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Report of the Working Party on Rail Transport on its seventy-third session

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Attendance.....	1–5	3
II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)	6	3
III. Workshop: “Making rail freight more competitive and the coordinated development of the rail network with a focus on how to work together at the government and sectoral levels on EATL” (agenda item 2).....	7–10	3
IV. European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (agenda item 3)	11–18	4
V. Railway financing and Public-Private Partnerships (agenda item 4)	19–22	5
VI. Towards unified railway law in the pan-European region and on Euro-Asian transport corridors (agenda item 5).....	23–30	6
VII. Rail Security (agenda item 6).....	31–35	7
VIII. Euro-Asian rail transport (agenda item 7).....	36–37	8
IX. Trans-European Railway project (agenda item 8).....	38–39	8
X. Master Plan on High-Speed Trains (agenda item 9).....	40–41	8
XI. New Convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail (agenda item 10)	42–45	9
XII. Innovation in Rail Transport (agenda item 11)	46–48	9
XIII. Productivity in Rail Transport (agenda item 12).....	49–51	10

XIV.	Climate Change and Rail Transport (agenda item 13)	52–55	10
	A. Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes	52–53	10
	B. Climate Change mitigation and the For Future Inland Transport Systems tool	54–55	10
XV.	Railway Reform (agenda item 14)	56–57	11
XVI.	Facilitation of international rail transport in the pan-European region (agenda item 15).....	58–61	11
	A. Facilitation of rail border crossings	58–60	11
	B. Harmonization of technical specifications on different railway systems	61	11
XVII.	Rail Review (agenda item 16)	62–64	12
XXVIII.	Rail Statistics (agenda item 17).....	65–66	12
XIX.	Improving safety in rail transport (agenda item 18)	67–69	12
XX.	Activities of Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (agenda item 19)	70–73	13
XXI.	Activities of the European Commission in rail transport (agenda item 20)	74–75	13
XXII.	Activities of international organizations in rail transport (agenda item 21)	76	14
XXIII.	Programme of work for 2020-2021 (agenda item 22)	77–79	14
XXIV.	Election of officers (agenda item 23)	80	14
XXV.	Other business (agenda item 24)	81–83	14
XXVI.	Date and venue of next session (agenda item 25)	84	15
XXVII.	Adoption of decisions (agenda item 26).....	85–86	15
Annexes			
I.	Modifications to annex I of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines		16
II.	Terms of reference: “Group of Experts on Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock” ...		17

I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) held its seventy-third session from 25 to 27 November 2019 in Geneva.
2. The session of the Working Party was attended by representatives of the following countries: Albania, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Mongolia, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Representatives of the European Commission, European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) and the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking of the European Union (EU) were present.
3. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Eurasian Economic Commission, European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). A representative of the UNECE Trans-European Railway Project (TER) also attended the session.
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), International Union of Railways (UIC) and Rail Working Group.
5. Representatives of the following organizations, industry private groups and academia attended the session: Coordinating Council on Trans-Siberian Transportation, Hupac Intermodal SA (Intermodal Transportation), JSC National Company Kazakhstan Temir Zholy, JSC Russian Railways, Rail Cargo Austria AG, JSC UTLC ERA, Russian University of Transport, Instytut Kolejnictwa and TRA consulting.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)¹

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/231 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/231/Corr.1

6. The Working Party adopted the agenda and its corrigendum.

III. Workshop on “Making rail freight more competitive and the coordinated development of the rail network with a focus on how to work together at the government and sectoral levels on EATL” (agenda item 2)²

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/3

7. The Workshop on “Making rail freight more competitive and the coordinated development of the rail network with a focus on how to work together at the government and sectoral levels on EATL” was convened on the first day of SC.2. It was divided into two main sessions; one focusing on national practices aimed at improving freight competitiveness and one looking at examples of efforts to improve freight competitiveness between Europe and Asia. Speakers from national and international institutions as well as from the railways shared

¹ Information on the session is available at www.unece.org/trans/areas-of-work/rail-transport/meetings/rail-transport/meeting/2019/sc2-working-party-on-rail-transport-73rd-session/docs.html.

² Presentations from the workshop are also at www.unece.org/trans/areas-of-work/rail-transport/meetings/rail-transport/meeting/2019/sc2-working-party-on-rail-transport-73rd-session/docs.html.

their experiences on the subject and identified challenges as well as possible solutions going forward.

8. The Chair of the Working Party concluded by summarizing the Workshop. Member States and other delegates commented positively on the importance of this workshop which provided examples and good practice in making rail freight more competitive and agreed that the workshop had been very useful and a great success.

9. The Working Party welcomed discussions at the Workshop “Making rail freight more competitive and the coordinated development of the rail network with a focus on how to work together at the government and sectoral levels on the EATL” and requested that the secretariat prepare a summary document of the workshop in order to continue discussion on this topic at future sessions of the Working Party.

10. The secretariat informed that as soon as the document is available, it will be circulated to speakers for comments and corrections to finalize it as soon as possible and in time for submission to the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) in February 2020. The Working Party will continue its efforts to produce informative and useful publications for member States.

IV. European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (agenda item 3)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/9, ECE/TRANS/63/Rev.4, C.N.559.2019.TREATIES-XI.C.3

11. The European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) currently has 27 contracting parties.³ Detailed information on AGC, the up-to-date and consolidated text of AGC (ECE/TRANS/63/Rev.4), a map of the AGC network, an inventory of minimum standards stipulated in AGC and the Depositary Notifications are available on the website of the Working Party.⁴ The Working Party noted the importance of having the current consolidated version of the AGC published and available in all ECE official languages.

12. The Working Party took note of the secretariat efforts to increase the number of contracting parties to AGC. In particular, the secretariat participated in key international railway events and workshops to explain the importance of, and disseminate information on, AGC both within and outside the ECE region. The Working Party noted that having a published version of the AGC would facilitate this dissemination process further. Kazakh Railways informed that Kazakhstan was in the process of acceding to the AGC and in order to facilitate this further requested that a document be provided on the key benefits of accession to the AGC.

13. The Working Party welcomed the preparation of the consolidated version of the AGC (Rev.4) and asked the secretariat to publish it in three languages and make it available in print and electronic format. It also asked the secretariat to share the printed version with member States along with a document setting out the main benefits of becoming contracting parties to the AGC.

14. The AGC Administrative Committee recalled that at its seventy-second session in November 2018, it had had requested the secretariat to proceed with the depositary notification for the amendments set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2018/6 in relation to changes

³ Albania, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and Ukraine.

⁴ www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2_AGC_text.html.

to the technical parameters set out in annex II of the AGC and adopted at its sixty-ninth session. C.N.559.2019.TREATIES-XI.C.3 was accepted on 22 October 2019. The secretariat informed the Administrative Committee that objections had not been received and the amendments had entered into force. These modifications were already included in revision 4 of the AGC.

15. The Administrative Committee was informed that the secretariat had received a proposal for amendment to annex I of AGC from the Russian Federation (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/9) following the request first made by the Russian Federation at the seventy-second session through Informal document No. 2 (2018). The Russian Federation noted that, in line with the similar amendment made to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), the numbering of the two new lines to be added should be (in order of presentation) E 20/4 and E 20/5.

16. The Administrative Committee of the AGC noted that the amendments agreed in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2018/6 had been notified to the depository and that they had entered into force as no objections had been received. It asked the secretariat to send the amendments included in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/9 as amended to the depository. The amended provisions are included in annex I of this report.

17. The secretariat explained that it is continuing work on exploring ways to make the AGC more relevant in the current informatin age and render this information more transparent and useful. In particular, the secretariat has been looking at how best to show the AGC data online in a GIS platform and has been in discussions with ERA to use their data to map the information at its disposal. In addition to rendering this information more relevant, this is also helping to introduce innovation and transparency into the sector, following the requirements in the new ITC strategy. The secretariat, in collaboration with ERA, presented these developments at the seventy-third session and noted that this information, once available would allow the secretariat to also update the joint AGC-AGTC online tool on technical parameters for operation on the E-Rail network. It was noted by the secretariat that this information only covered EU member States and as such would need to be supplemented by data from other ECE member States.

18. The Working Party welcomed the efforts of the secretariat, in collaboration with ERA, to modernize the AGC and asked the secretariat to continue in its efforts in this area. In addition, it asked the secretariat to prepare a questionnaire to send to member States that are not covered by ERA data to ensure that there is full coverage of the ECE area.

V. Railway financing and Public-Private Partnerships (agenda item 4)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/10

19. The Working Party was informed about the Luxembourg Protocol to the Cape Town Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment aimed at facilitating the finance of railway rolling stock worldwide by the Chair of the Rail Working Group. The Government of Luxembourg presented a request for the creation of a Group of Experts on the fixing of unique identifiers to railway rolling stock as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/10. The Working Party discussed the contents of this document and the terms of reference annexed to it and agreed that this work was in line with the activities of SC.2 and confirmed the importance of these activities to the development of the railways internationally.

20. The Working Party adopted the amended terms of reference for the Group of Experts on the fixing of unique identifiers of railway rolling stock and asked the Inland Transport Committee to approve its creation. The Working Party asked member States, relevant

international organizations and the industry to send their nominations for potential experts to the secretariat by 31 March 2020. The Terms of Reference for this group are included in annex 2 of this report.

21. The Working Party recalled the discussions at previous sessions on good practices in implementing Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) in railway infrastructure development, and on the development of standards aimed at facilitating the implementation of PPP projects. The secretariat informed the Working Party of the PPP Forum held in 9 May 2019 where the Rail PPP Guidelines were discussed along with the current work underway on the specific Urban Rail PPP Guidelines. The representative of the EIB (during discussions on agenda item 21 but relevant to agenda item 4) also updated the working party on EIB's current activities in relation to PPPs, especially in relation to rolling stock finance.

22. The Working Party noted the information provided on the UNECE PPP Guidelines. The Working Party also welcomed the proposed intervention from EIB under this agenda item at the next session of SC.2.

VI. Towards unified railway law in the pan-European region and on Euro-Asian transport corridors (agenda item 5)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/274, ECE/TRANS/2018/13/Rev.1, Informal document SC.2 No. 3 (2018), Informal document SC.2 No. 5 (2018), Informal document SC.2/GEURL No. 6 (2017), ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/4, Informal document SC.2 No.4 (2019)

23. The Working Party recalled that ITC at its eightieth session (23 February 2018) and the Executive Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe had approved the extension of the mandate of the Group of Experts on Unified Railway Law for two more years under new terms of reference (ECE/TRANS/2018/13/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/274, para. 69). The Group of Experts held three meetings in 2019. The group had focused on the agreed Terms of Reference as set out in ECE/TRANS/2018/13/Rev.1.

24. The Working Party discussed at length the work that had been done over the two years including the achievements of the work. It welcomed the preparation of a list of documents for facilitating carriage of goods by rail under URL, and the indication of modification required to adjust those documents to the provisions of the Unified Railway Law (task (a) of the terms of reference). It took note of the conclusions on the performance of the test to verifying the effectiveness of the draft provisions (task (b) of the terms of reference). It also took note of the fact that the Group of Experts was not in position to conclude on its tasks (c) and (d) of the terms of reference, yet the Group identified a solution of working towards a system of unified railway law instruments, with the instrument on the contract for international carriage of goods by rail forming one of the instruments of the system. The Working Party recognized that more time was needed to discuss the details of the system and the preparation of the final and full text of contract for carriage instrument.

25. The Working Party took note of the report of the Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law (the Group) on the execution of its 2018–2019 mandate, as contained in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/4. It commended the Group of Experts for the work undertaken.

26. The Working Party decided to extend the mandate of the Group for two more sessions, to be held in 2020, under the current Terms of Reference, as set out in document ECE/TRANS/2018/13/Rev.1 to conclude on tasks (c) and (d) and to report to the Working Party at its seventy-fourth session in November 2020.

27. The Working Party further invited the secretariat:
- to expand the Group to invite to it country representatives with expertise on issues to be envisaged in the full set of conventions to form the system of URL conventions, and
 - to expand the geographical representation to invite to it interested countries along the entire Euro-Asian transport corridors.
28. The Working Party finally requested the secretariat to explore the possibility to establish the legally binding URL instrument on a corridor basis based on agreements between the governments concerned.
29. Germany, supported by Belgium, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovenia, Switzerland and the European Commission considered that, during the extension, the Group of Experts should focus on delivering tangible results and commit in particular to:
- (a) Finalize the text of the legal instrument on the contract for international carriage of goods by rail (i.e. to agree on all substantive provisions, the management system, the preamble and final provisions);
 - (b) After the work referred to at (i) is completed, identify and agree, where appropriate, on the next issue relevant to international rail freight, for which substantive URL provisions (another URL legal instrument) should be developed.
30. The Russian Federation orally presented its view of a compromise proposal on the development of a framework Convention, which should reflect provisions related to the organization and implementation of transcontinental transportation of goods by rail in the East – West – East route, and which should reflect a number of fundamental provisions discussed and agreed during the joint work within the framework of the Group of Experts, as set out in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/4, as well as proposals on the structure of a unified railway law, namely:
- Contract of carriage;
 - Infrastructure requirements;
 - Rolling stock requirements;
 - Use of wagons;
 - Management of unified railway law (a system of agreements governing all aspects of the functioning of railway transport).

VII. Rail Security (agenda item 6)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2018/2

31. The Working Party recalled that in 2018 the “Workshop on Rail Security” had been organized with UIC and the International Transport Forum at the ITF Annual Summit in Leipzig, Germany. The main conclusions are in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2018/2. The workshop was well received, and the secretariat received positive feedback.

32. The Working Party recalled that the secretariat had developed an advanced web-based platform on rail security which can operate as an international observatory on rail security issues (hence the Rail Security Observatory), where stakeholders can:

- (a) disseminate ad hoc knowledge and best/good practices;
- (b) exchange information about projects and other initiatives/proposals; and

(c) seek cooperation on specific rail security projects/tasks/studies and research initiatives agreed upon during SC.2 sessions and other events, and focus on developing definitions.

33. The Working Party took note that in the last year the Rail Security Observatory had been further updated and upgraded. The interface was displayed during the session.

34. The Russian Federation noted the importance of international cooperation on rail security issues and that the secretariat should work closely with UIC to ensure that a coordinated approach to harmonizing approaches on this issue and sharing best practice. The secretariat explained the ongoing collaboration with UIC in this area following the Workshop on Rail Security and reiterated its commitment to working with UIC on this matter.

35. The Working Party welcomed the updating of the Rail Security Observatory and asked the secretariat to keep it informed of developments in this area. The Working Party also reminded member States to notify the secretariat of focal points in relation to rail security.

VIII. Euro-Asian rail transport (agenda item 7)

36. The focus of discussions under this agenda item were included in the workshop that took place under agenda item 2. In addition, to these discussions the secretariat informed the Working Party about the progress of work in the Group of Experts on EATL, the Group of Experts on benchmarking construction costs and on the UNDA funded project “Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators”.

37. The Working Party reiterated its support for the EATL project. It further encouraged the rail sector to get increasingly involved in related discussions.

IX. Trans-European Railway project (agenda item 8)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/11

38. The Project Manager of TER, Mr. G. Bessonov reported on the activities of the TER Project for 2018 and 2019 (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/11). The work of the TER Steering Committee had focused on facilitation and development of coherent and efficient international railway and combined transport system in the Central and Eastern European countries (through the territories of the TER countries and between them and other European countries) as well as on the preparation of a High-Speed Masterplan for the region and numerous other ongoing activities. The Project Manager also welcomed the offer of the Government of Poland of a Deputy Project Manager for the project.

39. The Working Party welcomed the work carried out within the TER project and encouraged member States to intensify their work in this area.

X. Master Plan on High-Speed Trains (agenda item 9)

40. The Working Party was informed about the publication of the TER High-Speed Rail Masterplan Phase I and the developments in relation to the TER High-Speed Rail Masterplan Phase II. Work on the project will continue into 2020.

41. The Working Party welcomed the information provided in relation to High-Speed Rail Masterplan and asked the secretariat to update the working party on progress at its next session.

XI. New Convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail (agenda item 10)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2018/6/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2018/19, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/228, C.N.126.2019.TREATIES-XI.C.7, C.N.127.2019.TREATIES-XI.C.7

42. The Working Party recalled that, at its previous session, it welcomed the progress on the new Convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail, and supported the work of Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) to adopt the final text of the convention at its February session and transmission to ITC for adoption during its eighty-first session (19–22 February 2019, Geneva).

43. The Working Party was informed that the Convention was adopted 22 February 2019, and the opening for signature in Geneva was announced on 4 April 2019 and that initial steps are being taken in some countries to ratify the Convention.

44. The Russian Federation thanked all involved entities for their support in reaching this success with the Convention and noted that it was a significant tool in the development of sustainable transport and also for facilitating trade and transport. The secretariat suggested that additional steps could be taken to further enhance the legal framework for international passenger transport in accordance with the new ITC Strategy.

45. The Working Party welcomed the opening for signature of the new Convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail and invited member States to become contracting parties to it. It asked member States to consider how best to further facilitate the international passenger transport by proposing solutions, including border crossing point plans, also at the workshop on international passenger transport scheduled for the seventy-fourth session of the Working Party.

XII. Innovation in Rail Transport (agenda item 11)

Documentation: ECE publications: Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) for sustainable mobility (2012) and Making the railways of the future for the region (2019), ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/5

46. The Working Party recalled that at its last session a workshop had been organized on innovation in railways. A publication summarising the workshop was prepared in 2019 and is available on the UNECE website (“Making the railways of the future for the region”). Continuing the work in this area and in line with the new ITC strategy to promote the optimal use of innovation in transport, the secretariat prepared document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/5 on the use of alternative fuel technology in the railways as a form of innovation sweeping the railways. The document identifies good practice examples of alternative fuel use across the world and highlights the benefits and costs of the use of these alternative fuels. Albanian Railways noted the importance of the experiences of the Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking in this area as set out during the workshop discussed under agenda item 2.

47. The secretariat proposed the creation of a rail innovation observatory as an online repository of innovation in the sector with the aim of providing and sharing good practice examples of innovation on an open platform. The observatory would be open and available on the ECE website. The sharing of these best practices would also facilitate the increase of the competitiveness of the sector and assist in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

48. The Working Party welcomed the document prepared by the secretariat on innovation and asked that it be shared more widely. It asked that the secretariat create a rail innovation observatory to share good practice innovation in the sector. The Working Party also asked that it be updated on progress in this area at the next session of the Working Party.

XIII. Productivity in Rail Transport (agenda item 12)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/6

49. The Working Party recalled that at its seventy-second session, it had asked the secretariat to send the rail productivity questionnaire to member States in early 2019. The secretariat informed the Working Party that it had received a total of 8 responses to the questionnaire. Given the low response rate, the secretariat proceeded to integrate these responses with publicly available data from UIC. Document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/6 was prepared based on the information gathered and the analysis undertaken for each indicator. The secretariat presented the results included in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/6 during the session. The secretariat explained that it was not possible to compare the results received in 2019 with the results from previous years as a different approach had been adopted.

50. The Working Party recalled how important it was to continue working on the productivity indicators.

51. The Working Party welcomed the document on productivity prepared by the secretariat and thanked member States for contributing to it. It asked the secretariat to keep this item on the agenda and to renew efforts on gathering information in 2021.

XIV. Climate Change and Rail Transport (agenda item 13)

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

52. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the publication and the continuing work of the Group of Experts.

53. The Russian Federation informed the Working Party of the UIC declaration that was being prepared for the UNFCCC COP25 meeting in Madrid in December 2019 and the importance of ensuring that railways remains at the forefront of environmental related discussions because of the beneficial effects that its use has on reducing pollution. The Russian Federation reiterated the importance of UNECE working together with UIC on these issues and requested that the Working Party discuss under this agenda item in future years aspects of green logistics, eco-scoring and related matters.

B. Climate Change mitigation and the For Future Inland Transport Systems tool

54. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat about the developments in the For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS) tool in 2019, in particular the finalisation of the ForFITS run undertaken for the Environmental Performance Review of Uzbekistan. Further work in this area was planned for 2020.

55. The Working Party took note of the information provided on the Group of Experts on Climate change Adaptation and on ForFITS and requested that the secretariat continue to provide information on this project and its importance in achieving the Sustainable

Development Goals. In addition, it decided to include in the agenda going forward items on green logistics, eco-scoring and other related matters for the Working Party.

XV. Railway Reform (agenda item 14)

Documentation: ECE publication “Railway Reform in the ECE region” (2018)

56. The Working Party recalled that at its seventy-first session a workshop had been organised on railway reform and that subsequently a publication titled “Railway Reform in the ECE region” that had been prepared in three languages in the first half of 2018. The publication has received very positive feedback. The secretariat noted that the presentations by Albanian Railways and Azerbaijan Railways during the workshop under agenda item 2 were also relevant to this agenda item.

57. The Working Party welcomed the update on railway reform provided by the secretariat and member States and asked that the secretariat update the working party on developments at the seventy-fourth session of the Working Party.

XVI. Facilitation of international rail transport in the pan-European region (agenda item 15)

A. Facilitation of rail border crossings

58. The Working Party was updated on developments with annex 9 to the “Harmonization Convention” for the facilitation of rail border crossings in the pan-European region. The secretariat noted that in the past a survey had been sent to members of SC.2 on annex 9 but that there had been little interest shown over the years. Given that WP.30 conducts its own survey on the implementation of the Harmonization Convention the secretariat suggested that it was not necessary to undertake this survey in future within the framework of the Working Party on Rail Transport.

59. The Russian Federation reiterated the importance of sharing best practice in, and solutions to improving, the management of railway border crossings and invited countries to share their experiences on this matter at future sessions of the Working Party. Albanian Railways noted the importance of developing a joint plan for border crossing points.

60. The Working Party asked the secretariat to update it on developments in relation to the Harmonization Convention at the seventy-fourth session of the Working Party and invited countries to share best practice in implementing the Harmonization Convention at future sessions.

B. Harmonization of technical specifications on different railway systems

61. The Russian Federation updated the Working Party on the activities of the OSJD/ERA Contact Group on the harmonization of technical specifications on different railway systems in particular in relation to railway safety aspects. The Working Party thanked the Russian Federation for updating participants on the work of the OSJD/ERA Contact Group and asked OSJD and ERA to update the Working Party on this matter at future sessions of SC.2.

XVII. Rail Review (agenda item 16)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/7

62. The Working Party recalled that at its sixty-seventh session, it had approved the draft questionnaire for the rail review publication, which would be sent to countries and rail authorities for the collection of data. At its seventy-first session, the Working Party noted that the questionnaire covered a number of areas in other agenda items and as such it should concentrate only on question 2 of the questionnaire. The Working Party recalled that at its seventy-second session, it had expressed its gratitude to UIC for assisting in collecting the information in question 2 of the questionnaire. The Working Party also asked the secretariat to supplement the data received with publicly available information, to prepare a database and GIS information, and to provide member States with easily accessible information on rail infrastructure projects.

63. The secretariat informed delegates that this specific task had now been completed drawing on publicly available information from the Connecting Europe Facility database of projects. As identified in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/7 a total 121 projects have been identified and mapped in GIS. The secretariat then proceeded to present the visual results of this work on the GIS platform which only covered EU countries and therefore needed to be supplemented with non-EU country data. The TER Project Manager stated that some of this data is available for the TER region and could be made available to extend the GIS work.

64. The Working Party welcomed the work undertaken by the secretariat building on the activities undertaken in collaboration with UIC in the run up to the seventy-second session. In particular in mapping a large number of projects and their characteristics on a GIS platform. It asked member States to provide railway investment data as per the original questionnaire in order to have a complete picture of investment projects in the ECE region.

XVIII. Rail Statistics (agenda item 17)

65. The Working Party recalled that it continues to work closely with the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) on rail issues, for example, on developing the productivity indicators. The secretariat updated the Working Party on the main activities of WP.6 of relevance to SC.2, in particular efforts related to the E-Rail census which facilitates the identification of opportunities for modal shift to rail and tracking developments in EATL and the finalisation of the Transport Statistics Glossary.

66. The Working Party welcomed progress on rail statistics data gathering, the Glossary and other activities of the Working Party on Transport Statistics and asked to be kept informed of developments in this area going forward.

XIX. Improving safety in rail transport (agenda item 18)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/8, Informal document SC.2 No. 3 (2019)

67. The Working Party recalled that at its last session it had decided to widen the scope to safety at level crossings and to cover all relevant areas of rail safety. To facilitate discussions on this, the secretariat, in collaboration with WP.6 prepared document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/8 showing key rail safety statistics.

68. The Working Party noted informal document SC.2 No. 3 (2019) on slips, trips and falls on the railways prepared by the European Passenger Federation as well as the

presentation of the secretariat in this regard and decided to return to it at the seventy-fourth session.

69. The Working Party reaffirmed the importance of discussing wider rail safety issues in SC.2. It welcomed the document prepared by the secretariat and the informal document prepared by the European Passenger Federation and asked that it be kept informed on this issue going forward.

XX. Activities of Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (agenda item 19)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/288, ECE/TRANS/288/Add. 2, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/2

70. The Working Party noted that at its eighty-first session in February 2019, the Inland Transport Committee adopted its new strategy to 2030. The strategy confirms the key role of ITC as the UN platform for inland transport to help efficiently address global and regional needs in inland transport.

71. The mission for ITC is that it contributes to sustainable inland transport and mobility for achieving the sustainable development goals in the ECE and UN member States through policy dialogue, harmonizing regulatory frameworks, as appropriate, promoting new technologies, assisting in enhancing connectivity and supporting the implementation of legal instrument. In promoting its mission, the ITC will enhance its role as:

- (a) The UN Platform for regional and global inland transport conventions;
- (b) The UN Platform for supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport;
- (c) The UN Platform for regional, interregional and global inland transport policy dialogue;
- (d) The UN Platform for promoting sustainable regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility.

72. The Working Party noted that the ITC asked that its subsidiary bodies assess how their work can be better aligned to the new ITC strategy. In carrying out this assessment the secretariat has prepared document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/2 about the current activities of SC.2 and its role in relation to the new ITC strategy. The document highlights that the current activities of SC.2 are already significantly aligned to the requirements of the ITC strategy. In section V, it also identifies a number of specific actions to be undertaken.

73. The Working Party welcomed the completion and adoption of the new ITC strategy. The working party adopted the document prepared by the secretariat on the alignment of the activities of SC.2 with the ITC strategy and asked that new terms of reference for the Group of Experts be developed and submitted for adoption at the next session of SC.2.

XXI. Activities of the European Commission in rail transport (agenda item 20)

Documentation: Informal Document No. 2 (2019)

74. The Working Party was informed by the European Commission about their activities in 2019 (Informal Document No. 2 (2019)).

75. The Working Party welcomed the update from the European Commission on their activities.

XXII. Activities of international organizations in rail transport (agenda item 21)

76. The Working Party was informed by OTIF about their activities in 2019. The Working Party welcomed the update from the international organizations on their activities.

XXIII. Programme of work for 2020-2021 (agenda item 22)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/1

77. The Working Party was informed that, in accordance with the decision of the UN system to move away from biennial budget cycles, the preparation of the biennial programme of work is no longer required. However, given that no alternative has been mandated by ITC and given the alignment with the ITC strategy set out in discussions on agenda item 19 the secretariat suggests continuing with the programme of work in its current format.

78. The secretariat presented document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/1 with the draft programme of work and biennial evaluation highlighting the changes to the programme of work and also the biennial evaluation of achievements. The secretariat noted that it was aligned with document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/2.

79. The Working Party adopted the new programme of work for the Working Party on Rail Transport.

XXIV. Election of officers (agenda item 23)

80. The Working Party elected Mr. Krzysztof Kulesza as Chair of the Working Party on Rail Transport and Mr. Hinne Groot as Vice-Chair of the Working Party for the seventy-fourth and seventy-fifth sessions of SC.2.

XXV. Other business (agenda item 24)

81. The Working Party noted that at the seventy-second session it had agreed to hold a workshop titled: "The development of international passenger rail transport on the context of ITC resolution No. 264" at its seventy-fourth session.

82. The Russian Federation asked that given the importance for the railways of developments in the Code of Practice on the Safe Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code), the subject also be discussed within SC.2. The secretariat explained current progress with the setting up of the Group of Experts on the CTU Code as mandated by ITC at its eighty-first session and noted that future sessions of SC.2 would also cover the CTU Code. The secretariat also noted that invitations to participate in this Group of Experts would also be sent to members of SC.2.

83. The Working Party confirmed that the workshop for the seventy-fourth session of SC.2 would be on international passenger transport by rail.

XXVI. Date and venue of next session (agenda item 25)

84. The Working Party adopted the dates for the next session of the Working Party on Rail Transport as from 18 to 20 November 2020 in Geneva.

XXVII. Adoption of decisions (agenda item 26)

85. As agreed on and in line with the Working Party decision of its fifty-second session (TRANS/SC.2/190, para. 6), the Working Party reviewed the main decisions of the session, and the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chair and Vice-Chairs prepared the present report.

86. The Working Party agreed to adopt the amended decisions as discussed during the session and set out in Informal document SC.2 No. 5 (2019).

Annex I

Modifications to annex I of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines

Transmitted by the Government of the Russian Federation

In connection with the seventy-third session of the ECE Inland Transport Committee Working Party on Rail Transport (25–27 November 2019, Geneva), the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation hereby submits proposals to supplement the annexes to the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines.

Annex I. “Numbering of lines at the European level”, add the lines:

- E 20/4 (Braniewo-) Mamonovo – Dzerzhinskaya Novaya – $\frac{\text{Sovetsk (Pagėgiai)}/}{\text{Chernyshevskoe (Kybartai)}}$
- E 20/5 (Skandawa-) Zheleznodorozhny – Chernyakhovsk – $\frac{\text{Sovetsk (Pagėgiai)}/}{\text{Chernyshevskoe (Kybartai)}}$

Annex II

Terms of reference: “Group of Experts on Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock”

Scope of issues and achievements expected

1. The Group of Experts will focus its work on the following issues:
 - (a) Identify methodologies, tools and good practices for evaluating optimal mechanisms for marking railway rolling stock with unique identifiers to ensure that the marking is compatible with requirements under the Luxembourg Rail Protocol;
 - (b) Shape open standards for the Unique Rail Vehicle Identification System (URVIS) application among the relevant stakeholders;
 - (c) Set out recommendations and draft protocols for a range of qualifying rolling stock marking systems with unique identifiers, taking into account the wide range of equipment potentially to be marked, the need to be flexible to adapt to future technological developments and balancing cost with effectiveness;
 - (d) Consider and recommend protocols on private and public access to the unique identifier, in particular, when these are accessible remotely.

Methods of Work

2. The Group of Experts should take into account rules and protocols already in place for marking railway rolling stock, including Commission implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1614 laying down specifications for the vehicle registers referred to in Article 47 of Directive (EU) 2016/797, the rules of the American Association of Railways, the Rail Safety Regulator of South Africa and any directions given by OTIF under COTIF⁵ treaties and take evidence from the Rail Working Group, Regulis SA, the registrar of the International Registry, or any successor body, OTIF, UNIDROIT, financiers of rolling stock, rail operators and manufacturers (directly or through their representative associations) as well as industry experts, technology providers and suppliers of identification systems on the options, practicalities and cost of the various identification marking systems.
3. The Group of Experts will be established and function in accordance with the UNECE Guidelines for teams of specialists approved by the Executive Committee of UNECE on 31 March 2010 (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1). At its first meeting, the Group of Experts will adopt a work plan, clearly defining its objectives and activities, including a time schedule for their implementation.
4. The Group of Experts is expected to meet twice in 2020, at least twice in 2021 and at least once in 2022 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, before concluding its activities with the transmission of a report to the Working Party on Rail Transport at its seventy-sixth session (November 2022, Geneva). This report shall also contain proposals for monitoring procedures and follow-up activities.

⁵ The Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail.

5. Translation of documents and simultaneous interpretation of its sessions in English, French and Russian shall be provided by UNECE for all sessions held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

6. Participation in the Group of Experts is open to all concerned United Nations member countries and experts. Concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as concerned railway administration authorities and companies, freight and forwarding industries, intermodal terminals, freight and logistics centres as well as ports authorities are invited to participate and provide expert advice in compliance with United Nations rules and practices.

Secretariat

7. ECE will provide secretariat services for the Group of Experts and shall ensure close cooperation with the secretariat of the Luxembourg Protocol and all relevant stakeholders.
