

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**  
**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
Ninety-first Meeting  
Geneva, 24 March 2017

**EXCOM/CONCLU/91**

**CHAIR'S CONCLUSIONS**

**FORMAL SEGMENT**

Item 1 – Adoption of the agenda

1. The provisional draft agenda for the 91<sup>th</sup> meeting was adopted.

Item 2 – Chair’s conclusions from the last meeting

2. The conclusions from the 90<sup>th</sup> meeting of EXCOM (EXCOM/CONCLU/90) were adopted.

**FORMAL SEGMENT**

Item 3 - Matters relating to the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry

3. The Chair of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI), Ms. Marta Gaworska, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of COFFI over the past year and its plans for the future.

4. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed satisfaction with the results of the work of the Joint ECE-FAO Forestry and Timber Section and said its products were highly valued by the relevant agencies of his government. He welcomed the development of instruments for monitoring the state of forests and expressed interest in unified approaches to the forest sector outlook studies and in studying the impact of forests in combating climate change. He looked forward to Las2017, the upcoming joint session of COFFI and the FAO European Forestry Commission to take place in Warsaw in October 2017.

5. The representative of the European Union and its member States appreciated progress made on the Integrated Programme of Work (IPoW) 2013-17, and recognized the value of the IPoW 2018-19 and the cost efficiency of continuing to organize joint sessions in the future. He took note of the planned activities of the Joint Section including data collection for global and regional reporting on forests. He also looked forward to Las2017.

6. The representative of Switzerland appreciated the holding of joint sessions since 2011, noting that this supported both programmatic and organizational synergies and enhanced the regional approach, coherence and efficiency of the work.

7. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry for the clear and comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the progress and developments as well as the next steps.

Item 4 - Matters relating to the Committee on Environmental Policy

(a) Meeting with the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy

8. The Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy (CEP), Ms. Elisabete Quintas da Silva, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of CEP over the past year and its plans for the future. She sought EXCOM’s approval for the renewal of the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment (WGEMA) for the period 2017-2021.

9. The representative of the Russian Federation requested information on the financial difficulties in the servicing of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) following a budget cut in 2015. He also requested information on the principles of financing the MEAs. He did not support ECE’s

continued participation in the Environment and Security (ENVSEC) Initiative, noting that ECE had no intergovernmental mandate on security issues, and further explained that he objected not against providing interested member States with technical assistance but against the format of this assistance. Finally, he hoped for more focus in the Chair's report on the results achieved thanks to cooperation with other organizations, rather than a simple listing of these organizations. He supported the renewal of the mandate and terms of reference of the WGEMA.

10. The representative of the European Union and its member States noted that Mongolia's request in an Environmental Performance Review illustrated the interest ECE's products elicited beyond the region. He appreciated that follow-up to the outcomes of the 8<sup>th</sup> Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (June 2016, Batumi, Georgia), including promotion of the Batumi Action for Cleaner Air (BACA) and the Batumi Initiative on Green Economy (BIG-E), was part of CEP's planned activities for 2017. He also appreciated the good cooperation with the UN Environment Programme.

11. In response to the Russian Federation, Ms. Quintas da Silva said that she would consult with the secretariats of the MEAs and provide an update on their financial situation. The Director of the Environment Division further added that the MEAs depended on extrabudgetary contributions, which was not ideal in terms of predictability or sustainability. He noted that the secretariat had increased its resource mobilization efforts but thought this could not be a strong long-term solution. On ENVSEC, he clarified that ECE had agreed not to chair the initiative, and that all the activities it undertook related to environmental issues. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe was the one who worked on security-related ENVSEC activities.

12. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Committee on Environmental Policy for the clear and comprehensive report. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the progress and developments as well as the next steps.

(b) Decisions on matters related to the Committee on Environmental Policy.

13. The representative of the European Union and its member States inquired what modifications had been introduced into the mandate and terms of reference of the WGEMA.

14. Ms. Quintas da Silva replied that normally, the WGEMA's mandate would be given for at most two years, as they were associated with specific short-term tasks. After Batumi, there was more clarity on what would need to be done to put in place the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) by 2021, and WGEMA would be at the center of this activity. She explained that this was the reason for the request for a five year mandate, with a mid-term review in the middle if needed, and also noted that this mandate was more detailed as it had specific activities relating to SEIS implementation by 2021. She added that most of the activities would depend on resource availability.

15. The representative of Switzerland supported the renewal of the mandate and the terms of reference. He noted that the outcomes of Batumi would form a strong foundation for the establishment of SEIS by 2021 and welcome a workshop being envisaged in the summer of 2017 to look into the future role of the WGEMA in this context.

16. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the renewal of the mandate and terms of reference of the Working Group on Environmental Monitoring and Assessment for the period 2017-2021 as contained in ECE/EX/2017/L.2.

Item 5 - Matters relating to the Inland Transport Committee

(a) Meeting with the Chair of the Inland Transport Committee

17. The Chair of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC), Mr. Jerzy Kleniewski, made a presentation to EXCOM on the achievements of ITC over the past year and its plans for the future. He sought EXCOM's approval for the renewal of the mandate of three Groups of Experts under their terms of reference and for the submission of three resolutions adopted by the ITC to the 67th Commission session for information. He also sought EXCOM's guidance on how the hosting of the Database for the Exchange of Vehicle Type Approvals (DETA), requested by the Contracting Parties to the 1958 Agreement<sup>1</sup>, should be financed.

18. The representative of the Russian Federation appreciated the strong organization of the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the ITC and said the adoption of the Ministerial Resolution, with its decision 1 on the ITC reporting to ECOSOC as well as to ECE, would raise the profile of the Committee's activities to a global level. He noted that an important area for regulatory cooperation was Eurasian Transport Links and said that, as a member of both ECE and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Russian Federation would strive to ensure that the two Regional Commissions would work on a sustainable transport system in Eurasia in a coordinated manner. He called upon other countries that were members of both ESCAP and ECE to do the same.

19. The representative of the European Union and its member States noted the success of the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the ITC. He said DETA was relevant and useful and should be financed from the Regular Budget (RB). Therefore, he could not support any of the financing options outlined in informal document 2017/17. He requested the secretariat to consider reallocating funds from other activities to DETA to avoid interruptions.

20. The representative of Belarus appreciated the results of the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the ITC. He supported the renewal of the mandates of the three Groups of Experts and the submission of the three ITC resolutions to the Commission session for information. He said the financing of DETA required further study that could be explored at informal consultations.

21. The representative of Germany supported the comments of the European Union. She said DETA should be financed by the RB, as it was a long-term project and a mandatory component of the 1958 Agreement, which itself was a core, mandated activity of ECE. She hoped the secretariat could provide RB financing via reallocation of funds or other means and said she would be open to informal consultations on the topic.

22. The representative of Switzerland commended the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the ITC and supported the global nature of the Committee's efforts and the renewal of the mandates of the Groups of Experts in question. He also hoped DETA could be financed with RB resources.

23. The representative of France aligned himself with the European Union and Switzerland and hoped DETA could be financed via the RB.

24. The representative of the United States commended the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the ITC. Regarding DETA, he did not support financing via the RB, pointing out that the United States derived little benefit from this database as it was not a Contracting Party to the 1958 Agreement and used other methods to certify new vehicles. He wondered whether DETA could not be financed by its beneficiaries, for example via user fees. He said he would be open to informal consultations on the topic.

25. The representative of the Russian Federation supported the renewal of the mandate of the Groups of Experts in question. He supported DETA and expressed his readiness to participate in informal consultations regarding its financing.

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<sup>1</sup> 1958 Agreement on uniform technical prescriptions for wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted and/or used on wheeled vehicles and the conditions for reciprocal recognition of approvals

26. The Deputy Executive Secretary explained that the secretariat wished to host DETA and found it to be strongly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. He thanked Germany for having hosted the DETA pilot for many years. Regarding financing, he pointed out that the ITC could not issue mandates with budgetary implications. In order to request the necessary additional RB resources, the Commission would have to adopt a draft ECOSOC decision at its 67<sup>th</sup> session in April 2017, and submit it to ECOSOC's consideration. ECOSOC's approval of this decision would give a possibility for ECE to incorporate this additional resource request, through the Programme Budget Implication process, into the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019, which would be on the Fifth Committee's agenda in December 2017. He noted that, should the process advance that far, member States would have to express strong support for DETA at the budget negotiations in New York to increase the chance of a positive outcome. He recalled that ECE had already been instructed to cut the proposed programme budget for 2018-2019 by over USD 1 million. As such, he said it would be impossible for the secretariat to finance DETA via reallocation of RB funds from other activities. Comparing DETA's initially estimated annual costs of USD 45,000 with the Transport division's annual non-staff budget of USD 66,000, he said any reallocation would greatly hamper other mandated activities.

27. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the Chair of the Inland Transport Committee for the clear and comprehensive report and expresses its appreciation to the secretariat for the well-organized and successful 70th anniversary session of the ITC. EXCOM appreciates being informed about the activities and achievements of the Committee and being kept aware of future directions of its work.

(b) Decisions on matters related to the Inland Transport Committee

28. The representative of the European Union and its member States supported the renewal of the mandates of the Groups of Experts in question, and the transmission of the three ITC resolutions to the 67<sup>th</sup> Commission session for information.

29. The representative of Switzerland found the three ITC resolutions to be useful and relevant and likewise supported their onwards transmission.

30. The representative of the United States said that the financing of DETA could perhaps be included in the agenda of the ECE Donor Meeting to be held on 6 April 2017, as a potential candidate for extrabudgetary funding.

31. The representative of Germany preferred not to be seen as leaning towards any particular form of financing and hoped for informal consultations on the topic.

32. The representative of Italy supported Germany's position and said DETA should be financed via the RB.

33. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the renewal of the mandate of the Group of Experts Towards Unified Railway Law until 31 December 2017, under its terms of reference as contained in document ECE/TRANS/2016/18; the renewal of the mandate of the Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals until 31 December 2017, under its terms of reference as contained in document ECE/EX/2013/L.9; and the renewal of the mandate of the AETR Group of Experts until 30 June 2019, under its terms of reference as contained in document ECE/EX/2011/L.16. EXCOM decides to submit the resolutions adopted at the 79th session of the Inland Transport Committee, as contained in informal document 2017/16, to the Commission session for information. EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the update on the Database for the Exchange of Vehicle Type Approvals (DETA) and reiterates the relevance and usefulness of DETA, noting the importance of sustainable longterm funding arrangements. EXCOM looks forward to further informal consultations on this matter.

## **INFORMAL SEGMENT**

#### Item 6 – Preparations for the 2017 Commission session

34. The Secretary of the Commission informed EXCOM that the first translated documents were already uploaded on the session's website. She said the programme of side events would soon be circulated and hoped delegates would visit the exhibition on ECE that would start shortly near the Pregny Gate of the Palais des Nations. She encouraged member States interested in joining the Bureau to contact the secretariat and informed that the representative of the United States had offered to serve as the Rapporteur of the session. She noted that consultations were ongoing among member States on additional draft decisions for the Commission's considerations and said the secretariat stood ready to facilitate the process as needed.

35. The Director of the Sustainable Development and Gender Unit informed EXCOM about the preparations for the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (RFSD). It would be chaired by France's Commissioner General for Sustainable Development. The Deputy Secretary-General's attendance had been confirmed. She hoped member States would participate at high level and encouraged further financial contributions towards the extrabudgetary project contained in informal document 2017/12, intended to finance participation in and interpretation during the RFSD.

36. The representative of France said he was pleased that France would preside at the RFSD and that the Deputy Secretary-General would attend the event.

37. The representative of the Russian Federation said consultations on the draft Commission decision he had proposed were ongoing. He hoped they would advance so that the decision could be adopted at the session. He said his government would be represented at high level at the RFSD and hoped the event would take place in the same format as in the previous year. His government would contribute USD 25,000 towards financing the participation of other member States at the RFSD, in particular from the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

38. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the updates on the preparation of the 67th Commission session and the Regional Forum for Sustainable Development. Member States are encouraged to reach out to the secretariat to explore speaking arrangements and finalize the registration of their delegations at their earliest convenience.

#### Item 7 - Mapping of the reach of the products of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

39. The Deputy Executive Secretary suggested postponing this item to a later date, noting that it would likely require a lengthy discussion.

40. The representatives of the Russian Federation and the European Union and its member States agreed to the proposal by the Deputy Executive Secretary.

41. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the mapping of the reach of UNECE products that documents the geographic reach of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE, prepared in response to a recommendation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services. EXCOM decides to continue its discussions on this matter at a future meeting.

#### Item 8 – Update on evaluation

42. The representative of Switzerland introduced the draft decision contained in informal document 2017/19 that he proposed for EXCOM's adoption.

43. The representative of the Russian Federation supported the decision, noting that it would allow for a systematic approach to evaluations and how their results were taken into account.

44. The representative of the European Union and its member States supported the decision and highlighted the need to ensure that lessons learned from evaluations are applied to future work.

45. The Chair concluded that EXCOM requests the secretariat to prepare, within existing resources, an annual report of evaluations, containing information of implementation rates, status and information on completed and ongoing evaluations and programmatic changes generated by the implementation of relevant recommendations, and present it to EXCOM every year at its first session after the completion of the year. EXCOM members are encouraged to contribute extrabudgetary resources to ensure that UNECE is able to engage the best evaluation consultants to continue to enhance the quality and utility of evaluation efforts in UNECE. EXCOM also encourages the secretariat and member States to continue sharing knowledge and experiences on this topic with relevant stakeholders.

Item 9 – Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (A/71/L.58)

46. The Deputy Executive Secretary introduced informal document 2017/19, explaining that ECE might be called upon to organize a regional consultation on migration once General Assembly Resolution A/71/L.58 was adopted. He recalled that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) would be convening the 7th Global Regional Consultative Processes (GRCP) Meeting on 10-11 October 2017 in Geneva. He underlined that ECE had a very limited mandate and expertise on migration issues (unlike the other Regional Commissions) and no resources for hosting a full-fledged consultation, and sought member States' views on how to proceed.

47. The representative of IOM noted that the October 2017 GRCP would bring together all the interstate consultative mechanisms on migration and that representatives from many ECE member States were expected to participate. She offered IOM's readiness to support ECE and member States.

48. Given the lack of relevant competence and resources, the representative of the Russian Federation supported the second consultation modality outlined in informal document 2017/19.

49. The representative of the European Union and its member States recalled that A/71/L.58 was still in the draft stage and noted that IOM and other entities were already working on migration issues in the ECE region. Should the resolution call for engagement by ECE, he thought ECE's role should be limited given ECE's lack of expertise and in order to avoid duplication. He suggested that this could consist of transmitting a summary of the GRCP Meeting to New York and that EXCOM could deliberate on this as an agenda item at a future meeting. However, he wished to wait until the adoption of A/71/L.58 before making a final pronouncement and also asked for information on how the other Regional Commissions would proceed.

50. The representative of Switzerland said that it would be important for ECE to decide on the format of the product to be transmitted to New York, and underlined the need for continued consultation with IOM and other relevant agencies throughout the process. Similar to the Russian Federation, he leaned towards the second option and envisaged a pared-down exercise.

51. Regarding the process followed by the other Regional Commissions, the Deputy Executive Secretary replied that they would be organizing full-fledged consultations but recalled that they had mandates to work on migration issues. As IOM was headquartered in Geneva, he felt that ECE could benefit from the concurrent IOM processes.

52. The Chair concluded that EXCOM thanks the secretariat for the information provided on the modalities of the discussions on regional and sub-regional aspects of international migration called for in A/71/L.58. EXCOM will revert to this matter once the resolution is adopted.

Item 10 - Important new developments: briefing by the Executive Secretary

53. The Deputy Executive Secretary informed EXCOM of a planned Memorandum of Understanding with the Asia-Pacific Council for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (AFACT), a non-governmental organization that promotes trade facilitation and electronic business in the Asia Pacific region, mainly by facilitating the adoption of UN/CEFACT recommendations and standards, and has had extensive cooperation with ECE for 25 years. This MoU would further develop and consolidate the cooperation in pursuit of enhancing the dissemination of UN/CEFACT deliverables in the Asia Pacific region.

54. The Deputy Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following recent meetings:

- i. 21-24 February, Geneva: 79th session of the Inland Transport Committee
- ii. 8-9 March, Geneva: 10th session of the Working Party on Land Administration
- iii. 20-22 March, Geneva: 11th session of the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships

55. The Deputy Executive Secretary informed EXCOM about the following upcoming events:

- i. 27-31 March, Geneva: 29th UN/CEFACT Forum
- ii. 3-4 April, Geneva: 23rd session of the UN/CEFACT Plenary
- iii. 6 April, Geneva: ECE Donor Meeting.
- iv. 12-13 April, Geneva: 3rd session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards
- v. 25-27 April, Geneva: Regional Forum on Sustainable Development and 67th session of the Commission

#### Item 11 – Extrabudgetary projects

##### a) Extrabudgetary projects (for approval)

56. The Chair concluded that EXCOM approves the extrabudgetary projects contained in informal documents 2017/21, 2017/22 and 2017/23.

##### b) Proposal for an interim procedure for approval of extra-budgetary projects during the period from 25 March to 22 June 2017

57. Given the three months between the 91<sup>st</sup> and the 92<sup>nd</sup> meeting of EXCOM, the Chair inquired whether delegates would prefer to approve extrabudgetary projects during this interim period at an additional meeting to be convened as needed, or via an online procedure.

58. The representative of the Russian Federation preferred the first of these options, noting the importance of not creating a precedent regarding online approval of extrabudgetary projects.

59. The representatives of the European Union and its member States and Switzerland also supported the first option.

60. The Chair concluded that EXCOM requests that the secretariat convene an additional EXCOM meeting in the period of April – May 2017 for the approval of extra-budgetary projects, if needed.

#### Item 12 – Other business

61. The Deputy Executive Secretary noted that various pending issues needed to be addressed before the Commission session, including any draft decision member States were still working on and the financing of DETA. He said the secretariat would be happy to convene informal consultations on any of these topics to facilitate the process.

62. The Chair informed EXCOM that the next meeting would be on 23 June 2017.