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European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations: Core networks

Core networks

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. At its previous session in 2021, the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24), when discussing a possible creation of a core network in the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), requested the secretariat to contact AGTC contracting parties and ask them to: (i) identify a line or lines crossing through their territories which possibly should be given a status of core lines on which special producers would be used in case of an emergency, and (ii) propose what the special procedures should entail.

2. This document summarizes information collected by the secretariat on (i) and (ii) above.

II. Proposals for core lines and procedures

3. The secretariat reminded on 22 June 2022 the focal points of all countries, contracting parties to the AGTC about the WP.24 decision on core networks and requested sharing of information on (i) and (ii) above.

4. By the time of preparation of this document, responses have been received from the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Germany, Greece, Latvia, Serbia and Türkiye.

5. The following proposals have been made with regard to core networks:

- Austria: core lines for the European Union states to be equivalent to those designated as core lines and extended core lines under the TEN-T network, which for Austria would entail: C-E 43, C-E 45, C-E 50 (without “Buchs to Innsbruck”), C-E 52, C-E 55 (without “Horni-Dvoriste to Summerau to Linz”), C-E 63, C-E 65, C-E 67, C-E 451 and C-E 551.

- Bulgaria: all the AGTC lines in Bulgaria have the same status regarding emergency procedures; there is no need expressed to prioritize any of the lines.
- Czechia: core lines to be equivalent to those designated as core lines under the TEN-T network.
- Germany: core lines can be only identified after a common understanding has been reached on the special procedures and so the requirements to be observed during emergency situations on the core lines.
- Greece: the following lines are proposed to serve as core lines: C 70/2, C-E 85, C-E 853, C-E 855, C 85/1 (until Florina), C 85/2 (until Amindeo), C85/3 (from Kalabaka) and C 84/4 (until Aigio).
- Latvia: the three AGTC-listed lines in Lativa, ie. C 12, C 14 and C-E 75 should be given the status of core lines.
- Serbia: the prioritization is given to C-E 70 and C-E 85.
- Türkiye: no designation of lines has been done so far where special procedures would apply.

6. The following proposals have been made with regard to special procedures:

- Austria: the Handbook for International Contingency Management, available at: https://rne.eu/wp-content/uploads/RNE-International-Contingency-Management-handbook-v-2.0.pdf, is used in the event of an emergency situation. It defines: (a) how to recognise and when to declare an internationally relevant disruption, (b) the process for international business continuity management, (c) the roles needed for the international cooperation, (d) whom to contact, (e) pre-defined procedures and best practices. In addition, case studies are developed to analyse the allocation principles in case of disruption. National regulations also exist for handling the capacity allocation in case of disruption or capacity overload: Austrian railway law 1957, (Federal law on railways, railway vehicles and transport on railways), original version: BGBl. Nr. 60/1957, current version: BGBl. I Nr. 231/2021, § 65c and § 66; https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/GeltendeFassung.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=10011302). The railway infrastructure company is obliged to elaborate an emergency plan involving all relevant public authorities which have to be informed and to take all necessary measures to normalize the situation. If the railway infrastructure was declared to be overloaded, the allocation body shall give priority to requests in an order which is pre-defined by the law. The procedures to be followed and priority criteria to be applied in relation to congested railway infrastructure shall be specified in the railway network conditions.
- Bulgaria: the Handbook for International Contingency Management, available at: https://rne.eu/wp-content/uploads/RNE-International-Contingency-Management-handbook-v-2.0.pdf, is used in the event of an emergency situation at international level. There are also rules available in the event of emergency situations at national level, which can be consulted at https://www.rail-infra.bg/bg/302.
- Czechia: Any rules should be clear and in line with other international rules in force and the rules of the European Union. They should also allow for flexible approval procedures by railway and infrastructure managers.
- Germany: Existing approaches for procedures, e.g. at the European level, should be explored in the first place, as they could potentially serve as a good practice for AGTC special procedures for emergency situations, if such are to be decided upon.
- Greece: Emergency plans have been drawn up by competent infrastructure managers for the following categories of emergencies: rail incident (collision with motor vehicles, derailment, fire, train split, leakage/spread/diffusion of dangerous goods, spillage, etc.), natural phenomena (such as extreme weather conditions), traffic difficulties, operational difficulties (e.g. due to strike), counteracting malevolent acts on facilities and material, security of personnel and passengers; contingency plans are also available for the following four categories: tunnel accidents, evacuation,

collisions and incidents related to dangerous goods; there are no emergency plans in place for pandemic situations.

- Latvia: The proposals made in ECE/TRANS/2022/19 may be considered as a basis for special procedures. For example, bilateral border crossing agreements should be reviewed, or permits should be obtained for train drivers to drive trains on new lines as long as this would not compromise safety of operations. At the same time, various procedures may be more relevant for some countries than others, e.g. the use of alternative routes would be more relevant for the countries with larger territory and so larger network, whereas for smaller countries the options for bypass routes are limited. The capacity and use of alternative routes in 1520 mm gauge network are regulated by train formation plan where any amendment to it must be coordinated. When there are several systems for train route allocation, and if these systems are not fully compatible, difficulties may arise with transfer of necessary data for train route allocation. Moreover, any procedure before it is accepted as special procedure should be considered in terms of cost for its implementation. Prohibitively expensive procedures should not be accepted as at least some countries would possibly not be in position to implement them.
- Serbia: no specific information provided.
- Türkiye: no specific proposals made. In Türkiye, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Türkiye has established the International Support and Cooperation Working Group and its sub-group the Transport and Infrastructure Working Group in compliance with the Türkiye Disaster Response Plan. In case of emergency, this sub-group determines the seaports, airports and border crossing points to be used in the emergency. This information is conveyed to the International Support and Cooperation Working Group for notification abroad.