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**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Rail Transport

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON RAIL TRANSPORT  
ON ITS SIXTY-SECOND SESSION  
(18-20 November 2008)**

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## **I. ATTENDANCE**

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport held its sixty-second session on 18-20 November 2008. Mr. Krzysztof Kulesza (Poland) was Chairman and Mr. Hinne Groot (Netherlands) Vice-Chairman of the session. Representatives of the following UNECE Member States participated: Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and Turkey. Representatives of the European Community (EC) and of the European Railway Agency (ERA) were present. A representative of the UNECE Trans-European Railway Project (TER) also attended the session. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: International Transport Forum (ITF) and Intergovernmental Organization for the International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) and International Union of Railways (UIC).

## **II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/209

2. The provisional agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/209) was adopted.<sup>1</sup>

## **III. ACTIVITIES OF UNECE BODIES AND PROJECTS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 2)**

### **A. Inland Transport Committee (ITC) (Agenda item 2 (a))**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/200

3. The secretariat summarized the decisions adopted at the seventieth session of the Inland Transport Committee that are related to the SC.2 programme. The Working Party took note of the Committee's decisions related to its work areas and asked the secretariat to be informed about such decisions at its sixty-third session in 2009.

### **B. Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) (Agenda item 2 (b))**

Documentation: Informal document No. 15

4. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the mandate and activities of the WP.24. Although the intermodal transport has continued to expand in Europe, its competitiveness has been impeded by frequent delays of freight trains. The Working Party took note of recent activities of WP.24 and asked the secretariat to be informed about such activities at its sixty-third session in 2009.

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

**C. Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports (GE.1) (Agenda item 2 (c))**

Documentation: Informal document No. 13

5. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the UNECE conference on port-hinterland linkages, hosted kindly by the Government of Greece in Piraeus in September 2008, and the questionnaire prepared by the GE.1. The Working Party took note of recent activities of the Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports and asked the secretariat to present conclusions and recommendations of the Group's final report at its sixty-third session in 2009.

**IV. EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON MAIN INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY LINES (AGC) (Agenda item 3)****A. Status of the AGC Agreement (Agenda item 3 (a))**

6. The Working Party noted that the following 27 countries are at present Contracting Parties to the AGC: Albania; Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Republic of Moldova; Montenegro; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey and Ukraine.

7. Given the significance of the AGC for the development of coherent railway infrastructure in the pan-European region, the Working Party invited the Executive Secretary of the UNECE to encourage those member States which had not acceded yet to the Agreement to become Contracting Parties to the AGC.

**B. Consolidated version of the Agreement (Agenda item 3 (b))**

8. The secretariat informed delegates that a consolidated unofficial version of the AGC Agreement had been posted on the SC.2 website. Working Party appreciated that the secretariat had prepared a consolidated version of the AGC Agreement.

**C. The E-rail traffic census (Agenda item 3 (c))**

Documentation: Informal document No. 16

9. Following a presentation by the secretariat, the Working Party noted the results of the 2005 E-rail traffic census and invited all UNECE member States to participate in the new E-rail traffic census in 2010.

**V. TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER) PROJECT (Agenda item 4)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2008/1; Informal document No. 17

10. The TER project manager informed SC.2 that in addition to the current 17 member States, Azerbaijan is expected to become a new TER member country in the near future. The following countries are to be involved in the planned revision and extension of the TEM and TER Master Plan: Albania; Armenia; Austria; Azerbaijan; Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Georgia; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Lithuania; Republic of

Moldova; Montenegro; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Turkey and Ukraine.

11. The Working Party took note of the report presented by the TER project manager, requested to be informed about TER activities at its sixty-third session in 2009 and invited member States from Eastern and South-Eastern Europe that had not yet joined the TER project to do so.

## **VI. EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS (Agenda item 5)**

### **A. Phase II of the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) Project (Agenda item 5 (a))**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.2/2, Informal document No. 14

12. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the planned Phase II of the EATL project and the first session of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links. Given clear synergies between the existing international initiatives and the work of the EATL Expert Group, the importance of co-operation and co-ordination of all interested stakeholders was stressed. The Expert Group was informed about and invited to a planned Euro-Asian Transport Links meeting in Shanghai, China in early 2009. The meeting will be hosted by the Government of China and co-organized with the UNECE Transport Division.

13. The Working Party took note of the activities of the new Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links, expressed its full support for the planned Phase II of the EATL project and asked to be informed about its progress during its sixty-third session in 2009.

### **B. Container block trains on Euro-Asian transport links (Agenda item 5 (b))**

Documentation: Informal documents Nos. 2 and 3

14. A representative of Russian Railways described upward trends of container traffic on Euro-Asian routes and presented highlights of planned investment in port-hinterland links over the period 2008-2020. In 2007, the share of rail in freight transport reached a remarkable level of 85 per cent. Container transport by rail increased rapidly in 2007 when international traffic accounted for one-half of total volume. Container traffic on the Trans-Siberian route almost doubled in 2007, reaching a record level of 620 thousand TEU. Growth continued over the first three quarters of 2008 at a slower pace. The secretariat informed delegates about a recent message from the Transport and Communications Directorate of the Economic Cooperation Organization, concerning the increased commercial speed of container trains on the Istanbul-Almaty route, and introduced the UNECE electronic brochure with recommendations on demonstration runs of container block trains.

15. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to Russian Railways for an excellent presentation on the development of container train services in international traffic between Europe and East Asia, took note of recent improvements of the container train service on the Istanbul-Almaty route and thanked the secretariat for the completion of the UNECE electronic brochure on demonstration runs of container block trains in cooperation with the CIT.

## **VII. FACILITATION OF INTERNATIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 6)**

### **A. Legal instruments and projects for border-crossing facilitation (Agenda item 6 (a))**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2008/2

16. The Working Party took note of recent developments concerning the new Annex 9 to the 1982 International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods and the International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers in the International Passenger Railway Traffic. It welcomed the concerted efforts of the OSJD, OTIF and European Commission to complete the consolidated text of Annex 9 and invited all Contracting Parties to the Harmonization Convention to finalize the necessary consultations so that the Administrative Committee of the Harmonization Convention could finally adopt the new Annex as soon as possible.

### **B. Progress of the common consignment note (CIM/SMGS) project (Agenda item 6 (b))**

Documentation: Informal document No. 4

17. A representative of the CIT made a presentation on the increasing use of the common CIM-SMGS consignment note on rail routes between Central Europe and Russia as well as Ukraine. The resulting time and cost savings proved to be considerable, averaging 16 hours per train and \$40 per wagon. In the ensuing discussion it transpired that the common note had been accepted as a customs document by authorities in all EU countries, Belarus, Russian Federation and Ukraine but not in other UNECE member States in Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA). This increases unnecessarily the cost of trade, especially in landlocked countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

18. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the CIT for its briefing about the considerable progress achieved in the CIM/SMGS interoperability project and asked to be informed about its further progress during its sixty-third session in 2009.

### **C. Interoperability and harmonization of conditions of different rail transport systems (Agenda item 6 (c))**

Documentation: Informal document No. 5

19. The Working Party received a joint report of the OTIF and Organisation for Railways Cooperation (OSJD). In addition, it was informed that Estonia would join the OTIF and accede to the COTIF convention in January 2009 while the Russian Federation is expected to join OTIF at a later date in 2009. In the ensuing discussion it transpired that an elaboration of a uniform body of Euro-Asian railway transport law would be most desirable in the longer term, with the participation of competent national Ministries and international Organizations.

20. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the OTIF and OSJD for submitting a joint report on their activities pertaining to the harmonization of conditions of different rail transport systems. The Working Party underlined its willingness to serve as an intergovernmental forum for the discussions leading to an elaboration of a uniform legal regime for rail transport at the pan-European level in cooperation with OTIF, OSJD and the European Commission.

## **VIII. FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 7)**

### **A. Activities of the former European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) Group on Railways (Agenda item 7 (a))**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2008/3

21. The Working Party took note of the work programme of the former ECMT Group on Railways and decided to focus its own activities on the interoperability and border crossing issues. It asked the secretariat to evaluate the recent ITF questionnaire on rail border crossings and its outcomes before elaborating a specific proposal on the incorporation of the interoperability and border crossing issues in the revised programme of work to be considered at the sixty-third session of SC.2 in 2009.

### **B. Rail transport of passengers with mobility handicaps (Agenda item 7 (b))**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2008/4, Informal document No. 6

22. The presentation by an invited expert focussed on passenger accessibility of heavy rail systems, describing relevant trends and European legislation as well as implications for the rail industry. It also included a series of steps that would be necessary to improve passenger accessibility. Subsequently, the secretariat introduced the UNECE perspective on rail transport of passengers with mobility handicaps, including the decision of the Inland Transport Committee at its seventieth session to intensify its work in this area by means of a workshop on accessibility in one of the Working Parties concerned. The UNECE Population Unit, ITF and UIC would be willing to cooperate with the SC.2 in organizing such a workshop. All major actors, including rail infrastructure managers, should be also involved and would be desirable to address the availability of multimodal access for passengers with mobility handicaps.

23. The Working Party decided to hold a workshop during its 2009 session on passenger accessibility of heavy rail systems in cooperation with the UNECE Population Unit, ITF and UIC. The European Commission and UNECE member States were invited to support the workshop-related research and travel of experts with voluntary contributions.

## **IX. PRODUCTIVITY IN RAIL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 8)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2008/5

24. The Working Party took note of the report on productivity in rail transport and asked the secretariat to prepare an update for its sixty-third session in 2009.

### **X. DG TREN REPORT ON FREIGHT ORIENTED NETWORKS AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND RAILWAY PACKAGE (Agenda item 9)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2008/6, Informal document No. 7

25. A representative of the European Commission (EC) reported on two items. First, he outlined the difficulties faced by rail freight transport in the EU as well as the measures needed to develop a rail network giving priority to freight. Second, the EC representative described the implementation of the Rail Safety Directive 2004/49/EC, one of the Directives of the second railway package adopted in 2002. In the course of the ensuing discussion, the EC representative



responded to a number of questions posed by delegates, including those pertaining to the relationship between rail freight oriented networks and earlier EC initiatives such as TEN-T networks. According to proposals of the Commission, the rules concerning the rail freight oriented networks would be binding for all EU member States unlike the earlier initiatives. Negotiations of the pertinent transport treaty are to be concluded in the middle of 2009.

26. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the European Commission for presenting a report on rail freight oriented networks and the progress made in the implementation of the second railway package and asked to be informed about further progress on this during its sixty-third session in 2009.

## **XI. WORKSHOP ON RAIL SECURITY (Agenda item 10)**

### **A. Introduction (Agenda item 10 (a))**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2008/7

27. The secretariat informed delegates about the recommendations of the Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Inland Transport Security that were adopted by the ITC at its seventieth session in February 2008. The Working Party noted that the ITC had requested its subsidiary bodies to act expeditiously upon recommendations prepared by a Multidisciplinary Expert Group on Inland Transport Security, including a review of all UNECE international legal instruments in transport.

### **B. Invited presentations (Agenda item 10 (b))**

Documentation: Informal documents Nos. 8, 9, 10, 11 (a), 11 (b), 11 (c)

28. Following a general introduction by a representative of the UIC, invited experts made presentations on the following topics: the UIC Security Platform, the European rail transport security after the liberalization of passenger services in 2010, the 'all hazards' analysis and regional cooperation activities of the Norwegian Railway Administration, and the work performed by the Schengenrail group in cooperation with the EC and European border security agency FRONTEX. During the ensuing discussions, delegates emphasized *inter alia* the need for intersectoral cooperation, effective legal instruments and the willingness to learn from other transport modes.

29. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the invited experts for comprehensive presentations on selected rail security issues related to border crossing, status of security personnel in cross-border operations, new technology for rail security, national security programmes, regional and international cooperation.

### **C. Conclusions (Agenda item 10 (c))**

30. Based on the workshop presentations and discussions, the Vice-Chairman of SC.2 summarized main rail security challenges in UNECE countries and proposed the formation of an informal task force that would address these challenges. Activities of the contemplated task force would have to be consistent with final recommendations of the Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Inland Transport Security.

31. The Working Party asked its Chairman and Vice-Chairman to incorporate the main workshop conclusions, in cooperation with the secretariat, into the SC.2 review of security issues that is to be submitted to the Director of the UNECE Transport Division by 31 December 2008. The review will include the proposal to establish an informal task force that would follow-up on the major rail-security issues identified by the workshop. The secretariat will distribute the draft mandate for this group by 2 December 2008 to delegates.<sup>2</sup>

## **XII. THE EUROPEAN RAIL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ERTMS) PROJECT AND ECONOMIC EVALUATION ACTIVITIES OF THE EUROPEAN RAILWAY AGENCY (ERA) (Agenda item 11)**

Documentation: Informal documents Nos. 12 (a) and 12 (b)

32. A representative of the European Railway Agency (ERA) described in two presentations the objectives, key benefits and current state of the ERTMS project of the EU as well as economic evaluation activities of the ERA. The EC-sponsored ERTMS is a major industrial project aiming to harmonize the control, command and communication system of European railways. Its two basic components are a radio system for railways based on GSM technology (GSM-R) and the European train-speed control system (ETCS). At present some 17,000 km of rail lines and 3,500 vehicles in Europe comply with ERTMS norms. Economic evaluation activities of the ERA focus on the mandatory impact assessment that aims to improve the quality of EU lawmaking. For instance, the cost-benefit analysis of technical specifications for rail interoperability should indicate the likely impact on all rail operators and other economic agents affected by the specifications. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the European Railway Agency for comprehensive presentations on the ERTMS project and its economic evaluation activities.

## **XIII. BIENNIAL EVALUATION 2008-2009 (Agenda item 12)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2008/9

33. The Working Party took note of the secretariat's evaluation questionnaire and requested that a similar questionnaire be prepared for the delegates participating in its sixty-third session in 2009.

34. Delegates from eight UNECE countries responded to the questionnaire. All respondents agreed that the sixty-second session was well organized, met their expectations, and provided enough time for presentations and discussions. While all respondents considered session documents to be relevant, 13 per cent felt that they were too general. The duration of the session should be kept as is according to 87 per cent of respondents while the remaining 13 per cent indicated their preference for a shorter session. According to 13 per cent of respondents, the agenda of the session should be reduced to fewer items; however, 13 per cent of respondents indicated that the agenda should include more items while the remaining 74 per cent would prefer to leave it unchanged.

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<sup>2</sup> The draft mandate is annexed to this report.

**XIV. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 13)**

35. There were no proposals under this item.

**XV. DATE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 14)**

36. The Working Party agreed to hold its sixty-third session, including the workshop on passenger accessibility of heavy rail systems, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 18-20 November 2009.

**XVI. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Agenda item 15)**

37. The report of the sixty-second session, including the decisions, was established by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman with the assistance of the secretariat for submission to the Inland Transport Committee.

38. The decisions adopted by the Working Party during the session are underlined in the following paragraphs of this report: 2-9, 11, 13, 15-16, 18, 20-21, 23-24, 26-27, 29, 31-33, 36.

Annex

**DRAFT MANDATE OF THE TASK FORCE ON RAIL SECURITY**

1. Following the report of the Expert Group on Inland Transport Security <<http://www.unece.org/trans/doc/2008/ac11/AC11-2008-inf01r1e.pdf>> and recommendations contained therein, the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) has decided on 19 November 2008 to establish a task force to address security issues in the rail sector.
2. The task force will aim to address selected rail security issues, including the cooperation between government agencies and railway sector (infrastructure managers, railway undertakings, etc.), in the framework of the recommendations mentioned above.
3. The task force will include experts from the public sector (e.g. government line Ministries, European Commission, OSJD, OTIF) and the business sector (International Union of Railways - UIC and possibly other representative organisations).
4. The task force will collect and exchange information about best practices in securing heavy rail systems, cost-benefit assessments, regional and international cooperation. The task force will focus on issues of international cooperation regarding railway security between UNECE countries that have not yet been taken up by the EU, OTIF or OSJD; e.g. on issues of cooperation on railway security between EU countries and non-EU countries.
5. The task force will prepare recommendations for the sixty-third session of the SC.2 in Geneva on 18-20 November 2009.
6. The business of the task force will be conducted in English.
7. The establishment and functioning of the task force will be consistent with pertinent UNECE guidelines <[www.unece.org/hlm/docs/guidelines%20teams%20specialists%202003%20e.pdf](http://www.unece.org/hlm/docs/guidelines%20teams%20specialists%202003%20e.pdf)>.

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