 - (iii) Number of thematic workshops/seminars organized and number of participants.

With this amendment, the Working Party adopted its draft programme of work as reproduced in the annex to this report, and reiterated its invitation to all member Governments to prepare new proposals for an in-depth discussion at its next session.

VIII. ACTIVITIES OF UNECE BODIES OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 7)

A. Economic Commission for Europe

Documentation: E/2007/37-E/ECE/1448

24. The Working Party was informed about the decisions taken by the Commission at its sixty-second session (Geneva, 25-27 April 2007), concerning such questions as the

implementation of the UNECE reform, and the Declaration on ECE's contribution to pan-European integration adopted during the session. In particular, the Working Party was informed about the implementation of the reform and concrete conclusions of the Panel discussion – "Secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation" organized under the Commission's agenda item Promoting sustainable development in the ECE region.

25. Noting these developments, the Working Party asked to be informed about the next session of the Commission and eventual impact of its decisions on the Working Party's work programme.

B. Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/192

26. The Working Party was informed about the results of the sixty-ninth session of the Inland Transport Committee (6-8 February 2007) and its discussions to the extent that they were related to the area of work of interest to the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/166, paras. 77-84).

IX. STUDY OF THE SITUATION OF THE RAILWAYS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES (Agenda item 8)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/7 and Add.1-3

27. The Working Party took note of the written contributions from Canada, Croatia, Estonia, Romania, Serbia, Russian Federation and Ukraine and appreciated information on new developments related to past and future developments of rail passenger and goods traffic, new developments observed subsequent to the reorganization of the rail sector in member countries investments in rail infrastructure and rolling stock. It noted that railways experience similar tendencies in some member countries and at the same time making significant efforts to promote their advantages compared to other transport modes. The Working Party felt that the exchange of experiences in dealing with similar problems was valuable, and that it is important to periodically exchange information on these topics. Therefore, it invited member Governments to inform the Working Party about: (a) data on past and future developments of rail passenger and goods traffic; (b) new developments to be observed subsequent to the reorganization of the rail sector with special attention to the setting-up of new railway companies; and, (c) investments in (i) rail infrastructure and (ii) railway rolling stock, at its session in 2009.

X. DETERMINATION OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY INCLUDING ASPECTS RELATED TO THE FEE FOR THE USE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE (Agenda item 9)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/8

28. The Working Party considered the Note transmitted by the European Commission which provided an overview of current cooperation between the EU, DG TREN and the European Railway Agency (ERA) and OSJD. Regretting the absence of the representative of the EC, the Working Party noted that the Commission launched a study on the compatibility of EU railway law and OSJD law. A decision whether the final report of the study will be published has not yet

been taken. Furthermore, the ERA has set up a Working Party dealing with convergence of the 1,435 mm and the 1,520/1,524 mm gauge networks. It is envisaged that this Working Party will issue a final report on the analysis of the relationship between the 1,435 mm and the 1,524/1,520 mm railway systems by mid-2008 and propose recommendations on technical and operational aspects concerned.

29. The information on the implementation of the Railway Packages has a high relevance for non-EU member countries, and the Working Party asked the EC DG TREN, to continue providing information on the progress made in their implementation at its future sessions.

XI. INTEROPERABILITY AND HARMONIZATION OF CONDITIONS OF DIFFERENT RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS (Agenda item 10)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/10

30. Regretting the absence of the representatives of OTIF, the Working Party took note of the Joint Report on the cooperation of OTIF and OSJD on harmonization of the different rail transport systems. The Working Party especially noted the work on CIM/SMGS consignment note and the efforts of OSJD and CIT to extend the area in which the CIM/SMGS consignment note is used, seminars and trial transport operations organized to promote its use. The Working Party commended OTIF and OSJD efforts and their joint work in this area. During the session, the secretariat also circulated supplementary note by OTIF which provided additional information on the preparation of the OTIF and OSJD annual plan of joint activities for 2008, on continued cooperation in the area of transport of dangerous goods, technical questions in railway transport and facilitation of border crossing.

31. The Working Party noted particular interest and relevance of interoperability related issues for non-EU countries, especially in the context of further development of Euro-Asian transport links. It further reiterated the importance of the establishment of a single regime for international carriage by rail through the entire UNECE region. In this context, the Working Party expressed its interest to continue to be informed about activities of the OTIF, OSJD, European Commission, and other concerned international bodies, on their efforts towards harmonization of conditions of different rail transport systems. The Working Party asked EC, OTIF and the OSJD to provide updated information on the progress in their work for its next session.

XII. PRODUCTIVITY IN RAIL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 11)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/11

32. The Working Party took note of the document containing the data on quantitative indicators of productivity for some 33 UNECE member countries transmitted by the UIC. Noting the usefulness of a continuous and systematic monitoring of quantitative productivity indicators, the Working Party invited the UIC, OSJD and all member Governments to provide to the secretariat the most recent required information on productivity indicators for its next session. It further asked the secretariat to reproduce a summary document for the next session of the Working Party, on the basis of information received from international sources and collected from member countries.

XIII. TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER) PROJECT (Agenda item 12)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2007/12

33. The Working Party appreciated the TER project focusing on relevant common issues and problems manifested in the project region. It noted plans for follow-up of the TEM and TER Master Plan and continuation of work on infrastructure issues. The Working Party felt that the future work of the TER project should focus on technical issues, through studies and continued training for TER member countries, which were invited to consider priority areas for future developments of railway transport. The TER Project Manager also informed the Working Party about efforts to attract new countries to join the project.

34. The Working Party took note of the annual TER report (TRANS/SC.2/2006/12) introduced by the UNECE TER Project Manager and asked to be kept informed of new developments at its forthcoming session.

XIV. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE SESSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY IN 2008 AND 2009 (Agenda item 13)

35. The Working Party elected Mr. Kulesza (Poland) as the Chairman and Mr. H.J.Y. Groot (Netherlands) as the Vice-Chairman for its sessions in 2008 and 2009.

XV. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 14)

36. The Working Party agreed to hold its sixty-second session, tentatively, from 19-21 November 2008.

37. It was also recalled that the Working Party's website: <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2.html> contained the reports, agenda of forthcoming sessions, major publications and working documents. To facilitate and accelerate the publication by the secretariat of working documents for the sessions, delegates were invited, whenever possible, to send their submissions for the Working Party's sessions by e-mail to: miodrag.pesut@unece.org.

XVI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Agenda item 15)

38. The report of the Working Party's sixtieth session was established by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman with the assistance of the secretariat and in consultation with all participants in the session.

39. The decisions adopted by the Working Party during the session are contained in the following paragraphs of this report: 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 35.

Annex

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008-2012

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.5: RAIL TRANSPORT

02.5.1 Rail transport infrastructure

Priority: 1

- I. Review of the situation concerning the implementation and possible amendments to the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC)

Description: Study of possibilities for the improvement of international railway lines and their reflection on AGC.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Rail Transport will carry out the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) Consideration of the AGC Agreement with a view to possibly: implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters; also taking into account new east-west traffic flows; raising environmental, energy and safety standards; taking into account the UNECE Conventions on the Environment.

Output expected: Report on amendment of the AGC network; Report on the development of a European conventional and high-speed railway network. (2008) Priority: 1

II. Studies in Railway Infrastructure

- (a) Description: Study of the possibility of the improvement of international railway lines and their management.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party will carry out the following activities:

Consideration of the influence of intermodal transport techniques, especially those concerning investment, as well as the harmonization of rolling stock and speed on railways to facilitate the integration of these techniques into the railway system and to create general interoperability.

Output expected: Report on investment in rail infrastructure and railway rolling stock in member countries. (2008) Priority: 2

- (b) Periodic review of the list of marshalling yards of international importance with a view to cutting down their numbers.

Output expected: Updated report on the location of important marshalling yards within the European railway network. (2009) Priority: 2

- (c) Consideration of questions concerning safety in railway tunnels.
Output expected: Review of the current situation and prospects for the development of new recommendations. (2008) Priority: 2
- (d) Consideration of developments regarding new railway initiatives on Euro-Asian transport links.
Output expected: Report on the current and new initiatives. (2008) Priority: 2

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (e) Periodically survey passenger and goods traffic on the various sections of lines of the AGC network in order to provide support for transport planning; the third survey is based on data for 2005.
Output expected: Report on total train traffic on the AGC network in 2000. (2008) Rail census in 2005. Priority: 2
- (f) Consideration of other subjects as need arises.
Output expected: Report on each subject.

III. Special project: Trans-European Railway (TER)

Description: Within the framework of the UNECE, the TER countries have established an appropriate administrative and financial framework, with the aim of developing a rail network as part of an integrated European international rail system.

Work to be undertaken

- (a) Report on specific project developments to promote international rail traffic. (Continuing)
Output expected: Annual progress report on activities carried out within the TER project. Priority: 1
- (b) Consideration of possible utilization of the results achieved under the project in other UNECE activities in the field of rail infrastructure including the implementation of AGC and AGTC in order to benefit from mutual experiences. (Continuing) Priority: 2
Output expected: Annual progress report.

IV. Interregional Cooperation

Description: Cooperation with other regional commissions and international bodies involved in the development of interregional links.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party will be kept informed of exchanges of information between the secretariats of the regional commissions and other international bodies in order to benefit from experiences gained in other regions of the world. (Continuing) Priority: 3

02.5.2 Harmonization of requirements concerning international railway transport including rail safety and facilitation of its operations Priority: 1

Description:

- (a) Simplification and harmonization of administrative formalities, particularly, for documents and procedures at border crossing.
- (b) Harmonization of and search for standardized requirements concerning the utilization of railway infrastructure including computerization aspects.
- (c) Elaboration of proposals and preparation of studies aimed at strengthening, consolidating and extending the position of rail transport on international transport markets.
- (d) Analysis of problems relating to the harmonization and improvement of rail safety.
- (e) Consideration of prospects for the adoption of legal regulations applicable to the contract for the transport of goods and passengers by rail so as to establish a standard legal system (harmonization of the SMGS/SMPS and CIM/CIV systems).

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Rail Transport will carry out the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) Consideration of specific difficulties encountered at border crossings in the transport of passengers and goods by rail with a view to accelerating border crossing operations and establishing a programme to deal with problems common to several routes.
Output expected: Report on bi- and multilateral contacts of Governments and railways to improve the crossing of borders in international rail traffic. (2007) Priority: 1
- (b) Consideration of follow-up of the implementation of recommendations and preparation of new texts or amendments to existing texts, if necessary, especially concerning the facilitation of border crossing with the aim to improve international rail traffic.
Priority: 1
- (c) Review of requirements concerning railway operations and regulations, reduction of transport time and improvement in the precision of movements in the international carriage of goods, new operative developments in rail transport, the integration of services of different railways.
Priority: 2
- (d) The study of the possibilities for harmonizing the application and periods of summer time with a view to upgrading transport quality in rail transport.
Output expected: Report on the application of summer time. (Report on change in application of summer time when it takes place) Priority: 3

- (e) Analysis of Government policies concerning rail safety to contribute to an improvement of safety in international transport.

Output expected: Report on safety and implementation of risk assessment techniques in rail transport in the UNECE region. (2008) Priority: 1

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (f) Analysis of the various elements of productivity in rail transport and the possibilities to increase rail productivity in particular for international transport.

Output expected: Bi-annual report on the development of productivity in rail transport in member countries. (2009) Priority: 2

- (g) Consideration on the basis of reports by the international organizations concerned of the progress accomplished on the harmonization of legal regulations applicable to the contract for the transport of goods and passengers by rail to examine whether the compatibility of the regulation concerned can be ensured.

Output expected: Report by international organizations concerned on the progress made in the elimination of difficulties arising from different legal systems in international rail transport. (2008)
