



ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics¹
UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

**REPORT AND SUMMARY OF DECISIONS
TAKEN BY THE WORKING PARTY AT ITS FORTY-FOURTH SESSION
(Geneva, 27 and 28 September 2005)**

ATTENDANCE

1. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria; Belgium; France; Germany; Hungary; Latvia; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia and Montenegro; Slovakia; Ukraine. The European Commission (EC) was represented. Representatives of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) were in attendance. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSZhD); Comité International des Transports Ferroviaires (CIT); International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR); International Organization for Standardization (ISO); International Container Bureau (BIC); European Association for Forwarding, Transport, Logistics and Customs Services (CLECAT); International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA); Groupement européen du transport combiné (GETC); European Rail Infrastructure Managers Association (EIM); Interrail Services (IRS).

¹ The UNECE and ECMT 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).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat ([TRANS/WP.24/108](#)).

ADOPTION OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE FORTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY

3. The Working Party reviewed the report and formally adopted the decisions taken at its forty-third session on the basis of the draft report prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairman ([TRANS/WP.24/107](#)).

FOLLOW-UP TO THE ECMT/UNECE SEMINAR ON INTERMODAL TRANSPORT BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA (KIEV, 27-28 SEPTEMBER 2004)

4. The conclusions of the ECMT/UNECE Kiev Seminar and possible follow-up activities were considered at the ECMT segment of the Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party on 26 September 2005 ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/1](#); [TRANS/WP.24/107](#)). It was recalled that work on the development of land transport links between Europe and Asia had already been commenced by the UNECE Working Party in 1996 on the understanding that viable land transport alternatives to Euro-Asian maritime transport could only be built on rail-based containerized transport over long distances, i.e. intermodal transport. This does not exclude the use of conventional rail, inland water or even road transport for dedicated services (oil, iron ore, etc.) along certain segments of routes to, from and within Central Asia.

5. The Working Party was informed of pertinent activities undertaken by OSZhD, the [UNECE-UNESCAP project](#) on Euro-Asian transport linkages, the UNECE Working Parties on Rail Transport ([SC.2](#)), Inland Water Transport ([SC.3](#)) and Transport Trends and Economics ([WP.5](#)) and by the [European Commission High-Level Group](#) on the extension of the major trans-European transport axes to neighbouring countries and regions. It was underlined that, in order to achieve tangible results, close coordination and cooperation among these organizations and bodies would be required within a consistent and transparent framework of work.

6. The Working Party noted that the numerous activities in this field were triggered by (a) the explosion of trade between Europe and Asia (mainly China, but also increasingly India) and the ensuing congestion at major European and Asian ports (hubs) and their hinterland transport networks, (b) increased security considerations relating to the main maritime transport corridors (Suez canal) and (c) the need to provide accessibility of the land-locked countries in Central Asia to the world markets.

7. While the impact of functioning land transport links on overall Euro-Asian trade would be rather limited (in the order of 1 or 2 per cent), the development of such alternative links could certainly have very positive consequences for the development of trade between Western Europe, the Russian Federation and Central Asia.²

8. The benchmark for intermodal Euro-Asian transport services is maritime container transport with its sophisticated logistics arrangements (frequency, flexibility, reliability, speed, tracking and tracing of cargoes, etc.) offered by globally operating shipping companies at very competitive prices³. On the shorter sections between Western Europe and the Russian Federation or Turkey and possibly the Middle East, the benchmark is international road transport making use, where available, of ferry services across the Mediterranean Sea, such as between Turkey and Italy.

9. In order to become competitive, Euro-Asian intermodal transport operators, as newcomers to this market, need to do as good or even better than maritime and road transport, particularly on service qualities, such as reliability, frequency and speed that are of primordial importance for the transport of containerized high-value goods. They must also fully exploit the potential comparative advantage of speed vis-à-vis maritime shipping⁴ and need to offer competitive transport prices.

10. It is realized that there exist enormous obstacles to achieving the required transport performance parameters. On the operational side, the considerable imbalances in cargo volumes between Europe and Asia (up to four times more westbound than eastbound container traffic) and between Western Europe and the Russian Federation/Central Asia (up to four times more eastbound than westbound container traffic) need to be resolved by container management systems (pools), reducing the transport of empty containers to a minimum. Intermodal transport operators also have to provide for interoperability between the different railway systems involved, including transshipment procedures at axle gauge changeover stations. They also must take a competitive client-oriented approach (one-stop shop, tracking and tracing systems, etc.) along the whole transport chain.

11. Governments will have to ensure a level playing field among the various modes. They also need to ensure that adequate and well-maintained rail infrastructures are available. Since land transport between Europe and Asia involves often 5 to 10 different countries, Governments, together with competent international organizations, must set in place the

² While containerized maritime transport between Asia and Europe is exploding and now reaches around 10 Mio. TEU, inter-continental traffic on the Trans-Siberian railway, presently the only functioning Euro-Asian transport line, carries in the order of 0.15 Mio TEU (even though capacity may be twice or three-times as high).

³ Container flows from Asia to Europe are up to 4 times higher than in the opposite direction resulting in westbound prices in the order of 2,000 US\$/TEU, while prices for eastbound traffic are at present as low as 500 US\$/TEU.

⁴ Depending on the transport link, Euro-Asian rail transport should be able to cut down transport time to half compared to maritime transport, i.e. 10-15 days compared to 30 days and more and could then also compete with Euro-Asia air-cum-sea transport.

necessary legal conditions to ensure efficient and predictable border crossing procedures. This includes, in particular, unique or at least harmonized rail transport as well as Customs transit regimes (see paras. 15-19 below).

12. In line with the plan of action adopted by the ECMT Council of Ministers, the Joint Working Party decided to designate, as a first step, an observatory on two or three major intermodal transport lines along Euro-Asian transport corridors. Such an observatory or mechanism should serve as an information centre on the above issues, provide a forum for the exchange of views among operators and Governments and allow, if necessary, for the introduction of corrective measures on the basis of best practices⁵. The secretariat, in cooperation with the Ukraine and the two Chairmen of the Joint Working Party, was invited to develop the Terms of Reference of such an observatory as soon as possible.

BORDER CROSSING FACILITATION PROCEDURES RELATING TO INTER-MODAL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS IN A PAN-EUROPEAN CONTEXT

13. The ECMT/UNECE Kiev Seminar had identified the persistent problems at border crossings, particularly in rail transport, as one of the main weaknesses for the effective development of transport linkages between Europe and Asia ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/1](#)). Subsequently, the ECMT Council of Ministers, in its plan of action, underlined that priority needs to be given to facilitating border crossings, all components and all modes combined, but with the focus on rail transport.

14. In line with this decision, the Working Party had an exchange of views among transport operators and international organizations on the administrative border crossing problems hampering efficient East-West transport with a focus on container rail transport.

15. The Working Party noted with concern that, in spite of considerable efforts made by railway undertakings, Governments and international organizations, as of today no single rail transport regime or unique international consignment note, such as CMR⁶ for road transport, existed in the UNECE region. There also existed no single Customs transit regime applicable for East-West rail transport, whereas for road transport the TIR Convention has already been applicable in virtually all UNECE member countries for nearly 30 years. While in most Western European countries, the Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) and its contractual rules for the international carriage of goods (CIM) provide a uniform system of law and a unique (CIM) consignment note for international railway transport of goods, in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, China and beyond, another rail transport regime, the Agreement on International Goods Transport by Rail (SMGS) is applicable. In

⁵ For more details on these activities, refer to the report of the ECMT segment of the Joint Working Party (<http://www.cemt.org>).

⁶ Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) of 1956. It has, at present 46 Contracting Parties.

addition, while the CIM consignment note is accepted as a Customs document in most of Western Europe coupled with still very favourable Customs guarantee and control systems, the SMGS consignment note is not normally accepted by Customs authorities in SMGS member countries.

16. This situation leads to complications and delays at border crossing points, particularly between COTIF and SMGS member countries (such as at the eastern borders of Hungary and Poland) and is prone to bureaucratic interferences and additional costs. It also does not provide for a level playing field between road and rail transport on these transport corridors.

17. The Working Party noted that container transport by rail could, in principle, profit from considerable operational advantages along these corridors (long distances over well-developed railway networks, easy transshipment of standardized loading units, high safety of cargo due to stowage of containers on railway wagons door-to-door, easy access to Customs seals, etc.), the lack of standard administrative procedures at border crossings on Euro-Asian corridors makes such transport operations unnecessarily costly and unreliable - and thus not competitive.

18. In order to address this situation, the Working Party agreed that the following elements should constitute the cornerstones of international activities in this field in the years ahead:

- (a) Negotiation of a unified railway law system, replacing the present artificial separation between COTIF and SMGS regimes, should be initiated as soon as possible in order to ensure direct carriage by rail under a single legal regime from the Atlantic to the Pacific. While this is likely to be a complex process, it should constitute the strategic direction to be pursued by UNECE member States in the years to come. The Working Party declared its readiness to support all initiatives taken in this regard.

In the short term, the development of a common CIM/SMGS consignment note as currently pursued by CIT and OSZHD, providing evidence for the existence of both contracts of rail carriage, should be completed as soon as possible. Such a common consignment note, to be acceptable by Customs and as a bank document, will have to be enshrined into the CIM Rules as well as into the SMGS Agreement. It should also address, at a later stage, standard liability provisions. It is expected that, as of September 2006, the common CIM/SMGS consignment note could be used for pilot operations at least on the following East-West rail lines: (i) Berlin-Moscow (-Nischni-Novgorod) and (ii) Dresden-Kiev. All concerned railway companies are expected to facilitate introduction of this common consignment note. The Working Party, as well as the new observatory (see para. 12), will closely monitor progress in this matter and will report to the ECMT Council of Ministers in 2007 at Sofia on lessons learned and conclusions to be drawn.

- (b) Development of a common pan-European rail Customs transit system should be initiated allowing for use of rail consignment notes as Customs declarations, for the introduction of international Customs control and guarantee systems and thus for the establishment of a level playing field with road transport.

As provisional measures, SMGS member States should adopt UNECE WP.30 resolution No. 50⁷. Furthermore, the UNECE Convention on International Customs Transit Procedures for the Carriage by Rail under cover of SMGS Consignment Notes⁸ should enter into force as soon as possible to allow in SMGS member countries the establishment of a rail Customs transit regime similar to that already existing in Western Europe. To this end, the legalistic dispute over the depositary functions needs to be resolved as soon as possible by the UNECE Working Party (WP.30).

- (c) Insertion of an Annex on international rail transport into the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982)⁹, similar to the already developed annex on road transport, should be accorded high priority by the UNECE Working Party WP.30. Such annex should address, in a comprehensive and consistent manner, all major elements important for efficient border crossing procedures in international rail transport of goods covering all operational and administrative procedures as well as infrastructure requirements. It should also address the specific needs of container transport and different types of cargoes, such as perishable and dangerous goods.

19. The Working Party felt in general that, in order to make rapid progress in this complex field, it would be advisable to start with pilot schemes on a very limited number of railway lines and with a few selected stations and border crossings only, possibly based on bilateral arrangements, such as that recently concluded between Bulgaria and Serbia Montenegro. Such an approach would facilitate the introduction of new procedures, the training of personnel and the provision of scarce resources, including indispensable IT services. It would also allow easy monitoring and fine-tuning.

20. The Working Party requested the secretariat to closely monitor all developments in this field and to do its utmost to facilitate the resolve of the above-mentioned problems. It would revert to these issues at its spring session in 2007 at the latest.

⁷ Resolution No. 50 on “Use of the SMGS Consignment Note as a Customs Transit Declaration” was adopted by the UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) on 25 October 2002 ([TRANS/WP.30/204, annex 1](#)).

⁸ The Convention has been adopted by the UNECE Inland Transport Committee on 17 February 2005 ([ECE/TRANS/162](#), para. 113). The text of the Convention is contained in [TRANS/2005/13 and Corr.1](#).

⁹ The UNECE Inland Transport Committee has decided to prepare an annex on railway border crossing facilitation to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982) ([ECE/TRANS/162](#)). This UNECE Convention has at present 47 Contracting Parties.

IMPLEMENTATION OF “MODEL” ACTION PLANS AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS AT THE PAN-EUROPEAN LEVEL

21. The Working Party noted that the ECMT Council of Ministers, at its Moscow session in May 2005, had adopted a recommendation on the use of the “model” action plans and partnership agreements for the development of intermodal transport” that had been prepared by the Working Party ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/7](#)). The objective of these models is to promote better practices for cooperation between players in international intermodal transport at the policy as well as technical and commercial levels and to establish benchmarks to measure performance.

22. The Working Party felt that Governments, international organizations and the secretariat should make all efforts to widely publicize the “model” action plans and partnership agreements and to obtain information on their application. In particular, feedback on the applicability of the model provisions in different legal and political environments and on the suitability of its key performance indicators and responsibilities (benchmarks) would be very useful to ensure that the models always reflect current Government policies and commercial practice.

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

(a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

23. The Working Party noted that, at present, the AGTC Agreement has 26 Contracting Parties¹⁰. The representative of Serbia and Montenegro reported that the Parliament of his country had ratified the AGTC Agreement already on 29 June 2005. The accession of Serbia and Montenegro will enter into force on 4 January 2006. The representative of Ukraine informed of the Presidential signature of the AGTC on 11 July 2005.

24. The up-to-date and consolidated text of the AGTC Agreement is contained in document ECE/TRANS/88/Rev.3 (<http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24>)¹¹.

(b) Status of amendment proposals adopted by the Working Party

25. The Working Party noted that the amendments to the AGTC Agreement, as proposed by the Russian Federation and adopted by the Working Party at its forty-first session ([TRANS/WP.24/103/Corr.1](#)), had come into force on 7 April 2005 ([Depositary Notification C.N.6.2005.TREATIES-1](#)).

¹⁰ Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Luxembourg; Kazakhstan; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland; Turkey.

¹¹ It should be noted that only the text kept in custody by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity as depositary of the AGTC Agreement, constitutes the authoritative text of the Agreement.

26. A large package of amendment proposals ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/6](#)) adopted by the Working Party on 8 March 2005 ([TRANS/WP.24/107](#), para. 11) has been issued on 19 August 2005 as Depositary Notification [C.N.646.2005.TREATIES-1](#). If, within a period of six months, no objection will be received from a Contracting Party directly concerned, these amendments are expected to enter into force by the end of May 2006.

27. Work has already commenced on another package of amendment proposals based on preliminary work carried out by the secretariat with a view to extending the AGTC network to Central Asia and the Caucasus ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/2](#)). Since the list of important terminals and border crossing points in Central Asian and Caucasus countries has not yet been finalized under the UNECE-UNESCAP project on Euro-Asian transport linkages, the secretariat was requested to await these results before submitting a complete draft of these amendment proposals to the Working Party for consideration and possible adoption.

28. Amendment proposals submitted by Poland and Slovakia relating to a new AGTC line "C 63", as submitted in [Informal Document No. 4 \(2005\)](#), will be added to the above amendment proposals.

PROTOCOL ON COMBINED TRANSPORT ON INLAND WATERWAYS TO THE AGTC AGREEMENT

29. The Joint Working Party recalled that the Inland Transport Committee had requested to undertake an analysis of the reasons that have led to the non-acceptance of a number of international legal instruments, including the Protocol to the AGTC Agreement ([ECE/TRANS/156](#), para. 29). To this effect, the secretariat has addressed a communication to the following UNECE member States that had signed the Protocol, but have not yet ratified or acceded to it: Austria, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia.

30. As replies are still outstanding, the Joint Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare an analysis of the replies for consideration by the Working Party at its forthcoming session.

31. The Protocol to the AGTC Agreement has been signed by fifteen and ratified by seven countries¹², but is not yet in force. The text of the Protocol is contained in document [ECE/TRANS/122](#) and Corrs.1 and 2 (<http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24>).

¹² Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Denmark; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Romania; Switzerland.

ROLE OF INTERMODAL TRANSPORT IN EUROPEAN EXPRESS FREIGHT AND PARCEL MARKETS

32. On the basis of a document and survey prepared by the “Groupement européen du transport combiné (GETC)” ([Informal Document No.3 \(2005\)](#)), the Working Party had an exchange of views on the possibilities that intermodal transport could play in the booming European express freight and parcel markets. It was noted that, while these markets required very high quality and logistics standards (speed, reliability, traceability, etc.), they also provided access to very considerable cargo volumes that are carried overnight between main European centres and are forecasted to continue to grow considerably faster than the freight market as a whole.

33. The Working Party agreed to analyze the replies to the GETC questionnaire at its forthcoming session and to reflect on possible inter-governmental measures that could be taken to facilitate the use of intermodal transport by express freight and parcel operators.

INTEROPERABILITY AND INTERMODAL TRANSPORT

34. The Working Party recalled the results of its survey on the relevance of the existing infrastructure and performance standards as well as target values contained in the AGTC Agreement ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/5](#)). With a view to analyzing the coherence between the various rail and intermodal infrastructure and service parameters and to examining, if necessary, how to harmonize them in the longer term, the Working Party felt that it was of particular importance to cooperate with the railway groups within UNECE and ECMT as well as with the competent authorities within the European Union dealing with infrastructure standards of national rail networks ([TRANS/WP.24/107, paras. 13-14](#)).

35. The Working Party was informed by the European Infrastructure Managers (EIM) on the latest developments within the European Union (EU) on the Trans-European Rail Networks (TEN-T) and on the application of the EU “Railway Packages”. It noted that the European rail network still has considerable spare capacity that could be tapped, in the short term, mainly by more competition and operational and administrative measures (composition and length of trains, interoperability, telematics, train path allocation, etc.). With regard to infrastructure parameters as enshrined in the AGC and AGTC Agreements, it was noted that loading gauge, length of trains and axle loads were of major importance for shippers.

36. There seemed to be a consensus that, for the construction of new railway lines, the main AGC and AGTC infrastructure parameters were quasi-mandatory. However, use of the relevant AGC and AGTC parameters for the upgrading of existing lines depended on the results of line-specific cost-benefit analyses. These parameters, as in fact indicated in article 3 of the AGC and AGTC Agreements, could often only be attained in the very distant future, even on the heavily used railway lines along the North-South European transport corridors.

37. The Working Party decided to revert to this issue at one of its forthcoming sessions with a view to possibly adjusting the current infrastructure standards of the AGC and AGTC Agreements and/or to add elements that, in the meantime, have become important for the “development and operation of a network of important international combined transport lines and related installations” (AGTC, article 2).

OPINION ON 45 FT LONG CONTAINERS: FOLLOW-UP TO THE ISO TC 104 DECISION

38. The Working Party recalled the results of a consultation with UNECE member States on the ISO proposal to standardize maritime containers with the following dimensions: 45’ x 8’ x 9’6” (length x width x height) ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/4](#)). It also recalled its opinion on the ISO proposal that had been transmitted to the ISO Technical Committee 104 (ISO TC 104) ([TRANS/WP.24/107](#), paras. 20-22 and annex).

39. As indicated in document [TRANS/WP.24/2005/8](#), containing also the views of ISO TC 104 on the opinion of the Working Party, the ISO proposal has now been approved by a very large majority of ISO TC 104 members, including most European standardization bodies. This proposal will now be issued as a draft International Standard for voting by ISO member bodies in the framework of the ISO Technical Committee 104/SC 1: “General purpose containers” and, following approval, would be issued in the form of a revised ISO Standard 668.

40. The Working Party regretted the decision of ISO TC 104 and reiterated that the proposed ISO 45’ container did not contribute to intermodal transportation and to global standardization and responded only to certain port-to-port maritime and regional interests. For transport in most of the 55 countries of the UNECE region, the newly proposed container is inappropriate for the transport of (ISO) palletized cargo, cannot be shipped efficiently by rail and inland waterways and, as of 1 January 2007, will be banned from road transport in the 25 countries of the European Union - in line with EU Council Directive 96/53. The Working Party recalled that the European Commission had no intention to modify Directive 96/53 in this respect in the foreseeable future.

41. The Working Party requested the secretariat to continue its monitoring of weights and dimensions of intermodal transport units (ITU) in accordance with ITC resolution No. 241 of 5 February 1993 and to report on any new developments in this field.

RECONCILIATION AND HARMONIZATION OF CIVIL LIABILITY REGIMES GOVERNING INTERMODAL TRANSPORT

42. Recalling its debate on this subject at its forty-third session, the Working Party was informed of progress made by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), [Working Group III \(Transport Law\)](#) in its preparation of an international instrument on the carriage of goods [wholly or partially] [by sea] (square brackets refer to the official text of UNCITRAL indicating unresolved issues) (TRANS/WP.24/2005/107, paras. 23-25; for background information see document [TRANS/WP.24/2002/6](#)).

43. Noting that the study commissioned by the European Commission on civil liability regimes applicable to intermodal transport that was expected to provide guidance on further work to be carried out in this field at the pan-European level, would only be available by the end of November 2005, the Working Party decided to postpone its debate on this issue to one of its forthcoming sessions in 2006. The secretariat was requested to continue monitoring further developments in this field, particularly relating to UNCITRAL.

INTERMODAL TRANSPORT AND SECURITY

44. The Working Party was informed that the UNECE Inland Transport Committee had requested its subsidiary bodies to accelerate existing and potential new activities in the field of transport and security and to play a more proactive role in relation to this question. The Committee had also decided to organize a multi-disciplinary Round Table on Transport Security in conjunction with its session in February 2006 that should primarily focus on the areas of expertise of the UNECE and should encompass all relevant authorities of UNECE member States, intergovernmental organizations and business organizations with an interest in the question of transport security ([ECE/TRANS/162, para. 20](#)).

45. Noting the arrangements on the division of labour between ECMT and UNECE in the field of intermodal transport and the recent ECMT study on container transport security across modes, the Working Party felt that there was no need, for the time being, to embark on new activities in this field.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2006 TO 2010

46. The Working Party reviewed its programme of work covering the period 2006 to 2010 as contained in document [TRANS/WP.24/2005/9](#). As decided at its forty-second session ([TRANS/WP.24/105, para. 4](#)) and approved by the Inland Transport Committee ([ECE/TRANS/162, paras. 133 and 134](#)), the Working Party inserted into its programme of work specific references on “transport safety and security” as well as to “globalization of the world economy.

47. The newly adopted programme of work covering the period 2006-2010 is contained in the annex to this report for approval by the Inland Transport Committee.

DOCUMENTATION FOR THE SESSIONS OF THE JOINT WORKING PARTY

48. Documentation for the ECMT segment of the Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party is available on the password protected web site of the ECMT (www.cemt.org).

49. Documentation for the UNECE segment is available on the UNECE WP.24 web site (www.unece.org/trans/wp24). This includes also all informal documents available during the sessions as well as presentations made. In addition, all documents referred to in the electronic versions of reports and agendas of the Working Party are hyperlinked and could be accessed by simply clicking on them (requires Internet access).

DATE OF NEXT SESSIONS

50. The forthcoming session of the joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party will be held on 29 and 30 March 2006 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. It will be hosted by the UNECE. The ECMT segment will be held on 29 March 2006 and the UNECE segment on 30 March 2006.

51. The tentative dates for the autumn 2006 sessions to be hosted by ECMT in Paris are 2 to 4 October 2006.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE SESSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY IN 2006

52. In line with the procedure adopted by the UNECE Inland Transport Committee, Mr. M. Viardot (France) was re-elected as Chairman of the UNECE segment of the Joint Working Party for its sessions in 2006.

SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

53. As agreed and in line with the decision of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee ([ECE/TRANS/156, para. 6](#)), the UNECE secretariat, in cooperation with the Chairman, has finalized the present report on the outcome of the session of the Working Party.

Annex

PROGRAMME OF WORK 2006-2010

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.9: INTERMODAL TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS¹³

Promotion of combined and intermodal transport

Priority: 1

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

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics will pursue the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) Consideration of measures to promote efficiency of intermodal transport as part of a sustainable transport system whereby goods are moved in one and the same loading unit or road vehicle using successively two or more modes of transport without handling the goods themselves in changing modes. Analysis of ways to implement a harmonized set of best practices and partnership models for intermodal transport operations (road, rail, inland water transport and short-sea shipping).

Priority: 1

[Output expected in 2004: Preparation of models or best practices for international action plans or agreements among Governments and private and public actors involved that can provide a framework and benchmarks for collaborative action towards the development of competitive international intermodal transport services.]

Output expected in 2006: Monitoring the use of and, if necessary, preparation of implementation procedures for the “model” action plans and partnership agreements for the development of intermodal transport prepared by the Working Party and adopted by the ECMT Council of Ministers (Moscow, 24-25 May 2005) and the Inland Transport Committee in 2006.

¹³ Text in square brackets [...] refers to text proposed for deletion; text in **bold** characters indicates newly proposed text.

(b) 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 UNESCAP and OSZhD;
- Taking into account new developments in transport markets (demands and requirements) **also as a result of globalization of the world economy**, including new East-West traffic flows;
- Implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters;
- Raising environmental, energy as well as safety and security standards. Priority: 1

Output expected in 200[5] 6: 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.

(c) Monitoring of weights and dimensions of loading units used in intermodal 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 200[4] 6: Review of the issues based on one annual report to be prepared by the UNECE secretariat on latest developments in this field.

(d) Analysis of modern transport chains and logistics that allow for an integration of production and distribution systems providing a rational basis for Governmental decisions on efficient intermodal transport regulations and infrastructures **and taking into account transport safety and security requirements**. Priority: 2

Output expected in 200[4] 6: Review of technical and legal issues and development of regional implementation tools and measures based on considerations and analyses made by the ECMT.

- (e) Analysis 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 intermodal transport.

Priority: 2

Output expected in 200[4] 6: Report to be prepared on the basis of information provided by UNECE member Governments and international organizations allowing the preparation of benchmarks for the efficient operation of intermodal terminals.

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

- Translation and updating of the intermodal transport terminology into Arabic, Chinese and Spanish in order to contribute to the dissemination of the joint ECMT, EC and UNECE glossary of terms used in this field;
- Intermodal 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 analyse the potential of intermodal transport;
- Data requirements for transshipment and handling operations, of marking, coding and identification systems for means of transport and loading units in intermodal transport, including electronic data processing;
- Analysis of economic and environmental aspects of intermodal transport, including administrative measures and activities of the transport industry, with a view to promoting sustainable transport development.

Priority: 2

Output expected in 200[4] 6: Report(s) to be prepared by the secretariat as a basis for discussion by the Working Party, as appropriate.

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

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

Output expected in 2004 6: Review of relevant activities undertaken by international organizations and, if appropriate, preparation of a draft legal instrument for multimodal overland transport covering the UNECE region.

- (h) Analysis of the consequences on the organization of intermodal transport in Europe resulting from the development of intermodal transport services on interregional rail links between Europe and Asia, including the Trans-Siberian railway, and vice versa, **in close cooperation with ECMT, UNESCAP, UNCTAD, EC, OSZhD, etc.**) [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. UNESCAP, UNCTAD, EC, OSZhD).] Priority: 2

[Output expected in 2004: Based on work carried out by UNESCAP, study on the feasibility of an intergovernmental meeting, jointly organized with UNESCAP, in a country in Central Asia, the Caucasus or in the Russian Federation to agree on common measures to facilitate intermodal transport services along interregional links.]

Output expected in 2006: Based on the recommendations adopted at the ECMT/UNECE Kiev Seminar on Intermodal Transport between Europe and Asia and the corresponding framework action plan adopted by the ECMT Council of Ministers (Moscow, 24-25 May 2005), review of measures to facilitate border crossing procedures and analysis of the coherence between the various rail and intermodal infrastructure parameters and their possible harmonization in the longer term.
