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**Economic Commission for Europe****Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Road Transport****118th session**

Geneva, 17-19 October 2023

**Report of the Working Party on Road Transport on its  
118th Session****I. Attendance**

1. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) held its 118th session on 17-19 October 2023, chaired by Mr. R. Symonenko (Ukraine). The following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States were represented in the meeting: Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czechia, Finland, France, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye and Ukraine.
2. The following non-ECE member States participated: Algeria, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Lebanon and Morocco.
3. The European Commission, the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) and the following non-governmental organizations participated: Council of Bureaux (CoB), International Road Federation, International Road Transport Union (IRU), Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange of Türkiye (TOBB), International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), Slovenian Logistics Association and EuroMed Transport Support Project.

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

4. The Working Party on Road Transport adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/419).
5. The presentations that were given during the session are available at <https://unece.org/transport/events/sc1-working-party-road-transport-118th-session>.

### **III. Inland Transport Instruments (agenda item 2)**

#### **A. European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport**

##### **1. Status of the Agreement**

6. The secretariat informed SC.1 that there was no change to the number of contracting parties to the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR), which stands at 52.

##### **2. Group of Experts**

7. The Chair of the AETR Group of Experts informed SC.1 on the work of the AETR Group of Experts. They were informed, especially on the work of the Group of Experts to reconcile the AETR regime in European Union and non-European Union AETR contracting parties following the introduction of the smart tachograph in the European Union on 15 June 2019. This included proposals to amend Article 22bis as well as to create a new appendix 1C (smart tachograph) and a new appendix 4 (exchange of information).

8. At the 116th session, SC.1 expressed support for a proposal by the AETR Group of Experts to amend article 14 in order to open up the agreement globally. The secretariat informed the Working Party that an informal exchange to facilitate such has taken place, though an amendment proposal has yet to be received. Contracting parties were again encouraged to formally submit such a proposal.

9. The Chair briefed SC.1 on the deliberations of the AETR Group of Experts on the extension of the Memorandum of Understanding via signing of the Administrative Arrangement. SC.1 took note of the information provided by the Chair and in Informal document No. 1.

10. Türkiye has requested to quickly find a solution to carry out the activities outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding under the AETR agreement, which was authorized by the 117<sup>th</sup> SC.1 session. Belarus and the Russian Federation supported the request of Türkiye subject to the non-discriminatory treatment to all the contracting parties to AETR.

#### **B. European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries**

##### **1. Status of the Agreement**

11. The secretariat informed SC.1 that there was no change in the number of contracting parties to the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) which stands at 38.

##### **2. Amendments to the Agreement**

12. At the last session, the Chair reminded SC.1 participants to consult their capitals on whether it would be appropriate to open AGR to accession by non-ECE member States, so that a discussion and decision might be reached at this session given that a decision has been deferred since the 115th session.

13. To facilitate a thorough consideration of this matter by contracting parties, at its 116th session, the Chair had requested the secretariat to invite representatives of other United Nations regional commissions to provide information on their equivalent regional agreements. ECA provided information on the 2014 Intergovernmental Agreement of the Trans African Highways, the 2012 Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa, and various Corridor Agreements.

14. SC.1 decided to defer making a decision until the next session. The Working Party requested the secretariat to provide information at the next session on the interest expressed by non-ECE member States to accede to AGR (if any). Given the lack of feedback over several sessions, the secretariat suggested that at the next session, the Working Party could decide that it did not consider it appropriate at the present time to open AGR to accession by

non-ECE member States, but that this matter could be revisited by the Working party pending interest if any by non-ECE member States.

15. At the last session, Türkiye tabled Informal document No. 2 which contained a proposal amendment to annex I with reference to E99, E691, E881, E981 and E982. As a result, ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/1 was developed. At the Chair's request, Türkiye tabled ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/1 for endorsement by SC.1. SC.1 adopted the proposal which is replicated in annex I.

16. In conjunction with agenda item 4(b) on the TEM Project, SC.1 was invited to consider potential aspects of AGR which could be the subject of future work or proposal amendments in annex II such as the inclusion of road safety audits and road safety inspections. SC.1 will consider this matter further at the next session.

17. In conjunction with agenda item 7(c)(i) on Inland Transport Committee (ITC)-related matters, SC.1 took note of the suggestion made by the secretariat of initiating a discussion on improving the E-roads network in terms of technological development and environmental sustainability for future sessions.

### **3. Implementation of the Agreement**

18. At the last session, SC.1 requested the secretariat's assistance in preparing a survey to be sent to contracting parties to the agreement to enquire about the status of implementation on their territories (Informal document No.2). This is linked to task 5.4 of the implementation of the ITC Strategy until 2030. SC.1 requested the secretariat to circulate the survey to AGR contracting parties with a request for feedback prior to the next session.

## **C. Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road**

### **1. Status of the Convention**

19. The secretariat informed SC.1 that there was no change in the number of contracting parties to CMR, which stands at 58.

### **2. Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (Protocol)**

20. The secretariat informed SC.1 that there was no change in the number of contracting parties to the Protocol to the Convention, which stands at 48.

### **3. Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road concerning the Electronic Consignment Note (Additional Protocol)**

21. The secretariat informed SC.1 that since its last session, Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan have acceded to the Additional Protocol to the Convention, bringing the total number of contracting parties to 33.

### **4. Group of Experts on the Operationalization of eCMR**

22. The Chair of the Group of Experts on the Operationalization of eCMR (GE.22) advised SC.1 that GE.22 had met six times from July 2022 to July 2023. She updated SC.1 on the work undertaken by the Group of Experts and summarized its report based on documents ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/2 to ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/5 and incorporate the revisions that were made at its sixth session. The GE.22 Chair emphasized that there were some points in the analysis contained in the documents that require further elaboration for the Group to give concrete recommendations to SC.1, and to finalize the conceptual and functional specifications.

23. A workshop was organized which included presentations by the European Commission, UN/CEFACT, FIATA, IRU and the secretariat.

24. SC.1 agreed to a two-year extension of GE.22 for the completion of work based on its current terms of reference including the preparation of technical specifications (if time permits) and reporting back to SC.1 at its 120th session in October 2025. Iran (Islamic Republic of) decided, based on the explanations provided during the session, to withdraw its reservations to the work of the group considering that any remaining issues and concerns will be further analysed, discussed and addressed at the future sessions of the group following the extension of its mandate.

25. SC.1 requested the secretariat to request an extension of the mandate of GE.22 at the next session of the ITC and thereafter at EXCOM. SC.1 also requested the provision of secretariat services for up to three sessions per year comprised of up to three days/session.

#### **D. New legal instrument(s) Proposal for a Global Multilateral Agreement on the International Regular Transport of Passengers by Coach and Bus (OmniBUS)**

26. At its 114th session, SC.1 resumed its discussion with the attendance of representatives from the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Türkiye. The Russian Federation indicated that it was prepared to accept the proposed wording reflected in paragraph 3 of Article 25 of ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2015/3 but not the “alternate wording” option. The Russian Federation withdrew its reservation to the text of paragraph 10 of annex VI. In addition, the Russian Federation proposed additional text to the “Important notice” part of the application for authorization contained in annex I. The Chair requested that the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Türkiye work together (e.g. through “Friends of Chair” meetings or other informal methods) to finalize the text of the draft agreement, and to submit a finalized text for adoption at the last session. Due to disruptions to usual work processes arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, such meetings did not take place in 2020.

27. At its 115th session, the secretariat informed SC.1 that it had followed up with the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Türkiye to ascertain their continued interest in this matter. The secretariat shared the replies received from Switzerland and Türkiye on 18 and 30 November 2020 respectively. In summary, Switzerland and Türkiye indicated that they would not continue their involvement in discussions on the proposed agreement. SC.1 decided to keep this item on its agenda but to suspend further discussions on this topic until the transport sector has had the opportunity to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. in 2023 or 2024).

28. SC.1 decided to defer a discussion on this matter until the next session.

29. The European Commission shared that there was no change in the status of its update at the last session. That is, the Protocol to the Interbus Agreement regarding regular and special regular services (which has been open for signature and ratification since 23 October 2020) has been ratified by the European Union but requires at least two other contracting parties besides the European Union to enter into force. Ukraine informed SC.1 that its internal procedures for the ratification of the Protocol to the Interbus Agreement regarding regular and special regular services were being carried out.

#### **E. Consolidated Resolution on the Facilitation of International Road Transport (RE.4)**

##### **The Relationship between the Origin of Goods and Transport Operations**

30. At the last session, Poland and Türkiye tabled ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2022/4 with a proposed definition of “bilateral transport”.

31. Poland, supported by Latvia, proposed that discussion on this item be postponed until the situation in road transport created by the sanctions imposed in this sector after the war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine ceases.

32. Türkiye asked that the item be kept on the agenda.

33. SC.1 agreed that the item should be kept on the agenda, but that discussion should be postponed until the war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine is over.

## **IV. Supporting New Technologies and Innovations in Inland Transport (agenda item 3)**

### **Digital/smart Road Infrastructure**

34. Due to time constraints, this topic was not discussed at this session. Volunteers willing to give a presentation at the next session were encouraged to contact the secretariat.

## **V. Promoting Sustainable Regional and Interregional Inland Transport Connectivity and Mobility (agenda item 4)**

### **A. Safe and Sustainable Road Infrastructure**

#### **1. Road Safety Inspections and Audits**

35. SC.1 continued its discussion on this topic in conjunction with agenda item 4(b) on the TEM Project.

36. Ukraine showed a film on disability from road traffic accidents which took the Grand Prix of Global Road Safety Film Festival 2022 and gave a presentation on its safe road infrastructure practices including road safety audits (RSA) and inspections (RSI) as well as other infrastructure design solutions.

37. SC.1 decided to create an informal group of experts on road infrastructure good practices comprising of Latvia, Ukraine, Türkiye and other interested participants. The informal group of experts was invited to work with the TEM Project Manager and the secretariat on the development of a proposed capacity-building collaboration between SC.1 and the TEM Project with an initial focus on RSA and RSI for the ECE region.

#### **2. Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes**

38. The Secretary of the Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes (WP.5/GE.3) provided an update on the work of the group which over the past year has included future climate change impact analysis, development of a framework for a stress test for climate change as well as a guide for adaptation pathways, and awareness raising and knowledge sharing. He also shared that a guide for transport network criticality assessment was in the initial stage of development.

39. SC.1 appreciated the information and invited the WP.5/GE.3 Secretary to provide an update at its next session.

### **B. Trans-European North-South Motorway Project**

40. The TEM Project Manager provided an update on the TEM Project over the past year.

41. He also tabled a paper on road safety audit and road safety inspections containing an analysis of the current practices and tools in TEM region countries and recommendations (Informal document No. 10) and summarized its contents. SC.1 appreciated the work undertaken and welcomed the suggestion by the TEM Project Manager to explore modalities to amend AGR to include road infrastructure safety management procedures, including tabling a document at the next session.

42. SC.1 also welcomed the suggestion to use the TEM Project in collaboration with SC.1 as a capacity-building vehicle on RSA and RSI for the ECE region. The Working Party invited the TEM Project Manager to work with the secretariat and the newly established informal group of experts on road infrastructure good practices to develop the suggestion further for the next session.

## **VI. Facilitation of International Road Transport (agenda item 5)**

### **A. International Motor Insurance System (Green Card)**

43. At the last session, SC.1 approved changes to Annex 1 of RE.4 per ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2022/1. The secretariat tabled Informal document No. 5 which contained the clean version of the amended annex. SC.1 endorsed the document and requested the secretariat to arrange for the present version of RE.4 (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2002/4/Rev.4) to be updated and submitted as a formal document at the next session so that RE.4 may be translated into the ECE official languages and shared on the website of SC.1.

44. SC.1 appreciated the presentation made by the Managing Director of the Council of Bureaux (COB), as well as Informal document No. 8 which contained her yearly update on “Green Card system” covering membership and financial stability issues, the organizational structure of the COB secretariat, COB collaboration, eMIC, data protection and a new motor insurance directive on insolvency events. SC.1 appreciated the efforts of COB in keeping the system operating smoothly with the ongoing challenging geopolitics and its impact in the region.

### **B. Workshop on Cross-border Insurance of Motor Vehicles**

45. At the last session, SC.1 was invited to participate in a workshop on cross-border insurance of motor vehicles jointly organized by ESCAP, ECE, ECLAC, ECA and ESCWA on 19 October 2022. Presentations were given by the insurance card organizations responsible for administering the Green, Blue, Orange, Brown and Yellow cards. The conclusions and recommendations from the workshop were contained in annex III of the report of the last session (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/418).

46. The secretariat informed SC.1 that a second workshop has been organized on 31 October 2023. Jointly organized by ESCAP, ECE, ECLAC and ECA, the workshop was being hosted by COB at its premises in Brussels and may be attended in-person or virtually. SC.1 requested an update on the outcomes of the second workshop, and relevant further developments, at the next session.

## **VII. Revision of SC.1 Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure (agenda item 6)**

47. At the last session, SC.1 commenced its reading and consideration of Rules 1 to 28 of the Rules of Procedure contained in ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2020/2. The Working Party requested Germany to submit a revised document reflecting the changes made and the proposed rules to be revisited at this session. A revised document has yet to be submitted as the departure of the former Transport Attaché with the German Permanent Mission has occurred prior to the arrival of the new Attaché.

48. The secretariat informed SC.1 of the operationalization of the revised ITC Terms of Reference, and of the follow up step that was included under Task 4.3 of the Implementation of ITC’s revised Terms of Reference (TOR) and Strategy until 2030 (ECE/TRANS/2023/3): “Operationalize ITC TOR and Rules of Procedure (ROP) and achieve necessary alignments to ITC TOR/ROP by its subsidiary bodies”. To assist SC.1 in this task, the secretariat had prepared ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/6 which contained recommendations relevant to SC.1’s TOR and ROP based on annex II of ECE/TRANS/2023/4/Rev.1 (Draft Recommendations for Harmonized Elements in the TOR of ITC Working Parties).

49. SC.1 discussed ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/6 from the Terms of Reference until Rule 1, paragraph 4(d) under Chapter I of its Rules of Procedure and made some changes.

50. SC.1 decided to continue discussing the matter at the next session using ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/6/Rev.1 with revisions made at this session, and ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2020/2/Rev.1 to be submitted by Germany.

## **VIII. Activities of Interest to the Working Party (agenda item 7)**

### **A. National Delegations**

51. There were no updates by national delegations.

### **B. International Organizations**

52. IRU tabled ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/7 which contained a resolution on the issue of driver shortage which was adopted at its recent General Assembly and made a statement. SC.1 participants were encouraged to work with IRU to address the shortage of drivers in the road transport industry.

53. There were no other updates by international organizations.

### **C. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Bodies and Other United Nations Organizations**

#### **1. ITC related**

54. The secretariat updated SC.1 on the key outcomes from the eight-fifth session of ITC in February 2023 which included (a) a Ministerial Declaration on “Harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions in the global fight against climate change” (ECE/TRANS/328/Annex II), (b) ITC revised TOR and Strategy until 2030, (c) the 2023 review of ITC working parties’ mandates, (d) a revised ECE Road Safety Action Plan for 2023-2030 (ECE/TRANS/2023/7), (e) the extension of the mandate of the Group of Experts on AETR, and (f) the emergence of electric vehicle charging infrastructure (ECE/TRANS/2023/23). All of the ITC decisions (ECE/TRANS/328) relevant to SC.1 were contained in Informal document No. 7.

55. The ITC secretariat presented the draft ITC strategy on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from inland transport. The Working Party appreciated the presentation and endorsed the suggestions made by the Chair and Vice-Chair (Poland) contained in Informal document No. 9 as the initial contribution by the Working Party on the matter. SC.1 also agreed to include a new item 4(a)(iii) “SC.1 contribution to the ITC Strategy on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from inland transport” on its agenda from its next session.

56. On the matter of the implementation of ITC Strategy until 2030, SC.1 discussed Informal document No. 6 and requested that the information contained therein, and updated for the discussions at this session, be provided to the ITC secretariat.

57. On the matter of the 2023 review of the mandates of ITC working parties, SC.1 discussed, made changes and endorsed ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/9, and thanked the secretariat for facilitating the discussion with the preparation of the document. The Working Party also asked that the document as revised be provided to the ITC secretariat.

58. On the matter of the draft ECE Road Safety Action Plan for 2023-2030, SC.1 discussed, made changes and endorsed ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2023/8, and requested that this information be provided to the ITC secretariat.

59. On the matter of the request by ITC to SC.1 (per ECE/TRANS/2023/23) to consider and make proposals on road transport developments in view of the electrification of light-duty vehicles (LDVs) and heavy-duty vehicles (HDVs) and how best to arrange the development of charging infrastructure, the secretariat organized a workshop with presentations by the Secretaries of the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) and the Working Party on Pollution and Energy (GRPE) to facilitate discussion.

60. The WP.24 secretary presented on containerization and invited SC.1 to imagine what road freight might look like in the future. The GRPE secretary presented on the regulatory framework for electric vehicles, and the role of the energy provider/grid operator as being key to successful deployment. SC.1 appreciated the presentations and requested the secretariat to organize a half-day workshop at its next session with presentations from industry and government to further generate discussion and ideas on the contribution by SC.1

on this matter. Liechtenstein was invited to give a presentation on its relevant activities at the workshop.

61. At the last session, SC.1 requested the secretariat to prepare a presentation on the legal instruments under the purview of SC.1. This is related to Task 5.1 of the implementation of the ITC Strategy until 2030 (ECE/TRANS/2022/3) which referred to relevant working parties assessing and/or reviewing legal instruments under their purview.

62. SC.1 agreed to continue to monitor the eleven legal instruments under its purview which remain relevant in their current form. In addition, the Working Party agreed that there should be an ongoing assessment of the relevance of the five active legal instruments which are discussed at each session, and to undertake an assessment, from time to time, of the relevance of the four less active legal instruments and the two legal instruments yet to come into force.

## **2. Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics**

63. The Secretary of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) provided information on the establishment of a coordination committee co-facilitated by the ECE and Economic Cooperation Organization secretariats on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Teheran-Istanbul corridors to evaluate and prioritize transport infrastructure construction and renewal requirements for rolling stock and pool containers and identify missing infrastructure links. The committee will also promote the digitalization, harmonization and standardization of transport documents in use in the corridors. He also provided information of the establishment of a new e-mobility task force and invited SC.1 to consider collaboration.

64. SC.1 appreciated the presentation, indicated its willingness to collaborate with WP.5 on relevant initiatives, and invited the Secretary of WP.5 to provide an update at its next session.

## **3. Car Sharing and Car Pooling**

65. The secretariat updated SC.1 on the completion of this project which included a desktop analysis of car sharing and car pooling services globally, guidelines on the creation of such services based on the desktop analysis adjusted to the needs of Central Asian countries and target cities, and a subregional workshop. SC.1 thanked the secretariat for this presentation.

## **IX. Other Business (agenda item 8)**

66. Türkiye tabled and introduced Informal document No. 10 which contained a suggestion to establish an international intergovernmental road organization. Türkiye will submit further information on its proposal at the next session.

67. The European Union highlighted that they would need to study the proposal first. They expressed concerns that this would create duplications as the Terms of Reference of ITC have been approved by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 2022 recognizing its regional and global role in inland transport.

68. Ukraine informed SC.1 about the difficulties faced by drivers on the territory of Ukraine which have arisen as a result of the war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, and requested the secretariat to inform the countries participating in the AETR Agreement based on a letter to be received from Ukraine not to apply penalties for deviations from the norms of work and rest regimes to drivers on the territory of Ukraine until the end of martial law in Ukraine according to Article 2.2(f) of the AETR agreement. Latvia expressed support for the request of Ukraine.

## **X. Date of Next Session (agenda item 9)**

69. The Working Party was informed that its next session has been scheduled for 15 to 17 October 2024. The deadline for the submission of documents is 31 July 2024.



## **XI. Adoption of the Report (agenda item 10)**

70. The Working Party adopted the report of this session.

## Annex

### **Amendment proposal to Annex I to the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR)**

The Government of Türkiye has proposed to amend Annex I to the AGR Agreement as follows:

**E 80:** Lisboa - Santarem - Leiria - Coimbra - Aveiro (Albergaria) - Viseu - Guarda - Vilar - Formoso - Salamanca - Burgos - San Sebastián - Pau - Toulouse - Narbonne - Nîmes - Aix-en-Provence - Nice - Veintimiglia - Savona - Genova - La Spezia - Migliarino - Livorno - Grosseto - Civitavecchia - Roma - Pescara ... Dubrovnik - Petrovac - Podgorica - - Priština - Niš - Dimitrovgrad - Sofia - Plovdiv - Svilengrad - Kapıkule Border Gate – Edirne – Babaeski – Silivri – İstanbul – İzmit – Adapazari – Bolu – Gerede – Ilgaz – Amasya – Niksar – Refahiye – Erzincan – Aşkale – Erzurum – Ağrı - Gürbulak Border Gate – Iran (Islamic Republic of)

**E 90:** Lisboa - Montijo - Setúbal - Evora - Caia - Badajoz - Madrid - Zaragoza - Lérida - Barcelona ... Mazara del Vallo - Alcamo - Palermo - Buonfornello Messina ... Reggio di Calabria - Catanzaro - Crotona - Sibari - Metaponto - Taranto - Brindisi ... Igoumenitsa - Ioannina - Kozani - Thessaloniki - Alexandroupoli - İpsala Border Gate – Keşan – Gelibolu – Lapseki – Bursa – Eskişehir – Sivrihisar – Ankara – Niğde – Adana -Toprakkale – Gaziantep – Şanlıurfa – Nusaybin – Cizre - Habur Border Gate - Iraq

**E 87:** Odessa - Izmail - Reni - Galati - Tulcea - Constanta - Varna - Burgas - Marinka - Zvezdec - Malko Tarnovo - Dereköy (Border Gate) – Kırklareli – Babaeski -Havsa – Keşan – Gelibolu - 1915 Çanakkale Bridge – Çanakkale – Ayvalık – İzmir – Selçuk – Aydın – Denizli – Acıpayam – Korkuteli -Antalya

SC.1 adopted this amendment proposal as per Article 8 of the AGR Agreement.

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