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Working Party on Rail Transport

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Item 21 (b) of the provisional agenda

Draft programme of work, biennial evaluation and draft work plan

Draft work plan for 2016–2020

Note by the secretariat

I. Mandate

1. As requested by the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) Bureau at its sixth meeting on 20 June 2011, the Working Party on Rail Transport should review and approve its traditional 4-year work plan for 2016–2020, the mandatory programme of work for 2016–2017 and the biennial evaluation (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2015/7).
2. The secretariat has reproduced below the 4-year work plan as adopted by the Working Party at its sixty-fifth session (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2013/9 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/220, paras. 88–89) and approved with amendments by ITC on 27 February 2014 (ECE/TRANS/240, para. 105 and annex IV, ECE/TRANS/2014/26) indicating also proposed deletions, modifications and additions, as appropriate.
3. The Working Party may wish to review its work plan for 2016–2020 for adoption and transmission to ITC.

II. Work plan for 2016–2020

Programme activity 02.5: Rail Transport¹

02.5.1 Rail transport infrastructure *Priority: 1*

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

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

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

Continuing activities

(a) Consideration of the AGC Agreement with a view to possibly implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters; also taking into account new east-west traffic flows; raising environmental, energy and safety standards; taking into account the UNECE Conventions on the Environment. *Priority: 1*

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

(b) Review the coherence between the AGC parameters and infrastructure standards established by competent authorities of the European Union (EU) and consider the feasibility of harmonizing them over the longer term. *Priority: 2*

Output expected: A report on the coherence of the AGC and EU rail infrastructure standards (20145).

B. Studies in railway infrastructure

Description: Study of the railway investment projects and their management.

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

Continuing activities

(a) Consideration of railway infrastructure investment and financing techniques, especially (Public Private Partnerships) (PPP) models. *Priority: 2*

Output expected: Report on investment in rail infrastructure ~~and railway rolling stock~~ in member countries **and on good and/or innovative practices on financing rail infrastructure.** (20145).

(b) Biannual review of railway reforms in the UNECE region, aiming to optimize the provision and use of rail infrastructure. *Priority: 1*

Output expected: Reports on the progress of railway reforms in the UNECE region (20145, 20167).

(c) Consideration of questions concerning security **and safety** in international railway transport.

Priority: 2

¹ Text struck through refers to text proposed for deletion; text in bold characters indicates newly proposed text.

Output expected: **Development and maintenance of the International Observatory on Rail Security (online tool)**. Review of the current situation **on rail safety** and prospects for the development of new recommendations. (20145).

(d) Participation in or monitoring of different rail projects and initiatives that will take place along Euro-Asian transport corridors. *Priority: 2*

Output expected: Report or publication on current and new initiatives (20145, 20156).

Activities of a limited duration

(e) Biannual survey on passenger and goods traffic on the AGC network in order to provide support for transport planning; the next survey is to be based on data for 20134.

Priority: 2

Output expected: Rail census in 20135.

C. Special project: Trans-European Railway

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

Work to be undertaken:

Continuing activities

(a) Report on specific project developments to promote international rail traffic and especially the development of high-speed trains. *Priority: 1*

Output expected: Annual progress report on activities carried out within the TER project.

(b) Consideration of possible utilization of the results achieved under the project in other UNECE activities in the field of rail infrastructure, including the implementation of European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) and Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) in order to benefit from mutual experiences. *Priority: 2*

Output expected: Annual progress report.

D. Interregional Cooperation

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

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

Priority: 3

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 passengers by rail so as to establish a standard legal system.

(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.

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

Continuing activities

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

Priority: 1

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

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

Priority: 1

Output expected: Guidance report to facilitate application of Annex 9 on rail transport of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982) (20145).

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

Priority: 2

Output expected: Monitoring of new developments by the secretariat and report to the Working Party, as required.

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

Priority: 1

Output expected: Report on safety and security and implementation of risk assessment techniques in rail transport in the UNECE region. (20145, 20156).

Activities of a limited duration

(f) Analysis of the various elements of railway productivity growth, in particular in freight transport. *Priority: 2*

Output expected: Biannual report on the development of railway productivity in member countries. (2014~~6~~).
