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109th session

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Report of the Working Party on Road Transport on its 109th session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) held its 109th session on 28-29 October 2014 in Geneva, chaired by Mr. R. Symonenko (Ukraine). The following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States were represented in the meeting: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.
2. The representatives of non-ECE member States also participated: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.
3. The following non-governmental organizations were also represented: the Council of Bureaux (CoB), and International Road Transport Union (IRU).

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

4. SC.1 adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/401).

III. Activities of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 2)

A. Activities of UNECE bodies and other United Nations organizations

5. The Working Party was informed about the key decisions made at the seventy-sixth session of the Inland Transport Committee (Informal document ITC (2014) No. 11). In particular, as requested in para., 15, SC.1 was informed about "old conventions that are still not in force", namely the "Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Road (CVR) of 5 July 1978" and "General Agreement on Economic Regulations for International Road Transport of 17 March 1954".

B. National delegations

6. National delegations did not provide any information about road transport developments in their countries.

C. International organizations

IRU provided information about the impact of Russian Federation's TIR restrictions, its trade sanctions and the announced European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) quota reductions on road transport. First, IRU noted that TIR carnets are only accepted in two customs offices (and for operations through Belarus and Kazakhstan) which resulted in carnet terminations being down by half. Second, the Russian Federation's trade sanctions have had the greatest impact on the neighbouring countries as well on the transport of perishable goods. Third, IRU informed SC.1 about the Russian Federation's decision to reduce basic ECMT quota from 67 to 16 as of next year. This - due to many countries retaining their own reservations - may have additional detrimental effects on trade. Finally, IRU described problems arising from two different legal interpretations of transport between Belarus and the Russian Federation (i.e. transport from Belarus to the Russian Federation may be considered to be an operation within the Customs Union or between two

countries). IRU also announced the launch of a pilot project to introduce the International Vehicle Weight Certificate in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation region.

8. Turkey noted similar adverse impacts in its transport sector while Poland stressed that embargo on the transport of some goods effective at the Russian Federation's borders must not apply to transit.

9. The delegate of the Russian Federation explained that a new TIR guarantying association is to be selected by 30 November 2014, that trade sanctions are not the competence of the Ministry of Transport and that the reduction in the ECMT quota is driven by similar protectionist measures by trade partners of the Russian Federation. In case of shortage of multilateral permits, the Russian Federation will hold bilateral negotiations with the countries concerned. The Russian Federation will also renounce its reduction if the reservations of other countries are removed. With respect to transport operations that involve Belarus and the Russian Federation, the suitable amendment proposals to the Customs Code will enter into force in 2016.

10. SC.1 urged the Government of the Russian Federation to provide a more satisfactory, timely and definitive reply so the uncertainty related to TIR transport operations in the Russian Federation is reduced.

IV. European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) (agenda item 3)

A. Status of the Agreement

11. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the unchanged status of the AETR Agreement. There are still 51 Contracting Parties.

B. AETR Group of Experts

12. The secretariat provided an update on the work of the AETR Expert Group.

13. SC.1 discussed Informal document No.1/Rev.1 (originally prepared by the secretariat for the final ninth session of the AETR Expert Group on 27 October 2014). SC.1 adopted this report and requested the secretariat to submit it at the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) session in 2015 while requesting ITC to extend the mandate of the AETR Expert Group until June 2017. Pending consideration and approval by the ITC and Executive Committee, SC.1 requested the secretariat to schedule a special SC.1 session in early 2015 to consider extending the Memorandum of Understanding between the UNECE and European Commission services which recognizes the Joint Research Centre (JRC) as the authority responsible for Root and Interoperability Certification for non-EU AETR Contracting Parties (and any other issues related to the Expert Group's Term of Reference).

14. SC.1 adopted the following amendment proposal to Article 14 of the AETR Agreement to allow Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia to accede to it.

“Article 14

15. 1. This Agreement shall be open for signature until 31 March 1971 and thereafter for accession, by States members of the Economic Commission for Europe and States admitted to the Commission in a consultative capacity under paragraph 8 or 11 of the Commission's terms of reference. Accessions under paragraph 11 of the Commission's terms of reference

shall be limited to the following States: Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia ."

16. SC.1 invited an AETR Contracting Party to formally propose this amendment at the earliest opportunity and requested the secretariat – upon the receipt of such communication - to submit it to the Secretary-General.

17. The secretariat informed SC.1 – on the basis of the intervention of the EU on 2 July 2014 (para. 13, ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/20) – that EU Regulation No. 165/2014 does not invoke a notification procedure stipulated in Article 22bis of AETR. As a result, there is no need for the secretariat to notify non-EU AETR Contracting Parties.

C. Implementation of the digital tachograph

18. Turkey informed SC.1 that digital tachograph became mandatory for domestic transport operations as of 1 July 2014.

19. Given that digital tachograph has been implemented in virtually all AETR Contracting Parties, SC.1 requested the secretariat not to include this agenda item at the next session. Going forward, delegations were invited to inform SC.1 about any digital tachograph matters under other suitable agenda items such as “Activities of interest to the Working Party”.

V. European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) (agenda item 4)

A. Status of the Agreement

20. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the unchanged status of the AGR Agreement. There are still 37 Contracting Parties.

B. Amendments to the Agreement

21. At its 105th session, the Working Party considered and approved amendments to the AGR on procedures relating to road safety impact assessments, road safety audits, the management of road network safety as well as safety inspections (based on European Commission Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management). As no Contracting Party had indicated that it would be willing to propose the amendment, the secretariat had been unable to forward the amendment proposal to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. SC.1 requested not to include this agenda item at the next session.

22. The Government of Germany tabled amendment proposals (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2014/1) to incorporate selected e-mobility issues into the AGR Agreement. With minor editorial changes, SC.1 adopted the proposal and requested the secretariat to submit it to the Secretary-General. The revised and adopted proposal is annexed to this report.

VI. Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) Project (agenda item 5)

23. The Working Party was informed about the status of the TEM project.

VII. Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) (agenda item 6)

A. Status of the Convention

24. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the unchanged status of the Convention. There are still 55 Contracting Parties.

25. Informal document No. 1 which was to propose to study the experience with CMR using a questionnaire developed in cooperation with IRU was not submitted. SC.1 requested this item not be retained on the agenda for the next session.

B. Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR)

26. The secretariat informed SC.1 about Slovenia's accession in November 2013. There are now 42 Contracting Parties.

C. Additional Protocol to the CMR concerning the Electronic Consignment Note

27. The secretariat informed SC.1 about Slovakia's accession in February 2014. There are now nine Contracting Parties. The secretariat reminded SC.1 about the need to operationalize this "Additional Protocol" by agreeing on procedures and their implementation as articulated in Article 5.

VIII. Facilitation of international road transport (agenda item 7)

A. International Motor Insurance System (Green Card)

28. The Working Party was informed by the representatives of the Council of Bureaux (CoB) about recent developments in the "Green Card system". ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2014/2 provides a comprehensive overview of CoB activities in 2014.

B. Proposal for a global multilateral agreement on the international regular transport of passengers by coach and bus (OmniBUS)

29. The secretariat provided an overview of the outcome of the special SC.1 session in July 2014 (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/S/394). SC.1 requested to schedule another special SC.1 session in early 2015 to consider the draft OmniBUS agreement. SC.1 invited the Government of Switzerland to assess – as far as possible - the comments provided by the secretariat with the aim of developing another draft to be considered at the special SC.1 session.

C. Quantitative restrictions imposed on international road transport of goods

30. As agreed at the last session, SC.1 continued discussions on a modelling study undertaken by an Istanbul-based university which estimated that Turkey had sustained large financial losses due to quotas. The presentation is available at the SC.1 website.

31. Turkey informed SC.1 about a study completed by the World Bank and a study being undertaken by the European Commission about road transport quotas.

32. SC.1 invited all those who are interested to continue to work on estimating effects of quotas on road transport. SC.1 also encouraged all those who are interested to continue to communicate the adverse effects of quotas on international trade. SC.1 invited the European Commission to report on the result of its study at the next SC.1 session.

D. The relationship between the origin of goods and transport operations

33. The Polish delegation updated SC.1 on development regarding the informal document no. 4 on the relationship between the origin of goods and transport operations. Poland considers that from the perspective of purely road transport operations executed by road transport hauliers, the place of taking over the goods and the place of unloading the goods, indicated in the CMR Consignment Note is the decisive factor which determines the kind of transport operation. As discussion at the 109th session of S.C.1 showed that experts had diverging views on this issue, the Polish government will submit a document at the next session of S.C.1 which analyzes this issue within the legal framework of international legislation related to road transport.

IX. Safety at Level Crossing's Expert Group (agenda item 8)

34. The secretariat provided information about the work of the Group of Experts on Improving Safety at Level Crossings, which met three times this year (20 January, 12–13 May, 23–24 October). SC.1 was shown a film from the Government of Switzerland, UNECE and UIC about enhancing safety at level crossings.

X. Revision of SC.1 terms of reference and rules of procedure (agenda item 9)

35. SC.1 took note of Informal document No. 2, which contains a first draft of its revised version of its terms of reference and rules of procedure and requested the secretariat to table it as a formal document at the next session for further discussion.

XI. Other business (agenda item 10)

36. The Working Party requested information concerning prices of digital tachographs and related services. The secretariat will endeavour to provide this information to SC.1 at the earliest opportunity.

XII. Date of next session (agenda item 11)

37. The Working Party was informed that the secretariat scheduled the 110th session for 26–27 October 2015.

XIII. Election of Officers (agenda item 12)

38. The Working Party elected its officers for the period October 2015 – September 2016. Mr. R. Symonenko (Ukraine) was elected as Chair; Ms. N. Tufekcioglu (Turkey) and Mr. K. Lewczak (Poland) were elected for Vice-Chair positions.

XIV Adoption of the report (agenda item 13)

39. The Working Party adopted the report of its 109th session.

Annex

Amendments to Annex II of the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR)

The Government of Germany proposed the following amendments to “table of contents” and provisions IV.4.2, IV.4.4, and IV.7.2 of Annex II. The amendments are identified below by strikethrough (deletions) and bold (additions).

Annex II

CONDITIONS TO WHICH THE MAIN INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC ARTERIES SHOULD CONFORM

Contents

IV. EQUIPMENT

4. Traffic control
 - 4.1 Traffic light signals
 - 4.2 Variable ~~traffic message~~ signs
 - 4.3 Emergency communications systems
 - 4.4 User information**

IV.4.2. Variable ~~traffic message~~ signs

Variable message signs shall be used in accordance with the international conventions and agreements in force.

Variable ~~traffic message~~ signs shall be as comprehensible as static road signs, and be legible by day and night to drivers in all lanes. **In particular, variable message signs may be used where special road safety requirements and/or road capacity problems exist.**

IV.4.4 User information

Up-to-date information on road and traffic conditions should be transmitted to road users by appropriate means (**e.g. variable message signs**). Possibility of receiving such information in tunnels is advisable. **Contracting Parties should endeavour to harmonize the content and presentation of road and traffic conditions information as far as possible.**

IV.7.2 Service areas

Service areas adapted both to the site and to its users (**e.g. tourists, road hauliers, etc.**) and away from interchanges shall provide a minimum of services such as parking **space for trucks, buses and cars**, ~~telephone~~, fuel, **restaurant** and toilets with easy access for physically disabled persons.

Due to the increasing number of vehicles in international traffic using alternative energy propulsion systems, it is also desirable to provide refuelling points for Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), hydrogen (H₂), Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), and electricity.

These areas should be provided at appropriate intervals, taking into account, among other things, the volume of traffic; a sign indicating the approach to a service area should also indicate the distance to the next service area **and the type of services available**.

All traffic and parking areas shall be separated from the carriageway(s) of the E-road.

SC.1 adopted these amendment proposals as per Article 9 of the AGR Agreement. Once these amendments have been accepted, the relevant parts of Annex II shall read as follows.

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