
**Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and
Connectivity (TWG-STTC)**

24th Session
18-19 November 2019
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

International Conventions and Agreements

(Item 4.2 of the Agenda)

Note by UNECE/ESCAP

1. Harmonizing the legal regimes relating to international transport continues to be a prerequisite to ensure the smooth and efficient movement of goods through national borders. During all previous sessions, the Thematic Working Group reaffirmed the importance of the international legal instruments listed in the protocol of its second session and re-iterated the invitation to SPECA countries to intensify their efforts to accede to all of them as soon as possible. The Working Group stressed that accession to United Nations transport-related legal instruments would only serve transport connectivity and facilitation if followed by proper implementation measures.
2. The accession status to the conventions recommended by ESCAP resolution 48/11 and the Group is shown in Annex 1. The situation is the same like the last year - Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have acceded to all the seven conventions recommended by ESCAP resolution 48/11, and Kazakhstan has acceded to six of the seven conventions. Evidently, there is a need for other SPECA countries to take concrete steps towards accession to the rest of the seven core conventions.
3. With respect to United Nations transport-related legal instruments, the situation in 2019 is the following:
 - In 2018, Uzbekistan ratified the Agreement concerning the establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or be used on Wheeled Vehicles (1998);

- In July 2019, Tajikistan acceded to the Additional Protocol to the CMR concerning the electronic consignment note (e-CMR).

Development of a new Convention on rail border crossings for passengers and their luggage

4. At its 81st session in February 2019, the UNECE Inland Transport Committee adopted the text of a new United Nations convention on the “Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-Luggage carried in International Traffic by Rail”. The Convention, which is the 59th legal instrument in the field of inland transport, developed under UNECE auspices will help to:

- Facilitate and expedite border-crossing by means of efficient state controls systems and the application of international standards
- Extend the use of modern technologies, automatic gauge changeover technologies and high-speed rolling stock technologies.
- Reduce time-frames for the completion of technological operations and state controls.
- Provide comfort and quality of service for passengers, while reducing the running times of trains.
- Facilitate visa issuance procedures.

5. The new convention will help to overcome the many time-consuming technical and administrative limitations that international passengers still experience when travelling by train in the Euro-Asian region. The representatives of Azerbaijan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan and Turkey have already expressed their intention to start internal procedures to formally accede to the Convention.

6. SPECA countries could benefit from acceding to and implementing the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network which was signed by China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation on 8 December 2016 during the third session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport held on 5-9 December 2016 in Moscow, Russian Federation. This Agreement came into force and helps to enhance regional connectivity by providing new links between the Russian Federation and China through the central and western parts of Mongolia, and sea access to landlocked Mongolia. It is open to accession by all interested parties. The Commission, at its 73rd session (May 2017), recognized this agreement as an important initiative to operationalize the AH Network and adopted resolution 73/4, which encourages all Parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the AH Network to consider accession to the Agreement.

7. Taking into consideration the complexity of dealing with different international, subregional and bilateral agreements, SPECA countries may use the Database of Agreements on International Road Transport which was developed by ESCAP Transport Division. It includes the texts of over 200 documents, including bilateral agreements and other legal instruments related to international road transport, as well as selected major multilateral agreements containing provisions on international road carriage. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure that information and documents provided in this database are accurate and up-to-date based on available information. However, SPECA countries are invited to access the database and review the information for accuracy. The database can be accessed under the following web link: <http://www.unescap.org/resources/database-agreements-international-road-transport>

Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030

8. The 81st session of the ITC, held on 19-22 February 2019 in Geneva, adopted the “Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030” as a basic document for future directions of the ITC development.

9. The Strategy defines the ITC Vision as: “ITC is the United Nations platform for inland transport to help efficiently address global and regional needs in inland transport”. The mission for the ITC is defined as: to contribute to sustainable inland transport and mobility for achieving the sustainable development goals in the UNECE and United Nations Member States through policy dialogue, harmonizing regulatory frameworks, as appropriate, promoting new technologies, assisting in enhancing connectivity and supporting the implementation of legal instruments.

10. According to the Strategy, in its future activities, the ITC will act as the United Nations Platform for: (i) regional and global inland transport conventions; (ii) supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport; (iii) regional, interregional and global inland transport policy dialogues; and (iv) promoting sustainable regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility.

11. The focus on these core added-value areas will provide solutions to Member States transport-related challenges and goes hand in hand with UNECE’s functional strengths.

The Thematic Working Group may wish to

- Reaffirm the importance of United Nations transport-related legal instruments listed in the protocol of TWG-STTC's twenty second session and reiterate the invitation addressed to SPECA member States to intensify their efforts to accede all as soon as possible;
- Invite SPECA countries to familiarize with goals and activities of the Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030;
- Take measures for efficient implementation of ratified United Nations transport-related legal instruments in SPECA member States;
- Encourage SPECA member States to consider acceding to the Convention on facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-Luggage carried in International Traffic by Rail and the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network;
- Indicate further technical assistance needed from UNECE and ESCAP secretariats in relation to the accession and/or implementation of the transport-related United Nations legal instruments.
- Provide the text of missing agreements, additions, corrections or updates to the Database of Agreements on International Road Transport

**Accession Status to United Nations International Agreements and Conventions Listed in
the Protocol of the Session of the TWG-STTC
as of 1 August 2019**

№	Agreements and Conventions	AFG	AZE	KAZ	KGZ	TJK	TKM	UZB
<i>Conventions Recommended by UNESCAP Resolution 48/11</i>								
1	Convention on Road Traffic (1968)		X (2002)	X (1994)	X (2006)	X (1994)	X (1993)	X (1995)
2	Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968)		X (2011)	X (1994)	X (2006)	X (1994)	X (1993)	X (1995)
3	Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR, 1956)		X (2006)	X (1995)	X (1998)	X (1996)	X (1996)	X (1995)
4	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)	X (1977)	X (2000)		X (1998)			X (1999)
5	Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) (1975)	X (1982)	X (1996)	X (1995)	X (1998)	X (1996)	X (1996)	X (1995)
6	International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982)		X (2000)	X (2005)	X (1998)	X (2011)	X (2016)	X (1996)
7	Customs Convention on Containers (1972)		X (2005)	X (2005)	X (2007)			X (1996)
<i>Additional Agreements and Conventions:</i>								
8	European Agreement on Main International traffic arteries (AGR) (1975)		X (1996)	X (1995)				
9	European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) (1985)							
10	European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) (1991)			X (2002)				
11	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Traffic opened for signature at Vienna on 8 November 1968 (1971)			X (2011)				
12	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1971)		X (2011)	X (2011)				
13	European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) (1970)		X (1996)	X (1995)		X (2011)	X (1996)	X (1998)
14	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954)							
15	European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) (1957)		X (2000)	X (2001)		X (2011)		
16	Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP) (1970)		X (2000)	X (1995)	X (2012)	X (2011)		X (1999)

- Notes: 1. X - Final signature, ratification, accession;
2. AFG – Afghanistan; AZE – Azerbaijan; KAZ – Kazakhstan; KGZ – Kyrgyzstan; TJK - Tajikistan; TKM – Turkmenistan; and UZB – Uzbekistan.