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Working Party on Rail Transport

REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON RAIL TRANSPORT
OF ITS FIFTY-SECOND SESSION
(5-7 October 1998)

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Please note that the distribution of documentation for the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) is no longer "restricted". Accordingly, the secretariat has adopted a new numbering system whereby all working documents other than Reports and Agendas will be numbered as follows: TRANS/SC.2/year/serial number. Reports, Agendas, resolutions and major publications will retain their previous numbering system (i.e. TRANS/SC.2/189).

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REPORT

ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport held its fifty-second session from 5 to 7 October 1998. The session was held under the Chairmanship of Mr. E. Kosteas (Greece). Representatives of the following ECE member States participated: Austria; Belgium; Croatia; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Netherlands; Poland; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland and Ukraine. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations also took part in the session: Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSZHD); Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). The following non-governmental organization was present: International Union of Railways (UIC).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The Working Party adopted the agenda as circulated in TRANS/SC.2/189 and Add.1.

ACTIVITIES OF ECE BODIES OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

(a) Economic Commission for Europe

Documentation: E/1998/38-E/ECE/1365.

3. The Working Party was informed about the results of the fifty-third session of the Economic Commission for Europe (23-25 April 1998) and, in particular, regarding the implementation of the reform process and the guidelines for prioritization of the work of the PSBs (E/1998/38-E/ECE/1365).

(b) Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/125 and Add.1.

4. The Working Party was acquainted with the activities which had been dealt with at the sixtieth session of the Inland Transport Committee to the extent that they are related to the area of work of interest to the Working Party as contained in paras. 83-92 of the Committee's report.

5. As to the reform process, the Working Party learned that, during its sixtieth session (12-16 January 1998), the Committee considered inter alia a number of aspects related to the implication of the reform process for the transport sector in ECE. It decided that the Principal Working Party on Rail Transport should maintain its permanent character and be renamed Working Party (ECE/TRANS/125, para. 9).

6. In connection with items related to the reform process, the Working Party examined the question of the procedure for the adoption of the report on its session. It agreed to adopt the report at the end of its current session. For its session in 1999, it decided to introduce on an experimental basis the following: the secretariat would prepare a list of the decisions taken to be adopted by the Working Party. This list would be incorporated in the report of the session to be established subsequently by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman with the assistance of the secretariat after the session.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Documentation: ECE/RCTE/CONF./2/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL; JMTE/1998/2.

7. The Working Party was informed about the results of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 12-14 November 1997) on the basis of the Vienna Declaration (ECE/RCTE/CONF./2/FINAL) and the Programme of Joint Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL).

8. In this connection, it noted that the Declaration addressed a number of areas outlining the interrelationship between transport and the environment.

9. Regarding the Programme of Joint Action and follow-up to the Regional Conference, the Inland Transport Committee decided at its sixtieth session to review the progress achieved in the follow-up at its next session. In this context, it requested its subsidiary bodies to include an item on follow-up in their respective agendas and to consider how they could contribute to the objectives of the Conference (ECE/TRANS/125, para. 22).

10. In line with this request and after consultation with the Chairman, the secretariat had identified at the international level element III (d) of the Joint Programme of Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL) as relevant for follow-up that might be undertaken by the Working Party. This information, together with that from other intergovernmental bodies within and outside the UN system on possible follow-up in the framework of the Programme of Joint Action, had been compiled by the secretariat in document JMTE/1998/2 (English only) for consideration by the Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment (Geneva, 7 July 1998). The report of the Joint Meeting will be contained in document JMTE/1998/4.

11. After having examined various aspects regarding a possible contribution it could make, the Working Party agreed to deal with item III (d) at the international level in the Programme of Joint Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL).

12. The Working Party noted that these items would be considered together with the proposals of other bodies at a meeting of all international organizations involved in the follow-up process to the Conference to be held before the end of 1998.

STUDY OF THE SITUATION OF THE RAILWAYS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/1 and Add.1-6.

13. In respect of past and future development of rail traffic in member countries, the Working Party noted that there was no consistent pattern to be observed. While in some countries there had been a steady decline in passenger and goods traffic volumes during recent years, in others the evolution showed a positive trend. A further differentiation also had to be made concerning goods and passenger transport: whereas within a country passenger traffic might be on the increase, the number of tons transported by rail was decreasing. In the case of passenger traffic, the positive trend may be attributed to a reduced travel time - this is particularly notable in countries where high-speed rail service are available - and to a stronger customer orientation which implies enhanced levels of service including also new and improved product ranges.

14. The separation of operation and infrastructure in the rail sector has made further progress and has been enshrined in a new legal framework in line with the principles of EU Directive 91/440. The reorganization of the rail sector may imply a differentiation of the rail sector according to individual functions to be fulfilled, i.e. long-distance passenger traffic, local and regional passenger traffic, goods traffic, infrastructure, etc.

15. The Working Party recognized that investment programmes in rail infrastructure focuses on the modernization of tracks in transit corridors, electrification of lines, upgrading of safety standards, ensuring interoperability of lines etc. Investment in rolling stock includes the procurement of electric locomotives and a variety of rail wagons and coaches.

16. The Working Party was also informed of the new competitive situation in the rail sector of the Netherlands, the development of rail transport between Europe and Asia via the Trans-Siberian Railway, the interaction between high-speed rail and air transport and the upgrading of rail infrastructure in Pan-European Transport Corridors.

17. The Working Party expressed its appreciation for the information submitted to the current session and asked Governments to provide information for its forthcoming session on the following points:

- (i) data on past and future developments of rail passenger and goods traffic;
- (ii) new developments to be observed subsequent to the reorganization of the rail sector with special attention to the setting-up of new railway companies;
- (iii) investments in (i) rail infrastructure and (ii) railway rolling stock.

18. The Working Party agreed that from 1999 onwards Governments should provide information on the above items every two years. Should, however, new developments have occurred in the areas of the three items, Governments may submit pertinent information annually.

DETERMINATION OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE CAPACITY INCLUDING ASPECTS RELATED TO THE FEE FOR THE USE OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/2 and Add.1.

19. In accordance with their offer made at the fifty-first session of the Principal Working Party, the representatives of the Netherlands and Spain had prepared a note outlining the elements for the determination of railway infrastructure capacity including also aspects related to the fee for the use of the infrastructure (TRANS/SC.2/188, para. 11).

20. In presenting his note, the representative of the Netherlands elaborated on the various elements which had to be taken into account in determining railway infrastructure capacity such as the kind of traffic, traffic during peak and off-peak hours, capacity assigned to a rail operator, etc. Similarly, he referred to the fee for the use of railway infrastructure which might be differentiated according to elements like the length and weight of the train, the type of transport (containers, chemicals etc.), peak/off-peak use or the specificity of the route with regard to average speed.

21. In this connection, the Working Party also recalled the proposals of the EC on guidelines for infrastructure charges and capacity allocation and noted the White Paper prepared by the European Commission of "Fair Payment for Infrastructure use: A phased approach to a common transport infrastructure charging framework in the EU", a copy of which was made available to participants of the session.

22. The Working Party also discussed measures envisaged to facilitate rail

freight on the European Freight Freeways.

23. Having been informed that the Dutch Government was in the process of preparing rules for the use of the infrastructure, the Working Party asked the representative of the Netherlands to provide for its next session information on such rules in order to learn more about the practical questions to be observed in case different rail operators use the infrastructure.

24. Furthermore, having noted the activities undertaken within the EC on railway infrastructure, the Working Party asked the EC to submit to its next session pertinent information related to the progress made.

PRODUCTIVITY IN RAIL TRANSPORT

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/3 and Add.1, informal papers by UIC and the secretariat.

25. The Working Party considered at some length the data on rail productivity provided by OSZhD and UIC (TRANS/SC.2/1998/3 and Add.1) and commented on the differences in the value of productivity indicators between countries, which might be rather large in certain cases. In this connection, the Working Party recalled its observation made at previous sessions in which it had underlined the fact that the technical, economic, political, geographic, etc. framework of each country was reflected, to a considerable extent, in productivity measurements. Bearing this in mind, the Working Party recognized that labour productivity gauged in terms of number of employees per km of network was distinctly different among countries ranging between 0.8 and 20.5. To a certain extent only, labour productivity is mirrored in the productivity of freight transport: for instance, the comparison between two countries showed that for the same labour productivity (number of employees/km of network) freight transport productivity (ton-km per km of network) was more than five times higher in one of the two. The differences between countries were less pronounced when comparisons were made for productivity of freight transport in terms of ton-km/employee.

26. The Working Party underlined the fact that the principal difficulty in such comparisons was to ensure that one was comparing like with like. So, for instance, it noted that "productivity" based on staff figures was not satisfactory due to the varying degrees to which railways use outside firms.

27. It was felt that financial results in terms of revenues and costs might be one of the ways to judge performance. However, there is currently insufficient consistency in the way financial results are drawn up.

28. In order to pursue discussion of this item at its session in 1999 the Working Party asked the representative of UIC to provide data of its member railways on the eight productivity criteria (referred to in TRANS/SC.2/189, item 6) for the years 1996 and 1997 indicating also the growth rates for the individual criteria. The representative of OSZhD was requested to submit the same kind of information for the member railways of his organization not being members of UIC.

29. In reply to the Working Party's request to the UIC to analyse the social, technical, economic and political framework which has an impact on rail productivity (TRANS/SC.2/188 para. 17), the representative of that organization had submitted a note on a review of productivity figures for rail transport, which was submitted to the Working Party as an informal paper and which referred only to the situation in the EU and EFTA countries.

30. Based on his note, the representative of UIC explained in great detail the interaction between the various factors influencing rail productivity.

31. In order to continue the search for more meaningful productivity figures, the Working Party asked experts participating in its sessions to provide comments on the explanations given in the UIC note to be incorporated subsequently in an updated version of the note which would be submitted to its next session.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RISK ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/4 and Adds.1-2.

32. During its fifty-first session, the Principal Working Party asked the Governments of France, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to provide for the present session a note on the experience gained with the risk assessment technique (TRANS/SC.2/188, para. 21). The Working Party noted that Germany had included its contribution on this item in point (b) of document TRANS/SC.2/1998/13/Add.1, submitted to the current session.

33. Based on the documentation submitted, the Working Party stressed the need to assess the risks of transport activities on the grounds of a consistent and rationalized risk approach. In this connection, the Working Party also recalled that safety-related legislation had been put in place which required that reasonably practical measures be applied to control risks and ensure safety.

34. The Working Party felt that it would be useful for countries to have a common approach to risk assessment regarding rail transport in order to enable resources to be allocated to the best effect.

35. Bearing this in mind, the Working Party asked the representative of the Netherlands to provide a copy of the guidelines applied for risk assessment policy, which might be taken as a basis for further work in this area.

36. Moreover, the Working Party asked the secretariat to prepare a synthesis of the information submitted on the risk assessment technique with a view to comparing the various approaches and identifying common features.

FACILITATION OF BORDER CROSSING IN INTERNATIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/5 and Adds.1-7; TRANS/SC.2/1998/17.

37. At their fifty-first and sixtieth sessions, respectively, the Principal Working Party and the Inland Transport Committee discussed the question of facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport (TRANS/SC.2/188, paras. 22-27; ECE/TRANS/125, para. 90). In accordance with a request of the Principal Working Party, Governments submitted information on the items indicated in TRANS/SC.2/188, para. 22.

38. The Working Party noted that the border stopping time of passenger and goods trains might vary substantially at main border crossings according to countries and that there was still quite a potential for improvement. Progress has been realized in reducing further the delay of passenger trains through the sharing of customs and passport controls, which eliminated unnecessary delays at borders. In freight transport, it is advocated to implement border controls and phytosanitary controls at terminals of departure and arrival. A number of bi- and multilateral contacts have taken place between Governments and railways of neighbouring countries focusing on the

acceleration of border crossing procedures in international rail traffic.

39. The Working Party was informed that the ITC at its sixtieth session had endorsed its decision regarding a maximum time limit of 60 minutes for the border delay of shuttle trains.

40. The Working Party considered in detail the draft resolution on the reduction of the border stopping time of shuttle trains in international traffic and commented on a number of aspects contained therein. In view of the wide range of services addressed in border control procedures such as customs, police, technical, sanitary and phytosanitary controls, the Working Party decided that the draft Resolution should be submitted for adoption to the Inland Transport Committee. The text of the Resolution as agreed upon by the Working Party is reproduced in annex 1 to the report.

41. The Chairman informed the Working Party that, in the framework of the South East European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), the question of reducing the time spent by shuttle trains at major border crossings had also been raised. In order to improve international rail transport in the SECI region in line with the decision of the Working Party on Rail Transport, the competent SECI-Working Group on Transport Infrastructure will consider, with the help of an informal ad hoc meeting, the border delay of shuttle trains running on a daily/weekly basis from Sopron via Bucharest, Sofia to Thessaloniki and from Sofia to Istanbul.

42. The Working Party asked its Chairman to keep it informed, at its next session, of the progress arrived at in improving international rail traffic in the context of the SECI project.

43. The Working Party agreed to continue to monitor the improvements realized in international traffic in border crossing and requested Governments to submit information to its next session on the following items:

- (i) average time spent by passenger and goods trains at main border crossings;
- (ii) the progress made (in minutes) subsequent to the implementation of measures taken by Governments (e.g. for customs, police, sanitary and phytosanitary controls) and railways (e.g. for technical controls) for passenger and freight trains to reduce the delays during border crossing;
- (iii) other measures that are envisaged in future to eliminate delays during the crossing of borders;
- (iv) succinct reports on bilateral and multilateral contacts which have taken place between Governments and railways of neighbouring countries in order to improve the crossing of borders in international rail traffic.

HARMONIZATION OF CONDITIONS OF DIFFERENT RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/7 and Add.1.

44. At its fifty-first session, the Principal Working Party discussed inter alia the question of the harmonization of conditions of two different legal rail transport systems, namely the COTIF/CIM and the SMGS for freight transport as well as the COTIF/CIV and the SMPS for passenger transport (TRANS/SC.2/188, paras. 28-31). Taking into account the work of the

Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSZhD) in this area, the Principal Working Party requested both organizations to submit further information on progress made in the elimination of difficulties arising from the two different legal systems in international carriage by rail.

45. The representative of OTIF pointed out that the contribution provided in the past by his organization on the subject under discussion was still valid. He felt that the easiest solution for harmonization of the two legal systems would be for a large number of States currently only applying the SMGS and SMPS agreements to accede to OTIF.

46. The representative of OSZhD recalled efforts made by his organization and OTIF in the past to overcome the problems encountered to harmonize the conditions of the two legal systems. He felt that further efforts had to be made in order to develop gradually the appropriate solutions to overcome the problem of the two legal systems. He thought that, on the basis of practical experiences made on specific transport routes, a general solution could be developed.

47. The representative of Ukraine stressed the importance of experimental routes and continuing the search for finding appropriate solutions by means of joint efforts of OTIF and OSZhD.

48. The Working Party agreed to consider this item every two years and encouraged both organizations to continue in their endeavours to harmonize the conditions of the two legal rail transport systems and requested them to submit to its session in the year 2000 a report on the progress made.

DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN CONVENTIONAL AND HIGH-SPEED RAILWAY NETWORK

Documents: TRANS/SC.2/1998/8 and Adds.1-6 and TRANS/SC.2/1998/15.

49. The Working Party noted the extensive and useful information which had been submitted by Governments and international organizations.

50. The Working Party agreed to continue to consider this item also in future and asked Governments, the EC, UIC and OSZhD to provide for its next session information on developments of (i) a European conventional railway network and (ii) a European high-speed railway network (including information on the complementarity between high-speed rail and air transport, regional development, regional transport and urban transport).

EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON MAIN INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY LINES (AGC)

(a) Situation regarding the application of the AGC

51. 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 are at present Parties to the AGC, bringing the total number of Contracting Parties to 22: Belarus; Bosnia and Herzegovina (succession); Bulgaria; Croatia (succession); Czech Republic (succession); France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Luxembourg; Republic of Moldova (succession); Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia (succession); Slovenia (succession); The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (succession); Turkey; Ukraine; Yugoslavia.

52. The Working Party noted that the amendments proposed by Italy (on behalf of Portugal) and the Republic of Moldova, which have been considered and adopted at the fiftieth session of the Principal Working Party entered into force on 12 February 1998 (Depositary Notification: C.N.457.1997, Treaties -2).

53. The Working Party was also informed that the representative of Belgium had informed the Inland Transport Committee at its fifty-eighth session that procedures were under way in his country to become a Contracting Party to the AGC (ECE/TRANS/116, para. 19).

54. The Working Party took note that the Government of Austria envisaged to start the ratification procedure for becoming a Contracting Party to the AGC in early 1999.

55. Finally, the Working Party noted the situation with respect to the application of the AGC Agreement in member countries and invited those Governments which had not yet acceded to the Agreement to examine the possibility of doing so. It asked those Governments which had not yet informed the secretariat of (i) the reason which had not yet permitted them to become a Party to the said Agreement and (ii) the possibility of acceding to it in the future, to do so as soon as possible.

(b) Amendments proposed to Annex I of the AGC Agreement

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/9.

56. At their fifty-first and sixtieth sessions respectively, the Principal Working Party on Rail Transport and the Inland Transport Committee continued discussion of the extension of the AGC network to central Asian and Caucasus ECE member States. Both bodies requested the secretariat to continue work, through its Regional Adviser, on the establishment of a coherent rail transport network in this region and to present a draft for consideration at the next session of the Working Party (TRANS/SC.2/188, paras. 43-45 and ECE/TRANS/125, para. 85).

57. In accordance with the request of the Principal Working Party and the Committee and bearing in mind the activities undertaken by the Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSZhd) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) regarding the development of rail networks in the region, the secretariat had prepared a draft map of a rail transport network in central Asian and Caucasus ECE member countries, which is an extension of the network as laid down in the AGC Agreement.

58. A member of the secretariat informed the Working Party that the amendment proposals concerning the extension of the AGC railway lines to central Asian and Caucasus ECE member countries would be transmitted for comments, in due course, to the Governments concerned.

59. Recalling Commission decisions H (50) as well as the Committee's decision taken at its fifty-ninth session (ECE/TRANS/119, paras. 90 and 91), the Working Party invited all central Asian and Caucasus countries to become Contracting Parties to the AGC Agreement.

(c) Total train traffic on the AGC network in 1990

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/18.

60. At its fifty-first session, the Principal Working Party reiterated its

request that the Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, the Netherlands and the Ukraine submit data on total train traffic for 1990 as soon as possible for consideration at its current session (TRANS/SC.2/188, paras. 46-47).

61. The Working Party took note of the data which had been submitted by Greece.

62. The Working Party requested Governments to provide for its next session data on total train traffic on the AGC network in 1995.

(d) Location of important marshalling yards within the European railway network

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/10 and Add.1; informal paper prepared by the secretariat.

63. At its fifty-first session, the Principal Working Party took note of the information submitted on important marshalling yards within the European railway network in Annex 1 to resolution No. 66/Rev.1 (TRANS/SC.2/165/Rev.1) and requested those Governments which had not yet updated the list of marshalling yards to do so as soon as possible (TRANS/SC.2/188, paras. 50-51).

64. The Working Party noted that countries had updated their respective lists of important marshalling yards within the European railway network. In this connection, it also pointed out that, although it had been originally envisaged to reduce the number of yards (see also TRANS/SC.2/178, para. 43), this objective had not been attained in a number of cases as is evidenced by the replies received.

65. Therefore, the Working Party asked the secretariat (i) to send the list of marshalling yards to the countries concerned asking them to review the list once again with a view to, possibly, reducing the number of yards and (ii) to distributing, subsequently, the list as an annex to resolution No. 66 in a Revision No. 2 of document TRANS/SC.2/165/Rev.1.

EUROPEAN RESEARCH PROGRAMME FOR TRANSPORT (EURET)

Documentation: Informal papers by the EC.

66. At its fiftieth session, the Principal Working Party requested the representative of the EC to provide information on the European Rail Traffic Management System, as well as the future development of the Community research programme (TRANS/SC.2/186, paras. 71-73).

67. As the representative of the EC was absent at the current session, the Working Party decided to consider the papers concerning the "European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS)", the "5th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development", the "Innovation through Cooperation in Rail Signalling-The Community's ERTMS Initiative" and an "overview of projects supported under the 4th Framework Programme of the European Community", at its next session.

TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY (TER) PROJECT

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/6.

68. A member of the secretariat informed the Working Party of the principal activities which had been carried out recently in the TER project and referred

in this context to the technical, legal and economic aspects which are mentioned in detail in document TRANS/SC.2/1998/6.

69. Recalling the importance of the work undertaken, the Working Party asked the secretariat to report also at its next session on new developments within the TER project.

APPLICATION OF SUMMER TIME

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/12 and Add.1-6; TRANS/SC.2/1998/16.

70. At their fifty-first and sixtieth sessions, respectively, the Principal Working Party and the Inland Transport Committee discussed questions concerning the application of summer time in Europe (TRANS/SC.2/188, paras. 60-67; ECE/TRANS/125, paras. 91 and 92).

71. Following a request of the Principal Working Party, Governments and the EC had provided information on summer time arrangements for consideration at the current session.

72. It was recalled that, according to the Eighth Directive of the European Parliament (EP) and of the Council (22 July 1997), a harmonized beginning and end of summer time had been determined in the European Union for the years 1998 to 2001, i.e. the last Sunday in March and the last Sunday in October.

73. The Working Party also took note of a document prepared by the secretariat on an overview of summer time arrangements in Europe (TRANS/SC.2/1997/16).

74. In view of the advantages of common dates for the application of summer time for ECE member countries, the Working Party reiterated its appeal to Governments to pursue also in future the goal of a harmonized beginning and end of summer time in Europe.

75. In order to continue its discussion of summer time arrangements, the Working Party asked Governments and the EC to provide the secretariat with information on summer time arrangements to be considered at its next session.

76. Furthermore, the Working Party requested Governments to study the possibility of extending summer time for a longer period and to provide that a medium-term period be applied for the same years in all European ECE member countries.

ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/1998/7.

77. The Working Party took note of the assistance provided to countries in transition as presented in document TRANS/WP.5/1998/7 and underlined, in particular, the importance of the seminar on railway safety and speed increases, which was held in Paris from 22 to 24 September 1997.

78. The Working Party asked Governments and international organizations to inform the secretariat on (i) specific items concerning transition countries, which might be included in its programme of work and on (ii) topics which could be inserted in the list of workshops of the Committee (see ECE/TRANS/125/Add.1, programme element 02.1.1, item "o").

79. The Working Party learned that, in accordance with a European Directive,

from the year 2001 onwards a safety adviser must be among the staff of transport firms which deal with hazardous substances. It felt that it would be appropriate to provide training for the education of such advisers.

INFORMATION ON DEVELOPMENTS IN VARIOUS RAILWAY FIELDS

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/13 and Add.1-6.

80. The Working Party considered the above documents and, in view of the usefulness of the information provided, asked Governments and international organizations to submit relevant material on sub-items (a) through (d) as mentioned under item 16 of the agenda TRANS/SC.2/189 to the secretariat before the next session of the Working Party in case there should be new developments in the interim.

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1999-2003

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/1998/14.

81. In considering the draft programme of work, the Working Party took into account further guidelines for the presentation of activities of the Inland Transport Committee's programme of work adopted at the sixtieth session of the Committee (12-16 January 1998) (ECE/TRANS/125, paras. 138-145) as well as the decision taken by the Commission, at its fifty-third session (21-23 April 1998), regarding "Common Guidelines for Prioritization of the Work of the PSBs" (E/1998/38-E/ECE/1365, para. 29).

82. Referring to its discussion on follow-up to the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (para. 11), the Working Party decided that the pertinent item of the Programme of Joint Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL) should be included in its programme of work.

83. The Working Party adopted its programme of work as reproduced in annex 2 to this report.

OTHER BUSINESS

Date of the next session

84. The Working Party noted that its next session was tentatively scheduled to be held from 6 to 8 October 1999.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

85. In accordance with established practice, the Working Party adopted the report of its fifty-second session on the basis of the draft prepared by the secretariat.

Annex 1

DRAFT RESOLUTION

THE REDUCTION OF THE BORDER STOPPING TIME OF
SHUTTLE TRAINS IN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC

The Inland Transport Committee,

Recalling the overall objective of transport policy to further efficient, coherent, balanced and flexible transport systems which meet the economic, social, environmental and safety requirements of ECE member Governments,

Stressing the increasing need to pursue the objective of sustainable transport development by means of promoting the use of environmentally sound modes of transport including the development of rail transport,

Conscious of the importance of the difficulties still encountered by rail transport at border crossings, which are detrimental to the free movement of passengers and goods,

Noting in this connection that state frontiers are gradually disappearing while rail frontiers are still difficult to cross,

Reaffirming the need to promote the facilitation of international rail transport, in particular, through the simplification and harmonization of administrative and technical border crossing procedures and documentation,

Underlining the importance of the work carried out by ECE aiming at the facilitation of border crossing in international rail traffic,

Noting with satisfaction the wide range of measures which have been applied by joint actions of railways and Governments to accelerate passenger and goods traffic by rail and the progress made due to these measures,

1. Appreciates the efforts made by Governments and railways to reduce, in particular, the delay of shuttle trains in passenger and goods traffic at borders;

2. Notes that, despite these efforts, substantial delay of shuttle trains at borders is still to be observed, which reduces considerably the competitiveness of rail transport in the transport market;

3. With the precise aim of improving the services offered by international rail transport and increasing the competitiveness of the rail sector

(a) Invites the ECE member Governments to intensify their efforts to seek swiftly within the framework of their competence a solution to limit overall to 60 minutes (30 minutes for each of the neighbouring countries) the waiting time of shuttle trains at borders;

(b) Also invites non-governmental international organizations specialized in the rail sector to encourage their member rail companies to do the same in the area of their competence;

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Annex 1

4. Asks the Working Party to monitor implementation of the Resolution and to report to it on the progress made.

Annex 2

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1999-2003

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.4: RAIL TRANSPORT

02.4.1 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 rail transport.

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; taking into account new east-west traffic flows; raising environmental, energy and safety standards; taking into account the ECE Conventions on the Environment. (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on amendment of the AGC network; Report on the development of a European conventional and high-speed railway network. (1999)** Priority: 1
- (b)[(c)] Consideration of the influence [on railways] 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.** (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on investment in rail infrastructure and railway rolling stock in member countries. (1999)** Priority: 1
- (c)[(d)] Periodic review of the list of marshalling yards of international importance with a view to cutting down their numbers. (Continuing); **Output expected: Updated report on the location of important marshalling yards within the European railway network. (1999)** Priority: 2

Note: Changes or additions to the text adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its sixtieth session (ECE/TRANS/125/Add.1) are shown in bold character while the texts proposed for deletion have been placed in square brackets.

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (d)[(b)] 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 [first] **second** survey is based on data for [1990] **1995** [(1998)]; **Output expected: Report on total train traffic on the AGC network in 1995. (1999)** **Priority: 2**

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

Description: Within the framework of the UN/ECE, 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) Consideration of 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 possibilities for financing of TER in order to promote the upgrading and construction of internationally important rail lines. (Continuing) **Priority: 3**
- (c) Consideration of possible utilization of the results achieved under the project in other UN/ECE activities in the field of rail infrastructure including the implementation of AGC and AGTC in order to benefit from mutual experiences. (Continuing) **Priority: 2**

III. Interregional Cooperation

Description: Cooperation with other regional commissions and international bodies involved in 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**

02.4.2 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)][Study of interface problems of railways having different gauges (transshipment/gauge changing procedures, logistic arrangements to support transshipment processes).]

- (d)[(e)] Analysis of problems relating to the harmonization and improvement of rail safety.
- (e)[(f)] [Consideration] **Monitoring of developments** 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. (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on bi- and multilateral contacts of Governments and railways to improve the crossing of borders in international rail traffic. (1999)** **Priority: 1**
- (b) Consideration of follow-up of the implementation of recommendations and preparation of new texts or amendments to existing texts, if necessary, notably concerning the facilitation of border crossing with the aim to improve international rail traffic. (Continuing) **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. (continuing) **Priority: 2**
- (d) [t]The study of the possibilities for harmonizing the application and periods of summer time with a view to upgrading transport quality in rail transport. (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on the application of summer time. (1999)** **Priority: 1**
- (e) Analysis of Government policies concerning rail safety to contribute to an improvement of safety in international transport. (Continuing); **Output expected: Report on the risk assessment technique in rail transport. (1999)** **Priority: 1**

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (f)[(d)] Analysis of the various elements of productivity in rail transport and the possibilities to increase rail productivity in particular for international transport. [(1998)]; **Output expected: Report on the development of productivity in rail transport in member countries. (1999)** **Priority: 2**
- (g)[(f)] 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 ensure compatibility of the regulation concerned. [(1998)]; **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. (2000)** **Priority: 3**
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