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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON INTERMODAL TRANSPORT  
AND LOGISTICS AT ITS FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION<sup>1</sup>  
(Geneva, 5–6 March 2007)**

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<sup>1</sup> All documents mentioned in this report are available and can be downloaded from the relevant UNECE website (<http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>) or from the ODS system of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

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## **I. ATTENDANCE**

1. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria; Azerbaijan; Belarus; Belgium; Czech Republic; France; Georgia; Germany; Latvia; Lithuania; Netherlands; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Turkey; Switzerland; Ukraine. The European Commission (EC) was represented. A representative of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) was in attendance. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: European Association for Forwarding, Transport, Logistic and Customs Services (CLECAT); Europlatforms; International Bureau of Containers (BIC); International Rail Transport Committee (CIT); International Road Transport Union (IRU); International Organization for Standardization (ISO); International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR); Groupement européen du transport combiné (GETC); International Multimodal Transport Association (IMMTA); International Interreligious Federation for World Peace (IIFWP).

## **II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)**

2. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/114](#)).

## **III. COMMITTEE ON INLAND TRANSPORT (ITC) (Agenda item 2)**

3. The Working Party was informed about the results of the sixty-ninth session (6-8 February 2007) of the Committee on Inland Transport (ITC) ([ECE/TRANS/192](#)) and the implementation of the UNECE reform that had led to a streamlined governance structure for UNECE ([E/ECE/1434/Rev.1](#)). The ITC had approved the activities undertaken by the Working Party in 2006. It had agreed to the proposal of the Working Party to add to its programme of work four additional work items that had been undertaken by the now dissolved joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/113](#)) and to increase its allotment of annual meeting days by one day ([ECE/TRANS/192](#), paragraphs 85-90).

4. The ITC had also endorsed the proposal of the chairman of the Working Party to consider ways and means to further improve coordination and cooperation among the UNECE Working Parties dealing with, in particular, the development of Euro-Asian transport links. On the basis of proposals to be made by concerned Working Parties, the ITC had requested its Bureau to review this matter and to formulate proposals for consideration by the Committee at its next session ([ECE/TRANS/192](#), paragraph 86). The Working Party, recalling its considerations on this issue at its last session ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/113](#), paragraph 5) agreed to contribute to this exercise and invited its chairman to take necessary action in this regard.

## **IV. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 3)**

5. The Working Party took note of [Informal documents No. 2, 4 and 5 \(2007\)](#) prepared by ISO, Belgium and Turkey and of presentations and documentation made available by Georgia,

Romania and the UIRR. In addition, the representatives of Austria, France, Germany, Portugal, Russian Federation and the European Commission provided information on the latest developments of intermodal transport.

6. In 2006, intermodal transport has risen very substantially in most countries in the region. Preliminary data provided by UIRR that are representative for the general developments in Western Europe show for 2006 an increase in unaccompanied road-rail traffic (containers, swap-bodies and semi-trailers) in the order of 12 per cent. International traffic even rose by 15 per cent, national traffic by 7 per cent. Accompanied road-rail traffic (Rolling Highway) showed in 2006 an increase of around 16 per cent (+25 per cent in national and +15 per cent in international traffic). Port hinterland traffic increased even more (up to 28 %) and trans-alpine intermodal transport recorded an increase in the order of 16 per cent in 2006.

7. The reasons for this rapid growth in intermodal rail transport that, for unaccompanied traffic, continues unabated since 2002 are manifold. Important factors are the continued rapid growth of maritime container transport to and from China, the liberalization of rail transport in many Western European countries and the emergence of rail transport operators providing efficient and reliable international haul management from origin to destination with block and increasingly shuttle trains. In addition, increasing congestion on main European road transport corridors, regulatory traffic restrictions, particularly across the Alps, the sharp rise in diesel prices, the introduction of new motorway tolls (Germany) and the compulsory use of the electronic tachographs in heavy goods road vehicles are factors that have and will increasingly play in favor of intermodal road/rail transport.

8. As a result of these developments, serious capacity problems have already occurred along major rail transport corridors in Western European countries, not only in port hinterland traffic and on the important European North-South corridors, but increasingly also on important East-West railway links as contained in the AGTC Agreement. This situation is likely to further deteriorate as preliminary figures for 2007 show a continued upward trend in intermodal road/rail transport that is likely to continue throughout 2007 while rolling stock as well as rail and, to a lesser extent, terminal infrastructure development cannot follow at such a pace.

9. An indicator for these difficulties is the deteriorating service quality of rail transport operations. While in 2004 around 64 per cent of intermodal trains arrived on time, this figure declined to 60 per cent in 2005 to reach 53 per cent in 2006. At the same time the number of trains arriving more than 3 hours late has climbed to 30 per cent and those arriving with a delay of more than one day, causing serious logistical problems, has reached an all time high with 10 per cent (UIRR data). Thus considerable efforts need to be made to better use, in the short run, the existing rail capacity through more efficient logistical systems and by an increased use of block and shuttle trains. In the longer run, administrative and technical interoperability of national railways must be improved ([UNECE/ECMT Model Action Plans and Public-Private Partnership Agreements](#)), adequate rolling stock should be available and intermodal infrastructures needs to be built and maintained in compliance with the standards of the [UNECE AGTC Agreement](#).

10. In contrast to this situation, transit container traffic along the Transsiberian railway line that had grown considerably over the past years has dropped dramatically from more than 100.000 TEU in 2005 to around 8.000 TEU in 2006 mainly due to a near doubling of tariffs by the competent authorities. As transit tariffs have now been reduced by around 35 per cent it is expected that this Euro-Asian traffic will again increase considerably in 2007.

11. Intermodal, mostly container transport by inland waterways was hampered in 2006 by very low water levels in the first two months of the year and by the ever-increasing congestion in major European maritime ports. Nevertheless, preliminary figures indicate that container transport on the Rhine increased in 2006 by around 2-3 per cent. Ro-Ro transport in the Mediterranean Sea continued to grow. For example, the number of road vehicles (trucks and semi-trailers) transported by Ro-Ro vessels between Turkey and Italy increased by 10 per cent and reached 242.000 vehicles in 2006. With the planned extension of Ro-Ro services between Turkey and Italy, France and possibly other Mediterranean countries, this intermodal traffic is prone to increase further in the years to come.

12. The Working Party welcomed the detailed information provided by all participants and felt that this in-depth review of traffic coupled with information on recent policy, research and technical developments in intermodal transport in the pan-European context should be further encouraged and structured by the secretariat. The Working Party noted that, at its next session, it was planned to focus attention on (a) work undertaken by the [European Commission](#) and the International Union of Railways ([UIC](#)) to identify and overcome congestion and bottlenecks in intermodal road/rail transport, (b) cooperation between inland [freight villages](#) and maritime container ports and (c) impact of the new 35 km long [Lötschberg tunnel](#) in Switzerland on the organization of intermodal transport in Europe.

## **V. MONITORING AND ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL MEASURES TO PROMOTE INTERMODAL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 4)**

13. At its sixty-ninth session, the ITC had decided that the Working Party continues, possibly in a streamlined manner, the work carried out by ECMT in (a) monitoring and analysis of national measures to promote intermodal transport and (b) monitoring enforcement and review of the ECMT Consolidated Resolution on Combined Transport (CEMT/CM(2002)/Final) (see paragraph 3 above).

14. The ECMT secretariat has prepared document CEMT/CS/TIL(2007)1 (reproduced as [Informal document No. 1 \(2007\)](#)) containing information of 21 ECMT and UNECE member countries on national measures taken to develop combined transport as well as document CEMT/CS/TIL(2006)5 containing the answers of 19 countries to a survey on the implementation of the ECMT Consolidated Resolution. The ECMT secretariat would slightly modify and update these documents and will post it on the ECMT website with a link to the UNECE site.

15. The Working Party was of the view that information in these fields would be extremely useful for Governments and intermodal transport operators. It should be collected and presented by the secretariat in a consolidated manner and in such a way as to provide a comprehensive and consistent picture of national measures taken by UNECE member States to promote intermodal transport. This information should be comparable among countries and should allow on-line and user-friendly access by important intermodal transport lines and related installations as identified in the [UNECE AGTC Agreement](#). The Working Party felt that the new [UNECE electronic inventory of AGTC standards and parameters](#) might be used as a model for such an exercise. The secretariat was requested to analyze the feasibility of such an approach for consideration by the Working Party at its next session.

## **VI. ECMT PEER REVIEW ON INTERMODAL TRANSPORT POLICY IN TURKEY (Agenda item 5)**

16. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat about a peer review on intermodal transport in the framework of ECMT that, at the request of the Minister of Transport, is currently being undertaken in Turkey.

17. The term “peer review” as carried out in the framework of ECMT and UNECE, can be described as the systematic examination and assessment of the performance of a State by another State in a specific field. The final objective is to assist the reviewed State to improve its policymaking, adopt best practices and support compliance with established standards and principles. Such peer reviews are carried out upon the specific request of a Government only and, in principle, are carried out free of charge for the requesting Government. Following agreement on modalities and procedures, the secretariat, in cooperation with the requesting country, is identifying a team of experts and is coordinating their work. Assisted by the requesting Government, the team of experts will visit the country concerned and will prepare a report for review by this Government. Following acceptance of the report, the report may be transmitted to a concerned inter-governmental meeting and might be published if it is of general interest.

18. The Working Party felt that such peer reviews could be a useful tool to assist countries in the effective implementation of intermodal and other policies in the field of transport. At the same time, such reviews would also allow countries to learn from each other. As the present exercise in Turkey was the first peer review on intermodal transport, the secretariat was invited to pursue its work in this regard and to inform the Working Party about the results of this peer review, if appropriate.

## **VII. FOLLOW-UP TO THE ECMT/UNECE SEMINAR ON INTERMODAL TRANSPORT BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA (KIEV, 27-28 SEPTEMBER 2004) (Agenda item 6)**

19. The Working Party recalled its decision to designate an intermodal transport observatory in Ukraine ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/111](#), paragraph 6), its discussions on that issue at previous meetings ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/1](#); [TRANS/WP.24/107](#), paras. 4-6; [TRANS/WP.24/109](#),

paras. 4-12; ECE/TRANS/WP.24/111, paras. 5-10 and annex 1) and the [framework action plan](#) for the promotion of intermodal transport on transport links between Europe and Asia adopted by the ECMT Council of Ministers in 2005.

20. The contact point for the observatory in Ukraine is Mr. Oleksandr Polischuk (e-mail: [o.polischuk@liski.com.ua](mailto:o.polischuk@liski.com.ua)).

21. In accordance with its mandate, the observatory will serve as an information centre for intermodal transport operations along the above two intermodal transport lines, 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 practices applicable elsewhere as well as of the model action plans and partnership agreements that had been prepared by the Working Party.

22. The representative of the intermodal transport observatory in Ukraine presented a very brief progress report on its activities relating to two identified North-South (C-E 10, 95, 70, 70/2: Helsinki - Istanbul/Alexandroupolis) and East-West (C-E 30: Dresden - Kiev) intermodal transport lines forming part of the Euro-Asian transport corridors. With the assistance of the secretariat, the observatory has continued to collect and update information along these lines covering infrastructure and service parameters on rail, intermodal transport, terminals, border crossing points and other related transport installations. Some of these data are already available online from the UNECE website (<http://unece.unog.ch/wp24/agtc.aspx>). However, it was noted that there still existed considerable data gaps. The secretariat was requested to continue to assist the observatory in its work.

23. As decided earlier, a first report of the experiences made and the results achieved by the observatory in Ukraine will be considered by the Working Party at its next session in October 2007. This report will refer to the ECMT action plan and will be based on the specifications contained in document [ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/1](#). The progress report of the observatory should be available at the secretariat by 30 June 2007 in order to have it translated and distributed in time.

#### **VIII. BORDER CROSSING FACILITATION PROCEDURES RELATING TO INTERMODAL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS IN A PAN-EUROPEAN CONTEXT (Agenda item 7)**

24. The Working Party recalled that 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, had underlined that priority needs to be given to facilitating border crossings, all components and all modes combined, but with the focus on rail transport.

25. In line with this decision, the Working Party had agreed on three strategic elements of work that should constitute, in the long term, the cornerstones of international activities in this field. Within this framework, the Working Party had recommended a number of short-term

issues to be tackled immediately in the competent international fora ([TRANS/WP.24/109](#), para. 18):

A. Unified railway law resolving the present separation between the COTIF and SMGS regimes

26. The representative of the CIT informed the Working Party that the development of a common CIM/SMGS consignment note had been completed and is being used already on a few rail transport lines. This document provides evidence of the existence of both contracts of carriage and is recognized as a Customs and bank document in the countries of the European Union as well as in Belarus, the Russian Federation and in Ukraine. The representative of CIT also reported on continued work by CIT and OSJD on the electronic version of the common CIM/SMGS consignment note as well as on the development of standard liability conditions and harmonized terms of contracts.

27. The Working Party congratulated CIT and OSJD on these achievements that constituted an important element in the fulfilment of one of the three strategic areas of work in this field: the direct carriage of freight by rail under a single legal regime from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The Working Party also stressed in this context the advantages of the common CIM/SMGS consignment note for the fight against Customs fraud and erroneous Customs declarations.

B. Unified rail Customs transit system

28. The Working Party noted that, on 9 February 2006, the ITC had adopted a UNECE Convention on International Customs Transit Procedures for the Carriage by Rail under cover of SMGS Consignment Notes that provided for the SMGS consignment note to be recognized as a Customs document in all SMGS member countries having ratified this Convention ([ECE/TRANS/2006/9](#) and [ECE/TRANS/2006/9/Corr.1](#)). The new Convention has now been translated into Chinese, English, French and Russian and will be opened for signature as of late April 2007 in Geneva and thereafter at the Legal Office of the United Nations in New York.

C. Annex on international rail transport to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982)

29. The UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport is currently reviewing proposals on measures to facilitate border crossing procedures for railway transport that will be included into a new Annex 9 to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Control of Goods ([ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2007/Informal document No. 3](#)). These proposals include some general provisions on nationally or internationally coordinated and mutually recognized control procedures at border crossings as well as on the optional use of the common CIM/SMGS consignment note. Following an international conference on rail facilitation scheduled for autumn 2007, it is planned to have the new Annex finalized and adopted by the Administrative Committee of the "Harmonization" Convention in spring 2008.

30. The Working Party welcomed the progress made on the above three strategic elements of work. It requested the secretariat to continue its monitoring of all developments in this field and to do its utmost to facilitate the resolve of still outstanding issues.

## **IX. MONITORING OF WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS OF LOADING UNITS IN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 8)**

### **A. Transport of 45 ft long ISO containers on the European road network**

31. The Working Party recalled that, at its forty-third session in March 2005, it had adopted an opinion on the proposal of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to standardize 45 ft (13,716 mm) long containers ([TRANS/WP.24/107](#), paragraphs 20-22 and annex). This opinion, alluding also to Council Directive 96/53EC of 25 July 1996 applicable in the European Union, stated that "... 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." As 45 ft long ISO containers are 9 cm longer than the maximum allowable length in the EC Directive, such containers would normally no longer be allowed to be transported in national transport operations within the European Union after 31 December 2006.

32. On 27 November 2006 the Commission of the European Communities issued a staff working document interpreting EC Directive 96/53EC in such a way as to allow, as of 1 January 2007, continued national transport of 45 ft long ISO containers as "indivisible loads" or under a so-called "modular concept" if EU member States so decide individually.

33. On the basis of a document prepared by the secretariat ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2007/2](#)), the Working Party considered the consequences of this interpretation also and in particular with regard to the transport of 45 ft long ISO containers to and within non-EU member States. The Working Party noted that the interpretation of the European Commission seemed, under the present circumstances and as a short-term measure, acceptable to several EU and non-EU countries.

34. However, it was recognized that this approach did not provide for a harmonized solution neither within EU nor within UNECE member States and could affect other countries as the control of such containers at road border crossings within the EU and neighbouring countries could not be ensured. Since only a minority of the 56 UNECE member States had indicated earlier that 45 ft long ISO containers were permissible on their road network, the secretariat was requested to inquire from all UNECE member States whether they would allow as of 1 January 2007 the transport of 45 ft long ISO containers on their national road network and if yes, under which conditions.

35. In this context, the Working Party voiced its concern about the apparently ever increasing dimensions of intermodal transport units (ITU) (containers, swap bodies and semi-trailers suitable for intermodal transport) and drew attention to the cost effects this might have not only for road transport infrastructure, but also for terminals, rail tunnels and other related intermodal installations, particulars in case of an increased width and height of such ITUs.

**B. Impact of “mega-trucks” on European roads**

36. The Working Party recalled the considerations at its forty-sixth session of a study undertaken by UIRR on the economic impact of “mega-trucks” on intermodal transport in Europe. While such lorries are regularly used in some of the Nordic countries, such as Sweden, they are not allowed on the road network in other European countries. At present they are only used on a trial basis and on specific motorways sections in Germany and the Netherlands ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/113](#), paragraph 8).

37. The Working Party was informed by the representatives of Germany and the Netherlands about the continuation of pilot or trials operations of such trucks with a maximum length of 25.5 m and weights of up to 60 tonnes on specific motorway sections in their countries. Preliminary results over relatively short distances in the Netherlands seemed to show encouraging results (reduction of 2 to 5 per cent of heavy goods vehicles on the road and only very minor shift of freight from intermodal transport to road). This has led to an extension of the trials to 300 lorries as of November 2007. First studies undertaken over longer distances in Germany, as also reflected in the above UIRR study, seemed to indicate however that the negative impact of such mega-trucks on intermodal transport could be more marked and could result in a reduction of intermodal transport in the order of 7 to 14 per cent and a corresponding increase in road transport. Whether such a modal shift towards road transport would then offset the reduced number of lorries plying the road network as a result of the use of longer and heavier units still remained to be investigated.

38. As the general use of such mega-trucks also raised questions relating to road traffic safety and the feasibility of road and terminal infrastructure, particularly in alpine and densely populated regions, the Working Party decided to consider this matter in more depth at its next session. The representatives of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands were invited to present the results of studies and trials made in their countries. Also the experiences made with such lorries in the Nordic countries might be of interest in this regard.

**X. MODERN TRANSPORT CHAINS AND LOGISTICS (Agenda item 9)**

39. The Working Party may recall that its programme of work contains the following work element: “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 transport demand, modal choice as well as on efficient intermodal transport regulations and infrastructures and taking into account transport safety and security requirements.” ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/113](#), annex). Based on initial discussions already held earlier in ECMT, the Working Party had a first round of discussions on general logistical concepts and on the role Governments and national authorities responsible for transport and land-use planning could and possibly should play in order to set appropriate framework conditions for the development of efficient logistical services.

40. Several UNECE member countries, such as France, Germany and Portugal have already embarked on plans to identify various logistics concepts, to analyze developments and future trends in logistics, in particular with regard to transport requirements and to define the role of

Governments in this context. As the importance of efficient logistics and transport systems for the competitiveness of European economies was increasingly recognized, the Working Party felt that there might also be a role for inter-governmental organizations to assist in the exchange of best practices and possibly in the coordination of well-focused activities.

41. The Working Party noted that it was a considerable challenge to define concretely the term “logistics” as a process of designing and managing the supply chain in the wider sense and to measure its impact on economic activities and transport.<sup>2</sup>

42. In line with its programme of work and taking account of preliminary work already carried out by ECMT in this field, the Working Party decided to task a virtual expert group, under the chairmanship of its Vice-Chairman, with the preparation of terms of reference and concrete issues for action that could serve as the basis for its future work in this field. Important elements to be looked at could be the role of Governments in the planning, development and operation of logistical centres or freight villages as well as the development by the Working Party of model Action Plans and Partnership Agreements for the promotion of intermodal transport, including benchmarking to measure performance ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/7](#)). Participants were encouraged to participate in this work that should be coordinated by the secretariat.

A. Reconciliation and harmonization of civil liability regimes in intermodal transport

43. The Working Party was informed that the European Commission was preparing an action plan on logistics to be issued in November 2007. The action plan would address issues such as requirements for logistical infrastructures, including financing, urban freight transport, information technologies, dimensions of intermodal transport units (ITU), quality labeling training and working conditions in logistics, etc. More detailed information on the action plan and the envisaged activities of the European Commission would be made available at the October 2007 session of the Working Party.

44. The Working Party recalled in this context that, at its last session, it had felt that it still seemed to be premature to initiate work on a pan-European civil liability regime for intermodal transport covering road, rail, inland water and short sea shipping. Possibly, the action plan prepared by the European Commission and the ensuing discussions would provide additional elements to decide on this matter ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/113](#), paragraphs 17-21).

B. Activities of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)

45. The Working Party was informed of progress made by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) [Working Group III \(Transport Law\)](#) in the preparation of an international instrument on maritime transport that would, in its present form, extend to all contracts of carriage involving a sea leg, including short-sea shipping and port hinterland transport by road, rail or inland water transport. It noted that UNCITRAL expects to finish its work by the end of 2007.

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<sup>2</sup> Terminology on Combined Transport. Prepared and published by UNECE, ECMT and EC (2001).

**XI. EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC)  
(Agenda item 10)**

A. Status of the AGTC Agreement

46. The Working Party noted that the AGTC Agreement has at present 30 Contracting Parties.<sup>3</sup>

47. Detailed information on the AGTC Agreement, including the up-to-date and consolidated text of the Agreement ([ECE/TRANS/88/Rev.4](http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html)), a map on the AGTC network, an inventory of standards stipulated in the Agreements as well as all relevant Depositary Notifications are available at the website of the Working Party (<http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>).<sup>4</sup>

B. New amendment proposals

48. The Working Party considered preliminarily a package of amendment proposals prepared by the secretariat containing a number of railway lines for inclusion into the AGTC Agreement that complement the existing networks and cover important international pan-European combined transport lines in Belarus, Estonia, Latvia and the Russian Federation ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2007/1](http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/2007/1) and [ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2007/1/Add.1](http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/2007/1/Add.1)). These proposals also contain railway lines and related installations that would extend the AGTC network to Central Asia and the Caucasus and would align it with the AGC rail network in this region ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/113](http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/113), paragraphs 26-27).

49. As the required consultation process among countries directly concerned has not yet been concluded, the Working Party decided to postpone formal consideration and possible adoption of these proposals in accordance with article 15 of the AGTC Agreement to its next session in October 2007.

C. Electronic inventory of AGTC standards and parameters

50. The Working Party was informed of improvements made to the UNECE website allowing access to the inventory of existing AGTC and AGC standards and parameters (<http://unece.unog.ch/wp24/agtc.aspx>). At present, the system provides information on 20 infrastructure and service standards covering all railway lines contained in the AGC and AGTC Agreements. The secretariat was requested to further improve and expand this very valuable tool allowing on-line monitoring of the implementation of the AGTC and AGC infrastructure and performance standards at the national level.

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<sup>3</sup> Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Luxembourg; Kazakhstan; Montenegro; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland; Turkey; Ukraine.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

## **XII. PROTOCOL ON COMBINED TRANSPORT ON INLAND WATERWAYS TO THE AGTC AGREEMENT (Agenda item 11)**

51. The Protocol to the AGTC Agreement has been signed by fifteen and ratified by seven countries,<sup>5</sup> but is not yet in force. The text of the Protocol is contained in document ECE/TRANS/122 and Corrs.1 and 2.

52. Detailed information on the Protocol, including the text of the Protocol and all relevant Depository Notifications are available at the website of the Working Party (<http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>).<sup>6</sup>

53. Following ratification by Hungary, the Protocol is expected to enter into force in 2007. Upon entry into force, the Working Party would consider possible modifications to the standards contained in the Protocol (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/111, paragraphs 31-33) together with other amendment proposals already made earlier by Bulgaria, France, Hungary and Romania (TRANS/WP.24/97, paragraph 23).

## **XIII. DATE OF NEXT SESSIONS (Agenda item 12)**

54. The Working Party decided to hold its autumn session on 1 and 2 October 2007 in Geneva. The spring 2008 session of the Working Party was tentatively scheduled for 17 and 18 March 2008.

## **XIV. REPORT AND SUMMARY OF DECISIONS (Agenda item 13)**

55. As agreed and in line with the decision of the ITC (ECE/TRANS/156, paragraph 6), the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chairman and in consultation with delegates, has prepared this report and summary of decisions taken by the Working Party for formal adoption at the autumn session of the Working Party.

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<sup>5</sup> Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Denmark; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Romania; Switzerland.

<sup>6</sup> 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.