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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Rail Transport

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON RAIL TRANSPORT
ON ITS SIXTY-THIRD SESSION
(18-20 November 2009)**

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I. ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) held its sixty-third session on 18-20 November 2009. Mr. Krzysztof Kulesza (Poland) was Chairman and Mr. Hinne Groot (Netherlands) Vice-Chairman of the session. Representatives of the following member States of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) participated: Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Switzerland and Turkey. Representatives of the European Community (EC) and European Railway Agency (ERA) were present. A representative of the UNECE Trans-European Railway Project (TER) also attended the session. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), International Transport Forum (ITF), Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSJD). The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), C.S.F. Ferroworld, European Disability Forum (EDF), European Older People's Platform (AGE), International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) and International Union of Railways (UIC). A representative of Pinsent Masons LLP attended the session by invitation of the secretariat.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/211

2. The provisional agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/211) was adopted.

III. EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON MAIN INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY LINES (Agenda item 2)

A. Status of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines

3. The Working Party took note of the secretariat's report on the status of the European Agreement on Main International Rail Lines (AGC) Agreement and expressed its support for the forthcoming review of the AGC and European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) standards while assessing the possibility of making some AGC parameters more flexible in order to encourage accessions to the AGC Agreement by more countries.

B. Amendments to the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/1, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/2, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/2/Corr.1

4. The AGC Contracting Parties present adopted unanimously the amendments to the E-rail network described in the working documents ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/2 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/2/Corr.1, and asked the secretariat to prepare the depositary notification and send it to the Treaty Section of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. The amendment proposals contained in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/1 should be resubmitted by the UNECE secretariat to the AGC administrative committee, following further consultations with the countries concerned.

C. The E-rail traffic census

Documentation: Informal documentation

5. The secretariat presented the results of the 2005 census and its preparation for the 2010 census. The Working Party took note of the results of the 2005 E-rail traffic census and invited all member Governments to participate in the 2010 E-rail traffic census.

IV. TASK FORCE ON RAIL SECURITY (Agenda item 3)

Documentation: Informal document No. 1

6. The Chairman of the Task Force on Rail Security presented its report to delegates. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the Task Force on Rail Security for a timely fulfillment of its mandate and took note of the recommendations proposed in its report, including the formation of a new Technical Working Group (TWG) of government and industry representatives outside UNECE.

V. TRANS-EUROPEAN RAILWAY PROJECT (Agenda item 4)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/3

7. The TER project manager informed SC.2 of its current activities. The Working Party appreciated the report on the implementation of planned TER activities and invited the project manager to provide an update on relevant developments at its sixty-fourth session in 2010.

VI. EURO-ASIAN RAIL TRAFFIC TRENDS (Agenda item 5)

Documentation: Informal documentation

8. The Working Party appreciated the excellent presentations on the Trans-Siberian rail traffic trends and prospects given by Russian Railways (RZD) and the Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia (ERINA). The Working Party also decided to address the principal Euro-Asian rail traffic issues at a workshop during its sixty-fourth session in 2010 and invited all interested parties to cooperate closely with the secretariat while preparing in-depth studies and evidence-based recommendations for this event.

VII. FACILITATION OF INTERNATIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT (Agenda item 6)

A. Legal instruments for border-crossing facilitation (Agenda item 6 (a))

9. The Working Party took note of the progress made in the preparation of the proposed Annex 9 to the Harmonization Convention.

B. Progress of the common consignment note project (Agenda item 6 (b))

Documentation: Informal documentation

10. A representative of CIT made a presentation on the development of the common consignment note (CIM-SMGS) interoperability project. The Working Party expressed its appreciation on the progress achieved in this joint CIT and OSJD project.

C. Interoperability and harmonization of conditions of different rail transport systems (Agenda item 6 (c))

Documentation: Informal documents No. 2 and No. 5

11. The Working Party received a joint report (Informal document No. 2) of OTIF and OSJD on their activities aiming to improve the interoperability of rail transport systems in the pan-European region. In addition, it was informed that the first meeting of the OTIF rail transport facilitation committee, scheduled to take place in October 2010, would address key border-crossing issues. A representative of OSJD presented to the Working Party a report on activities of the recently established OSJD/ERA contact group (Informal document No. 5) that aims to harmonize technical interoperability of the standard gauge and wide gauge systems.

12. The Working Party appreciated the report on joint activities of the OTIF and OSJD that aim to harmonize conditions of rail transport systems in the pan-European region and asked to be briefed about such activities at its sixty-fourth session in 2010. It also expressed its appreciation to the OSJD for a report on activities of the OSJD/ERA contact group that aims to harmonize technical specifications for interoperability of the 1,435 mm and 1,520 mm railway systems in the European Union (EU) and East European Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.

D. Towards a unified railway law in the pan-European region (Agenda item 6 (d))

13. The Working Party expressed its full support for all initiatives that aim to unify railway law in the pan-European region and decided to set up an informal group of experts that would prepare a position paper on this issue for its sixty-fourth session in 2010. The group would also be tasked to prepare, in cooperation with the OSCE and TER secretariat, a workshop on the principal Euro-Asian rail transport issues that would take place during the sixty-fourth session of SC.2 in 2010. The Working Party asked the secretariat to send a letter to representatives of UNECE member States, OTIF, OSJD, European Community and international railway industry organizations, inviting them to participate in the work of the informal group.

VIII. INVESTMENT IN RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE AND ROLLING STOCK (Agenda item 7)

A. Railway infrastructure investment trends in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe region (Agenda item 7 (a))

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/4

14. The Working Party took note of the secretariat's report on railway infrastructure investment trends.

B. Financing of railway infrastructure and rolling stock (Agenda item 7 (b))

Documentation: Informal documentation

15. The Working Party appreciated the presentation by a representative of Pinsent Masons LLP on the feasibility of Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects in the rail sector and decided to consider PPP financing of rail infrastructure projects at its sixty-fourth session in 2010.

IX. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies of interest to the Working Party (Agenda item 8)

A. Inland Transport Committee (agenda item 8 (a))

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/208, ECE/TRANS/2009/6, ECE/TRANS/2009/7, ECE/TRANS/2009/8

16. The Working Party took note of the decisions of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) related to its work areas and asked the secretariat to be informed about such decisions at its sixty-fourth session in 2010.

B. Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.24/123, ECE/TRANS/WP.24/125

17. The Working Party took note of the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) activities in the area of intermodal transport and logistics and agreed to participate in the ongoing review of the AGC and AGTC standards.

C. Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports

18. The Working Party took note of the UNECE report on hinterland connections of seaports and agreed to consider the report's recommendation pertaining to the AGC agreement during the forthcoming joint review of the AGC and AGTC standards.

D. Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links

19. The Working Party took note of activities of the Expert Group on Euro-Asian transport links.

**X. BIENNIAL EVALUATIONS AND NEW PROGRAMME OF WORK (2010-2014)
(Agenda item 9)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/5

20. The Working Party adopted its programme of work for the period 2010-2014 (Annex I) and performance indicators for 2010-2011 (Annex II). It also decided to improve the coordination of its activities with WP.24 and the TER project.

**XI. DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR TRANSPORT AND ENERGY REPORT ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIRST RAILWAY PACKAGE AND THE
EUROPEAN RAILWAY TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DEPLOYMENT
PLAN (Agenda item 10)**

Documentation: Informal documentation

21. A representative of the Directorate-General for Transport and Energy (DG TREN) of the European Commission informed delegates about the implementation to date of the first railway package and the deployment plan for the European Railway Traffic Management System (ERTMS). The Working Party expressed its appreciation to the European Commission for an excellent presentation on the implementation of the first railway package and the ERTMS plan.

It asked to be informed about further progress of the key EU rail transport initiatives during its sixty-fourth session in 2010.

XII. WORKSHOP ON PASSENGER ACCESSIBILITY OF HEAVY RAIL SYSTEMS (Agenda item 11)

Documentation: Informal documentation

22. The Working Party decided at its sixty-second session in 2008 to hold a Workshop on passenger accessibility of heavy rail systems during its sixty-third session in 2009. The Workshop was organized by the UNECE Transport Division and UNECE Population Unit, in cooperation with ITF and the Government of Austria. The Workshop consisted of three sessions.¹

23. Following a general introduction by the UNECE Transport Division at the outset of the first session, the UNECE Population Unit made a presentation about the relevance of demographic trends to passenger accessibility of rail systems. Subsequently, the ITF provided an overview of the policy and legislative context for improved accessibility.² The second session started with an introduction by the Vice-Chairman of the SC.2 that was followed by a review of the COST 335 project by Ann Frye Ltd, an economic evaluation of legal accessibility requirements by the ERA, service provider views by UIC and an overview of recent accessibility legislation in the Russian Federation and provision of accessible passenger services by Russian Railways. The third session started with an introduction by the ITF that was followed by presentations pertaining to user views (AGE – the European Older People’s Platform), demand of elderly and disabled passengers (European Disability Forum), and best practice and recommendations (Ann Frye Ltd). Subsequently, a policy statement was discussed by participants.

24. The Working Party expressed its appreciation to invited experts for comprehensive presentations pertaining to passenger accessibility of heavy rail systems and decided to adopt the policy statement on passenger accessibility of rail transport (Annex III).

XIII. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE 2010 AND 2011 SESSIONS OF THE WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 12)

25. The Working Party elected Mr. K. Kulesza (Poland) as the Chairman and Mr. H.J.Y. Groot (Netherlands) as the Vice-Chairman for its sessions in 2010 and 2011.

¹ The Workshop programme is available in English and Russian at the following links:

<<http://unece.org/trans/doc/2009/sc2/ECE-TRANS-SC2-inf09e.pdf>>.

<<http://unece.org/trans/doc/2009/sc2/ECE-TRANS-SC2-inf09r.pdf>>.

² All Workshop presentations are available at <<http://unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2-presentations/presentations.html>>.

XIV. BIENNIAL EVALUATION 2008-2009 (Agenda item 13)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/6

26. The Working Party took note of the secretariat's evaluation questionnaire and requested that a similar questionnaire be prepared for the delegates participating in its sixty-fourth session in 2010.

27. Nine delegates responded to the questionnaire. All respondents agreed that the sixty-second session was well organized, met their expectations and allowed enough time for presentations. Eight respondents agreed that the session allowed enough time for discussions. While all respondents considered session documents to be relevant, two of them felt that they were too general. The duration of the session should be kept as is according to six respondents while two respondents indicated their preference for a shorter session and one for a longer session. According to one respondent, the agenda of the session should be reduced to fewer items; however, two respondents indicated that the agenda should include more items while the remaining six would prefer to leave its length unchanged.

XV. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 14)

Documentation: Informal documentation.

28. The Working Party appreciated the CER presentation on the global warming and sustainable transport and decided to consider the issue again at its sixty-fourth session. The Working Party also took note of the presentation on planned activities of the Ferroworld project.

XVI. DATE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda item 15)

29. The secretariat informed delegates that the Government of Austria and OSCE had proposed to host the next SC.2 session in Vienna. The Working Party agreed to hold its sixty-fourth session, including the workshop on Euro-Asian rail transport, in Vienna on 18-19 November 2010.

XVII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Agenda item 16)

30. The report of the sixty-third session, including the decisions, was established by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman with the assistance of the secretariat for submission to the Inland Transport Committee.

Annex I

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2010-2014

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.5: RAIL TRANSPORT

02.5.1 Rail transport infrastructure

Priority: 1

I. Review of the situation concerning the implementation and possible amendments to the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines

Description: Examine the possibilities of improving international railway lines and reflecting them in the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC).

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Rail Transport will carry out the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) Consideration of the AGC Agreement with a view to possibly: implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters; also taking into account new east-west traffic flows; raising environmental, energy and safety standards; taking into account the UNECE Conventions on the Environment.

Output expected: Occasional reports on amendments of the AGC network.

Priority: 1

- (b) Review the coherence between the AGC parameters and infrastructure standards established by competent authorities of the European Union (EU) and consider the feasibility of harmonizing them over the longer term.

Output expected: A report on the coherence of the AGC and EU rail infrastructure standards. (2010)

Priority: 2

II. Studies in Railway Infrastructure

- (a) Description: Study of the railway investment projects and their management.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party will carry out the following activities:

Consideration of railway infrastructure investment and financing techniques, especially (Public Private Partnership) PPP models.

- Output expected: Report on investment in rail infrastructure and railway rolling stock in member countries. (2011) Priority: 2
- (b) Periodic review of railway reforms in the UNECE region, aiming to optimize the provision and use of rail infrastructure.
- Output expected: Reports on the progress of railway reforms in the UNECE region. (2011, 2014) Priority: 1
- (c) Consideration of questions concerning security in international railway transport.
- Output expected: Review of the current situation and prospects for the development of new recommendations. (2010) Priority: 2
- (d) Consideration of developments regarding new railway initiatives on Euro-Asian transport links.
- Output expected: Report on the current and new initiatives. (2011) Priority: 2

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (e) Periodically survey passenger and goods traffic on the AGC network in order to provide support for transport planning; the next survey is to be based on data for 2010.
- Output expected: Rail census 2010. (2013) Priority: 2
- (f) Consideration of other subjects as need arises.
- Output expected: Report on each subject.

III. Special project: Trans-European Railway

Description: Within the framework of the UNECE, the Trans-European Railway (TER) countries have established an appropriate administrative and financial framework, with the aim of developing a rail network as part of an integrated European international rail system.

Work to be undertaken

- (a) Report on specific project developments to promote international rail traffic.
(Continuing)
- Output expected: Annual progress report on activities carried out within the TER project. Priority: 1
- (b) Consideration of possible utilization of the results achieved under the project in other UNECE activities in the field of rail infrastructure,

including the implementation of AGC and the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) in order to benefit from mutual experiences. (Continuing)

Priority: 2

Output expected: Annual progress report.

IV. Interregional Cooperation

Description: Cooperation with other regional commissions and international bodies involved in the development of interregional links.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party will be kept informed of exchanges of information between the secretariats of the regional commissions and other international bodies in order to benefit from experiences gained in other regions of the world. (Continuing)

Priority: 3

02.5.2 Harmonization of requirements concerning international railway transport including rail safety, security and facilitation of its operations

Priority: 1

Description:

- (a) Simplification and harmonization of administrative formalities, particularly for documents and procedures at border crossing.
- (b) Harmonization of standardized requirements concerning the utilization of railway infrastructure.
- (c) Elaboration of proposals and preparation of studies aimed at strengthening, consolidating and extending the position of rail transport on international transport markets.
- (d) Analysis of problems relating to the harmonization and improvement of rail safety and security.
- (e) Consideration of prospects for the adoption of legal regulations applicable to the contract for the transport of goods and passengers by rail so as to establish a standard legal system (harmonization of the SMGS/SMPS¹ and CIM/CIV² systems).

¹ Contract for International Goods Transport by Rail (SMGS), Contract for International Passenger Transport by Rail (SMPS).

² Contract for International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM), Contract for International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Rail (CIV).

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Rail Transport will carry out the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) Consideration of specific difficulties encountered at border crossings in the transport of passengers and goods by rail with a view to accelerating border crossing operations and establishing a programme to deal with problems common to several routes.

Output expected: Annual report on the progress of the CIM/SMGS project of the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) and the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), aiming to improve the crossing of borders in international rail traffic.

Priority: 1

- (b) Consideration of follow-up of the implementation of recommendations and preparation of new texts or amendments to existing texts, if necessary, especially concerning the facilitation of border crossing with the aim to improve international rail traffic.

Priority: 1

- (c) Review of requirements concerning railway operations and regulations, reduction of transport time and improvement in the precision of movements in the international carriage of goods, new operative developments in rail transport, the integration of services of different railways.

Priority: 2

- (d) Analysis of government policies concerning rail safety and security to contribute to an improvement of safety and security in international transport.

Output expected: Report on safety and security and implementation of risk assessment techniques in rail transport in the UNECE region. (2011)

Priority: 1

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (e) Analysis of the various elements of railway productivity growth, in particular in freight transport.

Output expected: Biannual report on the development of railway productivity in member countries. (2010)

Priority: 2

Annex II**EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENT AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT****Cluster of activity: Rail transport****Expected accomplishment**

Better understanding of rail transport operations and policies in the region, including infrastructure, border crossing, interoperability issues, and monitoring and updating of relevant legal instruments as well as enhanced cooperation of UNECE countries in addressing them.

Indicators of achievement

- (a) Number of countries, intergovernmental organizations (IGO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO) participating in the annual meeting of the Working Party on Rail Transport and level of satisfaction as expressed in surveys

Performance measures:	Actual performance 2008-2009
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Target:	2008-2009: 42	27 ¹
Target:	2010-2011: 30	

- (b) Number of amendments to the AGC Agreement as well as updated and amended lines in its Annex I which the Working Party has put in effect

Performance measures:	Actual performance 2008-2009
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Target:	2008-2009: 2	0
Target:	2010-2011: 2	

- (c) Number of thematic workshops/seminars organized and number of participants

Performance measures:	Actual performance 2008-2009
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Target:	2008-2009: 2	2
Target:	2010-2011: 2	

¹ Participants at the sixty-second session of the Working Party in November 2008 included 20 UNECE member countries, European Commission, 3 IGOs and 3 NGOs. All respondents to the questionnaire distributed during the session agreed that it was well organized, met their expectations, and provided enough time for presentations and discussions. For additional information pertaining to the level of satisfaction of participants, see the report ECE/TRANS/SC.2/210, paragraph 43.

Annex III

POLICY STATEMENT ON PASSENGER ACCESSIBILITY OF RAIL SYSTEMS

The demographic trends common to many UNECE countries show a significant increase in the number of older people in the population in the coming years. There is also a high correlation between age and disability. This means that a growing number of actual and potential rail passengers will have some kind of disability that affects their mobility. In many countries, older people will have higher disposable incomes and greater desires to travel than ever before.

There has been good progress in recent years both at political and practical levels in identifying the transport needs of disabled and older people and in finding ways to meet those needs. There is a substantial body of legislation, both general and technical, including the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Disabled Persons.

However, much remains to be done to implement that legislation and to monitor its implementation and the benefits arising from it, including increases in ridership. The first priority is to ensure that accessibility is identified as a social and economic priority for Governments. Industry needs to invest to tackle the legacy of old infrastructure and rolling stock. There is already clear data on the costs of accessibility but little exists to quantify the social benefits of accessibility measures for the large and growing population of disabled and older people. Without such data optimum solutions are difficult to realize. The UNECE Working Party on Transport Statistics is encouraged to explore the possibility of collecting this type of information for UNECE member States with rail systems in close cooperation with the ITF, Eurostat and national statistical authorities.

There also needs to be a concerted programme of physical improvements to the rail rolling stock and stations but also improvements to key issues such as information and staff training. Such improvements need to be harmonized between EU and non-EU railways so that the goal of seamless travel can be realized. It should also be recognized that design and other improvements for disabled and older people can bring benefits to the travelling public as a whole.
