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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON COMBINED TRANSPORT  
AT ITS THIRTY-SIXTH SESSION  
(3-5 September 2001)**

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## **REPORT**

### **ATTENDANCE**

1. The Working Party held its thirty-sixth session from 3 to 5 September 2001 under the chairmanship of Ms. M. Masclee (Netherlands) and the vice-chairmanship of Mr. M. Viardot (France).
2. The session was attended by representatives from the following countries: Austria; Belarus, Belgium; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Hungary; Italy; Netherlands; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland; Turkey. A representative of the European Community (EC) was also present.
3. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was represented.
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Container Bureau (ICB); International Union of Railways (UIC); International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR); International Road Transport Union (IRU); Groupement Européen du Transport Combiné (GETC).

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/92.

5. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (TRANS/WP.24/92).

### **ADOPTION OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/91.

6. The Working Party formally adopted the decisions taken at its thirty-fifth session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the chairperson. The adopted report is contained in document TRANS/WP.24/91.

## **ACTIVITIES OF UNECE BODIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY**

(a) Subsidiary bodies of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC)

Documentation: [www.unece.org/trans](http://www.unece.org/trans).

7. The Working Party took note of the request by the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) that all subsidiary bodies should focus attention on the environmental implications of the legal instruments administered by them, i.e. for the Working Party on Combined Transport the AGTC Agreement and its Protocol on inland water transport.

8. The Working Party was informed about the activities undertaken by the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2), which had undertaken a study on the situation of railways in UNECE member countries and on the possibilities for improvements of international rail transport. SC.2 had also undertaken work on the Trans-European Railway project (TER). The Working Party was also informed about the extension of the AGC network towards UNECE member States in Central Asia.

9. The Working Party was informed of the activities of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), as far as they relate to combined transport matters. The Working Party was informed about the revision process of the TIR Convention undertaken by WP.30. It was also informed about the development of a draft UNECE Convention concerning harmonization of pan-European Customs transit procedures for rail transport. The Working Party welcomed the fact that several countries had already taken the initiative to facilitate border crossing procedures for rail transit along the lines proposed in the draft UNECE Convention.

10. Detailed information on the activities of the UNECE and its subsidiary bodies, including the Working Party on Combined Transport (WP.24) is available on the UNECE Transport Division web site ([www.unece.org/trans/](http://www.unece.org/trans/)).

(b) European Commission (EC)

11. The Working Party took note of the latest activities in the field of combined transport, in particular with regard to the White Paper "European transport policy for 2010: time to decide", which contains 60 specific proposals for action focusing on issues such as charging policies, revitalizing of modes other than road transport as well as targeted investments. It is expected that the White Paper will be published in September 2001. The White Paper, including the presentation made by the representative of the

European Commission, is available from the web site of the European Commission ([http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/energy\\_transport/en/lb\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/energy_transport/en/lb_en.html)).

Furthermore, the Working Party was informed about the guidelines for the so-called “Marco Polo” programme, which will succeed the PACT programme. The Working Party noted that the Marco Polo programme, unlike the PACT programme, aims at fostering a modal shift away from road transport towards all segments of the freight market, not only combined transport. Furthermore, funds from the “Marco Polo” programme can also be used for projects outside the European Union, when the projects in question concern accession countries.

(c) Other organizations

12. The Working Party was informed about the current activities of the International Container Bureau (ICB). The ICB has made available on their internet site an overview of container codes, including information about the ownership of containers. The information is intended to assist the prevention of fraud (<http://www.bic-code.org/html-fr/presentation.html>).

13. The Working Party was also informed about the current activities of the International Union of Railways (UIC) and in particular its working group on combined transport (GTC). The UIC/GTC had recently developed contracts for co-exploitation in combined transport and had focused attention on developing best practices. The UIC/GTC had also focused attention on the improvement of statistical data for combined transport of dangerous goods.

14. The representative of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) informed the Working Party that the IRU is conducting a study on energy use in combined transport as compared to traditional road transport. The study will be submitted to the Working Party for information once it is finalized.

15. The Working Party was also informed about the activities of the International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR). The UIRR is presently involved in three PACT projects. The UIRR is also conducting a study on energy in combined transport, but with a different focus than the study being conducted by the IRU. This study will also be submitted to the Working Party for information once it is finalized.

## **FOLLOW-UP TO THE 1997 REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

Documentation: JMTE/2001/5; ECE/AC.21/2001/3; TRANS/2001/9; ECE/RCTE/CONF./2/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL; TRANS/WP.24/R.85/Rev.1; TRANS/WP.24/R.80/Rev.1.

16. The Working Party recalled the outcome of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment held in Vienna from 12 to 14 November 1997 and in particular the implementation of the Programme of Joint Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL) adopted by the Conference. The Working Party took note of the report of the Joint Meeting on Transport and Environment that took place in Geneva on 6 June 2001 (JMTE/2001/5).

17. The Working Party was also informed about the follow-up activities undertaken jointly by UNECE and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the implementation of the so-called London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health and about the outcome of the high-level meeting on Transport, Environment and Health (Geneva, 4 May 2001) (JMTE/2001/5).

18. Detailed information on all activities undertaken by the UNECE on the follow-up to the Vienna and London Conferences is available at the UNECE POJA website ([www.unece.org/poja](http://www.unece.org/poja)).

## **EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC)**

### (a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/88/Rev.1.

19. The Working Party noted that, as of 1 September 2001, the following 23 countries are Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia, Switzerland and Turkey. The following countries have signed the AGTC Agreement, but have not yet become Contracting Parties to it: Finland and Poland.

20. The Working Party was informed by the representative of Poland that his Government was in the process of acceding to the Convention.

21. The Working Party was informed that the secretariat had sent out country specific draft maps of the AGTC network to all Contracting Parties and other countries linked to the AGTC network for verification. So far the secretariat had received replies from half of the countries. The Working Party recalled that the consolidated map of the AGTC network would be a useful tool for all parties involved in combined transport and called upon those countries that had not submitted their comments to do so as soon as possible.

22. The Working Party was also informed that the UNECE Trans European Railway Project (TER) had proposed to implement a system of numbering for AGTC lines that have multiple arms (i.e. C-E 40/1, 2, 3). The proposal aims to facilitate identification of specific itineraries within the AGTC network. The Working Party took note of the proposal and referred it to a more in-depth discussion at one of its forthcoming sessions.

23. Up-to-date information on the status of the AGTC Agreement as well as of other United Nations treaties developed and/or administered by the UNECE may be obtained from the web site of the UNECE Transport Division ([www.unece.org/trans](http://www.unece.org/trans) - Legal instruments).

(b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement

Documentation: C.N.18.2001.TREATIES-1.

24. The Working Party was informed that no objections had been launched to the amendment proposals adopted by the Working Party at its thirty-fourth session (6-8 September 2000) relating to Annexes I and II to the AGTC Agreement, which had been transmitted for review to all Contracting Parties on 17 January 2001 (Depositary Notification C.N.18.2001.TREATIES-1). According to Article 15, paragraphs 4 and 5 of the AGTC Agreement, the amendments contained in Depositary Notification C.N.18.2001.TREATIES-1 will therefore enter into force on 17 October 2001.

25. As soon as the relevant depositary notification has been issued by the Legal Office of the United Nations in New York, the secretariat will prepare a consolidated version of the AGTC Agreement containing all amendments that have come into force in 2001. The document will be transmitted to all Contracting Parties.

26. The representative of Slovenia informed the Working Party of the intention to submit an amendment proposal on a new combined transport line between Slovenia and Hungary for consideration by the Working Party at its next session.

## **INVENTORY OF EXISTING AGTC STANDARDS AND PARAMETERS**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2000/5; Yellow Book and Corrigendum 1.

27. The Working Party took note that the secretariat had issued a Corrigendum to the Yellow Book containing modifications transmitted by the Governments of Austria and Poland.

28. The Working Party recalled that, at its thirty-fifth session, it had invited all countries concerned to verify the data contained in the inventory and to inform the secretariat of any further modifications.

## **PROTOCOL ON COMBINED TRANSPORT ON INLAND WATERWAYS TO THE EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC)**

Documentation: Informal document No. 1 (1998); TRANS/WP.24/79; ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1 (F) and Corr.2 (R); [www.unece.org/trans/](http://www.unece.org/trans/).

29. The Working Party recalled that, on the occasion of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 12-14 November 1997), the Protocol to the AGTC Agreement has been signed by the following 12 UNECE member countries: Austria; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Netherlands; Portugal; Romania and Switzerland. Subsequently, the Protocol has been signed by Luxembourg on 29 April 1998, Slovakia on 29 June 1998 and Bulgaria on 28 October 1998.

30. As of 1 September 2001, the Protocol has the following seven Contracting Parties: Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Denmark; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Romania and Switzerland. It will come into force following ratification by at least five States, of which three States are linked, in a continuous manner, by the waterways identified in the Protocol.

31. Amendment proposals submitted to the Working Party at its twenty-ninth session by France, Hungary and Romania (Informal document No. 1 (1998); TRANS/WP.24/79, para. 20) as well as amendment proposals transmitted by the Government of Bulgaria to the secretariat may be considered by the Working Party as soon as the Protocol enters into force.

32. The final text of the Protocol to the AGTC Agreement (in English, French and Russian) is contained in document ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1 (F) and Corr.2 (R). Up-to-date information on the status and the text of the Protocol may be obtained via the Internet from the web site of UNECE



Transport Division ([www.unece.org/trans/](http://www.unece.org/trans/)).

33. The Working Party called on all concerned Contracting Parties to the Agreement to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible in order that the Protocol will come into force and the above amendment proposals can be considered.

## **THE ROLE OF RAILWAYS IN THE PROMOTION OF COMBINED TRANSPORT**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/91; TRANS/WP.24/2001/8-TRANS/SC.2/2001/9 ; Informal document No. 8 (2001).

34. The Working Party took note of the report of the Joint Meeting of the Working Party on Combined Transport and the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) that had taken place on 19 April 2001 as contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2001/8-TRANS/SC.2/2001/9.

35. The Chairman of the Joint Meeting, Mr. G. Szabo (Hungary) added to the conclusions of the report, that it had been mentioned during the meeting both by some government representatives and by the UIC, that it was indispensable for railways that combined transport was based on the principle of full cost recovery.

36. The Joint Meeting had concluded (TRANS/WP.24/2001/8-TRANS/SC.2/2001/9, para. 47) that follow-up actions resulting from the meeting should focus on the following issues:

- Partnership models, including agreements, best practices and key performance indicators taking into consideration the question of free competition and anti-trust regulations;
- Costing, pricing and subsidies focusing on the specific elements which make up each of these economic parameters, what factors influence each of the elements and how optimizing the elements can assist in promoting combined transport;
- Facilitation of border crossing procedures, harmonization of frontier controls and interoperability in international transport;
- Harmonization of civil liability regimes in multimodal transports.

37. The Working Party also took note of the views contained in Informal document No. 8 (2001) transmitted by the Vice-Chairman of the Working Party concerning concrete follow-up actions as a result of the Joint Meeting.

38. The Working Party agreed that in order to make progress on the issue, it was essential to develop practical measures that could possibly be linked to existing legal instruments administered by the Working Party, such as for instance the AGTC Agreement and its Protocol on inland water transport.

39. In view of the above, the Working Party agreed to establish two informal ad-hoc expert groups addressing the following two issues:

- Partnership models and best practices in Combined Transport
- Combined Transport Terminal efficiency.

40. The mandate of the two informal ad-hoc expert groups is to develop two discussion papers for submission in all official languages at the next session of the Working Party.

41. The Working Party called on all delegations to participate in the activities of the expert groups and requested the secretariat to provide assistance for their work. The secretariat will, in co-operation with the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson of the Working Party, prepare the terms of reference for the two informal ad-hoc expert groups. The secretariat will also convene the two groups.

42. The Working Party requested the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) to take up the issue of interoperability and to revert with its findings on this issue to the Working Party in due course.

## **POSSIBILITIES FOR RECONCILIATION AND HARMONIZATION OF CIVIL LIABILITY REGIMES GOVERNING COMBINED TRANSPORT**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/128; TRANS/WP.24/1999/1; TRANS/WP.24/1999/2; TRANS/WP.24/2000/3; TRANS/WP.24/91; UNCTAD/SDTE/TLB/2.

43. The Working Party recalled that its programme of work contains, as a priority item, the “... analysis of possibilities for reconciliation and harmonization of civil liability regimes governing combined transport operations.” Following a request by the Inland Transport Committee to investigate existing difficulties for combined transport operations (ECE/TRANS/128, para. 86), the Working Party had decided to further consider possible difficulties arising from differences in modal liability regimes and/or gaps in full coverage during combined transport operations (TRANS/WP.24/1999/1).

44. Following the recommendations of a small working group (TRANS/WP.24/1999/2), the Working Party had requested the secretariat to initiate an informal consultative process with participation by government representatives, representatives of the interested intergovernmental organizations as well as international organizations representing the interests of trade and industry. The results of the two hearings organized by the secretariat are contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2000/3.

45. The Working Party was informed by the representative of UNCTAD of a study on the implementation of multimodal transport rules. The study concludes that uniformity of the law governing multimodal transport is far from being achieved. On the contrary, there seems to be a tendency of disunification as a result of recent national and regional initiatives and enacted legislations.

46. The Working Party was also informed by the representative of UNCTAD of a recent meeting of UNCITRAL (Vienna, 25 June - 13 July 2001). In this context, the Working Party was also informed about a submission by the UNECE secretariat to the UNCITRAL expressing its views on the harmonization of civil liability rules for multimodal transport. UNCITRAL had decided to start work on a new legal instrument covering civil liability in the maritime field, but not to address, for the time being, the issue of multimodal transports including a maritime leg (door-to-door transport).

47. The Working Party agreed to reconvene its small ad hoc expert group to consider how to make further progress on the harmonization of civil liability regimes on a pan-European level, in particular harmonization of CMR and the CIM rules, as well as on a global level.

## **TERMINOLOGY IN COMBINED TRANSPORT**

Documentation: ([www.unece.org/trans/new\\_tir/wp24/-Publications](http://www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/wp24/-Publications)).

48. The Working Party took note that the secretariat will contact the other Regional Commissions of the United Nations to inquire about their interest in having the terminology document translated into the other official languages of the United Nations. The document and the definitions contained therein are at present available in four languages: English, French, Russian and German. The glossary is available on the UNECE Transport Division web site ([www.unece.org/trans/new\\_tir/wp24/-Publications](http://www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/wp24/-Publications)).

## **NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF COMBINED TRANSPORT IN UNECE MEMBER COUNTRIES**

49. The Working Party was informed by the representatives of Hungary, the Netherlands and Poland about new developments in the field of combined transport.

## **PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2002 TO 2006**

50. The Working Party considered and adopted its programme of work covering the period 2002 to 2006 as contained in the annex to this report.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

### Date of next session

51. The Working Party decided, pending the formal decision by the Inland Transport Committee, to convene its thirty-seventh session on 18 and 19 April 2002. The deadline for submission of documentation to be included in the agenda as official documents is 17 January 2002.

## **ADOPTION OF THE REPORT**

52. The Working Party agreed to adopt the report of its thirty-sixth session by way of a written procedure based on the Conference Room Papers (CRPs) distributed in the three UNECE working languages at the meeting. Representatives who wished to modify the final report were requested to inform the secretariat in writing before 14 September 2001.

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## Annex

### PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2002 TO 2006\*

#### PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.9: COMBINED TRANSPORT

##### Promotion of combined and multimodal transport

Priority: 1

Description: Consideration of legal, administrative, documentary, technical, economic and environmental aspects of combined and multimodal transport with a view to the development of measures to promote combined and multimodal transport as well as the maximum utilization of equipment, infrastructure and terminals used for such transport.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Combined Transport will pursue the following activities:

#### 1. CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

(a) Review and updating of the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) with a view to:

- Extending the AGTC network to all UNECE member countries concerned taking account of the work already undertaken by ESCAP and the OSZhD;
- Taking into account new developments in transport markets (demands and requirements), including new east-west traffic flows;
- Implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters;
- Raising environmental, energy and safety standards.

Priority: 1

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\* Text in **bold** characters indicates newly proposed text; text in square brackets [...] refers to text proposed for deletion.

Output expected in 2002:

Adoption of an extended AGTC network covering all UNECE member countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Inclusion into the AGTC Agreement of new East-West combined transport lines.

[Analysis of existing standards and operational parameters to be published by the ECE secretariat in an updated Yellow Book.]

- (b) Review and analysis of possibilities to develop inter-regional combined transport services, including the use of the Trans-Siberian railway. Priority: 2

Output expected in 2002:

Report to be prepared as the basis of information provided by concerned UNECE member Governments and international organizations.

- (c) Monitoring of the efficiency of various modes of transport of relevance for combined transport operations. **Analysis of ways to implement a harmonized set of best practices and partnership models for combined rail/road transport.** Priority: 1

Output expected in 2002:

Review of the efficiency of various modes of transport of relevance for combined transport in the sessions of the Working Party and cooperation with other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee. **Initial report by an informal ad-hoc expert group on best practices and partnership models.**

- (d) Analysis of data requirements for transshipment and handling requirements, of marking, coding and identification systems for means of transport and loading units in combined transport, including the promotion of electronic data processing, with a view to improving the flow of information among the various operators and to allow for a better integration of production and distribution systems (logistics) using combined transport techniques. Priority: 2

Output expected in 2002:

Review and analysis of standardized data systems for combined transport operations with a view to possibly preparing international recommendations on this subject.

- (e) Monitoring of weights and dimensions of loading units used in combined transport in accordance with resolution No. 241 adopted by the Inland Transport Committee on 5 February 1993. This includes consideration of possibilities for standardization of loading units and the compliance with safety regulations. Priority: 1

Output expected in 2002:

Review of the issues based on one annual report to be prepared by the UN/ECE secretariat on latest developments in this field.

- (f) Monitoring of technical and organizational measures to optimize terminal and transshipment procedures allowing for more cost-effective handling procedures of loading units. **Analysis of possibilities to improve efficiency and quality of terminal operations in combined transport.** Priority: 2

Output expected in 2002:

Report to be prepared on the basis of information provided by UN/ECE member Governments and international organizations. **Initial report by an informal ad-hoc expert group on efficiency and quality of terminal operations in combined transport.**

- (g) Analysis of economic and environmental aspects of combined transport, including administrative measures and activities of the transport industry, with a view to promoting sustainable transport development. Priority: 1

Output expected in 2002:

Follow-up to the 1997 Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 12 to 14 November 1998) on the basis of the Programme of Joint Action adopted at the Conference, to be determined in accordance with the decisions taken by the Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment and inter-secretariat consultations.

- (h) Monitoring by the secretariat on behalf of the Working Party of the following subjects for consideration by the Working Party upon specific request only:

- [Harmonization] **Translation** of the combined transport terminology into Arabic, Chinese and Spanish in order to contribute to the dissemination of the joint ECMT, EC and UN/ECE glossary of terms used in this field;

- Combined transport techniques and operations (including inland waterways and coastal shipping techniques) as a basis for a possible international compendium of measures for the safe handling and temporary storage of dangerous goods;
- National approval procedures for containers and swap-bodies in the framework of relevant conventions, such as the CSC Convention, with a view to better harmonizing such procedures;
- New services and technologies in combined and intermodal transport, including sea/inland waterways and sea/land interfaces, and the use of bimodal road/rail vehicles with a view to be able to analyze the potential of combined transport. Priority: 2

**Output expected in 2002:**

**Report(s) to be prepared by the secretariat as a basis for discussion by the Working Party, as appropriate.**

**2. ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION**

- (a) Analysis of possibilities for reconciliation and harmonization of liability regimes governing combined transport operations. Priority: 1

**Output expected in 2002:**

Review of relevant activities undertaken by international organizations and, if appropriate, preparation of further analytical and legal work in this field.

- (b) Analysis of the consequences on the organization of combined transport in Europe resulting from the development of combined transport services on interregional rail links between Europe and Asia. This includes the organization of an inter-regional meeting harmonizing the legal and administrative work carried out by relevant international organizations in Europe and Asia (e.g. ESCAP, UNCTAD, EC, OSZhD). Priority: 2

**Output expected in 2002:**

Based on work carried out by ESCAP, study on the feasibility of an intergovernmental meeting, jointly organized with ESCAP, in Central Asia or the Caucasus to agree on common measures to facilitate combined transport services along the interregional links.

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