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Thirty-first session

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Report of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics on its thirty-first session

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Attendance.....	1–5	3
II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)	6	3
III. International Conference on “Making Euro-Asian Transport Corridors Operational” (agenda item 2).....	7–10	3
IV. Workshop and study on “Integrated Transport and Urban Development including environmental, health and quality of life perspective” (agenda item 3).....	11–18	4
V. Ports Hinterland connections (agenda item 4).....	19–22	6
VI. Monitoring of the developments relevant to pan-European transport networks (agenda item 5).....	23–27	7
A. The European Commission briefing on the progress made in developing the Trans-European Transport Network	23	7
B. Trans-European Motorway and Trans-European Railway projects	24–27	7
VII. Transport in the Mediterranean Region (agenda item 6).....	28–32	8
A. Report of the Mediterranean Transport Study Centre	28–30	8
B. The Euro-Mediterranean transport network.....	31	8
C. Report of the Union for the Mediterranean.....	32	8
VIII. Euro-Asian Transport Links (agenda item 7).....	33–39	8
A. Progress in Euro-Asian Transport Links work	33–35	8

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	B. International Transport Infrastructure Observatory	36–38	9
	C. Other Euro-Asian transport initiatives	39	9
IX.	Group of Experts on Benchmarking Transport Infrastructure Construction Costs (agenda item 8).....	40–42	9
X.	Urban mobility and Public Transport: Pan-European master plan for cycling (agenda item 9).....	43–45	10
XI.	Climate Change and Transport (agenda item 10).....	46–51	10
	A. Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes.....	46–49	10
	B. Climate Change mitigation: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe For Future Inland Transport Systems tool.	50–51	11
XII.	Review of the transport situation, transport trends and economics in the ECE region (agenda item 11).....	52–64	11
	A. Transport Trends and Economics 2018–2019: Mobility as a Service	52–55	11
	B. Transport Trends and Economics 2016–2017: Innovative ways for financing Transport Infrastructure	56	12
	C. Transport Trends and Challenges in the road sector.....	57–58	12
	D. Transport Trends and Challenges in the rail sector.....	59–60	13
	E. Transport Trends and Challenges in the inland waterways sector.....	61–62	13
	F. UNECE Transport Statistics analysis.	63–64	13
XIII.	Technical assistance to countries with economies in transition (agenda item 12)...	65–67	13
XIV.	Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 13)	68–70	14
XV.	Election of officers for the Working Party sessions in 2019 and 2020 (agenda item 14).....	71	15
XVI.	Other business (agenda item 15)	72	15
XVII.	Date of next session (agenda item 16).....	73	15
XVIII.	Adoption of the main decisions (agenda item 17).....	74	15
Annex			
	Conclusions and Recommendations of the International Conference on Making Euro-Asian Transport Corridors Operational.....		16

I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) held its thirty first session from 3 to 5 September 2018. The meeting was chaired by Mrs. I. Dettbarn (Germany). Representatives of the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States participated: Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Malta, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Switzerland, Tajikistan and Ukraine. Representatives of Afghanistan, China, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Mongolia attended under Article 11 of the Terms of Reference of ECE. A representative of the delegation of the European Union was present.

2. The following United Nations organizations and specialized agencies were represented: ECE Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects, UNCTAD and WMO.

3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Centre for Transportation Studies for the Western Mediterranean (CETMO) and the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Coordinating Council on Trans-Siberian Transportation (CCTT), European Rail Infrastructure Managers (EIM), FERRMED, International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the International Union of Railways (UIC).

5. The following attended the meeting at the invitation of the secretariat: Anaklia Development Consortium, Democritus University of Thrace, Hellmann Worldwide Logistics GmbH & Co KG, Hewlett Packard, Hupac Intermodal SA (HISA), Infrastructure Economics Centre, Russian University of Transport, Interdisciplinary scientific and piratical Center for Identification Systems and e-Business, International Association of Logistics Business, Joint-stock company United Transport and Logistics Company – Eurasian Rail Alliance (JSC UTLC ERA), Rossada Innovative Solutions, Russian Railways (RZD), Scientific and Research Institute of Motor Transport (NIIAT), Scientific-Research and Design Institute of Moscow, Transcontainer Europe, University of the Aegean.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/63

6. The Working Party adopted the agenda.

III. International Conference on “Making Euro-Asian Transport Corridors Operational” (agenda item 2)

Documentation: Informal document No. 1

7. This year`s international conference came as a follow-up to the workshops organized by the Working Party during its twenty-eighth session (7–9 September 2015, Geneva) on “Road and Rail transport corridors along Europe and Asia” and during its thirtieth session (4–6 September 2017, Geneva) on “Transport Infrastructure Corridors along Europe and Asia” as well as to the finalization of phase III of the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) Group of Experts.

8. The EATL Project, Phase I (2002–2007), Phase II (2008–2012) and Phase III (2013–2017) made transport between Europe and Asia a reality. The identification of routes, the prioritization of infrastructure investment projects, the development of a GIS database, the analysis of non-physical obstacles to transport, the comparison study between maritime and inland transport, the organization of a number of national capacity-building workshops on transport facilitation as well as the efforts to operationalize those corridors by preparing common time schedules and tariffs, have all helped to lay the foundation for an operational Euro-Asian transport network.

9. The Executive Secretary of ECE, Mrs. Olga Algayerova opened the session. She focused her speech on the need to establish efficient connectivity along the Euro-Asian transport corridors where all nodes of the transport corridors are interlinked by infrastructure and services which allow travel on all origin-destination connections within a reasonable range of time and without risk of major interruptions. She stressed that more efforts and coordinated actions are required and that the work towards the operationalization of the Euro-Asian transport corridors should continue. The Director of the Transport Division, Mr. Yuwei Li pointed out that focus should be on efficient operations. Trains might run along the corridors but the question is under which conditions, time schedules and costs. The work towards the efficient operations of Euro-Asian transport corridors should continue, however, has to be done by using an already well-established platform such as WP.5.

10. The conclusions and recommendations of the conference can be found in annex of this report.

IV. Workshop and study on “Integrated Transport and Urban Development including environmental, health and quality of life perspective” (agenda item 3)

Documentation: Informal document No. 2

11. At its fifteenth session, the Pan-European Programme on Transport, Health and Environment (THE PEP) Steering Committee (6–8 November 2017, Geneva) proposed the development of a manual on current practices and solutions in the field of sustainable transport and urban planning, to be launched and potentially adopted at the Fifth High-level Meeting in Vienna, in autumn 2019. At the same time, THE PEP secretariat presented a proposal for a publication on case studies and good practices on integrating transport and land-use planning in cities. The Steering Committee welcomed both proposals.

12. Based on those proposals, a project was initiated, funded by the Russian Federation, with the overall objective of preparing a handbook that improves knowledge of the ECE member States on integrated transport and urban development including environmental, health and a quality of life perspective. The Inland Transport Committee during its eightieth session in Geneva, 20–23 February 2018 (ECE/TRANS/274, para. 33) requested WP.5 as the analytical body of the Sustainable Transport Division to undertake this study in close cooperation with THE PEP.

13. The main objectives of the project are to:

(a) support the development of integrated transport and urban development and land use policies that take into account environmental and health issues and quality of life;

(b) raise awareness among policymakers at national level of the relevance and benefits of promoting national policies that support local action towards integrated transport and urban planning, and providing them with inspiring examples of practices;

(c) raise international awareness of the importance of linking sustainable transport policies into urban planning, to achieve multiple targets of the 2030 Agenda.

14. The workshop organized in order for the member States to brainstorm on this topic as well as discuss and suggest proposals on how better prepare the above-mentioned publication on case studies and good practices. The programme of the Workshop can be found in informal document No.2.

15. The participants during the workshop:

(a) Noted that urbanization and rapid growth of urban population and urban territories lead to significant growth in transport demand therefore there is a need to link this demand with capacity of transport systems and ensure its compliance with high standards of transport services quality (and, generally, quality of life!) by mobility management instruments;

(b) Noted that development of transport infrastructure and ensuring of new capacity of transport transit systems may lead to the generation of a new (additional) transport demand (in particular, by rise of territories attraction for housing) therefore we need effective legal instruments to regulate housing and especially activity of developers;

(c) Recalled the vicious circle of “induced mobility”: road building — increase of road network capacity — improvement of traffic conditions — rise of car use — increase of car trips — increase of congestion;

(d) Recalled that sustainable urban mobility planning should:

(i) focus on people;

(ii) have as objectives: accessibility and quality of life as well as sustainability, economic viability, social equity, health and environmental quality;

(iii) balance development of all relevant transport modes and shift towards cleaner and more sustainable transport modes (pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, urban rail);

(iv) integrate set of actions to achieve cost-effective solutions;

(v) be based on cross-sectoral planning tools (land use and spatial planning, transportation, social services, health, environment and so on);

(vi) be developed by interdisciplinary planning teams.

(e) Agreed that cities are different (different budgets, resources, assets, infrastructure, challenges, stakeholders’ engagement, mentality, culture and history, climate and land scape) therefore there is no one solution that fits to all cities;

(f) Agreed that integration of spatial planning and mobility planning is required to:

(i) optimize planning procedures of transport plus spatial development;

(ii) preserve a natural landscape at its best;

(iii) save spatial reserves in rare free urban areas in an economic way;

(iv) avoid urban sprawl;

(v) safeguard a healthy and socially viable environment including free spaces in other areas.

(g) Welcomed the case studies presented as well as the economic analysis concerning public transport advantages.

16. The Working Party took note of the presentations made by the experts and welcomed the in-kind contributions on good practices and case studies received so far from France. It thanked the experts for their participation and requested the secretariat to make sure that the topic should be addressed in Working Party's agenda on a regular basis.

17. The Working Party also during the workshop considered formal document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2018/1 which included a questionnaire to be distributed to member States to collect as many case studies and good practices on the topic under discussion as possible. The Working Party adopted the questionnaire as amended. The revised questionnaire was uploaded on Working Party's web site as ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2018/1/Rev.1. The Working Party requested the secretariat to distribute the questionnaire through diplomatic channels to the Ministers of Transport of the ECE region for them to request the appropriate information from all relevant bodies including the mayors of cities with good practices already implemented. The questionnaire is quite open and provides a general framework in order to collect all relevant data. However, governments, cities and other relevant bodies can provide any other information / good practice they consider important to be disseminated. The results from the replies to the questionnaire as well as the handbook should be ready for the next session of the Working Party.

18. The proceedings of the workshop, presentations and all workshop material have been uploaded on the ECE website at: www.unece.org/trans/main/wp5/transport_and_urban_development.html.

V. Ports Hinterland connections (agenda item 4)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2015/3

19. This agenda item was discussed in combination with agenda item 7(b) on the development of an international transport infrastructure observatory.

20. The Working Party recalled that at its twenty-eighth session it had taken note of the ports hinterland connections observatory prepared by Mediterranean Network (MedNet) programme. It noted that MedNet had already concluded its life time and that the secretariat had received an unofficial confirmation from the MedNet project on taking over this observatory ensuring its hosting, maintenance and further expansion to all ECE countries.

21. During the last session the secretariat informed the Working Party that no official response from the MedNet project had been sent so far. However, the secretariat provided information about the GIS project that is currently taking place in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank expressing its expectation that many economies of scale could be created between the two projects.

22. The secretariat informed the Working Party that the international transport infrastructure observatory is work in progress but soon it would be a reality. The data included in the MedNet ports hinterland connections observatory could be transferred with an efficient way to the observatory being prepared by the Division. The Working Party welcomed this development and requested the secretariat to provide updates on this agenda item at its next session.

VI. Monitoring of the developments relevant to pan-European transport networks (agenda item 5)

A. The European Commission briefing on the progress made in developing the Trans-European Transport Network

Documentation: Informal document No. 3

23. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat (Informal document No. 3) on the progress made by the European Union in developing the Trans-European Transport Network. The Working Party invited the European Union to provide an update on its activities related to pan-European corridors at its thirty-second session in 2019.

B. Trans-European Motorway and Trans-European Railway projects

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2018/2, ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2018/3

24. The Working Party appreciated the update provided by the TEM Project Manager on the TEM activities in 2017–2018, reiterated its support to the project and invited the project manager to provide an update on relevant developments in the TEM project at its thirty-second session in 2019.

25. The focus of TEM activities was given to:

(a) Network improvement and Funding of infrastructure (TEM Network Report, chairing the ECE Group of Experts on Benchmarking Transport Infrastructure Construction Costs, cooperation with the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO));

(b) Operational proficiency for road infrastructure operators and authorities (environmental protection, organization and financing of the roads and motorways, information systems for the management of the road infrastructure, innovations in the road infrastructure management, road safety);

(c) Trends.

26. The Working Party also appreciated the update provided by the TER Deputy Project Manager on the activities implemented in the TER Project in 2017–2018, reiterated its support for the project and invited the Project Manager to provide an update on relevant developments in the TER project at its thirty-second session in 2019.

27. The focus of TER activities during the reporting period was on:

(a) Connectivity (High-Speed Master Plan, participation in International fora);

(b) Visibility (TER webpage, TER brochure, promotion activities);

(c) Capacity-Building (TER Workshop, Identification of infrastructure bottlenecks);

(d) Development (TER Master Plan follow-up, possible extension of TER system, results of the Master Plan Revision implementation);

(e) Management (TER Steering Committee sessions).

VII. Transport in the Mediterranean Region (agenda item 6)

A. Report of the Mediterranean Transport Study Centre

Documentation: Informal document No. 4

28. The General Director of CETMO, Mr. Ò. Oliver had the opportunity during the international conference to introduce the report on recent activities of CETMO for consideration by the Working Party (Informal document No.4).

29. The Working Party took note with appreciation that a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between CETMO and ECE will be signed after final approval by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) (21 September 2018) that would further enhance the cooperation among the two institutions. The main objectives of this MoU would be the development of an integrated intermodal network in the CETMO region, the promotion and implementation of the United Nations transport conventions as well as the cooperation to expand the international transport infrastructure observatory in the CETMO region.

30. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the CETMO secretariat for its comprehensive report, welcomed the cooperation between the two institutions and requested an update on CETMO activities for its next session in 2019.

B. The Euro-Mediterranean transport network

31. Nothing was reported under this agenda item.

C. Report of the Union for the Mediterranean

32. The information provided by the representative of CETMO (Informal document No.4) included also information about the current activities and developments of the Union for the Mediterranean.

VIII. Euro-Asian Transport Links (agenda item 7)

A. Progress in Euro-Asian Transport Links work

Documentation: EATL phase III Publication

33. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) during its eightieth session requested the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/274, para. 71) to address on a regular basis the topic of the intermodal issues on the Euro-Asian Transport Links.

34. This topic was extensively discussed during the international conference on "Making the Euro-Asian transport corridors operational".

35. The Working Party took note that the report of EATL phase III is being prepared as a United Nations publication and that it should be ready most probably for ITC in February. Furthermore, the Working Party was informed by the secretariat that for administrative purposes the EATL publication "Euro-Asian Transport Linkages – Operationalisation of inland transport links between Europe and Asia" will be published by using the slot in the publications programme for 2018–2019 (item 26/2869) of the "Study on border crossing and customs questions affecting transport". This slot became available since the main objective of the study had lost its relevance due to recent developments in the application of

the TIR Convention. Two-hundred copies will be published in English and one-hundred-fifty in Russian. The Working Party approved the use of this slot.

B. International Transport Infrastructure Observatory

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2016/3, ECE/TRANS/2018/4

36. The Working Party recalled that during its last session was informed about the development of a transport infrastructure observatory in Europe and Asia which should include all existing initiatives on transport infrastructure development in the European and Asian continents (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2016/3, ECE/TRANS/2018/4). More information about this observatory can be found at: www.unece.org/trans/main/wp5/international_transport_infrastructure_observatory.html.

37. The secretariat informed the Working Party that the preparation of the observatory is based on funds received by Islamic Development Bank concerning a similar financing transport infrastructure project the “Strengthening regional connectivity with the establishment of a Geographical Information System (GIS)”. The observatory is an innovative example of how government data on new transport infrastructure projects is presented to financial institutions in a transparent, comprehensive and "bankable" way. The observatory is devised as an online platform where (a) governments find all the relevant data to prepare, benchmark and present their transport infrastructure projects, and (b) financial institutions can consider, analyse and compare projects from a regional/international perspective and identify projects to finance.

38. The Working Party requested the secretariat to provide more information on this issue at its next session.

C. Other Euro-Asian transport initiatives

39. No other initiatives were reported under this agenda item.

IX. Group of Experts on Benchmarking Transport Infrastructure Construction Costs (agenda item 8)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.4/10, ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.4/12, ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.4/14

40. The Working Party was informed by the Chair of the Group of Experts about the work undertaken during the three meetings of the Group that took place after the last session of the Working Party. The Working Party noted that for all transport modes including the intermodal terminals and the ports sub-groups have been prepared led by a government, railway undertakings, associations or a Working Party. For the five items under discussion, meaning roads, railways, inland waterways, ports and intermodal terminals draft terminologies and questionnaires in order to collect data for the benchmarking study have been prepared. For roads these terminologies and questionnaire have already been sent to the Governments in order to collect the relevant data. For all the other transport modes the work is in progress and input is required by the Governments.

41. The Chair of the Group stated that more time is needed for the Group to finalize its objectives and deliver its final report. The Working Party appreciated the work done by the Group and thanked the experts for their efforts and contribution. The Working Party also recognized the challenges that the Group faces and therefore decided to approve the

extension of the mandate of the Group for one more year. This extension for one more year should be realized after the final approval by the EXCOM in 2019 in order for the experts to have the opportunity to meet at least four times before submitting their final report to the thirty-third session of the Working Party in 2020.

42. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the Chair of the Group and the secretariat and it requested the secretariat to provide more information on this issue at its next session.

X. Urban mobility and Public Transport: Pan-European master plan for cycling (agenda item 9)

Documentation: Informal document No. 5

43. The Working Party recalled that at its last session was informed by the secretariat for the cooperation with the THE PEP in developing the infrastructure module of the Pan-European master plan for cycling (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2016/4) based on methodology used for other ECE transport infrastructure projects such as TEM and TER.

44. The secretariat informed the Working Party for the draft report already prepared by the consultants (Informal document No. 5) which includes maps on cycling infrastructure from the majority of the countries of THE PEP cycling partnership as well as their capitals.

45. The Working Party thanked the secretariat for the information provided and requested to provide more updated information on this topic at its next session.

XI. Climate Change and Transport (agenda item 10)

A. Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes

Documentation : ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/29

46. The Working Party recalled that at its last session, it had approved the extension of the mandate of the Group for one more year after the final approval from EXCOM in order to report back its final report to the Working Party in September 2019.

47. The Group during its last session decided that the identification of hot spots by the Governments is a complex and long-lasting exercise where the match of accurate data on transport infrastructure and climatic factors projections is just the first step. Detailed analysis of geomorphology, of transport infrastructure conditions, quality and technical specifications as well as sensitivity to climate change impacts should be performed. Furthermore, use of indicators to operationalise the exposure, sensitivity and criticality of network sections should be performed and forecasts for traffic and land use should be included, a clear and agreed definition of a hot spot should be warranted.

48. Furthermore, they agreed that only countries that already have the governmental structure established and have started to perform such hot spots analysis would be able to provide a mapping of hot spots in their countries / regions and even these countries have still restrictions with regard to data availability, extent and spatial resolution to deliver a complete analysis for their transport sector.

49. The Working Party welcomed the cooperation with the WMO which it considered as a great interagency example of cooperation and thanked its representative for her support and contribution. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the

secretariat requested the secretariat to provide further information on developments of the Group of Experts work at its next session.

B. Climate Change mitigation: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe For Future Inland Transport Systems tool

50. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat about the 2017–2018 developments in the For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS) tool. It was reported that implementation of ForFITS was performed in the city of Mannheim (Germany). Marking two-hundred years since the invention of the Draisine, an ancestor of the bicycle, in Mannheim, the city hosted the twelfth Relay Race Workshop of Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) on “Cycling and walking make THE Link – Transport, Health and Environment” (21 September 2017). As part of the efforts to develop policy-relevant knowledge and disseminate good practices, the ECE Sustainable Transport Division, as one of the three pillars of THE PEP, was invited to develop an analysis of CO₂ emission projections in the city of Mannheim using ForFITS.

51. The Working Party took note of the information provided and reiterated its support on the further development of this tool. The Working Party requested the secretariat to present any developments on this issue at its next session.

XII. Review of the transport situation, transport trends and economics in the ECE region (agenda item 11)

A. Transport Trends and Economics 2018–2019: Mobility as a Service

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2018/4, Informal Document No. 6

52. The Working Party recalled that at its last session and while discussing the theme for transport trends and economics 2016–2017, it decided that:

(a) The questionnaire and analysis prepared under documents ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2016/5, ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2016/6 were quite challenging and difficult to be answered by the Governments since some of those questions were not directly related to transport. Therefore, the secretariat suggested the theme for the transport trends and economics 2016–2017 to be “Mobility as a Service” to take advantage of the excellent presentations and inputs received during the workshop of the second day of the session;

(b) The secretariat should prepare a formal document for the next session of the WP.5 which should include a draft road map on the contributions of member States and of the Working Party sessions in implementing the 2030 Agenda for the consideration of the Working Party.

53. The Working Party decided to postpone discussion on the draft road map (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2018/4) for its next session since it would be appropriate to discuss this document while discussing and approving its work plan for the next biennium.

54. As it concerns the publication Transport Trends and Economics 2018–2019: “Mobility as a Service” (Informal Document No. 6) the secretariat provided the following information:

(a) Several experts will contribute to the preparation of this publication. The chapters and the names of the experts agreed so far to contribute are as follows:

- (i) Chapter I: Introduction – Mobility as a Service, Prof. D. Dimitriou;
- (ii) Chapter II: Car sharing;
- (iii) Chapter III: Bike sharing;
- (iv) Chapter IV: Railways and Mobility as a Service;
- (v) Chapter V: Enablers of Mobility as a Service operators (Mrs. S. Pichler, Fluidtime);
- (vi) Chapter VI: Revenue allocation challenge (Prof. A. Rouboutsos);
- (vii) Chapter VII: The infrastructure perspective (Mr. A. Maciejewski);
- (viii) Chapter VIII: Conclusions and recommendations.

(b) For Chapters II, III and IV no experts were identified so far. The secretariat kindly invited the Governments to provide some experts that would contribute to the preparation of those chapters;

(c) The first draft of the publication should be ready for ITC in February 2019. The final draft should be ready at the next session of the Working Party in 2019.

55. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat and approved its proposals. It requested the secretariat to provide more information on both issues at its next session.

B. Transport Trends and Economics 2016–2017: Innovative ways for financing Transport Infrastructure

Documentation: ECE Publication

56. The Working Party welcomed the preparation of the publication on Transport Trends and Economics 2016–2017: “Innovative ways for financing Transport Infrastructure” which was distributed during the meeting and thanked the secretariat for its efforts.

C. Transport Trends and Challenges in the road sector

Documentation: Informal document No. 7

57. Mr. M. Bauernfeind (Austria) presented the effects of Brexit on transport in general. There were two main scenarios. The first scenario speaks about the conclusions of leaving the agreement and the second one speaks about no agreement. In that case the possible general consequences would be as follows:

(a) The United Kingdom will be no longer subject to European Union law in general and no more member of the common market;

(b) Then WTO-rules will apply;

(c) UK will be no longer party/subject to international agreements concluded by the European Union (e. g. trade or aviation agreements with third countries);

(d) Border controls for customs, (technical) standards, etc. necessary for timely delivery of goods/passengers would be seriously endangered;

(e) Hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland with possible consequences for the Good Friday Agreement;

(f) Guidelines on future relations foresee sectoral agreements for transport: if no deal and no implementation period then disruptions of transport operations might occur.

58. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the representative of Austria for the presentation and invited Governments to provide an update on relevant developments in the road sector at its thirty-second session in 2019.

D. Transport Trends and Challenges in the rail sector

Documentation: Informal document No.8

59. The representative of UIC, Mrs. S. Markovic-Chenais, gave a presentation on transport trends and challenges in the rail sector. She provided information on trends and challenges for the rail sector based on data from the UIC synopsis which provides provisional data on annual basis for all continents, the length of lines, rolling stock, the average staff strength, the train performance in train-km, the rail traffic in pass., pass-km, tonnes, tonne-km and the high-speed traffic.

60. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to UIC for the presentation on the analysis of recent rail transport trends and challenges and invited UIC to provide an update on relevant developments in the rail sector at its thirty-second session in 2019.

E. Transport Trends and Challenges in the inland waterways sector

61. The secretariat provided information on transport trends and challenges in the inland waterways sector.

62. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for the presentation on the analysis of recent inland water transport trends and challenges and requested the secretariat to provide an update on relevant developments in the inland waterways sector at its thirty-second session in 2019.

F. UNECE Transport Statistics analysis

63. The secretariat provided information on the analysis of transport statistics in the ECE region.

64. The Working Party appreciated the information provided by the secretariat. It requested the secretariat to provide more information on transport statistics for the ECE region at the next session.

XIII. Technical assistance to countries with economies in transition (agenda item 12)

Documentation: Informal document No. 9

65. The secretariat informed the Working Party about technical assistance activities to countries with economies in transition. The Working Party noted that assistance in the field of transport is focused, but not limited to strengthening the capacity of countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular, the landlocked countries. Furthermore, assistance related to the work of the Division is provided to other member States. Technical assistance activities aim at acceding to and implementing United

Nations legal instruments, norms and standards, transferring know-how as well as sharing best practices in transport.

66. Three capacity building workshops were organized on transport-related Sustainable Development Goals. One in Podgorica in October 2017, a second one in Astana in November 2017 and the third one in Ljubljana in November 2017. The UNDA¹ project on “Strengthening the national road safety management capacities of selected developing countries and countries with economies in transition” was finalized in March 2018. The beneficiary countries were Albania, Georgia, the Dominican Republic and Viet Nam and the project was realized in cooperation with ESCAP and ECLAC.

67. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the regional advisor on progress made in technical assistance to countries with economies in transition and requested the secretariat to provide information at the next session.

XIV. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 13)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/274

68. The secretariat informed the Working Party that the Committee at its seventy-eighth session had recognised the need to adapt to new realities and dynamics in the strategic environment within which the Committee operates. It had decided that the secretariat should draft a strategy paper on the priorities and the main directions in consultation with the Bureau, the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and the Administrative Committees of transport conventions under the purview of the Committee. The Committee had the opportunity to review the advance version of the Executive Summary of the Strategy Paper (ECE/TRANS/2017/R.1) which included the main findings and recommendations, in order to consider ways to enhance the role and impact of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies vis-à-vis emerging challenges and opportunities globally.

69. The ITC Bureau, supported by the secretariat, has further elaborated the draft ITC Strategy until 2030 (Zero Draft of ECE/TRANS/2019/R.1). In line with ITC decisions (ECE/TRANS/274, para. 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, the secretariat presented ECE/TRANS/2019/R.1 for discussion and comments by the Working Party. No comments received from the Working Party on this topic.

70. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the ITC strategy paper and requested the secretariat to provide information of ITC decisions at its next session.

XV. Election of officers for the Working Party sessions in 2019 and 2020 (agenda item 14)

71. The Working Party elected for its sessions in 2019 and 2020, its Chair Mr. P. De Wildt (Netherlands) and its Vice-Chair Mr. S. Andreev (Russian Federation).

¹ United Nations Development Account

XVI. Other business (agenda item 15)

72. No other business was reported.

XVII. Date of next session (agenda item 16)

73. The Working Party's thirty-second session is tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva from 2 to 4 September 2019.

XVIII. Adoption of the main decisions (agenda item 17)

74. The Working Party adopted the list of main decisions of its thirty-first session and requested the secretariat and the Chair to prepare the full and complete report for circulation to the members of the Working Party for comments on items other than those in the list of main decisions.

Annex

Conclusions and Recommendations of the International Conference on Making Euro-Asian Transport Corridors Operational

1. The Conference acknowledged the importance of:
 - further development of the effective transport linkages between Europe and Asia;
 - eliminating bottlenecks;
 - simplifying border crossing procedures; and
 - acknowledging the importance and the impact that the intelligent transport systems implementation, the digitalization of transport, the full computerization of border crossing points, the use of satellite track and trace services for both the rail and road services, the introduction of autonomous vehicles (trucks and locomotives) can have on the transportation along Euro-Asian transport routes and the need to pay particular attention to these trends.
2. To achieve these goals, due attention must be paid to unification of railway regimes in particular to the reconsignment from the Agreement on International Goods Transport by Rail (SMGS) to the Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM) along the corridors, which is a source of extra costs and time. Any mistake while translating from one consignment note to the other could be weeks of waiting time at border crossings etc. The non-existence of one contract of carriage, one liability and one consignment note along the total trip of the trains decreases the reliability of the services and the trust of the market on the services provided.
3. The participants noted:
 - (a) the significance of a dialogue between representatives of executive authorities, business, science and international organizations, aimed at achieving above mentioned goals;
 - (b) the importance of paying the necessary attention to the international transport corridors functioning, to the transit time reduction, to the cost, safety and reliability of transportations.
4. The participants also noted that:
 - (a) The East bound cargo traffic is lesser compared to the Westbound one with increasing trend of the difference; However, these statistics are mainly referring to trade between Europe and China and do not include other “producing” countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, South Korea etc.;
 - (b) Transportation mode share China – European Union in value: Vessel 95 per cent, Plane 4 per cent, Railway 1 per cent;
 - (c) Approximately 40 per cent of total cargo turnover between China and Europe is of high value-added products. What about e-business / smaller packages, fast consuming products, garments? Current products from Europe to China include: Wood, furniture, electrical appliances, health products, wine, engineering products, metal and tile products. Products exported from China to Europe include: textiles, clothing, toys, consumer goods, spare parts for cars, agricultural products, tomato sauce, seasonings, chemical products, high-tech products, including electronics and accessories. These goods apparently may be transported by inland transport vessels;

(d) Container trains in China are subsidized by the authorities of some Cities through which the route passes. For some Cities, the subsidies are valid until 2020. Long term planning is needed that would enhance reliability of the services provided and trust by the market;

(e) Since 1st August 2018 in China there is a new Harmonized System (HS) code with 13 digits. The international transport of dangerous goods cargo in tank container is not according to the International Conventions (SMGS and RID²) therefore it is basically impossible to be realized. The transport of non-dangerous goods in tank containers in China requests a non-dangerous goods certificate valid only if it is released by a laboratory authorised by China Rail therefore, in practice, the international standards of the MSDS paper do not apply.

5. The participants agreed:

(a) To enhance cooperation and communication among:

(i) Development initiatives along the corridors implemented by international organizations (ECE, ESCAP, BSEC, OSJD³, OTIF, IRU etc);

(ii) The railway and logistics undertakings involved in each corridor;

(iii) The market/private sector, the Governments and the UNECE Secretariat.

(b) Particular actions should be taken in order to operationalize EATL corridors.

6. Among others the following proposals might be considered:

(a) The good practices in the framework of the Coordinating Council for the Trans-Siberian Transport (CCTT) as well as the well-established platform of Working Party 5 in cooperation with other ITC working bodies could be used as a platform for coordination, monitoring and discussions;

(b) Encourage stakeholders of the international transport corridors to intensify their work within their governing and relevant bodies;

(c) Adoption of particular measures, that are focused on KPIs (lead time reduction, preparation of common tariffs etc);

(d) Adoption of coordinated measures that are aimed to develop block trains and truck caravans;

(e) Consideration of border crossing facilitation issues;

(f) Expansion of the digital technologies usage;

(g) Development of mega intermodal terminals – if possible or needed specialized ones- along the corridors;

(h) Initiatives of the private sector for increasing of productivity of trains operations:

(i) Longer and heavier trains: in addition, enhancing cooperation between Europe and Asia;

(ii) Shorter block intervals: more trains, better use of the network capacity;

² Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail

³ Organization for Cooperation between Railways

(iii) Train length evolution from 600 meters to 1,500 meters would dramatically reduce the transportation cost;

(iv) Need to enhance the EATL routes noting United Nations projects TEM and, TER as well as other new initiatives, raised by the participants, such as the Via Carpatia project initiated by the Government of Poland, the Trans-Maghreb corridor administrated by CETMO secretariat as well as the Anaklia deep sea port of Georgia etc.

7. At the same time, the participants of the Conference noted the following challenges on the particular transport corridors:

(a) EATL Routes 1, 2 and 6 (China, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Belarus, Poland):

(i) These are operating corridors and the travel time on average is 14 days (China-Duisburg);

(ii) Most block trains operating today between the two continents are taking place along these corridors;

(iii) Big freight forwarders are the main operators of those corridors;

(iv) Modernization of checkpoints and border crossing procedures are required;

(v) The increase in the fleet of container platforms until 2024, up to 16 thousand units;

(vi) Approving the long-term pass-through tariffs for transit routes;

(vii) Weather Conditions especially during Winter for transportation of specific goods may demand special units keeping the temperature stable;

(viii) The private sector suggests that the implementation of a single block train length technology 57–71 units would improve freight capacity and increase rail operators total income;

(b) EATL Routes 3, 4 and 7 (China, Central Asia countries, Turkey or Romania or Ukraine):

(i) There are still missing links and infrastructure maintenance is required;

(ii) Border crossings facilitation is required;

(iii) The lack of cooperation among the railway undertakings in order to perform block trains operations (common tariffs / time schedules) was noticed;

(iv) Security / Safety issues have been pointed out;

(v) The Ukrainian delegate mentioned that as it concerns the current situation in EATL Route 3 due to the restrictions imposed by the Russian Federation, transportation from Ukraine to Central Asian countries decreased by almost 3 times. This has led to the reorientation of traditional land cargo flows to an alternative route using ferry crossings across the Black and Caspian Seas making EATL Route 3 non-operational.

(vi) The Russian Federation delegate mentioned that EATL Route 3 is currently operational and transportation is taking place along this specific corridor but with enhanced measures of control. Furthermore, the delegate of the Russian Federation stated that this International Conference is dedicated to the development of the Euro-Asian corridors and any kind of attempts to politicize these efforts should be avoided

and definitely should not be included in the final conclusions and recommendations of the Conference.

- (c) EATL Routes 5, 8 and 9 (North South corridors):
 - (i) Cooperation among the different stakeholders have been established;
 - (ii) Working group meetings are already taking place;
 - (iii) Missing links – infrastructure investments are requested;
 - (iv) Border crossings facilitation needs further improvement.
- (d) Common Challenges:
 - (i) Empty trains are running back to China from Europe;
 - (ii) There were reported differences in:
 - a. track gauges;
 - b. energy systems;
 - c. structure clearance gauges;
 - d. train protection systems (>20);
 - e. signalling systems;
 - f. signal images;
 - g. radio systems;
 - h. pantograph widths;
 - i. regulations of train criteria;
 - j. other technical, administrative, linguistic and cultural barriers.

8. Participants of the Conference called upon the interested Governments to provide further political support to the projects on the development of Eurasian transport initiatives.
