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Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON TRANSPORT TRENDS
AND ECONOMICS ON ITS EIGHTEENTH SESSION
(15-16 September 2005)**

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REPORT¹

ATTENDANCE AND OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics held its seventeenth session from 15 to 16 September 2005. The session was held under the chairmanship of Mr. W. Zarnoch (Poland) and Mr. R. Kellermann (Germany) as Vice-Chairman. Representatives of the following UNECE member States participated: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and Uzbekistan. The representative of the International Road Union (IRU) and the representatives of the TEM and TER Project Central Office also attended.

2. During the session of the Working Party, a Workshop “Euro-Asian Transport Links – Feedback from users” was held on 16 September. The report of the Workshop with conclusions is circulated in document TRANS/WP.5/38/Add.1.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. The provisional agenda (TRANS/WP.5/36) was adopted.

FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORKING PARTY

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/1.

4. The Chairman reminded participants that the Informal meeting held on 14 April 2005, had noted that the Working Party would benefit from an in-depth review of its activities with a view to further increasing its relevance to member Governments. In this context, the Working Party agreed that a change in focus and priorities in the work programme would represent a positive step toward reinvigorating the interest of member Governments in its work. Proposals concerning specific topics outlined in document TRANS/WP.5/2005/1 were supported by the majority of participants, while additional ideas were also proposed.

5. The prevailing opinion was that the Working Party should avoid duplicating its work with other international bodies dealing with transport issues, that it should limit the number of items it considers, that it should define its priorities and focus on concrete and tangible results. It was felt that there are such issues, not covered by other international fora, where the Working Party could make contributions within its competences. Subsequently, the Working Party agreed to initiate an in-depth review of its programme of work under agenda item 7. It further agreed that discussion about future activities should be based on a pragmatic selection of relevant items, considering the ways in which they could be dealt with effectively, and the expected outcome.

¹ The underlined text indicates the Working Party’s decisions taken at the end of the session.

MONITORING OF DEVELOPMENTS RELEVANT FOR THE PAN-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS AND AREAS

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/5.

- (a) Relationship between the UNECE infrastructure Agreements (AGR, AGC, AGTC and its protocol, and AGN) and the UNECE Projects (TEM and TER) with Pan-European transport infrastructure network planning procedures

6. The Working Party noted that development of Pan-European Transport Corridors (PETRc) and Areas had reached a new direction after the enlargement of the European Union (EU). Activities carried out by the European Commission (EC), member States, corridors' Steering Committees, and the High Level Groups established by the EC, have advanced development of corridors and led to identification of priority projects aimed at connecting the Pan-European Transport Network with the EU new neighbouring countries. In this context, the Working Party considered in what ways it could contribute to a further development of Pan-European transport infrastructure and network planning procedures.

7. Noting the ongoing work of the EC High Level Group, which is considering how to connect better the major Trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions, the Working Party noted the great significance which member Governments attach to a coherent development of the Pan-European transport infrastructures. To that end, participants expressed interest to continue exchanging views and being closely associated with activities leading to future infrastructure developments at the Pan-European level. In this context, the Working Party decided to invite the chairpersons of steering committees of the selected Pan-European transport corridors to periodically provide the information on the most important developments in their respective corridors to its future sessions.

8. A member of the TER Project Central Office made a detailed presentation of the recently completed TER and TEM Master Plan. He highlighted the methodology behind the project, elements of the plan, main results, achieved goals and benefits, and concluded with the main directions for the follow-up. The Working Party appreciated the information and the content of the Master Plan, stressing its relevance for the current phase of the work of the above mentioned EC High Level Group. It further asked the TER and TEM PCO to urgently transmit the Master Plan to the next meeting of the EC High Level Group for information and eventual further consideration.

- (a) Infrastructure bottlenecks and missing links

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2004/1/Add.1; TRANS/WP.5/2005/16 and Add.1-7.

9. The Working Party considered documents containing the updated information on infrastructure bottlenecks and missing links on the AGR, AGC and AGN transport infrastructure networks. It was felt that bringing together this information, in particular from Central Asian and Caucasus countries, would greatly enhance the quality and the relevance of an updated final document, especially in view of its potential usefulness in the context of further development of Pan-European and Euro-Asian transport links.

10. Noting that twelve member countries had replied to a questionnaire on “Infrastructure bottlenecks and missing links in the European transport network”, the Working Party asked the countries which have not yet replied to do so. It further asked the secretariat to prepare a summary report for the next session of the Working Party.

DEVELOPMENT OF EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS

11. The Working Party welcomed the participation of delegates from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, whose attendance was made possible by successful completion of the Division’s project entitled “Facilitation of participation of Central Asian and Caucasus countries in the meetings of UNECE Inland Transport Committee and selected Subsidiary Bodies” funded by the European Union. The Project is aimed at facilitating the attendance of one participant per country to a number of meetings organized in Geneva by the UNECE. Beneficiary countries include: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Appreciating the involvement of delegates from the above-mentioned countries, especially in the context of discussion about the development of Euro-Asian transport links, the Working Party asked the secretariat to consider extending the mentioned project by requesting the continuation of funding by the European Union.

(a) Report on informal meeting on Euro-Asian transport links

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/2.

12. The Working Party noted the recommendation of the Informal meeting on Euro-Asian transport links held on 15 April 2005 in Geneva. In particular, it supported the continuation of the joint UNECE-UNESCAP project and asked the two secretariats to prepare a joint proposal for the continuation of the project in the new phase beyond 2006. In order to ensure closer coordination of activities, it asked the secretariat to consider the most appropriate framework in which the Expert Group established under the UNDA Project could, in close relationship with the Working Party, become functional as a permanent mechanism ensuring continued monitoring of all related activities.

13. Noting that UNECE TER and TEM Projects had accumulated considerable expertise and know-how on various aspects related to development of transport infrastructures, the Working Party asked the two Project Central Offices to consider sharing their experiences with Caucasus and Central Asian countries in concrete areas within their competence and, in accordance with their capacities, to make possible this transfer of knowledge.

14. The Working Party appreciated the organization of the Workshop “Euro-Asian transport links – Feedback from users”, as recommended by the Informal meeting. Organization of the Workshop was welcomed as an important step that could increase the interest in its activities and reinforce its relevance.

- (b) Elaboration of the joint UNECE-ESCAP Programme for the development of Euro-Asian transport links and analysis of the results of the relevant international meetings

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2001/14.

15. Representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and the Russian Federation informed the Working Party about the most recent transport trends and developments and, in particular, important activities related to further progress of Euro-Asian transport links in their respective countries. The Working Party decided to request the member countries to continue to provide, on a regular basis, information about the progress made in development of Euro-Asian transport links as well as to maintain the practice of exchange of experiences in dealing with related infrastructure and relevant regulatory developments.

- (c) Organization of demonstration trains

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/4.

16. Representatives from the Russian Federation and Turkey informed the Working Party about the latest developments related to organization of demonstration runs of container block trains. The Working Party noted the usefulness of this activity for the further promotion of Euro-Asian transport corridors and invited involved countries to provide similar information for its next session.

FINANCING SCHEMES OF TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/6 and Informal document No.1.

17. Participants noted a certain proliferation of discussions about various transport infrastructure financing methods and schemes in different countries, international organizations and other fora. For that reason, the Working Party agreed that it would not be suitable at this moment to organize a special session devoted to financing issues, as proposed at its seventeenth session. Noting, however, the relevance of the subject and strong interest expressed by several member countries, the Working Party decided to continue discussing, in a similar manner, issues related to financing of transport infrastructure at its future sessions.

TRANSPORT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

- (a) Mediterranean Transport Study Centre and Transport Training Centre

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/7.

18. The Working Party took note of the report on activities of CETMO in recent years and asked the Director of CETMO to report on the results of the work of the centre at its next session. The Working Party also noted the interest of CETMO to become involved and associated with the UNDA project component involving the UNECE and UNECA member countries.

(b) Transport developments in the Mediterranean Region

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/8.

19. The Working Party appreciated the information on the current situation regarding the development of the Euro-Mediterranean transport network provided by the DG TREN of the EC and asked the secretariat to request similar information for its next session. In addition, noting the importance attached to the concept of the “motorways of sea”, the Working Party asked the secretariat to request the information on developments of motorways of the sea from member Governments for its next session.

(c) Europe-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar

20. The Working Party asked the secretariat to submit to its twentieth session (2007) new information on activities carried out under this project.

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2006-2010

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/10.

21. The Working Party discussed in detail and carried out an in-depth review of its programme of work for 2006 - 2010. Considering the concrete elements of its draft Programme of work, as circulated in document TRANS/WP.5/2005/10, the Working Party decided to retain, for consideration at its future sessions, items: (a) and (b) which will be considered every five years. Items: (d), (e) (with the reservation from Turkey), (f), (g), (h), (j) will be retained on the annual agenda. Items (n) and (o) will be merged with the item (m) into a single item and retained. Item (l) will be maintained as an information item, while items (c), (i) and (k) will be deleted.

22. Adopting these amendments, the Working Party approved its draft programme of work for 2006-2010, as reproduced in the annex to this report.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

ACTIVITIES OF UNECE BODIES OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

Documentation: E/2005/37-E/ECE/1431 and ECE/TRANS/162.

23. The Working Party was informed about the decisions taken by the sixtieth session of the Economic Commission For Europe and sixty-seventh session of the Inland Transport Committee.

PHASED APPROACH TO TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/11.

24. The Working Party was informed about the result of the secretariat inquiry concerning the questionnaire on a phased approach to transport infrastructure developments.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/12.

25. The Working Party took note of document TRANS/WP.5/2005/12 containing views from member Governments on the role of transport in economic development with particular focus on the relationship between the availability of transport infrastructure and its impact on economic development.

ASSISTANCE REGARDING INSTITUTIONAL ADAPTATION OF GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND OF TRANSPORT ENTERPRISES TO MARKET ECONOMY

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/13.

26. The Working Party was informed about the activities of the Regional Adviser and the UNECE Trust Fund for Assistance to Countries in Transition (TFACT).

COHERENT EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURES

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/14 and TRANS/WP.5/2005/9.

27. The Working Party took note of the report consolidating replies to the secretariat questionnaire on the quality of transport service.

DEVELOPMENT OF A EUROPEAN TRANSPORT DATABASE SYSTEM

Documentation: TRANS/WP.5/2005/15.

28. The Working Party took note of the biennial report by the secretariat on the development of a European transport database system.

OTHER BUSINESS

29. The Working Party's nineteenth session is tentatively scheduled for 14-15 September 2006.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

30. The report of its eighteenth session, including the above decisions, was established by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman with the assistance of the secretariat, for submission to the Inland Transport Committee.

Annex**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2006-2010****PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.1: TRANSPORT TRENDS AND ECONOMICS**

Review of general trends with regard to transport development and transport policy, and analysis of specific transport economic issues Priority: 1

Description: Review and exchange of information on general trends in the development of transport and of specific transport economic issues including transport development in the Mediterranean Region.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee and the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) will consider and carry out the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) Study of economic aspects of transport taking into account (i) the integration process going on within the UNECE region, and (ii) the reform processes under way in member countries by monitoring current changes in transport in order to identify, promote and spread positive examples for transport development.

Output expected: Report on transport developments every 5 years (2007). Priority: 2

- (b) Periodical review of new important policy developments relating to inland transport in UNECE member countries in order to make the medium- and long-term evolution of transport more transparent. The Working Party WP.5 will examine all decisions, general and specific, recently taken in member countries likely to have implications in the organization of transport and take into account the findings arrived at during international meetings focusing on salient issues of transport development.

Output expected: Reports on developments in inland transport of member countries (every five years; next report: 2007). Priority: 1

- (c) Monitoring of the developments relevant for the Pan-European Transport Corridors in cooperation with the EC.

Output expected: Report on progress made in the implementation of the Pan-European Transport Corridors (2006). Priority: 1

- (d) Study of the interrelationship of the UNECE Agreements (AGR, AGC, AGTC and its Protocol, AGN) and the UNECE projects (TEM, TER) with the Pan-European transport network planning procedure with a view to:

- indicating the major international transport routes to be considered for improvement and modernization, establishing priorities and a timetable taking into account those parts of the networks where there are bottlenecks and missing links;
- assessing the cost of this infrastructure plan and making suggestions for financing it.

Output expected: Biannual report on coherent European system of international transport infrastructure (2006). Priority: 1

- (e) Further elaboration of the elements of the joint UNESCAP/UNECE programme on the development of Asia-Europe land transport links as well as the analysis of results of international meetings on the problem.

Output expected: Report on Euro-Asian transport links (2006).

Priority: 1

- (f) Financing schemes of transport infrastructure

Output expected: Report on national experiences

Priority: 1

- (g) Development of efficient management frameworks for transport infrastructure maintenance and operation, thus optimizing the need for new investments (linked to the development of the Quality-of-Service concept).

Output expected: Report on the quality of transport services (2006).

Priority: 2

- (h) Improving inter-modal coordination and integration with a view to establishing a balanced European transport system.

Priority: 2

- (i) Assistance regarding institutional adaptation of government administration and of transport enterprises to market economy. This also includes support through the UNECE Trust Fund for Assistance to Countries in Transition (TFACT).²

Output expected: Annual report for information (2006).

Priority: 1

- (j) Strengthening of cooperation with the Mediterranean Study and Training Centres, to enable all UNECE countries to benefit from the activities carried out including the organization of workshops. The Working Party will also analyze evolution of transport developments in the Mediterranean basin and the Black Sea region, as well as consider information on the Europe/Africa Permanent Link through the Strait of Gibraltar.

Output expected: Annual report on activities of the Study and Training Centres (2006).

Priority: 2

Output expected: Biannual report on progress made in the analysis of the Europe/Africa Permanent Link through the Strait of Gibraltar (next report: 2007)

Priority: 3

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (a) As follow-up to the Conference on Transport and the Environment: Development and implementation of programmes to establish attractive networks taking into account such aspects as intermodality, interoperability and environmentally sound vehicles.³

² A detailed list of subjects is circulated in document TRANS/1999/11.

³ In addition to the above item, the Working Party wishes to be associated with activities on transport and environment concerning, in particular, development of methodologies for setting up databases, implementation of scientific programmes, assistance to countries in transition, development of environmental guidelines, external costs, analysis of questions related to the protection of sensitive areas (see also items I (c), (d), (g), (h); III (e); IV (c), (f) in the Programme of Joint Action).