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Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Rail Transport****Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law****Seventeenth session**

Geneva, 9-11 July 2018

Item 4 of the provisional agenda

The Group of Experts: administrative arrangements**Work Plan of the UNECE Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law****Note by the secretariat****I. Work Plan****A. Objectives of work**

1. In line with the Joint Declaration on Euro-Asian Rail Transport and Activities towards Unified Railway Law, signed at the ECE Ministerial Meeting “Making the Euro-Asian Transport Network Operational” on 26 February 2013, as well as with the draft legal provisions towards Unified Railway Law prepared by the Group of Experts, the Group during this phase will focus its work on the following issues:

(a) Monitor the finalization of necessary documents in order to perform international rail transport under the unified railway law including a standard model for the consignment note for the new provisions and its manual;

(b) Monitor the performance of a substantial number of real pilot tests to be carried out by the railway companies involved in the Group along the corridors agreed and along other corridors if proposed by governments in order to ensure the operational validity and effectiveness of the legal provisions prepared;

(c) Draft a document (or systems of documents) on Unified Railway Law which

could be adopted as a legally binding instrument; the document (or systems of documents) shall:

- (i) take into account the draft legal provisions on the contract of carriage already prepared;
- (ii) include the necessary formal provisions such as depository, management, secretariat, administrative committee, amending procedures, voting rights, etc.;
- (iii) be structured in a way which allows to easily supplement it with provisions on other issues related to international rail freight transport where the Group considers it appropriate to do so.
- (d) Discuss other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport with a view to adding, where appropriate, provisions to the document referred to at (c); these issues may include:
 - (i) Common provisions on dangerous goods;
 - (ii) Common provisions on the use of freight wagons;
 - (iii) Common provisions on rail infrastructure;
 - (iv) Common provisions on rolling stock.

2. The UNECE secretariat should ensure close cooperation with the European Commission (EC), the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), OSJD and OTIF as well as with the other concerned Regional Commissions of the United Nations, particularly with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

B. Activities

3. At its seventeenth session, the Group of Experts will undertake the following tasks:
- (a) Adopt its work plan (objectives, activities, time schedule);
 - (b) Monitor the finalization of necessary documents:
 - (i) monitor the preparation of the standard model for the consignment note (discuss and if possible agree on a list of amendments that should take place in the current common CIM-SMGS consignment note in order to prepare a standard model for the consignment note that fully accommodates the requirements of the draft legal provisions as well as on the structure of the manual of the standard model for the consignment note);
 - (ii) monitor the preparation of all necessary documents required (discuss and if possible agree on the list of documents required).
 - (c) Monitor the performance of a substantial number of real pilot tests:
 - (i) discuss and determine the main obstacles towards the performance of a number of real pilot tests;
 - (ii) schedule the realization of real pilot tests during the period 2018-2020.

(d) Draft a document (or systems of documents) on Unified Railway Law which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument. The Group should prepare a document (or system of documents) on Unified Railway Law which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument and should include the draft legal provisions already prepared as well as provisions on depository, management, secretariat, administrative committee, amending procedures, and voting rights:

(i) discuss and agree on the determination of the document or systems of documents which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument;

(ii) discuss and agree on the list of the necessary formal provisions that should be included in the legally binding instrument; preliminary exchange of views on possible formal provisions especially for those related to the secretariat and the management;

(iii) designate experts to help in preparing a draft working document on the necessary formal provisions.

(e) Discuss other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport:

(i) discuss and agree on a list of relevant issues related to international rail freight transport in order to analyze them during the next sessions of the Group with a view to adding, where appropriate, provisions to the legally binding instrument;

(ii) designate experts to help in preparing a draft working document on those relevant issues.

4. At its eighteenth session, the Group of Experts will undertake the following tasks:

(a) Monitor the finalization of necessary documents:

(i) monitor and discuss the first draft of the standard model for the consignment note prepared including the structure of its manual;

(ii) monitor and discuss the first drafts of all the necessary documents required.

(b) Monitor the performance of a substantial number of real pilot tests:

(i) discuss the results - if any - of the first real pilot tests undertaken;

(ii) discuss the schedule for the realization of real pilot tests during the period 2019-2020.

(c) Draft a document (or systems of documents) on Unified Railway Law which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument:

(i) discuss and comment on the working document prepared by the secretariat and the designated experts on the necessary formal provisions that should be included in the legally binding instrument;

(ii) discuss and comment on the working document prepared by the secretariat and the designated experts on the different scenarios regarding the management of the legally binding instrument.

(d) Discuss other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport:

discuss and comment on the working document prepared by the secretariat and the designated experts on relevant issues related to international rail freight transport.

5. At its nineteenth session, the Group of Experts will undertake the following tasks:
 - (a) Monitor the finalization of necessary documents:
 - (i) monitor and discuss the second draft of the standard model for the consignment note prepared including the draft content of its manual;
 - (ii) monitor and discuss the second drafts of all the necessary documents required.
 - (b) Monitor the performance of a substantial number of real pilot tests:
 - (i) discuss the results of the first real pilot tests undertaken and prepare recommendations accordingly;
 - (ii) update the schedule for the realization of real pilot tests during the period 2019-2020.
 - (c) Draft a document (or systems of documents) on Unified Railway Law which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument:

discuss and comment on the updated working document based on comments received prepared by the secretariat and the designated experts on the necessary formal provisions that should be included in the legally binding instrument.
 - (d) Discuss other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport:

discuss and comment on the updated working document based on comments received prepared by the secretariat and the designated experts on relevant issues related to international rail freight transport with a view to adding, where appropriate, provisions to the legally binding instrument.
6. At its twentieth session, the Group of Experts will undertake the following tasks:
 - (a) Monitor the finalization of necessary documents:
 - (i) monitor and discuss the final draft of the standard model for the consignment note prepared including the final draft content of its manual;
 - (ii) monitor and discuss the final drafts of all the necessary documents required.
 - (b) Monitor the performance of a substantial number of real pilot tests:

discuss the results of the real pilot tests undertaken and prepare recommendations accordingly;
 - (c) Draft a document (or systems of documents) on Unified Railway Law which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument:

discuss and comment on the draft document or system of documents prepared by the secretariat and the designated experts;
 - (d) Discuss other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport:

discuss and comment on provisions prepared, in order to be included in the document or system of documents on relevant issues related to international rail freight transport with a view to adding, where appropriate, provisions to the legally binding instrument.
7. At its twenty-first session, the Group of Experts will undertake the following tasks:
 - (a) Monitor the finalization of necessary documents:
 - (i) finalize and agree on the standard model for the consignment note prepared including its manual;

- (ii) finalize and agree on the necessary documents required.
 - (b) Monitor the performance of a substantial number of real pilot tests:
 - finalize the results of the real pilot tests undertaken and prepare final recommendations.
 - (c) Draft a document (or systems of documents) on Unified Railway Law which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument:
 - agree and finalize the document or system of documents prepared by the secretariat and the designated experts in order to be adopted as a legally binding instrument.
 - (d) Discuss other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport:
 - agree and finalize the provisions prepared, in order to be included in the document or system of documents on relevant issues related to international rail freight transport with a view to adding, where appropriate, provisions to the legally binding instrument.
8. At its twenty second session, the Group of Experts will undertake the following tasks:
- (a) Monitor the finalization of necessary documents:
 - (i) disseminate the finalized standard model for the consignment note prepared including its manual to all interested stakeholders in order to ensure consensus and agreement;
 - (ii) disseminate the finalized necessary documents required to all interested stakeholders in order to ensure consensus and agreement.
 - (b) Monitor the performance of a substantial number of real pilot tests;
 - (c) Draft a document (or systems of documents) on Unified Railway Law which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument;
 - (d) Discuss other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport:
 - update and finalize the document or system of documents prepared based on recommendations received during the performance of the real pilot tests and provisions prepared based on other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport.

C. Time schedule

9. In accordance with the terms of reference approved by ITC and ExCom, work on preparing and completing the planned objectives is scheduled as follows:
- (a) UNECE Group of Experts, seventeenth session, 9-11 July 2018, Geneva;
 - (b) UNECE Group of Experts, eighteenth session, 29-30 October 2018, Geneva;
 - (c) UNECE Group of Experts, nineteenth session, 2-4 April 2019, Geneva;
 - (d) UNECE Group of Experts, twentieth session, 25-27 June 2019, Geneva;
 - (e) UNECE Group of Experts, twenty-first session, 16-18 October 2019, Geneva;
 - (f) UNECE Group of Experts, twenty-first session, January 2020, Geneva;

- (g) If needed, UNECE Group of Experts, twenty-third session, April 2020, Geneva;
 - (h) If needed, UNECE Group of Experts, twenty-fourth session, June 2020, Geneva.
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