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Report of the Working Party on Rail Transport on its sixty-eighth session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport held its sixty-eighth session from 24 to 26 November 2014 in Geneva.
2. The session of the Working Party was attended by the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. A representative of Egypt, Japan and Tunisia attended under Article 11 of the Terms of Reference of UNECE. A representative of the European Union (DG Move) was present.
3. The Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the UNECE TER Project Central Office were represented.
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: the Collaboration of Railway Police and Security Services (COLPOFER), the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) and the International Union of Railways (UIC).
5. Representatives of the following organizations and industry groups attended at the invitation of the secretariat: CMS Cameron McKenna LLP, Deutsche Bahn AG, EuroMed Road, Rail and Urban Transport Project, International Association “Coordinating Council on Trans-Siberian Transport” (CCTT), JSC “PLASKE”, Institute for International Transport Communications Moscow State University of Transport Engineering.
6. In accordance with the decision taken at its sixty-seventh session (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/220, para. 85), the session was chaired by Mr. K. Kulesza (Poland), and Mr. H. Groot (Netherlands) served as Vice-Chair.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)¹

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/221

7. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/221).

III. Workshop on “How to increase railways competitiveness” (agenda item 2)²

Documentation: Informal document No. 1 (2014)

8. During the second day of the session (25 November 2014) a high level workshop on increasing railways’ competitiveness took place. The Workshop took stock of initiatives by Governments, Railways Undertakings and International Organizations on how to increase railways’ competitiveness. The main objective was to bring together all decision- (and

¹ All informal documents and presentations made at the session are available on the following website: www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2-presentations/presentations_68.html, www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2inf_68.html.

² All presentations made at the workshop are available on the following website: www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2_events/2014_railways_competitiveness.html.

policy-) makers and experts related to railway management and development to exchange good practices, discuss challenges and new development concepts as well as agree on possible future activities and concerted actions.

9. The conclusions and recommendations of the workshop can be found in the Annex of this report.

IV. European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC Agreement) (agenda item 3)

A. Status of the AGC Agreement and adopted amendment proposals

10. At present, the AGC Agreement has 27 Contracting Parties.³ Detailed information on the AGC Agreement, including the up-to-date and consolidated text of the Agreement (ECE/TRANS/63/Rev.1), a map of the AGC network, an inventory of minimum standards stipulated in the Agreement as well as all relevant Depositary Notifications are available on the Working Party website.⁴

11. The Working Party took note of the efforts made by the secretariat to increase the number of Contracting Parties to the AGC Agreement. Especially the efforts about the participation in the High-level International Conference on the Role of Transit Transport Corridors in Ensuring International Cooperation, Stability and Sustainable Development that was held in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan (3–4 September 2014) and during the regional policy dialogue on strengthening transport connectivity in Southern Asia that was held in New Delhi, India (19–20 November 2014).

B. Amendment proposals (updating and extending the AGC network)

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

12. The Working Party recalled that at its last session it requested the secretariat to once more contact all concerned States and contracting parties on the amendment proposals affecting Denmark, Germany and Sweden (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2009/4) with the objective of finalizing the required consultation process before adopting the proposed amendments.

13. The secretariat informed the Working Party that it has sent letters (July 2014) to all concerned States and contracting parties asking for their consideration and approval of the proposed amendments for inclusion into the AGC Agreement.

14. The Working Party and the administrative committee of the AGC agreement took note of the efforts of the secretariat in contacting concerned States and contracting parties on the amendment proposals. They agreed that it should await the responses from these countries before taking any decision on these amendment proposals. Given the time that has passed since the original proposal of the amendments, the Working Party agreed that it would discuss ways to move forward on these amendments at its next session even if no further information is provided.

³ Albania; Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Montenegro; Poland; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Russian Federation; Serbia; Slovakia; Slovenia; the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey and Ukraine.

⁴ www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2_AGC_text.html.

C. Amendment proposals (Minimum infrastructure and performance standards)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/1–ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2014/1, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2010/1, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/216, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2012/1, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/218

15. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat that the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) applicable in the European Union were generally in line with the present minimum AGC and AGTC technical characteristics.

16. The Working Party recognized that the scope of the TSI which are mandatory in the European Union for newly built infrastructure went well beyond the objective and the minimum requirements enshrined in the pan-European AGC and AGTC Agreements. There is no need therefore, for additional detail to be transposed into these agreements.

17. The Working Party recalled the decision of last year on the background note prepared by the secretariat on the review of the technical characteristics of the AGC and AGTC rail networks. The Working Party also recalled its request to the secretariat to prepare amendment proposals to the AGC Agreement that would ensure that the existing technical infrastructure parameters of the AGC and AGTC agreements should be aligned with the relevant TSI applicable in the EU by keeping the objective of the minimum requirements enshrined in the two agreements.

18. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat that it prepared in cooperation with the secretariat of WP.24 and the European Railway Agency document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/1–ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2014/1 containing amendment proposals of possible new minimum infrastructure, performance standards as well as parameters for inclusion into annex II to the AGC Agreement.

19. The Working party and the administrative committee of the AGC agreement decided to postpone decision on amendment proposals to the AGC agreement based on official document ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2014/1–ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/1 as it was prepared by the secretariat and the European Railway Agency. They requested the secretariat to revise the proposed amendments based on comments received by Russia Federation and OSJD and submit them for consideration by the Working Party at its next session. The Working Party requested the Russia Federation and OSJD to submit their proposals to the secretariat.

V. Rail Security (agenda item 4)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/2

20. The representative of the International Working Group on Land Transport Security (IWGLTS) and Head of International Rail Security Policy, Transport Security Directorate, UK, Mr. A. Cook, presented the SMARToolbox on transport security measures and resources. The SMARToolbox is a readily available resource of global security information for land transport professionals which includes an easy to use searchable database of security measures. It also provides additional resources which include a self-assessment function, a security programme guide, external links and a downloadable for a local SMARToolbox version.

21. The tool box concept was conceived by IWGLTS and developed by US Transportation Security Administration (TSA). It currently contains over 350 security measures which are searchable by a combination of filters, including: Mode, User Type, Asset Type, Phase, Attack Type. These security measures were provided by IWGLTS and other international security organizations, facilitated by TSA. It is a tool for governments

and operators to use. Furthermore, users can edit and delete security measures from their local copy, or recommend changes.

22. The IWGLTS, having considered how best to proceed with dissemination of the SMARToolbox, would welcome UNECE members using it provided its source is acknowledged. Use by ECE member States could be facilitated if the tool would be uploaded on the ECE rail security web platform. The Working Party welcomed the cooperation with the IWGLTS in the field of rail security and in further disseminating the SMARToolbox especially through the ECE web platform on rail security.

23. The Manager of the UIC Security Division Mr. J. Colliard presented the UIC High-Speed security handbook. The High-Speed security handbook was prepared by the passenger/high-speed department of the rail companies based on the expertise of their security experts with the involvement of UIC. It is coherent with traditional rail systems and there are two versions: one restricted and one for the public.

24. The Working Party was also informed by the secretariat on document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/2 about the proposal on the development of an electronic space on rail security. The electronic space on rail security will be an advanced web-based platform which will operate as an international observatory on rail security issues and stakeholders will have the opportunity and possibility to:

- (a) disseminate ad hoc knowledge and best/good practices;
- (b) exchange information about projects and other initiatives/proposals;
- (c) seek for cooperation on specific rail security projects/tasks/studies and researches agreed during SC.2 sessions and other events and focused on such things as the development of definitions.

25. Stakeholders will be representatives of Governments and Rail Undertakings specialised in rail security and of international governmental and non-governmental relevant to rail security organizations. The access of these stakeholders to the platform will be restricted and Governments, the Railway Undertakings and the international organizations should inform the secretariat about their focal point. A forum will exist for the exchange of information, for submitting questions and answers, for submitting requests on new proposals or on searching for partners, cooperation, etc. Each organization and railways undertaking should be responsible for updating and revising information uploaded on the observatory. The secretariat will perform administrative tasks relating to the operation of the web platform such as usernames and passwords, creation of new pages when new Organizations/Railway Undertakings wish to participate, etc.

26. The Working Party took note of the presentations made by the distinguished speakers and the secretariat. The Working Party decided to adopt the proposal made by the secretariat on how to develop the web platform on rail security and asked the secretariat to inform the Working Party for any developments on this issue at its next session.

VI. Euro-Asian rail transport (agenda item 5)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.2/22

27. The Working Party recalled that during the eighth session of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asia Transport Links (9 September 2013) the Group of Experts approved its work plan which defines its objectives and activities. The work plan also includes a tentative time schedule with the aim of completing implementation before the end of 2015 (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.2/2013/1). The main objectives for the Group of Experts for the next two years are:

(a) To analyse, promote and present to International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and other donors a list of high priority Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) projects and feasibility or other relevant studies with the aim of facilitating the sustainable and long-term financing of these projects;

(b) To identify cargo flows (quantities and types) that could be transported along the nine Euro-Asian rail and road transport links;

(c) To facilitate the coordination of integrated time schedules and tariffs for the nine rail and road transport links;

(d) To promote Euro-Asian inland transport routes and the development of an integrated marketing strategy;

(e) To update and upgrade the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) application.

28. In 2014, the EATL project continued to fulfil its role as the platform for cooperation between countries involved in the project while ensuring the coordinated development of Euro-Asian land transport links. The EATL Group of Experts met 3 times in 2014 (February, May, October) and advanced its work on: rendering operational the priority links; analysing physical and non-physical barriers in international land transport between Europe and Asia; and on other elements of the work programme for phase III of the EATL project.

29. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the EATL project and asked that the secretariat inform the Working Party on any developments on this issue at its next session.

VII. Trans-European Railway (TER) project (agenda item 6)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/3

30. The Deputy Project Manager of TER Mr. A. Zimmer briefly presented a report on the activities of the TER Project over the period 2013–2014.

31. The new TER Management, Mr. G. I. Bessonov and Mr. A. C. Zimmer, who were elected during the Steering Committee sessions in 2013, started their activities on the 1 January 2014. The first tasks of the new management were to present a programme of work for 2014–2015 and adopt a cost plan appropriate for the proposed programme of work. The main tasks for 2014 were:

(a) Promotion of the TER Project;

(b) Visibility and attractiveness of the TER;

(c) TER integration into the Pan-European Transport Environment;

(d) Development of a methodology for the High-Speed Trains Master Plan;

(e) Review of Safety at Level Crossings.

32. The activities of the TER project in 2014 included:

(a) Working on a new TER Vision accompanied by an appropriate strategy in order to attract new points of view and to express the unique selling proposition of a modern and highly effective international project;

(b) Cooperation with the EATL Project to analyse the expected cargo and passenger flows between Europe and Asia and to be able to prepare a traffic simulation with the aim of increasing the market share for rail transport in the near future;

(c) Cooperation with the Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law (GEURL) Project – with the aim of accelerating the creation of a single Euro-Asian Railway Transport Area as a basic instrument for enhancing the accessibility for railway customers;

(d) Cooperation with the Group of Experts on Safety at Level Crossings – Given the number of casualties at level crossings in our member countries, it is of paramount importance that an effective and economically sound solution is found. A trial of a new Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) solution for level crossings is soon to be launched in Austria;

(e) Cooperation with the European Rail Research Network of Excellence (EURNEX) – to find a common way to use European Union (EU) funding for research, development and education for our railway companies (e.g. Smartrail, Shift²Rail);

(f) Visits to Belarus, Germany, Greece, Hungary and Italy are planned with the aim of encouraging their entry into the TER Project.

33. The Working Party took note of the information provided by TER Project Managers on the TER activities and requested that they inform the Working Party of any developments on this issue at its next session.

VIII. Railway infrastructure financing and Public-Private Partnerships (agenda item 7)

34. The representative of CMS Cameron McKenna LLP as well as the Project Leader on ECE PPP Standards for railways Mr. J. Beckitt presented different Rail schemes and PPP models. The presentation focused on illustrating a number of case studies where PPPs were used as a tool for financing railways projects. The presentation also focused on the main lessons learned. The proposal for UNECE Standard on best practice for the management of Public Private Partnership (PPP) programmes in the rail sector was also discussed during this session. The aim of the project will be to provide standards for a structured template for the development of rail schemes; a recommended common approach to risk allocation and model forms of contract based on international best practice.

35. The Working Party took note of the information provided by Mr. Beckitt on a UNECE PPP centre of excellence for railways and of:

(a) the possibilities for synergies between the centre of excellence and the Working Party; and

(b) the hosting on the Working Party's website of an online tool for the evaluation of financing of rail infrastructure projects under PPP schemes. The Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare a formal document addressing the above mentioned issues for consideration by the Working Party at its next session.

IX. Master Plan on High-Speed Trains (agenda item 8)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/4

36. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat on the revised methodology concerning the development of a master plan on high-speed trains

(ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/4). The revision of the methodology was prepared in cooperation and consultations with the TER project with the aim of developing a common methodology for the master plan of the high-speed network in ECE and TER regions. The revised methodology includes, among other activities, the development of a tool that will provide added value to Governments and will help them prioritize corridors on which they should develop high-speed lines and evaluate the cost-benefit of each option.

37. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat and the consultant of TER Project Manager on the development of a high-speed trains master plan and approved the revised methodology as prepared and presented by the secretariat. It requested the secretariat and the TER project inform the working party of any developments on this issue at its next session.

X. Towards unified railway law in the pan-European region and along Euro-Asian transport corridors (agenda item 9)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/5, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2014/10

38. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat regarding the work of the Group of Experts on Unified Railway Law. The Group of Experts held its seventh, eighth and ninth sessions on 3–4 April, 10–11 July and 30–31 October 2014 respectively. In addition an informal meeting of the “friends of the Chair” of the Group of Experts was held on the 29 September 2014.

39. The Working Party noted that considerable work has been done on the analysis of existing international modal transport conventions (rail, road, air, inland water and maritime transport) and related agreements. The Group of Experts reviewed existing international arrangements and legal instruments covering all modes of transport on the basis of a thorough outline provided by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2013/4) with a view to identifying elements and mechanisms as well as best practices that could be of relevance for the establishment of a unified railway regime.

40. Furthermore, the secretariat prepared a document which served as a basis for discussion for all the Group of experts’ sessions during 2014. This document provided a comparison of provisions in COTIF/CIM (column 1) and SMGS (column 2). These legal provisions were also briefly evaluated in the context of other international legal documents, such as CMR and the Montreal Convention (column 3). The document also included draft wording of legal provisions agreed (column 4) as well as other elements that could form part of a legal instrument for Euro-Asian rail freight transport. The experts reviewed and amended the document so that the provisions cover the needs of all participating stakeholders.

41. The Working Party noted that in order to finalise the provisions of this new legal instrument, three main tasks remain: (1) fine-tuning the wording substantively and settling all open issues; (2) fine-tuning the wording linguistically in three languages (English, French and Russian); and (3) reaching a decision on an appropriate management system for the Unified Railway Law.

42. The Working Party also noted the need for the Group of Experts to organize meetings between the end of the mandate of the Group of Experts and the upcoming seventy-seventh session of the Inland Transport Committee in order to avoid losing the momentum that was created. The Working Party agreed to request from the Bureau of ITC to exceptionally approve – without waiting ITC approval – the extension of the mandate of the Group of Experts for one more year. The Chair of the Inland Transport Committee

Mr. J. Kleniewski participated at in the session and agreed to bring it to the Bureau meeting for its support acknowledging the importance of the time factor for this Group of Experts.

43. The Working Party took note of the excellent work done by the Group of Experts on Unified Railway Law and thanked the experts for their commitment and dedication to this difficult task. The Working Party understood that more time is needed for the finalization of the Unified Railway Law. What remains to be done is fine-tuning of the wording both substantively and linguistically in three languages (English, French and Russian) as well as reaching a decision on an appropriate management system for the Unified Railway Law. Hence the request for an extension of the mandate of the Group of Experts for one more year was requested. The Working Party asked the secretariat to transmit this request at the next session of the Bureau of Inland Transport Committee and at the next session of Inland Transport Committee for approval.

XI. New convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail (agenda item 10)

44. The Working Party took note of the information provided by OSJD on the development of new convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail.

45. At OSJD Committee a meeting of the informal Group of Experts on the new convention took place under the aegis of UNECE. The representatives from Russian Federation provided information on the work towards the development of the new convention as well as on the progress of the work on facilitation of border crossings, the existing legal basis and the possible structure and content of the new legal instrument. It was decided that at this stage a concept note should be prepared regarding the new legal instrument. The participants agreed that conflict with existing legal agreements should be avoided. The participants suggested that the future meetings of the informal Group of Experts should be under the auspices of UNECE in order to prepare a draft of the new legal instrument and to ensure participation of representatives from UNESCAP, EU OTIF as well as customs authorities. The participants agreed that two meetings of the informal Group of Experts should be held during 2015, in February and September.

46. The Working Party took note of the developments and work done so far as presented by the OSJD Committee towards the development of a new convention on the facilitation of crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail as well as of the organisation of two meetings during 2015 and requested that the Committee inform the Working Party of any further development at its next session.

XII. Intelligent Transport Systems and other technological applications for Rail Transport (agenda item 11)

Documentation: UNECE publication, Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) for sustainable mobility (2012)

47. The Working Party was informed by Mr. K. Schockaert, Transport attaché to the Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations Office and specialized institutions in Geneva on the Joint UNECE-Belgium Workshop on Intelligent Transport Systems: "Towards a new transportation culture: technology innovations for safe, efficient and sustainable mobility" that took place in Brussels on 17th and 18th November. The workshop brought together ITS experts to discuss how innovations based on information and communications technology can help create a driving and transportation culture that

contributes to safe, efficient and sustainable mobility. The workshop is one of the 20 global actions mentioned in the UNECE Road Map promoting ITS.

48. The Working Party took note of the Joint Belgium – UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) workshop on Intelligent Transport Systems: “Towards a new transportation culture: technology innovations for safe, efficient and sustainable mobility” and requested that the secretariat inform the Working Party at its next session for any developments on ITS.

XIII. Productivity in Rail Transport (agenda item 12)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/6

49. The Working Party recalled that at its last session, it was informed by the secretariat that Governments provided many comments on the calculation of rail productivity indicators and their effectiveness. These comments focused mainly on the need to further review these indicators, re-evaluate their consistency, establish clear definitions and establish commonly agreed objectives regarding their interpretation.

50. The Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare an official document for its next session with the reviewed and fine-tuned rail productivity indicators based on Governments’ comments for consideration and approval by the Working Party.

51. The secretariat presented the Working Party document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2014/6 which included the reviewed and fine-tuned rail productivity indicators based on Governments’ comments for Working Party’s consideration.

52. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the revised and fine-tuned rail productivity indicators based on Government’s comments. The Working Party decided to await feedback from national experts and from the Working Party on transport statistics (WP.6) before approving the revised rail productivity indicators. It requested that the secretariat provide information on this issue at its next session.

XIV. Climate Change and Rail Transport (agenda item 13)

A. Group of Experts on climate change impacts and adaptation to International Transport Networks

Documentation: UNECE publication on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for International Transport Networks

53. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the UNECE publication on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for International Transport Networks. The publication was launched in December 2013 and it was distributed to all experts and participants of the Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for International Transport Networks.

54. In addition, the Working Party took note of the terms of reference (ToR) for the continuation of the work of the Group of Experts. The ToR includes directives to:

(a) Identify and establish where possible inventories of transport networks in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region which are vulnerable to climate change impacts;

(b) Use/develop models, methodologies, tools and good practices to address potential extreme hazards (e.g. high temperatures and floods) to selected inland transport infrastructure in the UNECE region under different scenarios of climate change;

(c) Identify and analyse case studies focusing on the potential economic, social, and environmental consequences of the climate change impacts and provide a cost/benefit analysis of the adaptation options.

55. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the continuation of the Group of Experts, the publication on Climate Change Adaptation to International Transport Networks and the change of the title of the Group of Experts to Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes. The Working Party also considered suggestions in the group's work plan on issues relevant to rail transport. The Working Party requested that the secretariat to inform the Working Party at the next session on developments in adaptation issues and railways.

B. Climate Change mitigation: Presentation of UNECE ForFITS tool

56. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat of the 2013–2014 developments in the For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS) project, a project initially funded by the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) through to the end of 2013.

57. Sustainable transport can be assessed in ForFITS through the simulation of Avoid-Shift-Improve policies which also take into account the expected evolution of relevant macroeconomic parameters. The ForFITS tool is available online along with a user manual which covers all necessary information on how to use ForFITS, as well as practical examples to facilitate the self-learning process.

58. In the final phase of the UNDA project, regional and national capacity-building workshops were organized. The objective was to raise awareness on CO₂ emissions in inland transport as well as to provide information about the ForFITS tool. Whenever possible the regional and national workshops were organized back-to-back with the launching of the pilots. Over the course of the pilot phase, ForFITS was tested in the following seven countries, representing all five United Nations regions: Chile, Ethiopia, France, Hungary, Montenegro, Thailand and Tunisia.

59. The Working Party took note of the information provided on the ForFITS tool and reiterated its support for the further development of this tool. The Working Party requested that the secretariat present any developments on this area at the next session.

C. Diesel engine exhausts

Documentation: UNECE publication “Diesel engine exhausts: Myths and realities”

60. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat of the discussion paper “Diesel engine exhausts: Myths and realities” prepared by the secretariat.

61. The objective of this discussion paper is:

(a) to offer a balanced view on the ongoing debate about the harmful effects of diesel engine exhaust emissions on human health and the environment;

(b) to take stock of recent studies on the harmful effects of diesel exhausts on public health;

(c) to provide information about diesel emissions from different economic sectors including inland transport;

(d) to give an overview of the recent policy developments on the reduction of pollutant emissions to address health and environmental concerns; and

(e) to give an overview of any technological developments in diesel engines that reduce or even eliminate the harmful effects to public health.

62. The Working Party considered the discussion paper and exchanged ideas on the best way to disseminate its findings and possible follow-ups on issues relevant to rail transport.

XV. Railways Reform (agenda item 14)

63. The rail executive from Department for Transport, UK, Mr. A. Mundy, presented to the Working Party the rail privatisation experience in United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

64. In the 1980's a wider programme of privatising state-run utilities had taken place in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The aim was to introduce competition, bringing in private-sector innovation and cost efficiencies and reducing the taxpayer contribution. In 1991 the European Union issued a Directive requiring the management and operation of rail services to be separated from the provision of rail services. Privatisation and separation of the State-run British Rail took place in 1993 against this background. British Rail was split into:

(a) A private, shareholder-owned, company with the responsibility for rail infrastructure – Railtrack. This subsequently went into administration and it was replaced in 2002 by the not-for-dividend, private company limited by guarantee “Network Rail”. In September 2014 Network Rail was re-classified as a state company;

(b) Train services were tendered out to private train operating companies for limited term passenger rail franchises, paying premium to or receiving subsidy from Government depending on the profitability of services (15 franchises);

(c) Freight services are in the private sector. They get some support through rail freight grants and financial assistance aimed at modal shift (4 freight operators);

(d) Rolling stock companies (ROSCO's) which lease trains, locomotives and coaches to train operators.

65. A rail regulator (Office of Rail Regulation – ORR) was created to regulate the access charge and oversee the granting of track access to train operators, as well as other aspects of consumer protection and later rail safety.

66. A number of high profile rail accidents led to Railtrack being put into administration and a fall in public confidence in the railway system. This has been overcome by better performance at Network Rail and a much improved safety record. The challenge in recent years has been to ensure efficiency is delivered by Network Rail coupled with additional capacity on the network. Passenger satisfaction has improved since surveys were introduced in 2004 and it comes close to the top of tables of satisfied passengers across the EU.

67. The Working Party thanked the presenter for providing this useful information on railway reform in United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Working Party requested that the secretariat provide information on any developments in railway reform at its next session.

XVI. Facilitation of international rail transport in the pan-European region (agenda item 15)

A. Facilitation of rail border crossings

Documentation: Informal document No. 2

68. The Working Party recalled that at its last session it took note of and approved the questionnaire (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2013/6) prepared by the secretariat on actions regarding possible implementation mechanisms of the provisions in the new Annex 9 to the “Harmonization Convention” for the facilitation of rail border crossings in the pan-European region. The Working Party also recalled that the secretariat was requested to distribute the proposed questionnaire.

69. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat about the replies received (Informal document No. 2). Twenty four contracting parties to the harmonization convention replied to the questionnaire sent by the secretariat. The analysis provided by the secretariat was focused on data that could be quantified. All other information from Governments replies could found in informal document No. 2.

70. OSJD informed the Working Party that the Committee also sent a questionnaire to member countries regarding the implementation of Annex 9. In addition to the Committee requested that OSJD member countries submit information on the measures taken for the implementation of Annex 9. Based on the replies received the following was reported:

(a) In principle, the procedures stated in Annex on the facilitation of border crossings have been implemented in OSJD member countries;

(b) The measures taken include among others the technological reinforcement of railway border stations (installation of information technology systems and means of communication, devices etc.) and improvement of infrastructure in order to ensure that capacity in stations corresponds to traffic volumes;

(c) Bilateral agreements have been signed and bilateral negotiations have taken place with the aim of minimising delays of passenger and freight trains;

(d) Transit goods control is conducted only when it is justified due to prevailing circumstances.

71. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat and OSJD on the replies to the questionnaire sent as part of the actions of possible implementation mechanisms of the provisions in the new Annex 9 to the “Harmonization Convention” for the facilitation of rail border crossings in the pan-European region. The Working Party requested that the secretariat to provide more updated information on this area at the next session.

B. Harmonization of technical specifications of different railway systems

72. The Working Party was informed by the representative of OSJD Mr. V. Zhukov, about recent developments in technical interoperability issues between the 1,435 mm standard and the 1,520 mm broad gauge.

73. Since 2007 the OSJD/ERA group has had 32 meetings and the following documents were developed and finalized:

(a) Document 1: Subsystem: infrastructure, track and permanent way;

- (b) Document 2: Energy;
- (c) Document 3: Signalling, interlocking and communications;
- (d) Document 5: Passenger carriages;
- (e) Document 6: Locomotives and multiple unit rolling stock;
- (f) Document 7: Operations and traffic management.

74. The results of the analysis that was conducted on technical parameters were used by ERA to revise the TSIs in order to include the 1520/1524 mm parameters in the TSIs. In order to improve the existing technical and operational compatibility of CIS-EU borders, a glossary was drafted of the terminology that is relevant to interoperability for CIS-EU cross-border rail traffic. In addition a new OSJD/ERA Memorandum of Understanding was drafted and adopted for the period 2015–2019.

75. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the OSJD Committee on the harmonization of technical specifications on different railways systems and requested that the secretariat provide updated information on this issue at its next session.

XVII. Rail Review (agenda item 16)

76. The secretariat informed the Working Party that due to limited resources and time it was not able to proceed with this publication during the last year. Therefore there have been no developments on this issue.

77. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the Rail Review and requested that the secretariat proceed with this publication as soon as possible and provide updated information at its next session.

XVIII. Group of Experts on improving Safety at Level Crossings (agenda item 17)

78. At its seventy-third session (Geneva, 1–3 March 2011), the Inland Transport Committee discussed the importance of addressing key issues related to enhancing safety at level crossings. The Committee recommended that the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1), the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) and the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) consider creating a joint Group of Experts of limited duration to work on enhancing safety at level crossings, drawing where possible on all relevant experience within other bodies such as the European Railway Agency (ECE/TRANS/221, para. 50).

79. The secretariat provided an overview of the terms of reference of the Group of Experts on Improving Safety at Level Crossings. The secretariat reported on the work to date by various subgroups within the Group of Experts relating to the economic costs of level crossing accidents, the safety performance of types of levels crossings, good practices, a survey of prevailing national legislation and/or legal arrangements at level crossings, technology and technological solutions to improve safety at level crossings, human factors contributing to unsafe conditions at level crossings, and enforcement.

80. The secretariat also showed a film, “Saving lives at Level Crossings” which it produced in partnership with the International Union of Railways and the Swiss Federal Office of Transport on the occasion of International Level Crossing Awareness Day 2014. It invited SC.2 delegates to attend the fourth session of the Group of Experts on the 29 and 30 January 2015, and to contribute to the work of the Group of Experts.

81. The Vice president of Israeli Railways responsible for safety, security, quality and environment – Mr. E. Kaplansky – presented how the Israeli Railways manage and address safety at level crossings. Two main courses of action were identified: (a) grade separation and (b) level crossing maintenance and improvement. Under grade separation, 55 grade separations were built for 154 existing level crossings. A Level Crossings & Grade Separation Administrative Committee was established (Inter-ministerial) managed by the General Manager of the Ministry of Transport. The followings activities took place:

- (a) Setting a plan for grade separation (ISR, MOT, MOF);
- (b) Defining a Ranking Model for LCs based on risk assessment and budget – How much safety can be achieved per €
- (c) Update instructions for level crossing planning;
- (d) Law Enforcement.

82. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat on the work of the Group of Experts on improving safety at level crossings and thanked the presenter for his contribution. The Working Party asked the secretariat to provide updated information on this issue at its next session.

XIX. Activities of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies (agenda item 18)

83. The Working Party took note of the decisions of the seventy-sixth session of the Inland Transport Committee, held from the 25 to 27 February 2014 related to its areas of work and asked the secretariat to provide updated information on this issue at its next session.

XX. Activities of the European Commission in rail transport (agenda item 19)

Documentation: Informal document No. 5

84. The Working Party was informed by the representative of DG Move, Mr. F. Jost, on its most recent developments in rail transport (Informal document No. 5).

85. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the European Commission on its activities in rail transport and requested that the European Commission and the secretariat to provide updated information on this issue at its next session.

XXI. Activities of international organizations in rail transport (agenda item 20)

86. The Working Party was informed by the Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) Mr. V. Zhukov on the activities of the OSJD during 2014. A joint seminar was held regarding cooperation between the OSJD railway transport corridors and the Rail Freight Corridors of the EU. During the seminar, representatives of OSJD member countries presented the requirements for technical standards, developments in the Trans-European transport network, the financing principles of the European rail freight corridors, and other areas.

87. Furthermore, the Working Party was informed by the Secretary General of the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) Mr. C. Brand on CIT's activities during 2014 which were focused on:

- (a) Finalization of the General Terms and Conditions for Eurasian rail transport and dissemination of this work to all interested stakeholders for agreement;
- (b) Work on multimodality;
- (c) Work on the common CIM/SMGS consignment note;
- (d) Work on the electronic consignment note in cooperation with OTIF;
- (e) Development of General terms and conditions for the use of infrastructure in order to adapt it to the Recast of the First Railway Package of Directives of the EU.

88. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the representatives of OSJD and CIT and requested that the International Organizations and the Secretariat provide updated information on this issue at its next session.

XXII. Work plan for 2014–2018 (agenda item 21)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/240

89. The Working Party recalled that at its previous session the Working Party adopted its work plan for 2014–2018 as contained in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2013/9. The Working Party was informed by the secretariat of the discussions made and amendments provided and adopted during last ITC session on the Working Party's work plan for 2014–2018. The adopted changes on the Working Party's work plan for 2014–2018 are as follows:

Paragraph 02.5.2, amend to read:

*“02.5.2 Harmonization of requirements concerning international railway transport including **railway legal regimes (Unified Railway Law)**, 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 and/or unification of the SMGS/SMPS⁵ and CIM/CIV⁶ systems~~).

⁴~~Contract for International Goods Transport by Rail (SMGS), Contract for International Passenger Transport by Rail (SMPS).~~

⁵~~Contract for International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM), Contract for International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Rail (CIV).~~

(f) **Unification of international railway law with the objective to allow rail carriage under a single legal regime from the Atlantic to the Pacific (Unified Railway Law) and harmonization of requirements concerning international railway transport including rail safety, security and facilitation of its operations. Elaboration of a unified set of transparent and predictable provisions and legal rules for Euro-Asian rail transport operations in all countries concerned that would facilitate border crossing procedures, particularly for transit traffic.”**

90. The Working Party took note of the information provided by the secretariat on amendments requested by the Inland Transport Committee on its Work Plan for 2014–2018.

XXIII. Other business (agenda item 22)

91. The Working party welcomed the invited participants from the Mediterranean countries of North Africa and the Middle East and will seek to enhance the cooperation with these countries and with the Euromed – Road, Rail and Urban Transport project of the EC, for the exchange of good practices, the transfer of know-how and the harmonization of standards and regulations in the transport sector, in these neighbouring countries, by inviting them to participate in future Working Party meetings and to attend Group of Experts such as the Group of Experts on level crossings.

XXIV. Date and venue of next session (agenda item 23)

92. The Working Party’s sixty-ninth session is tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva from 2 to 4 December 2015.

XXV. Adoption of decisions (agenda item 24)

93. As agreed upon and in line with the Working Party’s decision taken at its fifty-second session (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/190, para. 6), the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chair and Vice-Chair prepared the present report.

Annex

Workshop on “How to increase railways competitiveness”

Conclusions and Recommendations

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Workshop on “How to Increase Railways Competitiveness” was held in Geneva on 25 November 2014.

The Workshop was opened on behalf of the UNECE Transport Division by Ms. E. Molnar, Director of the Division. The Conference was fully supported by the Inland Transport Committee of UNECE where it was represented by its chairman Mr. J. Kleniewski.

The Conference was attended by 70 participants from ECE and non-ECE member States. Representatives from the following countries participated in the meeting: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Among the Workshop participants were representatives of Railways Undertakings such as the Bosnia and Herzegovina Public Railway Corporation, Deutsche Bahn AG, Israeli Railways, JSC “Lithuanian Railways”, PKP Polish Railway Lines (PKP PLK), JSC “Russian Railways”, TCDD, Turkish State Railways Directorate General, East Japan Railway Company, Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Tunisiens, JSC “PLASKE”. Furthermore representatives from the UNECE TER Project Central Office, the European Commission, the Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), the International Union of Railways (UIC), the Euromed Road, Rail and Urban Transport Project, the Collaboration of Railway Police and Security Services (COLPOFER), the International Association “Coordinating Council on Trans-Siberian Transport” (CCTT) and the Institute for International Transport Communications Moscow State University of Transport Engineering.

The distinguished speakers and participants in the Conference from UNECE and non-UNECE, member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as the transport industry, research and academia discussed issues related to increasing railway competitiveness, the elimination of inefficiencies and the introduction of innovative approaches and solutions. They all agreed that given the magnitude of the challenge, it is imperative that railway competitiveness should be enhanced and that related proposed actions and concerted initiatives be considered as a matter of priority. The challenges addressed were on providing integrated and door-to-door services, ensuring technical interoperability, providing sufficient funding for construction and maintenance of rail infrastructure and modernization of rolling stock, harmonization of legal agreements, creating innovative solutions for addressing old and historical burdens.

The participants:

on Infrastructure

- Agreed that an increase in railway competitiveness has a direct, positive impact on national economies and the environment therefore an urgent need exists for the

preparation of appropriate policy actions, exchange of information and of good practices;

- Observed that funding for the construction and maintenance of rail infrastructure is limited and new innovative solutions should be implemented;
- Commented that good quality rail infrastructure leads to a higher market share for railways;
- Noted that safety at level crossings should be dramatically increased as to eliminate accidents, increase railway reliability and efficiency of operations;
- Noted that an innovative solution could be the creation of incentives for Infrastructure Managers. These incentives should be regulated so as to make sure business conditions are fair for all players and not discriminatory;
- Agreed that the promotion of rail freight corridors leads to the increase of competitiveness if the development of these corridors is regulated and full transportation and logistics services – one stop shop/door to door approach – are provided;
- Noted that competitive and able to be planned charges for rail infrastructure use should be developed;
- Observed that adaptation to climate change impacts is imperative and directly connected with railways competitiveness;

on Legal Instruments/Operations

- Suggested that the improvement and enhancement of intermodality and intramodality can help to increase railway competitiveness when fair competition exists between the different transport modes;
- Agreed that a level playing field with other transport modes should be secured. Equal business conditions for all transport modes should be the ultimate objective;
- Agreed that harmonised customs solutions need to be implemented as they facilitate railway activity. However, railways in short term, have to invest a lot of money without a direct impact to their customers;
- Agreed that less administrative burdens should be set;
- Observed that multimodality increases railway competitiveness;
- Agreed that multimodality can become a success story for railways following increased collaboration from a legal point of view;
- Agreed that the harmonization of technical interoperability issues is an important and difficult task that railways should continue to work on because their facilitation will dramatically increase railway competitiveness;
- Agreed that Unified Railway Law is a big step towards the enhancement of railway competitiveness; its completion is a long term objective but its first step, which is the focus on contract of carriage, is already a reality and Governments should ratify it when it is final and ready to be used;
- Agreed that the common CIM/SMGS consignment note is already a successful story that facilitates international rail transportation;
- Observed that International transportation by railways suffers from different legal regimes – National Laws/Corridors regulations/European Commission Law/COTIF/SMGS – and more facilitation should take place;

- Noted that the General Terms and Conditions for Euro Asian rail transport are already well developed based on the Joint Declaration on the promotion of Euro-Asian rail transport and activities towards Unified Railway Law and their use and implementation by railways undertakings is needed;
- Agreed that railway undertakings should take advantage of their existing assets and create new sources for generating profit such as the transformation of main rail stations to include significant commercial retail activities, the expansion of business activity to other areas complementary to rail business such as hotels, restaurants etc.;
- Agreed that several barriers to the operations of railways should be eliminated:
 - (a) VAT regime should be the same for all transport modes. Railways should be excluded;
 - (b) Force Majeure: railways are liable for force majeure but Air and Road are not. Railways should not be liable for force majeure!
 - (c) Infrastructure charging: 100% of railway network is charged for, however only the 0.9 % of road network is subject to tolls!

on Passengers

- Agreed that the improvement and the enhancement of passengers rights – including compensation rights, etc. – will make travelling by rail more attractive to citizens;
- Suggested that access to the railways for people with restricted mobility should be provided or improved;
- Noted that a multimodal approach should be used when scheduling rail services since it facilitates connectivity with other transport modes and improves the passenger experience;
- Agreed that comfort is not a luxury but an imperative service that railways should provide if they wish to attract more passengers;
- Observed that the cost of tickets in many cases is higher than air transport tickets and therefore special attention should be given to these issues in order to attract more passengers;
- Agreed that new services for passengers should be developed – possibly on high-speed trains – that will connect major international cities and can boost railway competitiveness.

on Freight

- Agreed that the provision of full/integrated rail services to customers with door-to-door/just in case approach is a must for railway freight transportation;
- Observed that the provision by the railways of third and fourth party logistics services (3PL/4PL) will dramatically increase railway competitiveness and intermodality;
- Agreed that the development of intermodal terminals along railway lines is a key factor for railway development;

Considering that the increase of railway competitiveness is a challenge which can only be tackled through collective efforts and cooperation at all levels, the participants agreed on the following:

Recommendations:

1. The lessons learned during the workshop should be disseminated to all UNECE member States, other interested Countries, Railways Undertakings and International Organizations involved in rail transport;
2. Governments should be aware of the good practices already implemented and of the challenges that railways face; awareness should be raised on increasing railway competitiveness and there should be increased focus in this area;
3. There should be both collaborative research and policy actions to develop effective strategies that lead to an increase in railway competitiveness. Well targeted studies and research, implemented good practices and lessons learned should be a first step towards bridging together all decision. Policy-makers and experts related to railway management and development should exchange good practices; discuss challenges and new development concepts as well as agree on possible future activities and concerted actions. The Working Party on Rail Transport could be the platform for this sharing of knowledge and exchange of information;
4. Promotion of specific measures for affordable rail transport infrastructure that increases safety and efficient use of infrastructure such as the development of incentives for infrastructure managers should be considered;
5. Governments and Railway Undertakings should work more towards the development of rail corridors that promote intermodality, door-to-door services and enhance the railway's portfolio of services;
6. Governments should ratify the Unified Railway Law when it is ready because it is a concrete step towards increasing the competitiveness of the railways and the harmonization of legal rail instruments;
7. Railways need more passengers. The development of a toolkit on how to attract more passengers based on good practices already implemented by railways but also other modes of transport is needed in order to increase the number of passengers using trains.

The participants expressed their gratitude to the ECE Secretariat for hosting the workshop and to speakers for having shared their experience and provided for possible solutions to enhance the competitiveness of railways.

The proceedings of the Workshop including presentation and all conference material will be published on the UNECE website at:
www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2_events/2014_railways_competitiveness.html.