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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting
Transport

Informal ad-hoc expert group on Customs

Rail Transit based on the SMGS

Consignment Note

(11 February 2002)

**DRAFT CONVENTION IN THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT OF GOODS UNDER
COVER OF TIR CARNETS (TIR CONVENTION 1975)**

Summary of TER seminar on facilitation of border crossings in international rail transport

Transmitted by the Trans European Railway (TER)

Note: The secretariat reproduces below a communication transmitted by the Trans European Railway (TER)

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**Seminar on the Facilitation of border crossings
in international rail transport
(10-12 December 2001, Karlovy Vary, Czech R.)**

Summary of conclusions

A Seminar on the facilitation of border crossings in international rail transport took place in Karlovy Vary (Czech Republic) from 10 to 12 December 2001.

Representatives of the Ministries of Transport, Ministries of Finance (Customs Division) and Railway companies from 11 countries took part in a broad exchange of views on aspects related to the execution of procedure and formalities at the railway border crossings.

The Seminar was also attended by representatives of UIC, Gibb Ltd., (Jacobs consultancy) and UNECE-TER. The list of participants is attached (Annex 1)

The TER Project Manager presented the aims of the Seminar and chaired the meeting.

During discussions it was underlined the importance of this activity for increasing the railway efficiency and competitiveness of rail transport in the TER countries. In addition there is the need for harmonisation of border control procedures to EU standards because many of the TER countries are in the process of joining the EU.

It was recognised the complexity of the border crossing issues in the railway overall activity and the great importance of removing the obstacles in this field by concerted actions taken by neighbouring countries.

It was appreciated that while important funds were spent for upgrading the infrastructure in order to reduce the travelling time in passenger and freight transport, two neighbouring countries ought to take necessary steps to remove obstacles at border crossing, which sometimes do not require investments or only small expenditure.

In this respect it is essential to adopt legal measures for eliminating the obstacles at border crossing and encouraging the railway traffic as soon as possible.

During the Seminar the representative of UIC presented the Action Plan Border Crossing Project (ABC) initiated and financed by his organisation. The Action Plans produced until now for several border crossings of the TER countries were considered to be a useful basis for bilateral discussions between countries on

this subject. The presentation of this ABC Project is attached (Annex 2.)

It was agreed that in addition to looking at the individual circumstances of each border crossing there was a need to investigate the overall situation on electronic data exchange.

The representative of Gibb (Jacobs consultancy) provided general information on border crossings issues from several studies done in the TER region.

Examples of the good functioning of cooperation among the authorities concerned with facilitating the international traffic via the border crossings were presented by the representatives of Austria, Hungary and Slovenia.

The representative of Poland presented the new Polish system of automatic track gauge changing for wagons, coaches and locomotives introduced on the Polish-Lithuanian rail border.(Mockava)

In order to ensure a follow-up of this essential activity for monitoring the progress made in the TER region in the facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport, the following actions have been agreed upon:

1. Next meeting on this subject will take place in the last part of 2002 with the participation of all those involved in the preparation of this Seminar. The process of monitoring the measures taken by the countries for the facilitation of border crossing was considered useful and necessary to be continued.

2. During the meeting the representatives of the countries agreed to report on the following aspects:

- average time spent by passenger and goods train at border crossings;
- progress made (in minutes) as a result of implementing the measures taken by Governments (e.g. customs, police, sanitary controls) and railways (e.g. new technologies implemented in border stations) for passenger and freight trains to reduce the delays or time spent during border crossing;
- short information on bilateral new agreements concluded or contacts which have taken place between Governments and/or railways of neighbouring countries in order to improve the crossing of borders via international rail traffic;
- other measures envisaged to eliminate in the future the delays during the crossing of borders.

This report will cover, in case of international passenger traffic Euro City (EC), Inter city (IC) and Euro Night (EN) trains and in case of international freight traffic the following types of trains: Europe Unit Cargo (EUC) in use on selected routes, Rolling Road (Ro-La) for accompanied international combined transport, European Combined Transport (TEC) for unaccompanied international combined transport, "Just in time" (JIT) trains running between industrial centres from manufacturer to end user, as well as empty trains.

3. Countries will refer to all railway border crossings situated on the TER network and include latest

available data as on 30 September 2002.

4. The practice of discussing border crossing issues in bilateral groups established by two neighbouring countries on this subject will be continued. In other cases such groups would be established with a view to developing good relations, trust and better understanding among the representatives of various institutions involved in the border crossing procedures.

These bilateral groups would also discuss, by priority the measures included in the ABC Project of UIC for the various border crossings, with a view to their implementation.

A report on such developments would also be provided during the meeting in 2002.

5. Mutual information on new agreements concluded between countries, or arrangements for the implementation of the existing agreements, would be provided so as to share the experience with other countries.

6. The collection of additional data on the situation in border crossings was considered at this moment obsolete. It was agreed to take up this issue for consideration at the next meeting in 2002.

7. The importance of the close co-operation between different international railway bodies was underlined. Special emphasis should be placed on improving border crossing procedures with a view to increasing the efficiency of the railways as well as avoiding duplicating of efforts.

8. This summary of conclusions will be presented for approval to the next meeting of the TER Steering Committee.

**Seminar on facilitation of border crossings procedures
(10-12 December, 2001, Karlovy Vary)**

List of participants

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