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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Combined Transport  
(Thirty-ninth session, 14-15 April 2003,  
agenda item 3 (b))

**EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED  
TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC)\***

**Proposed amendments to the AGTC Agreement**

**Submitted by the Russian Federation**

1. In pursuance of the decisions taken at the sixty-fourth session of the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee, at the thirty-seventh session of the Working Party on Combined Transport the Russian Federation proposed the elaboration of a Euro-Asian agreement on important international combined transport lines based on the structure of the AGTC Agreement. At its thirty-eighth session, the Working Party considered the Russian Federation's proposal for the development of a new Euro-Asian agreement on important international combined transport lines (Euro-Asian AGTC Agreement), as set out in official document TRANS/WP.24/2002/10.

2. In the report of the Working Party on Combined Transport on the work of its thirty-eighth session (TRANS/WP.24/97), it was noted that the concept of linking the European and Asian combined transport networks should be pursued with the aim of promoting and facilitating further combined transport operations between the two continents. The

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\* The present documentation has been submitted after the official documentation deadline by the Transport Division due to personnel constraints.

Working Party accordingly requested the secretariat to invite the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN/ESCAP), interested countries and other relevant intergovernmental organizations, in particular OSZhD, to explore together, as soon as possible, how this aim could be realized.

3. Trade and economic ties between the European and Asian continents are known to occupy an important place in world trade. The World Trade Organization reports that, in value terms, approximately one tenth of all goods in international trade were carried between Europe and Asia in 2001. Nevertheless, overland transport facilities still play a minor part in these operations.

4. Dozens of agreements and conventions contributing to the development of overland transport, including combined services under the AGTC Agreement, have been adopted in Europe and have shown themselves to be highly beneficial. However, for the Euro-Asian continent as a whole, there are as yet no major agreements to assist the introduction of modern transport technologies. The lack of a unified system for combined transport operations between Europe and Asia is restraining the development both of intercontinental trade and of the foreign trade of a large number of landlocked countries.

5. Bearing in mind that the creation of an all-embracing system of transport links between Europe and Asia is one of the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee's main priorities, the Working Party on Combined Transport should arrange for the development of a new Euro-Asian AGTC Agreement that would make the experience and benefits derived from the existing AGTC Agreement available to countries of the Asian continent.

6. The long-term goal of the development of the Euro-Asian AGTC Agreement is the efficient integration of the transport systems of Asia and Europe. This is bound to have a positive impact on international trade in both volume and value terms, and will help to shorten the delivery times and enhance the safety of goods and, ultimately, reduce the costs to users of transport services throughout the Euro-Asian continent.

7. The transport facilities on the main Euro-Asian transport routes agreed upon by the group of experts of UN/ECE and UN/ESCAP and other international organizations and approved at the second International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport, held in St. Petersburg in 2000, could serve as the basic framework for the future Euro-Asian agreement.

8. The proposed Euro-Asian AGTC Agreement should be drafted jointly by UN/ECE, UN/ESCAP, OSZhD, UIC, IRU and other interested international organizations. Taking into consideration the experience gained with the establishment of other agreements, it would be worthwhile to set up a group of experts, including representatives of international organizations and all interested countries, for the development of the Euro-Asian AGTC Agreement.

9. The Russian Federation is ready to take part in the drafting process and in the composition of the group of experts. It suggests that the first version of the Euro-Asian AGTC Agreement might be prepared in 2003 and submitted for discussion at the Working Party's spring session in 2004.

10. The Euro-Asian AGTC Agreement may be structured along similar lines to the existing AGTC Agreement and take, for example, the following form:

(a) **Preamble:** This can be based on document TRANS/WP.24/2002/10 and on the AGTC Agreement. The status of the instrument should be defined as a joint UN/ECE and UN/ESCAP agreement.

(b) **General:**

- *Terms and definitions* may be based on the terms and definitions used in the AGTC Agreement, making reference to the "Terminology in Combined Transport" glossary prepared by UN/ECE, the European Commission and the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), and also including the definitions of Euro-Asian transport linkages, etc.;
- The *purposes of the agreement* can be drawn from the text proposed by the Russian Federation in document TRANS/WP.24/2002/10;
- The *definition of Euro-Asian transport linkages* may be based on the routes identified by the group of experts of UN/ECE, UN/ESCAP, the Commission of the European Communities, OSZhd, IUC, Russia and Germany at the meeting held in Geneva on 16 May 2000, as well as the main Euro-Asian transport routes defined in the Declaration of the second International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport (St. Petersburg, 2000);
- The *technical characteristics of important Euro-Asian transport lines* may be based on:
  - the technical parameters used in Annex III to the AGTC Agreement, making reference to the secretariat's note TRANS/WP.24/2000/5 of 6 October 2000, entitled "Inventory of existing AGTC standards and parameters";
  - the technical parameters used in the international E-road network, as approved by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the recommendation of UN/ECE;

- the technical characteristics used in the Asian international A-road network being formulated under the auspices of UN/ESCAP;
- the parameters set out in the integrated Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID) project;
- *Annexes to the Agreement* - the same structure as for the annexes to the AGTC Agreement can in general be used, e.g.:
  - Annex 1. “Euro-Asian railway lines of importance for combined transport”;
  - Annex 2. “Euro-Asian combined transport infrastructure - terminals, border crossings, gauge interchange stations, port stations and terminals at sea ports”;
  - Annex 3. “Technical characteristics and standards of important Euro-Asian combined transport lines”;
  - Annex 4. “Minimum technical and operational requirements for trains and infrastructure installations”.

(c) **Final provisions:**

- *Depositary* - the Secretary-General of the United Nations;
- *Signature of the Agreement* - the Agreement should be open for signature by all interested European and Asian States, including countries of the CIS;
- *Ratification of the Agreement* - the Agreement should be subject to ratification in accordance with the national requirements of the signatory States and effected by the deposit of an instrument of ratification with the depositary;
- *Entry into force* - this should be governed by a procedure similar to that specified in the AGTC Agreement;
- *Settlement of disputes* - a procedure similar to that specified in the AGTC Agreement may be applied;

- *Amendments and additions* - the procedure for amendments should be similar to that specified in the AGTC Agreement and other UN/ECE agreements;
- *Denunciation and termination of the Agreement* - the procedure for the withdrawal of individual countries may be similar to that specified in the AGTC Agreement;
- *Notifications* - the procedure and time-limits for notifications should be similar to those specified in the AGTC Agreement;
- *Language of the authentic text of the Agreement* - English, French and Russian, as the official languages of UN/ECE and UN/ESCAP.

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