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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics¹
(7 and 8 March 2005)

UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics
(Forty-third session, 8 March 2005, agenda item 8)

**MONITORING OF WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS
OF LOADING UNITS IN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT**

Note by the secretariat

Addendum 1

DRAFT

Opinion of the UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

Adopted at its forty-third session (8 March 2005)

¹ ECMT and UNECE have adopted cooperative arrangements in establishing the “Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics” consisting of separate ECMT and UNECE segments, the UNECE segment consisting of its Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24).

The UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics,

In accordance with its mandate to monitor weights and dimensions of loading units used in intermodal transport²,

Recalling the considerations of the two global Seminars on the Impact of Increasing Dimensions of Loading Units on Combined Transport (Geneva, 1989 and 1992) referring to the proposals of ISO to introduce a new series 2 of containers³,

Recalling also the resolution adopted by the 1992 Seminar⁴, the clarifications and comments thereto made by the UNECE Working Party⁵ and resolution No. 241 adopted by the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) on 5 February 1993⁶,

Recalling further ECMT resolution No. 67 on “Dimensions of Loading Units”(Edinburgh, 24 and 25 May 1989)⁷ and ECMT resolution No. 91/9 on “Dimensions of Loading Units (Containers and Swap Bodies) in the Combined Transport Sector” (Paris, 21 November 1991)⁸,

Taking account of Council Directive 96/53/EC of 25 July 1996 laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the European Community the maximum authorized dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorized weights in international traffic⁹,

Taking note of considerations within ISO TC 104 to amend a number of standards, in particular ISO 668 on Series 1 freight containers, with a view to including therein containers with the following external dimensions: Length: 45 ft (13,716 mm); Width: 8 ft (2,438 mm); Height: 9 ft 6 in (2,896 mm),

Following the request of ISO, made at the fortieth session of the Working Party in October 2003, to review the applicability of UNECE Inland Transport Committee resolution No. 241 of 5 February 1993 on “Increasing Dimensions of Loading Units in Combined Transport”¹⁰,

² Programme of work 2004-2008 adopted by the UNECE Inland Transport Committee on 19 February 2004 (ECE/TRANS/156/Add.1).

³ TRANS/SEM.7/4 (13-16 November 1989); TRANS/SEM.10/3 (1-4 September 1992).

⁴ TRANS/SEM.10/3, annex.

⁵ TRANS/WP.24/55, paragraphs 4-12.

⁶ ECE/TRANS/97, paragraphs 112-114 and annex 6.

⁷ CM(89)16.

⁸ CEMT/CM(91)24.

⁹ Official Journal of the European Communities No. L 235, 17/09/1996 P. 0059-0075.

¹⁰ TRANS/WP.24/101, paragraphs 21.

Recalling the considerations on this issue at its thirty-ninth, fortieth and forty-first sessions¹¹;

Adopts the following opinion on the proposal of ISO to standardize a 45 ft long container:

1. It is the prerogative of the container operating and handling industries to use and standardize via ISO whatever loading unit (container, swap-body) they view as appropriate and in line with their commercial needs for efficient port-to-port traffic.
2. The arguments put forward in ISO document ISO/TC/104/SC.1 N 405¹² proposing to amend the existing ISO standards to include 45 ft long containers refer exclusively to maritime port-to-port transport operations and not to intermodal land transport services by road, rail, inland waterways and short sea shipping.
3. Within the European Union, Council Directive 96/53 will exclude, at the latest by 31 December 2006¹³, road transport of the proposed 45 ft (13,716 mm) long ISO container (45 ft long units may be carried if their front corners are rounded as of the 13,600 mm length distance)¹⁴. The currently proposed new Directive of the European Parliament and the European Council on intermodal loading units containing also proposals for a standard European Intermodal Loading Unit (EILU) does not modify the external maximum permissible dimensions for road vehicles stipulated in Council Directive 96/53.
4. In most other European countries, the proposed 45 ft long ISO container is also not in line with existing road traffic regulations¹⁵.
5. There is no indication that Governments would allow for longer vehicle dimensions on the European road network to accommodate the proposed 45 ft long ISO container.

¹¹ TRANS/WP.24/99, para. 10; TRANS/WP.24/2003/4; TRANS/WP.24/2003/3; TRANS/WP.24/2003/2; TRANS/WP.24/101, paras. 20-23; TRANS/WP.24/103, paras. 21-23; TRANS/WP.24/2004/4; Informal document No.4 (2004).

¹² Reproduced in UNECE document TRANS/WP.24/2004/4 in English, French and Russian.

¹³ Article 4, paragraph 6 of Directive 96/53/EC.

¹⁴ Annex I, article 4.4 of Directive 96/53/EC: "The distance measured horizontally between the axis of the fifth-wheel king pin and any point at the front of the semi-trailer must not exceed 2,04 m").

¹⁵ Only 14 out of the 55 UNECE member States would seem to allow dimensions for national road transport that are compatible with the length of the proposed 45 ft long ISO container (survey undertaken by the International Road Transport Union (IRU)).

6. The proposed 45 ft long ISO container could thus not be transported freely among different land transport modes in Europe, impeding efficient port hinterland transport. It would also not contribute to European policy objectives of promoting efficient intermodal transport systems at a level playing field and would lead to supplementary transshipment costs in case final road haulage is necessary (due to additional loading and unloading requirements of containers in terminals in order to comply with Council Directive 96/53).

7. The proposed 45 ft long ISO container, due to its restricted internal width not allowing stowage of two pallets side-by side (i.e. 2 x 1,200 mm plus the necessary margin for manoeuvre), does not seem to be of commercial interest for shippers and transport operators for intra-European land transport, including short sea shipping.

8. The concerns expressed in UNECE ITC resolution No. 241 of 5 February 1993 are still valid today and also applicable to the new proposal for a 45 ft long ISO container, [particularly as long as the impact of their transport on European roads, particularly with regard to road traffic safety and road infrastructure limitations, has not been evaluated.]

9. The UNECE secretariat is requested to inform ISO TC 104 of this opinion well before its twenty-second plenary session (London, 12-13 May 2005).
