



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/WP.24/99
30 April 2003

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport

**SUBSTANTIVE DECISIONS
TAKEN BY THE WORKING PARTY AT ITS THIRTY-NINTH SESSION¹
(14 and 15 April 2003)**

ATTENDANCE

1. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Croatia; Cyprus; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Hungary; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovenia; Switzerland; Turkey. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) as well as the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) were represented. The following non-governmental organizations were also represented: International Container Bureau (ICB); International Organization for Standardization (ISO); International Road Transport Union (IRU); International Union of Railways (UIC); “Groupement Européen du Transport Combiné” (GETC).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

2. Mr. M. Viardot (France) and Ms. M. Masclee (Netherlands) were elected Chairman and Vice-chairperson respectively of the Working Party for its sessions in 2003.

¹ This document has been prepared by the UNECE secretariat in consultation with the elected officers of the session. It will be formally adopted at the forthcoming session of the Working Party (29 September-1 October 2003). Official documents as well as other information relating to the activities of the Working Party are available on the relevant UNECE web site: www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html.

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

(a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

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

3. Finland, Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine as well as countries in the Caucasus and in Central Asian were invited to become Contracting Parties to the Agreement as soon as possible. The secretariat was requested to publish an updated hard cover map of the AGTC Agreement and to make rapid progress in the preparation of an electronic version, also incorporating possibly information on the UNECE infrastructure networks on road, rail and inland waterways (see para. 5 below).

(b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2003/1.

4. The Working Party decided to pursue its work on interregional combined transport links between Europe and Asia by extending the geographical scope and the minimum standards and parameters of the AGTC Agreement. The Ad hoc Expert Group, established by the Inland Transport Committee, was requested to prepare, in cooperation with other international organizations, such as OSZhD and UNESCAP, concrete proposals for Euro-Asian links covering administrative, legal and technical issues. Contracting Parties were invited to submit concrete proposals in this respect to the secretariat.

(c) Inventory of existing AGTC standards and parameters

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2000/5.

5. The secretariat was requested to publish updated information relating to Austria, Poland and Romania in the Yellow Book. It was also requested to transmit a questionnaire for the collection of 2002 data to Contracting Parties in due course. Comments on the appropriateness of the infrastructure and service parameters and standards as contained at present in the AGTC should be sought as well as views on the possible inclusion of further parameters and standards particularly on performance. Furthermore, comments on the use that is being made of the Yellow Book, on possible shortcomings and on proposals for its modification should be requested. The preparation of the questionnaire should also be coordinated, to the extent possible, with the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2). Consideration should also be given to the establishment of a consolidated "Book", incorporating the data of the present "Blue" and "Yellow" Books as well as possibly also

those infrastructure parameters contained in the AGC Agreement (E-Roads) and in the AGTC Protocol on Inland Water Transport. The idea to provide information on specific pan-European transport corridors should be pursued.

PROTOCOL ON COMBINED TRANSPORT ON INLAND WATERWAYS TO THE AGTC AGREEMENT

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/122 and Corrs. 1 and 2; TRANS/WP.24/79.

6. The Working Party decided to invite, using appropriate diplomatic channels, in particular, those countries that had already signed the Protocol in 1997 to accede to it in order to ensure that it would come into force and could then be updated in line with several requests.

ROLE OF RAILWAYS IN THE PROMOTION OF COMBINED TRANSPORT

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/2002/9; TRANS/WP.24/2002/9; TRANS/WP.24/2002/4; TRANS/WP.24/2002/3; TRANS/WP.24/2002/2; TRANS/WP.24/2002/1; TRANS/WP.24/2001/8; TRANS/WP.24/2001/7; TRANS/WP.24/2001/6; TRANS/WP.24/2001/5; TRANS/WP.24/2001/4; TRANS/WP.24/2001/3; TRANS/WP.24/2001/2; TRANS/WP.24/2001/1; Informal documents No.3 and 5 (2003); Informal document No.10 (2002).

7. The ad hoc expert groups on partnership models and best practices and on combined terminal efficiency were requested to finalize their work taking account of the considerations at the present session and to propose amendment proposals for inclusion into the AGTC Agreement. The Working Party decided not to pursue, for the time being, work on costing, pricing and subsidies in combined transport.

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

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2000/3; UNCTAD STDE/TLB/2003/1.

8. The Working Party decided to continue its work on the elaboration of a draft convention relating to multimodal land transport covering the UNECE region with a view to improving the efficiency of combined and intermodal transport. The ad hoc expert group was requested, in line with its mandate, to continue its work taking account of the current activities of UNCTAD and UNCITRAL in this field and in particular the replies given by UNECE member States to an UNCTAD questionnaire.

ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN COMBINED TRANSPORT OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2003/5; Informal documents No. 1,2 and 6 (2003).

9. Information was provided by Hungary, Poland and the Russian Federation on new national developments and by a French company on a new horizontal transshipment technique for road vehicles. The representative of ECMT informed about current activities. UNCTAD will convene an Expert Group on Development of Multimodal Transport and Logistics Services (24 to 26 September 2003 in Geneva). The Working Party regretted that the European Commission was not represented and requested the secretariat to contact the competent Commission services in this regard.

MONITORING OF WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS OF LOADING UNITS IN COMBINED TRANSPORT

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2003/4; TRANS/WP.24/2003/3; TRANS/WP.24/2003/2.

10. The Working Party took note of information on new developments and efforts by the industry with regard to the introduction of longer, higher and heavier containers and other intermodal loading units. The Working Party decided to continue monitoring these developments.

SECURITY AND MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS

Documentation: TRANS/2003/6; TRANS/WP.24/2002/13.

11. The Working Party decided to continue work in this field in accordance with the mandate given by the Inland Transport Committee taking account of relevant activities undertaken in particular by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Customs Organization (WCO).

REVIEW OF THE SCOPE OF WORK OF THE WORKING PARTY

Documentation: TRANS/2003/13; TRANS/WP.24/96, annex 3; TRANS/WP.24/2002/11; TRANS/WP.24/2002/12; Informal document No.4 (2003).

12. In accordance with the mandate given to it by the Inland Transport Committee, the Working Party requested the secretariat and its Chair and Vice-chair to prepare, in cooperation with the Chairperson of the ECMT Group on Combined Transport, representatives of the European Commission and other interested delegations, a new programme of work for the Working Party (2004-2008) as well as a new concept for the organization of its work.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE 1997 VIENNA REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT: ESTABLISHMENT OF “THE PEP”

Documentation: ECE/AC.21/2003/6.

13. The Working Party decided to follow closely the work carried out in the framework of the newly established Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) that has consolidated and takes forward the previous London and Vienna processes.

TERMINOLOGY ON COMBINED TRANSPORT

Documentation: UNECE Publication (www.unece.org/trans/wp24/24term.html).

14. The Working Party welcomed the initiative of Poland to translate the glossary of terms used in combined transport into the Polish language and requested the secretariat to make this translation available on the relevant UNECE web site.

OTHER BUSINESS

15. The Working Party decided to convene its fortieth session from 29 September to 1 October 2003.

ADOPTION OF DECISIONS

16. In case an official report should not be adopted, the Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare, before the end of future sessions, a short list of decisions taken. Following the session, the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chair, would establish a short report for formal adoption at the autumn session of the Working Party.
