



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/2004/2
11 December 2003

Original: English

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

(Sixty-sixth session, 17-19 February 2004,
agenda item 2)

RESULTS OF THE COMMITTEE'S BUREAU MEETINGS

In accordance with the decision taken by the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its sixty-fifth session (ECE/TRANS/152, para. 137), its Bureau met on 21 February 2003, 10-11 July 2003, and 3-4 December 2003. The reports of the Bureau's meetings are reproduced below for consideration by the Committee. The Committee may wish to discuss the questions in greater detail under the respective items of the agenda.

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Annex 1

LIST OF DECISIONS OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE (21 February 2003)

ATTENDANCE

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee was chaired by Mr. P. Päßgen (Germany) and was attended by the following members: Mr. S. Kouchinski (Belarus), Mr. H. Courtois (Belgium), Mr. B. Chevalier (France), Ms. E. Pavli (Greece), Mr. B.J. Griffioen (Netherlands), Mrs. V. Tañase (Romania), Mrs. L. Renne (Russian Federation), Mr. J.-C. Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. U. Armangil (Turkey) and Mr. S. Yampolskyi (Ukraine). The representative of the European Commission was unable to attend. Mr. M. Marmy, Secretary-General, and Mr. U. de Pretto, Deputy Secretary-General of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) participated at the request of the Committee (ECE/TRANS/152, para. 99).

BORDER CROSSING FACILITATION

2. At its sixty-fifth session, the Committee had decided that its Bureau, starting at its first meeting in 2003, should, with the involvement of all concerned (Chairman of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), secretariat and IRU) consider the difficulties encountered in the TIR system at the end of 2002 and propose solutions for the future.

3. The Bureau reiterated the importance of the TIR Convention, including the Customs transit regime, for the economies as an essential factor for the development of cooperation among the Contracting Parties and stressed that its goal was to facilitate the international carriage of goods by road while ensuring that Customs duties and taxes at risk during transit operations are guaranteed at any moment.

4. Recognizing the large number and variety of actors involved (Customs, Transport Ministries, and national associations of more than 60 countries, several UNECE bodies - TIR Administrative Committee, TIR Executive Board, WP.30 - IRU, secretariat) as well as the complex interrelationships among them, the Bureau underlined the need to avoid in future the occurrence of a crisis similar to the one that took place in 2002. To this end, it considered it necessary to review the functioning of the system, identify possible weaknesses and recommend appropriate solutions. This task can only be satisfactorily achieved if transparency is ensured by all Parties concerned, in particular, regarding management and financial issues.

5. In order to be able to carry out this review, and on the basis of a proposal made by the representative of Turkey, the Bureau agreed on the following actions:

(a) On the basis of a questionnaire to be prepared by the secretariat in cooperation with the Chairman of WP.30, and to be sent to Contracting Parties to the Convention, the secretariat will prepare a note containing, inter alia:

- information on the various official language versions of the TIR Convention, the consistency among them and the causal connection to the recent crisis.
- information on the implementation of the TIR Convention, including amendments, in each Contracting Party and the causal connection to the recent crisis.
- information on risk management measures applied at national level.
- functions of each body involved in the TIR system (TIR Administrative Committee, TIRExB, WP.30).
- results achieved in the TIR system, so far, through revisions (Phases I and II) and recommendations for future action (Phase III).
- identification of current weaknesses encountered in the application of the TIR system.
- proposals to resolve those weaknesses including possible new amendments to the TIR Convention.

(b) The IRU will prepare a note including, inter alia:

- a general description of the administration of the TIR carnet system.
- an assessment of the weaknesses of the TIR system.
- the IRU's views on the obligations of Contracting Parties and the degree of implementation of control measures.
- the IRU's view on the responsibility of transport companies in the TIR procedure.
- a description of the TIR guarantee system at national and international level and the insurance mechanisms behind it.
- a description of steps to be taken in practice with a view to asserting a claim, including rights of contention by IRU and the function of Article 11, paragraph 3 in that context stipulating payment without defining substantive law elements.
- information on the overall financial flows of the IRU's involvement in the TIR system (sale of TIR carnets, payment of claims, etc.), as well as the related risk exposure of the IRU, national guarantee associations and Contracting Parties.
- information on what extent Contracting Parties are informed about the mentioned financial flows.
- proposals for improving the system both at national and international level.

(c) Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention were requested to respond to the questionnaire from the secretariat and attend meetings on this subject.

(d) The Bureau will:

- study the notes prepared by the secretariat and the IRU respectively.
- if necessary, request the TIR related bodies to further study the matter and report to the autumn session of the Bureau.

6. Bureau members were invited to formulate questions for possible inclusion in the questionnaire, based on the elements identified in paragraph 5 (a) above. It was agreed that such questions should be sent to the secretariat by e-mail before 7 March 2003.

7. The questionnaire should, as soon as possible, be sent to Contracting Parties to the Convention (via the Permanent Missions in Geneva with copies to heads of ITC delegations) and replies should be requested by 10 May 2003 so that the note which would subsequently be prepared by the secretariat could be considered at the Bureau's meeting on 10 July 2003. The Chairman of WP.30 would be involved in the review process.

OTHER ISSUES FROM THE SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE

8. Regarding the Convention on Civil Liability for Damage caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), the Bureau agreed that the secretariat should ask for the nomination of national focal points for the CRTD in each member State. It also invited the Chairman of the Ad hoc Meeting of Experts to report to the Bureau at its summer meeting on the results of the Ad hoc Meeting to be held from 7-9 July 2003.

9. Regarding the annual document - review of the transport situation in UNECE member countries and of emerging development trends – the Bureau requested the secretariat to outline the specific added value of the UNECE annual review and explore ways of streamlining it and in particular its statistical component.

10. The Bureau decided that the secretariat should prepare a new draft of the Strategic Objectives of the Committee in cooperation with the Chairman taking into account proposals made by the Bureau and the Committee. The new draft would be considered at the Bureau's summer meeting.

NEXT MEETING OF THE BUREAU

11. The Bureau decided that, in light of the volume of work to be carried out, its summer meeting should be extended by one day and be held from 10 to 11 July 2003. Subsequent to the Bureau meeting, UNOG Conference Services confirmed that 11 July 2003 is available. Therefore the next Bureau meeting will be held **10 and 11 July 2003**.

Annex 2

**LIST OF DECISIONS OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF
THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
(10-11 July 2003)**

(a) Attendance

12. The meeting of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee was chaired by Mr. P. Päßgen (Germany) and was attended by the following members: Mr. Dmitry Zorin (Belarus), Mr. Henri Courtois (Belgium), Ms. Eirini Pavli (Greece), Mr. Bert Jan Griffioen, Mr. Guus Jacobs, Mr. Jan Engel De Boer (the Netherlands), Mrs. Lyoudmila Renne, Mr. Iouri Chtcherbakov, Mrs. Elena Fedorova, Mrs. Nadezhda Gogopoulo (Russian Federation), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. Ümit Armangil, Mrs. Yildiz Kasikçi (Turkey), Mr. Mykhailo A. Mezheryskyi (Ukraine), Mr. Christian Dufour, Mr. Joachim Marques (European Commission). Mr. Martin Marmy and Mr. Jean Acri (International Road Transport Union (IRU)) participated at the request of the secretariat.

(b) Adoption of the agenda

13. The Bureau adopted its agenda (TRANS/BUR.2003/3) without modification.

(c) Convention on Civil Liability for Damage caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD)

14. The Bureau:

- noted that the Ad hoc Meeting of Experts on CRTD during its third session (7-9 July 2003) had made good progress and that a new Convention should be available by the end of this year after the fourth session, for consideration by the Committee at its February 2004 session;
- further noted, however, that despite the letters sent by the secretariat to all member States to designate a focal point for the CRTD, the third session of the Ad hoc Meeting of Experts had been attended by five member States only and that this poor participation could be interpreted as a lack of political interest from member States for a revision of the CRTD. If this were the case, the Committee might wish to consider how to follow up, i.e. whether it could be relevant to adopt the text by consensus, or to refer it to a Diplomatic Conference, or to put it on ice pending expression of more significant interest from member States;
- requested the secretariat to send again, by the end of August 2003, a letter to member States, with a copy of the draft new Convention which will be discussed at the fourth session of the Ad hoc Meeting of Experts, whereby member States would be asked to

express, before the end of October 2003, their official position on the principle of adopting a new Convention;

- stressed that the letter should also explain the added value of the new Convention;
- noted that the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine was also preparing a new Convention on the subject but applicable to inland navigation only;
- recalled that the mandate of the Ad hoc Working Group was to submit to the Committee a revised text of the CRTD;
- noted that the Ad hoc Meeting of Experts, in discussing the question of the scope of the Convention, was of the view that the Convention should continue to cover the three inland transport modes (TRANS/AC.8/2, para. 29).

(d) Border crossing facilitation

15. The Bureau:

- recognized the necessity of a well functioning public/private partnership based on the principles of trust, respect, mutual understanding and full transparency, in particular, in connection with financial arrangements;
- recalled its intention to provide guidance as to how to avoid the occurrence in the future of a crisis similar to the one that took place in 2002;
- reiterated its intention to consider the general principles of the problem and not to delve into detailed questions relating to the TIR Convention;
- stressed the objective of the TIR Convention to strike a balance between the facilitation of international cross border traffic, while at the same time ensuring the required Customs securities and guarantees;
- recalled that it is the competence of the Contracting Parties alone to decide on interpretations of the Convention;
- agreed to make an assessment of the weaknesses of the TIR procedure and referred in this connection inter alia to the following questions:
 - Languages:
 - The Bureau requested the secretariat to seek clarification from the United Nations Legal Office on the identical meaning of the terms mentioned in the items in TRANS/BUR.2003/4, para. 2.1, as raised by the IRU;
 - The Bureau asked that the reply from the UN Legal Office to these questions should be transmitted to WP.30 with the instruction to take the findings into account with the aim of ensuring the sustainability of the TIR Convention;

- noted that in the replies of the TIR Contracting Parties to the questionnaire (TRANS/BUR.2003/3), there is no mention of a causal connection between the recent crisis and the various official language versions of the TIR Convention;

➤ TIR Convention revision procedures / different Convention texts:

The Bureau:

- took note of the view of the IRU, that it would have been preferable to have carried out phases I and II of the TIR Revision process according to Article 62 of the Convention (TRANS/BUR.2003/4, para. 2.2). The Bureau recognized that the revision procedure which had been chosen according to Article 59 had been decided upon in unanimity by Contracting Parties and with the consent of the IRU with a view to implementing the amendments urgently. The Legal Office of the United Nations had accepted this procedure;
- on the basis of the preceding explanation, could not explicitly identify any causal connections to the recent crisis based on the explanations provided by IRU;
- with the aim of ensuring a uniform implementation of the Convention in all Contracting Parties, requested the secretariat to inquire with Contracting Parties about the state of implementation of the various revisions of the Convention and problems encountered in this connection;
- also requested the IRU to provide information on the implementation of the various amendments to the TIR Convention.

➤ Trade and criminal developments:

The Bureau:

- took the view that the matter of fighting fraud and irregularities could basically be reduced to improving existing control measures and adopting additional measures;
- noted that the Administrative Committee of the TIR Convention will consider the inclusion of provisions concerning a control system for termination of TIR Carnets in the Convention in the near future;
- also took note that WP.30 is expected to consider other amendment proposals to the TIR Convention concerning its application in the near future;
- also noted that the TIRExB had included the issue of combating fraud as the top priority issue in the Programme of Work, in particular focusing on providing uniform access procedures for operators;

- stressed that issuing Associations had a primary responsibility in accepting only those Operators for the TIR Procedure, which meet all requirements set out in the Convention;

➤ Financial flows of the TIR guarantee system:

The Bureau:

- appreciated the information provided by the IRU in relation to the financial flows (in Swiss francs) of the IRU in 2002 (according to the accounts of the IRU 2002 approved by the General Assembly of the IRU on 24 April 2003):
 - Overall revenue of which: 133,842,240
 - Contributions 1,537,611
 - Total expenses of the Secretariat General of the IRU (Management of the network of Associations) 6,308,655
 - Total expenses of the TIR department (Costs for the management of the TIR system and the international guarantee chain, including risk management) of which: 127,826,264
 - Insurance premium for the cover of the international financial guarantee 35,854,000
- felt that these explanations did not illustrate the real risk exposure of the IRU in connection with the management of the guarantee system and particularly the risk covered by the insurers and requested the IRU to provide the Bureau with additional details in writing;
- reiterated the decision of the TIR Administrative Committee that, according to the existing text of the TIR Convention, it is the competence of the Contracting Parties to the Convention alone to decide on the budget of the TIRExB and on the size of the levy on the TIR Carnet to be collected. It stressed that the IRU only acts as an intermediary for the transfer of the necessary funds;
- noted the statement of the representative of the IRU according to which the reservation made by his organization regarding the transfer of funds for the TIRExB budget 2003 had been made for political reasons and that the reservation would not have any practical impact on the funding of the TIRExB. In reply to a question from the floor, the Director pointed out that there was no relation between (i) the reservation of the IRU regarding the TIRExB budget and (ii) the reduced duration of the contracts of the TIR Secretariat's staff. It was felt that

these two points might jeopardize the effective and continuous work related to the TIR Convention;

- noted the confirmation by the representative of the IRU regarding an unimpeded funding of the TIRExB in the future;
- noted further the confirmation of the secretariat that the total amount of the budget for 2003 had been transferred;
- was informed by the secretariat that the process of revising the Agreement (transfer of funds, roles and responsibilities of the IRU) between the UNECE and the IRU had taken up more time than had been anticipated. It was expected that the Agreement would be submitted to the Chairman of WP.30 for review by the “Friends of the Chair” in the coming weeks;
- expressed its concern regarding the reservation and bearing in mind the confirmation by the representative of IRU not to amplify the situation, welcomed the readiness of the IRU to cooperate, henceforth, on the basis of improved transparency and mutual trust;
- asked the secretariat to transmit documents TRANS/BUR.2003/3, TRANS/BUR.2003/4 and TRANS/BUR.2003/4/Add.1 as well as the list of Decisions agreed upon by the Bureau at its meeting on 10 and 11 July 2003 (TRANS/BUR.2003/11) to WP.30 for further consideration.

(e) **Consideration of questions related to report writing**

16. The Bureau:

- noted the concerns expressed by the Russian Federation in document TRANS/BUR.2003/8 regarding the report of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) (ECE/TRANS/152) and the TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/69);
- recommended that AC.2 should reconsider its report (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/69) at its next session and indicate whether any missing parts should be included;
- also took note of the concern of the Russian Federation regarding the formulation of paragraph 99 of the ITC report (ECE/TRANS/152) and felt that, due to the availability of the Conference Room Paper only in the English language, difficulties might have occurred for the Russian speaking delegations to follow all aspects of the modifications proposed during the reading of the report;
- bearing in mind the situation outlined in the preceding paragraph and, in order to avoid a duplication with the content of the fifth sentence, noted that the sixth sentence of paragraph 99 of the Committee’s report (ECE/TRANS/152) reading: “ It pointed

out that the objective of the TIR system was not to compensate for irregularities committed by organized crime and advocated the need for a full and effective application of the Convention” might be replaced and superseded by the following text: “It advocated the need for a full and effective application of the Convention.” The Bureau advised the Committee to look again at the wording of paragraph 99, at its next session.

- in order to avoid any problems regarding the drafting of reports in future, the Bureau recommended to the Committee that:
 - (i) draft reports be finalized during the meeting—if the bodies concerned so decide—even if only in the form of a list of decisions;
 - (ii) draft reports prepared by the secretariat should be reviewed by the Chairperson before being translated and reproduced subsequently as Conference Room Papers (CRPs);
 - (iii) during the reading of the CRPs, all language versions should be available, to the extent possible;
 - (iv) if amendments are introduced in the CRPs during the reading, they should be made available in writing to all delegations present;
 - (v) the secretariat should check the final version of the report with the Chairperson before it is sent out to countries.
- The Bureau noted that it would be impossible to have all language versions of CRPs concerning the discussions of the last day of the meeting available at the reading due to a 24-hour time delay required by the translation services.

(f) **Consideration of matters arising from the 2003 annual session of the Economic Commission for Europe**

17. The Bureau:

- took note of a list of substantive issues concerning the follow-up to the 2003 annual session at the level of PSBs (TRANS/BUR.2003/5), which contained no prioritization of items and no decisions;
- underlined the fact that the transport sector has special needs particularly in terms of the frequency and length of the meetings;
- stressed the desirability of exercising a certain flexibility in implementing the requirements mentioned in the list (see also ECE/TRANS/152, para. 8);
- noted that usually, “sunset clauses” were not applicable in the transport sector because of the nature of the questions dealt with.

(g) **Draft Strategic Objectives of the Committee**

The Bureau:

- took note of a new draft of the Strategic Objectives of the Committee taking into account proposals made by the Bureau and the Committee (TRANS/BUR.2003/1, para.9);
- noted the comments made by a number of its members regarding the modifications proposed;
- agreed that Mr. Courtois, in cooperation with the secretariat, would ensure the consistent incorporation of those modifications in the text of the draft paper on Strategic Objectives of the Committee, which would be sent to all members of the Bureau for additional comments;
- agreed that the final version of the paper on Draft Strategic Objectives of the Committee should be adopted at the December session of the Bureau (3-4 December 2003);
- welcomed the readiness of Mr. Courtois to prepare a supplementary paper outlining the extent to which activities are already included in existing and proposed strategies.

(h) **UNECE Legal Instruments on transport which are important for non-acceding Countries**

18. The Bureau agreed to consider this item at its next session to be held on 3-4 December 2003.

(i) **Cooperation with the ECMT**

19. The Bureau:

- considered the ECMT documents “Report on Future directions for ECMT: From Visions to Decisions” (CEMT/CM(2003)13/FINAL) and “Future Direction of ECMT: Declaration (ECMT/CM/(2003)12/FINAL), adopted at the eighty-seventh session of the ECMT Council of Ministers (Brussels, 23 – 24 April 2003);
- was informed that the Seminar on Transport Infrastructure Development for a Wider Europe, which will be jointly organized by ECMT, the EC, UNECE and EIB, (27 - 29 November 2003) will comprise the following sessions: (i) planning infrastructure development, (ii) financing the infrastructure, and (iii) towards a new policy;
- pointed out that when convening joint meetings of UNECE and ECMT, the different nature of the work carried out in both organizations had to be taken into account, with UNECE focusing on technical and legal matters and ECMT on political questions;
- was not in favour of merging UNECE and ECMT bodies.

(j) Transport, Environment and Health

20. The Bureau:

- noted that the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) held on 10 and 11 April 2003 (ECE/AC.21/2003/6), considered the following project proposals: (i) clearing house on transport, environment and health, (ii) urban plans for transport sustainable for health and environment, (iii) transport related health impacts and their costs, (iv) establishment of a set of indicators to monitor the integration of environmental and health aspects in transport policies and the impact of these policies on health and the environment;
- welcomed the institutional arrangements made including the Bureau ensuring equal representation of the three sectors concerned and two subgroups.

(k) Document survey and Transport Division website

21. The Bureau:

- noting the information concerning document surveys carried out at the sixty-fifth session of the Inland Transport Committee (18-20 February 2003) and the forty-first session of the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (31 March – 3 April 2003) (TRANS/BUR.2003/9), asked the other subsidiary bodies of the ITC to also carry out such a document survey.

(l) Other business

Organization of a Round Table at the sixty-sixth session of the Committee

22. The Bureau:

- was informed about the status of preparations for the Round Table on Intelligent Transport Systems and noted, in this connection, a first draft of the programme of the Round Table (TRANS/BUR.2003/10);
- pointed out, that the Round Table should be widely publicized.

Other items

23. The Bureau:

- noted that at its next session, it will discuss inter alia, (i) UNECE Legal Instruments on transport which are important for non-acceding countries and (ii) the annual document which reviews the transport situation in UNECE member countries and emerging development trends.

(m) **Date of next meeting**

24. The Bureau may note that its next meeting is scheduled to be held on:

- 3 – 4 December 2003.

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Annex 3

**LIST OF DECISIONS OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF
THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
(3-4 December 2003)**

(a) Attendance

25. The meeting of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee was chaired by Mr. P. Päßgen (Germany) and was attended by the following members: Mr. Dmitry Zorin (Belarus), Mr. Benoît Chevalier (France), Mr. Peter Päßgen (Germany), Ms. Diamanto Zoi (Greece), Mr. Bert Jan Griffioen (Netherlands), Mrs. Dana Manuela Constantinescu (Romania), Mrs. Lyoudmila Renne, Mrs. Elena Fedorova (Russian Federation), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. Ümit Armangil, Mr. Hakan Kivanc (Turkey), Mr. Mykhailo A. Mezheryskyi (Ukraine), and Mr. Christian Dufour (European Commission). The representative of Belgium was unable to attend.

(b) Adoption of the agenda

26. The Bureau adopted its agenda TRANS/BUR.2003/12 without modification.

(c) Consideration of items concerning the agenda for the sixty-sixth session of the Inland Transport Committee

Matters arising from the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations bodies and Conferences

27. The Bureau:

- was informed about the programme of action and the declaration of the Almaty Conference (28-29 August 2003);
- agreed with the UNECE follow-up activities to be taken up subsequent to the Conference as proposed in the document (TRANS/2004/4/Add.1) and recommended to the Committee to provide further guidance to the secretariat on other possible activities that could be undertaken.

Intersectoral activities: Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)

28. The Bureau was informed of the progress made in respect of the THE PEP programme and, in particular, of the need for funding for the operational phase of THE PEP Clearing House.

Intersectoral activities: Transport and Trade

29. The Bureau agreed that the document on Transport and Trade should be corrected regarding the transport related aspects and returned to the Trade Division. As a general rule, the Bureau felt that any document dealing with transport should only be produced by the Transport Division.

Transport and Security

30. The Bureau agreed to retain in the annotations for the ITC agenda only the first phrase of the second paragraph to read as follows: “The Committee may wish **to note** that the Working Party on Inland Water Transport, at its forty-seventh session, considered a summary report prepared by the secretariat on activities undertaken within relevant international organizations on items concerning security in the transport sector circulated in TRANS/SC.3/2003/12.”

Assistance to Countries with Economies in Transition

31. The Bureau:

- underlined the importance of organizing seminars in CIS countries, which contribute to the solving of practical transport problems and felt that a seminar on the digital tachograph should be organized. The Bureau recommended to the ITC to consider all sources of finance for such a seminar, including from tachograph manufacturers;
- stressed the necessity of having an active participation of experts from CIS countries in the meetings of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;
- underlined the need to make sufficient funds available for travel, so that experts from CIS countries can participate in UNECE meetings;
- noted that proper technical assistance in Transport was not being provided to Caucasus and Central Asian as well as other Member countries in need thereof, due to the existence of only one Regional Adviser in this priority area;
- was informed about the possibility of having a second Regional Adviser subsequent to internal organizational arrangements in the secretariat;
- reiterated once again its request to allocate a second Regional Adviser to the Transport Division and decided to consider at its next session, the functions to be carried out by both Regional Advisers, and to identify the priority areas of assistance.

Transport trends and economics

32. The Bureau:

- regarding the annotations related to item 11(a)(i) of the ITC agenda and following the proposal of WP.5, requested that a second paragraph be included as follows: “in connection with this agenda item, the ITC may wish to have an exchange of views

about the possible need to convene a Pan-European Transport Conference in the near future (TRANS/WP.5/34, para. 11)”;

- regarding the annotations related to item 11(a)(ii) of the ITC agenda, was informed about the outcome of the recently held Seminar in Transport Infrastructure development for a wider Europe”, jointly organized by the ECMT, EC, UNECE and EIB, and asked the secretariat to formulate proposals concerning its follow-up for consideration by the Committee;
- recommended to the Committee, to support the activities undertaken, so far, by Turkey and the Russian Federation regarding the development of demonstration trains on the Trans-Siberian and Southern Euro-Asian transport corridors;
- invited the secretariat to contact the European Commission regarding the joint organization of a seminar on freight flows in the Mediterranean.

Road transport

33. The Bureau:

- regarding the annotations related to item 12(a)(i) of the ITC agenda, agreed that the first phrase of the second paragraph of the annotations should read as follows: “The Committee may also wish to **note** that, at its ninety-seventh session, SC.1 adopted proposals to amend Annex I to the AGR (TRANS/SC.1/373)”;
- noting the discrepancies between infrastructure parameters as laid down in the AGR and the AGN, was of the opinion that, in the case where both networks address the same roads, the stricter parameters should prevail;
- recommended to the Committee to **approve** the holding, if necessary, of an Ad hoc Meeting on the CMR in 2003 to finalize the text of a new Protocol on the basis of the proposal selected so that it could be finally adopted at the ninety-eighth session of SC.1;
- regarding the consolidated resolution on R.E.4, requested the secretariat to ensure that the final version adopted by SC.1 (TRANS/SC.1/2002/4/Rev.3) and the list of reservations made in relation thereto should be sent to Governments by 20 December 2003. The Committee is recommended to adopt the final text and take a decision on whether to retain the text in brackets on visas;
- noting the decision of SC.1 in relation to visa issuance for professional drivers, recommended nevertheless the establishment of an informal group to examine the responses to the questionnaire in detail and make proposals aimed at facilitating visa issuance.

Road Traffic Safety

34. The Bureau:

- with regard to the follow-up to General Assembly Resolutions on the Global Road Safety Crisis, agreed that in view of the meeting of the General Assembly on 14 April 2004: (i) the secretariat should, in consultation with the Chairman of WP.1, prepare a note outlining the possible global role that WP.1 could play in the follow-up to the Resolutions; (ii) this note should be submitted to the next session of the Inland Transport Committee in order for the Committee to provide guidance to WP.1; (iii) WP.1 should define its future role more precisely at its forty-fourth session (6 April 2004); and (iv) the Chairman of WP.1 and/or the Director of the Transport Division should present the proposals concerning the future role of WP.1 to the General Assembly at its special session on the Global Road Safety Crisis (14 April 2004).

Safety in tunnels

35. The Bureau recommended to the Committee to consider and approve the Recommendations of the Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Safety in Tunnels (rail).

Rail transport

36. The Bureau agreed to review the experience of joint ECMT/UNECE meetings on rail and combined transport before considering extending this practice to other subsidiary bodies of the Committee.

Inland water transport

37. The Bureau recommended the Committee to endorse (i) Resolution No. 51 on amendment of the Signs and Signals on Inland Waterways (SIGNI) (document TRANS/SC.3/2003/4) and (ii) the provisional approval by the Working Party on Inland Water Transport of amendments to the Recommendations on Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (TRANS/SC.3/2004/1).

Combined transport

38. The Bureau recommended the Committee to prolong the mandate of the Ad hoc Expert Group on Civil Liability Rules for Multimodal Transport, to follow developments in UNCITRAL and to analyse not only the answers of the UNCTAD questionnaire, but to carry out its own enquiry of the appropriateness of such a liability convention.

Border crossing facilitation

39. The Bureau recommended the Committee to prolong the mandate of the Group of Experts on the TIR revision process for the year 2004.

Transport of dangerous goods

40. The Bureau requested the secretariat to prepare an additional explanatory note for the Committee outlining the justification for and the additional value of the CRTD.

Transport statistics

41. The Bureau recommended the Committee to adopt the two Resolutions on the 2005 Road and Rail Traffic Censuses.

Draft Programme of work 2004-2008

42. The Bureau:

- recommended the Committee to modify programme element (o) of programme activity 02.1 (Transport Trends and Economics) to read as follows:

Output expected: Biannual report by **the secretariat** on progress made in the **project** of the Europe/Africa Permanent Link through the Strait of Gibraltar (next report: ~~2003~~ **2005**).

- bearing in mind its modification of programme activity 02.1, recommended the Committee to adopt the Programme of Work for the period 2004-2008 as contained in document TRANS/2004/3.

Schedule of meetings in 2004

43. The Bureau recommended to the Committee to consider and adopt the list of meetings as circulated in document TRANS/2004/5.

(d) Strategic Objectives of the Committee

44. The Bureau:

- considered the Draft Strategic Objectives of the Committee (TRANS/BUR.2003/6/Rev.2) and commented on a number of aspects contained therein. The amended version of the document was adopted by the Bureau and will be annexed to the list of decisions of the current session of the Bureau;
- recommended the ITC to adopt the note on Strategic Objectives of the Committee (Appendix 1);

- expressed its appreciation for the supplementary paper prepared by Mr. Courtois (see Appendix 2), which provided additional information to the paper on Draft Strategic Objectives, indicating the issues that are already being worked on by the Committee's subsidiary bodies;
- agreed to recommend to the Committee that subsidiary bodies review the table in the supplementary paper in light of their respective programmes of work, identify those issues which may be added to their respective programmes of work and formulate the programme items to be included in the programme of work. The tables reviewed by the subsidiary bodies would be submitted for consideration to the meeting of the Bureau in December 2004;
- The resource implications when considering the addition of such new items to the programmes of work of the subsidiary bodies will be evaluated by the secretariat and reported to the Bureau.

(e) **Blue Corridor Project**

45. The Bureau:

- supported proposals made by the Governments of Greece and Turkey recommending the Task Force of the Blue Corridor Project to consider, possibly, adding new pilot corridors to Greece and Turkey;
- noted favourably the proposal that an international seminar could be held on the Blue Corridor Project;
- recommended that all sources and methods of financing for the project be explored, including involvement of the private sector.

(f) **UNECE legal instruments on transport which are important for non-acceding countries**

46. The Bureau asked the secretariat to complete document TRANS/BUR.2003/7 with a note indicating the reason for the choice of legal instruments included in this document.

(g) **Annual document**

47. The Bureau recommended the Committee to maintain the Annual document on its agenda and suggested that national contributions to the document be posted on the Transport Division website.

(h) Round Table on Intelligent Transport Systems

48. The Bureau:

- took note of the progress of work regarding the Round Table and invited members of the Committee to participate actively in the Round Table;
- asked the secretariat to diffuse information about the Round Table as widely as possible and noted the request of the Russian delegation to make a presentation at the Round Table.

(i) Document survey and Transport Division website

49. The Bureau:

- took note of document TRANS/BUR.2003/9/Add.1 concerning the Document Survey and, in order to accelerate communication between the secretariat and national authorities, invited Governments to make as wide use as possible of the Transport Division website;
- recommended to put the address of the website where documentation can be found on the front page of all documents.

(j) Other business

50. The Bureau:

- noted the letter from the Secretary General of IRU, Mr. M. Marmy, dated 18 September 2003 addressed to the Chair of the ITC, Mr. P. Päßgen, requesting that changes be made to those parts of the report of the Bureau meeting (10-11 July 2003) concerning TIR;
- studied the communication of the IRU regarding TIR and expressed its view that the text of the report of the Bureau's last meeting (10-11 July 2003) correctly reflected the deliberations and decisions. In addition, the Bureau was of the opinion that the operation of international transport required a forward looking approach to ensure a healthy development in the international exchange between countries.

(k) Dates of next meetings

51. The Bureau may note that its next meetings are scheduled to be held on:

- 16 February 2004 (afternoon)
 - 20 February 2004 (morning)
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Appendix 1 to Annex 3

DRAFT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

1. General

1. The terms of reference of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of the UNECE are established in document ECE/TRANS/97 and were defined at its fifty-fifth session (1993), following major geopolitical changes in Europe. It should be recalled that the UNECE now totals 55 member States, of which 15 are members of the EU, 2 are members of the European Economic Area, 12 are candidates to join the EU, 2 are associated to the EU and 2 others have a special status with the EU. Moreover, half of its members could be considered as countries with transition economies. It therefore appears that the ITC is the only forum where common norms can be applied to both sets of countries, those part of the EU sphere as well as the others.
2. In the field of land transport, the ITC plays a crucial role since it fulfils a need not met by other international organizations: the development of a set of regulations for all land transport at the pan-European level with the participation of all its members. Such a regulatory framework includes Agreements and Conventions which serve as the basis for the national jurisdictions of member States. These legal instruments aim at establishing efficient and coherent transport infrastructure networks, facilitating border-crossing as well as harmonizing safety and environmental rules, technical standards and traffic rules.
3. The ITC has already achieved substantial tangible results: the E-road network, the railway, inland waterway and combined transport networks, the extension of these networks to the Caucasus and Central Asia, Regulations concerning the Construction of Vehicles, the creation of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations, the regulation of Road Traffic and Road Transport, as well as of the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the TIR Convention, etc. In addition, the ITC elaborates Recommendations and Resolutions and facilitates exchanges of best practices.
4. As a subsidiary body of the United Nations, the ITC plays a determining role internationally.
5. Owing to the wide range of its terms of reference, the ITC has always had to establish priorities. In the past, on the basis of decision O (45) of the Commission, the ITC had determined the following priority areas: construction of vehicles, transport of dangerous goods, road safety, transport infrastructure and combined transport. The Committee completed this list by adding customs questions relating to transport. More recently, further to recommendations in the 1997 UNECE Plan of Action, the Committee refined the formulation of its Programme of Work by establishing priorities for each work element.

6. Current or future important changes such as European integration, new technologies, the growth in trade and the new expectations of society pose new challenges for the Committee that make it necessary to reconsider its priorities and its strategy.

7. A transport policy should serve economic and social development. It should therefore take three types of consideration into account:

- Accessibility and fluidity;
- Safety and security;
- Respect for the environment and health.

8. Out of these three types of goals, the first (accessibility and fluidity) emerges both as the most “traditional”, but also perhaps as the most neglected. The many problems of network capacity (congestion of traffic and bottlenecks, interoperability, under-utilization of rail and inland waterway networks, management of flows, etc.) are of key importance.

9. It is therefore indispensable that the ITC pays special attention to addressing these problems and to solving them.

10. A strategic vision also entails paying attention to new problems as they arise, to new technical or technological options and to the trends that will shape transport operations in the future, as well as to the identification of possible solutions applicable in member countries.

11. As an example, several issues may be noted that could become major problems for the future, or may change the course of our work today:

- The development of Europe-Asia transport links;
- The use of telematics and intelligent transport systems (vehicles, infrastructure);
- Population ageing;
- European integration;
- The emergence of cleaner propulsion technologies, taking into account new energy sources;
- Impact of electronic trade on transport;
- Transport security;
- Charging for infrastructure usage;
- Globalization (in French: mondialisation) of the world economy and implications for transport.

In response to these challenges, the Committee could focus, for example, on the following missions:

- Creation, improvement and unification of international transport legislation and also monitoring its implementation;

- Development of road infrastructure, in particular east-west and north-south transport corridors;
- Possibility of increased facilitation of transport operations;
- Possibility of elimination of existing barriers to cross-border transport (visa problems, customs, fees, etc.).

Such actions would then be defined in a strategic plan, taking into account priorities and means available.

12. The ITC will take these questions into consideration in its strategy to the extent that they fall within its competence and it can contribute added value to activities carried out in other international fora.

2. Resources and Methods

13. The Inland Transport Committee has permanent and ad hoc groups. The secretariat services are provided by the Transport Division. The secretariat, whose number of staff is limited, must manage the whole of the activities of the ITC and of its subsidiary bodies as well as the Agreements and the Conventions.

14. Taking into account the urgency and magnitude of the problems and their technical complexity, the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies requires:

- a larger capacity of relevant services to ensure the material support for meetings (documentation, meeting rooms, interpretation, translation);
- greater availability of delegates;
- a strengthening of human resources in the Transport Division, including maintaining the two Regional Advisers;
- the adaptation of the budgetary framework of the UNECE and its member countries.

15. These aspects require also that some thought should be given to the methods of work, the efficiency and priorities on the one hand, and possibilities of finding new resources on the other.

16. As far as methods of work are concerned, it is suggested that:

- It is desirable to adopt a report at the end of each meeting. However, if that is not possible, a list of decisions should be agreed upon instead, particularly when dealing with legal issues;
- Reports could be shorter, and concentrate more on essential matters;
- Discussions could be limited to decisions and conclusions concerning the subjects dealt with;

- The late distribution of documents in all working languages should be avoided at all costs since it often leads to postponement of consideration or decision-making because it makes it impossible for the delegates to prepare for the meeting;
- Recourse to groups of experts preparing a subject and meeting informally would make it possible to progress more rapidly; only their report would be considered and adopted in plenary;
- Some questions could be adopted as an "A item" - i.e. without a presentation or discussion - during meetings of Working Parties or the ITC.

It is also necessary:

- to pay more attention to priorities;
- to determine clear and precise terms of references of bodies, which should be limited in time;
- to abandon, even temporarily, some of the topics on which no progress can be made, either because of lack of political agreement or because of lack of interest or because of lack of necessary facilities;
- to establish more often ad hoc groups for specific topics rather than addressing subsidiary bodies.

17. The efficiency of the Inland Transport Committee would certainly improve as a result of better coordination and more intensive cooperation:

- Internally (UNECE), for cross-sectoral questions or problems common to several Working Parties;
- Externally, with other international organizations (EU, ECMT, ...) or NGOs (technical questions) and the Coordinating Department of CIS countries;
- Intensification of work of UNECE in countries in Central and Eastern Europe as well as in CIS through the establishment of a system of information and analytical, consultative and training centers on key issues;
- Developing cooperation between UNECE and International Financial Institutions with a view to ensuring support for major projects including, in particular, investment projects in transition economies.

18. Coordination and cooperation with ECMT, UNESCAP and the Coordinating transport meeting of CIS countries seem particularly necessary, in order to:

- Define roles better with a view to making them complementary;
- Share the same strategic vision;
- Take into account the work and decisions of ECMT;
- Convene joint meetings at the levels of the Bureau and of the Working Parties;
- Carry out joint activities.

19. Where resources are concerned, new directions should be explored:
- To prompt more often member States to make experts temporarily available to the UNECE Transport Division;
 - To explore the possibility of allocating the proceeds of the sale of publications and documents to ITC activities;
 - To develop partnerships in order to organize some specific activities and help in the preparation of technical documents.
20. Lastly, it seems desirable for the role of the Inland Transport Committee that the importance of its work and its achievements be better known.

3. Measures to be taken

21. The Committee should build on its existing strengths in areas of norms and standard setting and follow better the implementation and monitoring of them.
22. The list of “major problems for the future” - cf. paragraph 11 - should encourage the Inland Transport Committee to develop a real strategy for action.
23. With this objective in mind, the Working Parties will consider new emerging trends and issues in their work whenever possible. However, in some instances, they may not be in a position to include some of these problems, in their work: either they fall outside their respective fields of competence or concern areas which go well beyond them, or else the working methods employed are such that concern is only with today’s problems.
24. The Bureau will dedicate part of its time to elaborating a strategy basing itself on the work of its subsidiary bodies and the expertise of the respective Chairpersons.
25. It would seem to be indispensable first of all to organize a consultation with ECMT, the relevant services of the European Commission and the coordinating transport meeting of the CIS countries so as to define a common strategic vision, to distribute the roles to avoid any duplication, and to ensure the necessary exchanges of information.
26. The strategic objectives of the Committee should be updated by the Committee when necessary.
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Appendix 2 to Annex 3

DRAFT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

Supplementary Paper by Mr. H. Courtois

Note: At its meeting on 10-11 July 2003, the Bureau, considering the Draft Strategic Objectives of the Committee, felt that it would be appropriate to have additional information indicating the issues that are being worked on by the Committee, or its subsidiary bodies, or not.

Therefore, the Bureau welcomed the readiness of Mr. Courtois to prepare a supplementary paper which would outline the extent to which issues mentioned in the Draft Strategic Objectives are already included in existing and proposed strategies as reflected in the Committee's programme of work (TRANS/BUR.2003/11, item 6).

In line with the discussion of the Bureau, the draft ITC programme of work has been reviewed by Mr. Courtois with a view to identifying whether the issues listed in para. 11 of the Draft Strategic Objectives of the Committee (TRANS/BUR.2003/6, (revision 2)) have been reflected in the Committee's draft programme of work or not.

The result of the review is outlined in the table below. It shows the extent to which issues raised in the Draft Strategic Objectives (TRANS/BUR.2003/6, (revision 2) para. 11) are already covered in the programme of work of the ITC by indicating which programme element corresponds to the individual issues.

On the basis of the review, the Bureau may note the issues which are already reflected in the Committee's draft programme of work and identify those issues which may be included additionally in the programme of work for the follow-up by the respective ITC subsidiary bodies.

List of issues (referred to in TRANS/BUR.2003/6 (revision 2), para. 11):

1. The development of Europe-Asia transport links;
2. The use of telematics and intelligent transport systems (vehicles, infrastructure);
3. Population ageing;
4. European integration;
5. The emergence of cleaner propulsion technologies, taking into account new energy sources;
6. Impact of electronic trade on transport;
7. Transport security;
8. Charging for infrastructure usage;
9. Globalization (in French: mondialisation) of the world economy and implications for transport.

BODY	ISSUES								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
WP.5 02.1	CA ^{1/} : (f)			CA ^{1/} : (j)(a)					CA ^{1/} :(a)
SC.1 02.2.1 02.2.2	I (a) (a)	(a)(e)				(e)		(c)	
WP.1 02.3			(b)						
WP.29 02.4.1 02.4.2		(a)			(a) (a)		(a)		
SC.2 02.5.1 02.5.2	I(g)	(ii)	I(e)	I(a) (c)					
SC.3 02.6.1 02.6.2	(a)	(k)(l)(m)		(a) (c)(f)	(a)(b)(d)(f)(n)	(n)			
WP.15 02.7							(a)(b)(c)		(a)
T&E&H 02.8									
WP.24 02.9	(b)(h)	(d)(e) (f)	(f)						(c)
WP.30 02.10	(h)	(f)(g)		(f)(e)		(f)(g)	(a)(f) (g)		(b)(c)
WP.11 02.11				(i)					
WP.6 02.12.1 02.12.2			(a)(ii)						

^{1/} CA: Continuing Activities