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Report of the Working Party on Road Transport on its 113th session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) held its 113th session from 16 to 18 October 2018, chaired by Mr. R. Symonenko (Ukraine). The following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States were represented in the meeting: Czechia Republic, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine.

2. The European Union, Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Association of International Road Carriers (ASMAP), Council of Bureaux (CoB), Euromed Transport Support Project, International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP), International Road Transport Union (IRU) and Moscow Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MTPP).

II. Adoption of the agenda

3. SC.1 adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/409).

III. Activities of interest to the Working Party

A. National delegations

4. There were no updates by national delegations at this session.

B. International organizations

5. The IRU informed SC.1 about its initiatives on decarbonisation, driver shortage, innovation, eTIR and Brexit.

6. The International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) introduced its work on star ratings.

C. Activities of UNECE bodies and other United Nations organizations

7. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the results of relevant sessions of the Inland Transport Committee, its subsidiary bodies and other United Nations entities of interest to the Working Party. In particular, the secretariat updated SC.1 on the key decisions made at the eightieth session of the Inland Transport Committee (20–23 February 2018) (paragraphs 25 to 27 of Informal document ITC (2018) No. 13).

8. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) Bureau, supported by the secretariat, has further developed the draft ITC strategy until 2030 (ECE/TRANS/2019/R.1). In line with ITC decisions (ECE/TRANS/274, paragraph 17), the Bureau requested that (a) the discussion of the ITC strategy becomes part of the agendas of the meetings of the Working Parties until the end of the year and (b) that the draft strategy document be circulated accordingly to governments to facilitate the consultations. Given the above background, SC.1 discussed ECE/TRANS/2019/R.1 and provided the comments in the annex.

D. Digital/smart road infrastructure

9. During its last session, SC.1 stated that it would “endeavour to organize events (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/408, paragraph 49) related to digital/smart infrastructure so that it may be better informed of emerging issues and consider how it may incorporate these developments into its work programme”. Accordingly, the secretariat organized a special session of SC.1 from 4 to 6 April 2018, with the second day —5 April 2018— as a dedicated workshop on this topic.

10. The outcomes of the special session are reflected in the report (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/S/398), including having this as an item on the agenda of SC.1 in order to educate and raise awareness on the topic given its relevance to road transport (paragraph 29). The secretariat has produced a compilation of case studies or project excerpts based on the voluntary contributions of the special session workshop’s speakers (Informal document No. 7).

11. For this session, the representative of Romania and the founder of Emerging Transport Advisors made presentations. The representative of Romania shared information about the early warning intelligent system for road transport risks which had recently been introduced. Emerging Transport Advisors shared information about the emerging trends on automated vehicles and ride sharing. Both presentations were well received and appreciated. In response to questions from SC.1, the representative from Emerging Transport Advisors recommended that road infrastructure managers incorporate interoperability in national infrastructure investments and consider the development of standards for interoperable systems.

12. The secretariat encouraged the members of SC.1 to suggest topics of interest under this item, and to volunteer to make presentations at the next session.

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

A. Status of the Agreement

13. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the unchanged status of the AETR Agreement. There are still 51 contracting parties.

14. The secretariat also informed SC.1 that Turkey had advised the Group of Experts that it had begun the necessary steps to submit an amendment proposal to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs to seek amendment of Article 14 to make Lebanon eligible to accede to the AETR Agreement.

15. The representative of Euromed Transport Support Project informed SC.1 that Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia had taken the necessary steps to accede to the AETR Agreement in the near future. He also advised that Egypt would likely express its interest to seek amendment of Article 14 to make it eligible to accede to the AETR Agreement.

B. AETR Group of Experts

16. The Chair of the Group of Experts on AETR provided an update on the work of the AETR Group of Experts since the last SC.1 session (detailed information is available in ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/41 and ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/43).

17. At the last session, the secretariat drew the attention of SC.1 to the possible desirability to consider changing the name of the AETR Agreement by deleting the term “European” from

the title (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/37 paragraph 14). The Chair repeated his request that members of SC.1 consult their respective capitals and provide their views at the next session.

18. The Government of Turkey made a presentation on the progress of its project to establish a national data monitoring centre for driving times and rest periods, including the establishment of the database component in mid-2018 (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/408 paragraph 23). SC.1 requested an update at future sessions.

19. In relation to the Memorandum of Understanding with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) which recognizes JRC as the AETR authority for root certification and for interoperability certification for the non-EU contracting parties to AETR, the secretariat updated SC.1 that a proposed supplement to the memorandum to extend its validity until 31 December 2020 had been successfully concluded (Informal document No. 8).

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

Status of the Agreement

20. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the status of the AGR Agreement. The number of contracting parties has remained the same (37) since the last SC.1 session.

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

21. SC.1 took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the TEM project contained in Informal document No. 9, with particular emphasis on road safety audits and inspections.

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

A. Status of the Convention

22. The secretariat informed SC.1 that that the number of contracting parties to the Convention has remained unchanged (55) since the last SC.1 session.

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

23. The secretariat informed SC.1 that that the number of contracting parties to the Protocol to the Convention has remained unchanged (43) since the last SC.1 session.

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

24. The secretariat informed SC.1 that, since the last SC.1 session, five States (Iran (Islamic Republic of), Luxembourg, Russian Federation, Republic of Moldova and Turkey) have acceded to the Additional Protocol to the Convention bringing the total number of contracting parties to 17. The representatives of Finland, Norway, Poland and Romania indicated that their

countries intended to accede to the Additional Protocol and informed SC.1 about the status of their preparations for accession.

25. At the last session, SC.1 requested the secretariat to organize a special SC.1 session dedicated to e-CMR in early 2018 to further discuss this issue and to decide on a way forward (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/408 paragraph 33). Accordingly, the secretariat organized a special session for SC.1 in April 2018. The first day —4 April 2018—was dedicated to e-CMR. The outcomes of the meeting are available in the report (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/S/398).

26. At the request of SC.1 at its special session, the secretariat had prepared a “without prejudice” guidance note on the legal aspects of e-CMR (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2018/1). This document has taken into account the legal questions provided by SC.1 members.

27. For the next session, SC.1 invited the Netherlands to prepare and submit ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2018/1/Rev.1 with appropriate text to reflect the usual scenario of the usage of electronic consignment notes for contracts of carriage of goods by road in vehicles for reward where both the place of origin and place of destination are situated in two different countries which are both contracting parties to the CMR (see ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2018/1 paragraphs 29 and 30). Also, at the next session, SC.1 will decide how it would wish to proceed with the guidance note.

28. In addition, at the request of SC.1 for case studies and best practice examples, the Netherlands had shared its Benelux project documents which include the decision of the Committee of Ministers of the Benelux Union on 7 September 2017 to start a pilot project on the e-CMR from 1 December 2017 to 1 December 2020 (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2018/3), and the reasons behind their decision (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2018/4). The Netherlands also shared the application form used by applicants to participate in the pilot (original in French, with unofficial translations to English and Russian) (Informal document Nos. 2, 3 and 4).

29. The European Commission provided an overview of its proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on electronic freight transport information which was issued on 17 May 2018.

30. IRU informed SC.1 about the pilot project on e-CMR which will commence in early 2019 in Latvia and the Russian Federation involving the customs authorities of these contracting parties.

31. OTIF expressed an interest in the discussions on this topic and drew attention to their work on similar challenges in implementing the electronic consignment notes for the commercial transport of goods by rail.

32. To facilitate discussion on technical aspects at this session, the secretariat also compiled a list of technical questions provided by SC.1 members (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2018/2).

33. Slovenia shared its challenge of not having neighbouring countries which are contracting parties to e-CMR to start a pilot project. Finland emphasized the importance of having interoperable technological systems so that information can be easily shared in the future.

34. In response to the secretariat’s question on next steps for e-CMR, and SC.1 role in these next steps, SC.1 affirmed its role as the main platform for multilateral dialogue and exchange of best/emerging practices by contracting parties implementing e-CMR.

35. For the next session, contracting parties are encouraged to provide information or updates on their implementation of e-CMR, including challenges and opportunities faced. SC.1 requested the European Commission to make a presentation on the AEOLIX platform which is envisaged to include an e-CMR offering for the next session.

VIII. Facilitation of international road transport

A. International Motor Insurance System (Green Card)

36. SC.1 was informed by the Secretary-General of the Council of Bureaux (COB) about recent developments in the “Green Card system” (detailed information is available in Informal document No. 5).

37. The Secretary-General also shared that COB wished to abolish the requirement to print the Green Cards in green colour and to issue them in PDFs in black on white colour. SC.1 expressed its support for, and approved, CoB’s request. It also invited CoB, if CoB deems it necessary, to provide an amendment proposal to annex 1 of the Revised Consolidated Resolution on the Facilitation of International Road Transport (RE.4) at the next session.

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

38. At the third day of the special session of SC.1 on 6 April 2018, SC.1 recommenced its discussion on ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2015/3 focused on Articles 6, 8 and 25, and on Annex VI. Changes were made to Articles 6 and 8. The Russian Federation retained its position of reservation on the draft text of Article 25 and Annex VI.

39. SC.1 requested the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Turkey to agree on and provide a proposal on draft text in relation to Article 25 and Annex VI for this session of SC.1.

40. SC.1 decided to defer its discussion on this item until the next session due to the absence of representatives from the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Turkey.

41. The European Commission advised that for the InterBus agreement, two protocols (one for the extension of the scope of regular services and another to provide access of Morocco to the InterBus agreement), as well as a draft Joint Committee Decision, were adopted by the Council on 16 July 2018. The draft Joint Committee Decision may be found at https://eurlex.europa.eu/legalcontent/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2018.185.01.0016.01.ENG&toc=OJ:L:2018:185:TOC. The period for the signature of the two protocols started at the date of adoption of the protocols and will last for nine months.

C. Quantitative restrictions imposed on international road transport of goods

42. At the last session, SC.1 discussed a European Commission (EC) study on the economic analysis of an agreement between the European Union and Turkey which had estimated that Turkey and the European Union had sustained large financial losses due to transport quotas and restrictions.

43. SC.1 had taken note of the information provided by EC that the extension of the mandate of the Customs Agreement was with the Council and that DG Trade was the responsible EC service. DG Move was requested by the Government of Turkey to further discuss this issue within EC.

44. SC.1 decided to defer its discussion on this item until the next session due to the absence of the representative of Turkey.

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

45. Based on the comments received at the last session in relation to Poland proposal to revise the Revised Consolidated Resolution on the Facilitation of International Road Transport (R.E.4) to include a definition of “bilateral transport” as a new subpoint 4.1.9 (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2017/4), Poland had submitted Informal document No. 6. Latvia had earlier been a proponent to a similar proposal, and the Netherlands indicated its support for the proposed definition at this session.

46. SC.1 requested that Poland submits an amendment proposal for adoption at the next session:

“4.1.9 "Bilateral transport means a road transport operation undertaken by a laden or unladen vehicle registered in one country, the point of departure of which is from the territory of registration of the vehicle, and the destination of which is in the territory of the other country, or vice versa. The country of origin of goods or the country of the recipient of goods could be any country, at least one of them should be a UNECE member State.”

IX. Safety at Level Crossings Group of Experts

47. The secretariat advised that, due to a lack of positive responses from International Union of Railways (UIC) and European Railway Agency (ERA), that this item should be removed from SC.1 agenda until a future time when there is renewed interest. The secretariat also shared the “sign to crash through gates (barrier)” which had been developed by the Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety.

X. Revision of SC.1 terms of reference and rules of procedure

48. In 2016, Belgium and Germany had submitted a proposal for changes to SC.1 terms of reference and rules of procedures (Informal document (2016) Nos 3 and 4).

49. SC.1 decided to postpone its discussion until the adoption of new terms of reference and rules of procedure by the Global Forum on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) which could be used as a template for SC.1 future terms of reference.

XI. Other business

50. There were no issues raised under this agenda item.

XII. Date of next session

51. The next session will take place from 16 to 18 October 2019 in Geneva.

XIII. Election of Officers

52. The Working Party elected its officers for the period November 2018 – October 2020. Mr. R. Symonenko from Ukraine (Chair), Mr. K. Lewczak from Poland (Vice-Chair) and Mr. D. de Groot from the Netherlands (Vice-Chair).

XIV. Adoption of the report

53. The Working Party adopted the report of this session.

Annex

ITC Strategy until 2030

The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) supports the proposed strategy outlined in ECE/TRANS/2019/R.1 (ITC Strategy, draft zero). SC.1 also welcomes the opportunity to provide the following comments on the strategy:

- The strategy appropriately captures modern transport scenarios and emerging issues, and UNECE's role in assisting member States to address the latter;
 - SC.1 supports and emphasizes the importance of digitalizing transport systems and documents for road safety, environmental issues, efficiency and security;
 - SC.1 supports and highlights the necessity of developing existing transport (road) corridors;
 - SC.1 supports and highlights the necessity of removing bottlenecks and obstacles through more effective implementation of United Nations regulatory frameworks arising from international transport conventions and agreements;
 - SC.1 recommends that the strategy considers and incorporates the benefits of the promotion of e-fuels or green fuels by motor vehicles which in turn reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - SC.1 supports and recommends that the strategy reflects the necessity of ensuring affordable transport systems.
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