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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport

**DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE WORKING PARTY ON COMBINED TRANSPORT  
AT ITS THIRTY-SEVENTH SESSION  
(18 and 19 April 2002)**

**ATTENDANCE**

1. The Working Party held its thirty-seventh session on 18 and 19 April 2002.
2. The session was attended by representatives from the following countries: Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Netherlands; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine. 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 inter-governmental organization was represented: European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT).
5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Container Bureau (ICB); International Road Transport Union (IRU); International Organization for Standardization (ISO); International Union of Railways (UIC); International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR).

6. On the invitation of the secretariat, a representative of the “Groupement Européen du Transport Combiné” (GETC) participated at the session.

### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/94.

7. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (TRANS/WP.24/94).

### **ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

8. Ms. M. Masclee (Netherlands) was re-elected Chairwoman and Mr. M. Viardot (France) was re-elected Vice-Chairman of the Working Party for its sessions in the year 2002.

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

#### **(a) UNECE Inland Transport Committee**

Documentation: Informal document No. 1 (2002) ; [www.unece.org/trans](http://www.unece.org/trans).

9. The Working Party was informed about the results of the sixty-fourth session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (18-21 February 2002), which had approved the activities of the Working Party carried out in 2001. The Committee had taken note of the activities of the Working Party to promote the role of combined transport through the development of new recommendations and effective procedures with the aim of amending the AGTC Agreement. Furthermore, the Committee had taken note of a request from the Russian Federation to elaborate within WP.24 a Euro-Asian Agreement on Main Combined Transport Lines, which would allow to realize the decision on the establishment of a comprehensive system of transport links between Asia and Europe. Finally, the Committee endorsed the work carried out, so far, by the ad hoc expert group on civil liability regimes in multimodal transport operations and decided to prolong the mandate of the group for the year 2002.

10. The Working Party also took note of Informal document No. 1 (2002) prepared by the Chair containing her contributions to the discussion of strategic objectives for the Committee that took place on 21 February 2002.

11. The Working Party was informed that the Committee had discussed the issue of transport and security, and that it had decided to request all subsidiary bodies to identify, within their respective fields of competence, the differences between "security" and "safety" concepts and the relevant concrete questions that could be addressed in this respect.

12. The Working Party was also informed about the activities undertaken by the UNECE Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3). In particular, the Working Party had decided, as a follow-up to the Pan-European Conference on Inland Water Transport (Rotterdam, 5-6 September 2001), to invite the Working Party to pay more attention to the integration of inland water transport into the combined transport chain. Furthermore, the Working Party noted the invitation to contribute to the scheduled up-date of the so-called "Blue Book" on parameters of inland waterways with additional parameters deriving from the Protocol to the AGTC on Inland Waterways. The Working Party requested the secretariat to invite Contracting Parties to the two Agreements to submit contributions in this respect.

13. The Working Party was informed about the activities undertaken by the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.3). The Working Party took note of an ongoing study on facilitation of border crossing, which had been carried out for ten border stations in six countries. The preliminary conclusions of the study demonstrated that stoppage times at border crossings could still be reduced by focusing on, in particular, integrated controls and harmonized documentation. As a result of the conclusions of the Joint Meeting between the Working Party on Combined Transport (WP.24) and the Working on Rail Transport (SC.2) (Geneva, 19 April 2001), the latter has decided to study the question of interoperability and has invited the European Community and EU member States to provide information on the status of implementation of Directive 2001/16/EC on the interoperability of the trans-European rail system. Finally, the Working Party noted that, as of 1 January 2002, the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) also includes main international railway lines in the countries of the Trans-Caucasus and Central Asia.

14. The Working Party was also informed about the activities undertaken by the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) concerning harmonization of Customs transit procedures for rail transport at a pan-European level.

15. Detailed information on the activities of the UNECE and its subsidiary bodies is available on the UNECE Transport Division web site ([www.unece.org/trans/](http://www.unece.org/trans/)).

**(b) European Commission (EC)**

16. The Working Party was informed by the representative of the European Commission, Directorate General Energy and Transport (TREN) that the financial promotion of the intermodal transport programme of the Commission, the so-called Marco Polo programme, most likely would be adopted in 2003. However, the call for projects would already take place in 2002. The Working Party was also informed that the Commission had initiated a consultation process on the issue of freight integration and that a report on the application of Directive 92/106 on the establishment of common rules for certain types of combined transport of goods between member States is expected to be released during the coming months.

**(c) European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)**

17. The Working Party was informed about the current activities of the ECMT, in particular relating to the ECMT Ministerial meeting that will take place in Bucharest on 28 to 31 May 2001, which, amongst others, will focus on the possibilities of a modal switch for freight transport. The Working Party took note that the consolidated Resolution on the Development of Combined Transport would be discussed at the meeting.

**(d) Other organizations**

Documentation: Informal document No. 4 (2002); Informal document No. 5 (2002).

18. The Working Party was informed about the current activities of the International Container Bureau (ICB). The ICB had finalized work on the so-called BIC code providing codes to identify container owners and operators. More information about the code can be obtained from the ICB web site: [www.bic-code.org](http://www.bic-code.org). The Working Party also took note of information concerning the development of an ISO standard for electronic seals.

19. The Working Party was also informed by the representative of the International Road Transport Union (IRU) about difficulties in the transport of dangerous goods in combined transport due to increasing restrictions at local and municipal level. Products of this kind are estimated to make up around fifteen to twenty per cent of the total combined transport volume and the increased restrictions have, therefore, a serious impact on the combined transport chain.

20. The Working Party was also informed about the current activities of the International Union of Railways (UIC). The Working Party took note of Informal document No. 5 (2002), which contains the views of the International Co-ordination Committee for the combined rail-road transport (INTERUNIT) on the development of combined transport. The Working Party also took note of activities concerning dangerous goods, the UIC Quality Guide for railways and a UIC IT project on certain transport corridors.

21. The Working Party was also informed by the representative of the International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR) of problems concerning the operation of the Channel Tunnel (Informal document No. 4 (2002)).

22. The Working Party was also informed about the current activities of the “Groupe ment Européen du Transport Combiné” (GETC). The GETC is participating in the development of a CEN code for intermodal loading units.

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

Documentation: ECE/AC.21/2002/5; ECE/AC.21/2002/3; Informal document No. 2 (2002); Informal document No. 6 (2002).

23. The Working Party recalled the outcome of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment held in Vienna from 12 to 14 November 1997. In particular, the Conference had adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Joint Action (POJA) (ECE/RC TE/CONF./2/FINAL; ECE/RC TE/CONF./3/FINAL). The Working Party also recalled that it had prepared earlier two background documents for the Conference on the promotion of combined transport to foster a sustainable transport policy in Europe (TRANS/WP.24/R.85/Rev.1; TRANS/WP.24/R.80/Rev.1). The Working Party took note of Informal document No. 6 (2002) containing the views of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and its bureau concerning the questions of transport, environment and health.

24. The Working Party was informed that the forthcoming second High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health (Geneva, 5 July 2002) is expected to endorse the mandated mid-term review of the Vienna Programme of Joint Action (POJA) covering the activities undertaken in this field between 1997 and 2002 (ECE/AC.21/2002/3). The High-level Meeting is also expected to consolidate and prioritize the activities undertaken under POJA and the so-called London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health in a new Transport, Environment and Health Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) (ECE/AC.21/2002/5). THE PEP will be

administered under a new institutional mechanism serviced jointly by the UNECE and WHO/Euro secretariats.

25. 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)).

26. The Working Party took note of Informal document No. 2 (2002) transmitted by the Government of Hungary on combined transport and sustainable development.

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

### **(a) Status of the AGTC Agreement**

Documentation: C.N.276.2002.TREATIES-1; ECE/TRANS/88/Rev.1; [www.unece.org/trans](http://www.unece.org/trans).

27. As of 1 April 2002 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 Working Party welcomed that Poland had acceded to the Agreement with effect from 20 June 2002. (Depositary Notification C.N.276-2002.TREATIES-1). Finland has signed the AGTC Agreement, but has not yet become a Contracting Party to it. Up-to-date information on the status of the AGTC Agreement may be obtained from the UNECE Transport web site: ([www.unece.org/trans](http://www.unece.org/trans) - Legal instruments. Part of the information is only available through subscription).

28. The Working Party invited, in particular, Finland, Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Yugoslavia to undertake all necessary steps with a view to becoming Contracting Parties to the Agreement as soon as possible.

29. The Working Party took note that the secretariat was in the process of studying if it would be possible to transfer the map of the AGTC network to an interactive electronic format that would be available on the UNECE Transport web site. The Working Party welcomed this initiative and requested the secretariat to pursue it.

**(b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement**

Documentation: C.N.877.2001.TREATIES-2; C.N.18.2001.TREATIES-1; Informal document No. 3 (2002).

30. The Working Party took note that the amendment proposals to Annexes I and II to the AGTC Agreement, adopted by the Working Party at its thirty-fourth session (6-8 September 2000), have come into force on 17 October 2001 (Depository Notification C.N.877.2001.TREATIES-2).

31. The Working Party took note of two proposals for amendments to the AGTC Agreement transmitted by the Governments of Norway and Slovenia (Informal document No. 3 (2002)). The Working Party decided to consider the proposals at its next session.

32. The Working Party was informed that the secretariat is in the process of preparing a consolidated version of the AGTC Agreement containing all amendments that have come into force since the last consolidation of the Agreement in 1999.

**INVENTORY OF EXISTING AGTC STANDARDS AND PARAMETERS**

Documentation: “Yellow Book” and Corr. 1.

33. The Working Party recalled the publication in 2000 of the so-called “Yellow Book”, an inventory of existing AGTC and AGC standards and parameters covering the year 1997. The short analysis on the implementation of the AGTC and AGC standards and parameters as contained in the “Yellow Book” had been translated into French and Russian by the secretariat (TRANS/WP.24/2000/5).

34. The Working Party had, at its thirty-sixth session (3-5 September 2001), taken note of Corrigendum I to the “Yellow Book” containing changes to the information concerning Austria and Poland. The secretariat will, following the session, publish Corrigendum II, containing changes to the information for a number of Contracting Parties.

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

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

35. 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 Slovakia on 29 June 1998 and Bulgaria on 28 October 1998.

36. As of 1 April 2002, 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.

37. 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.

38. 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 ([www.unece.org/trans](http://www.unece.org/trans) - Legal instruments. Part of the information is only available through subscription).

39. The Working Party encouraged 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 Working Party requested the secretariat to contact those Contracting Parties that had not yet ratified the Agreement to inquire about the reasons for non-ratification.



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

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2002/1; TRANS/WP.24/2002/2; TRANS/WP.24/2002/3; TRANS/WP.24/2002/4; TRANS/WP.24/2001/1; TRANS/WP.24/2001/2; TRANS/WP.24/2001/3; TRANS/WP.24/2001/4; TRANS/WP.24/2001/5; TRANS/WP.24/2001/6; TRANS/WP.24/2001/7; TRANS/WP.24/2001/8; Informal document No. 1 (2001); Informal document No. 3 (2001); Informal document No. 4 (2001); Informal document No. 5 (2001); Informal document No. 6 (2001).

40. The Working Party recalled the outcome of the Joint Meeting of the Working Party and the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) that took place on 19 April 2001 as contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2001/8.

41. At its thirty-sixth session, the Working Party took note of Informal document No. 8 (2001) (reproduced as official document TRANS/WP.24/2002/1) presented by its Vice-Chairman outlining three concrete avenues for further studies: (a) Interoperability; (b) Terminals; (c) Introduction of an incentive scheme. The Working Party agreed to establish two informal ad-hoc expert groups addressing the following two issues (TRANS/WP.24/93, paras. 39-41):

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

42. The Working Party also agreed that, in order to make progress on these issues, it was essential to develop practical measures that could possibly be linked to the existing legal instruments administered by the Working Party, i.e. the AGTC Agreement and its Protocol on inland water transport. The Terms of Reference of the two informal ad-hoc expert groups are contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2002/2.

43. The Working Party considered the two documents prepared by the informal ad-hoc expert groups in accordance with its mandate (TRANS/WP.24/2002/3 and TRANS/WP.24/2002/4).

### **(a) Partnership models and best practices in Combined Transport**

44. The Working Party took note of a presentation made by the representatives of the UIC and the GETC on partnership models and best practices in combined transport. The main points of the presentation are contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2002/3 prepared by the Ad hoc expert group. The Working Party was of the view that the work undertaken, so far, contained a number of interesting suggestions for improving the standards and performance parameters contained in the AGTC Agreement. The Working Party, however, felt that further work needed to be

undertaken in order to prepare, before the next session of the Working Party, a list of proposals specifically deliberated with the aim of being adopted as standards to be included in the AGTC Agreement. In this context, it was recalled that the standards and parameters contained in the AGTC Agreement are mainly directed towards Governments.

**(b) Combined transport terminal efficiency**

45. The Working Party considered the findings of the informal ad-hoc expert group contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2002/4. The Working Party welcomed the work undertaken by the informal ad-hoc expert group and felt that the findings were of a constructive nature, which would assist the Working Party in revising the standards and parameters for terminals contained in the AGTC Agreement. The Working Party invited Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement to provide the secretariat, as soon as possible, with any specific proposals or comments they might have. On this basis, the Working Party invited the informal ad-hoc expert group to prepare, in advance of the forthcoming session of the Working Party, specific proposals for amendments of the AGTC Agreement as well as a prioritization of such proposals.

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

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2002/5; TRANS/WP.24/2002/6; TRANS/WP.24/2002/7; TRANS/WP.24/2000/3; UNCITRAL document A/CN.9/WG.III/WP.21; UNCTAD/SDTE/TLB/2.

46. 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 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).

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

48. At its thirty-fifth session, the Working Party requested the secretariat to explore the possibility of organizing a world-wide forum to bring together all government representatives and experts on civil liability in multimodal transport with the aim to come to a final conclusion concerning the question of harmonization (TRANS/WP.24/91, paras. 40-46). The Working Party also requested the secretariat, as an intermediate step, to explore the possibilities of aligning the liability clauses of the legal instruments governing European overland transport, in particular road and rail transport (TRANS/WP.24/91, para. 51).

49. The Working Party was informed about the latest developments concerning the work of UNCITRAL in developing a new legal instrument covering civil liability for transport of goods by sea. In January 2002 UNCITRAL has issued a draft instrument contained in UNCITRAL document A/CN.9/WG.III/WP.21 (available on the UNECE Transport web site). The UNECE secretariat, together with the informal ad-hoc expert group on civil liability had submitted comments to UNCITRAL on the draft (TRANS/WP.24/2002/5). In April 2002, the UNECE secretariat had participated in the UNCITRAL Working Group on Transport Law, which had been convened to discuss the UNCITRAL draft. The UNCITRAL meeting had decided to consider the draft instrument on the basis of door-to-door provisions. As a result, the secretariat felt that there was little scope, at present, for the UNECE to prepare a draft global instrument on multimodal liability.

50. The Working Party considered the discussion paper prepared by the ad-hoc expert group containing an overview of the various possibilities for harmonization of the liability rules and outlining proposals for further action in this field (TRANS/WP.24/2002/6).

51. The Working Party also took note of the European Commission study on the economic impact of carrier liability on intermodal transport (TRANS/WP.24/2002/7).

52. The Working Party felt that, based on the developments in the various international fora and the requirements of the users of combined and multimodal in the UNECE region, further work in this field should focus, at this stage, on developing a civil liability regime for multimodal transport in the UNECE region based on an overland transport approach, possibly including short-sea shipping. The Working Party requested the secretariat to initiate a process to draft a legal instrument for this purpose.

53. The Working Party, however, also felt that it was important to ensure the co-operation between UNECE and other intergovernmental bodies involved in the development of civil liability regimes, such as, for instance, UNCTAD and UNCITRAL. The Working Party, in particular, stressed that it was important to observe that the development of new instruments, also covering

multimodal or door-to-door transport, should aim at simplifying use of multimodal transport. The Working Party requested the secretariat to monitor closely the development in other international fora and report on this at its next session.

## **MONITORING OF WEIGHT AND DIMENSIONS OF LOADING UNITS IN COMBINED TRANSPORT**

54. The Working Party recalled that its programme of work contains as a priority item “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”.

55. The Working Party was informed by the representative of the ICB about initiatives to develop a CEN standard for stackable swap bodies.

56. The Working Party was informed by the representative of the ISO that it was not foreseen to revise the provisions for measurements for containers contained in ISO standard 668.

57. The Working Party, recalling that the aim of resolution No. 241, in particular, had been to secure the circulation of loading units in line with national traffic provisions of the UNECE Contracting Parties, requested the secretariat to continue to monitor the developments in this field and to report to the Working Party if any new developments occurred.

## **TERMINOLOGY IN COMBINED TRANSPORT**

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

58. The Working Party recalled the publication of the glossary of terms used in combined transport prepared jointly by the European Commission (EC), the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the UNECE secretariat. The glossary contains a detailed, though not exhaustive list of definitions applied in the framework of combined transport in Europe. The definitions are available in four languages: English, French, Russian and German and are 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)).

59. The Working Party was informed that the glossary has been translated into all official languages of the European Union. The various language versions will be available shortly on the following internet addresses of the European Commission:  
[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/transport/themes/land/english/lt\\_28\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/transport/themes/land/english/lt_28_en.html).

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

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2002/8.

60. The Working Party was informed by the delegates of Bulgaria, Germany, Romania, Russian Federation and Switzerland on recent operating experiences and on new and planned administrative procedures and on new technologies with regard to combined transport in their countries. The IRU informed the Working Party about a study on combined transport and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions (TRANS/WP.30/2002/8). The Working Party welcomed the information and encouraged delegates to provide relevant information in writing to the secretariat, if possible.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **(a) Review of the scope of activities of the Working Party**

Documentation: Informal document No. 7 (2002).

61. The Working Party took note of information provided by the secretariat on some preliminary considerations to review the scope of activities of the Working Party (Informal document No. 7 (2002)). The Working Party decided to revert to this question at its next session.

#### **(b) Date of next session**

62. The Working Party decided to convene its next session from 7 to 9 October 2002. The deadline for transmission of official documents to be translated is 19 July 2002.

### **ADOPTION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE WORKING PARTY**

63. The Working Party will adopt the present decisions at its thirty-eighth session (7 to 9 October 2002).

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