



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
2 April 2020

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Transport Statistics

Seventy-first session

Geneva, 17-19 June 2020

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

Traffic censuses in the ECE region

Reminder on the E-Road and E-Rail Traffic Censuses

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. At its seventieth session the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) adopted ECE/TRANS/WP.6/2019/11 which was a minor update to the recommendations to Governments on the 2020 E-Road traffic census (itself based on ECE/TRANS/WP.6/2018/11, which was adopted as a resolution of the Inland Transport Committee at its session in February 2019). At its sixty-ninth session the Working Party also adopted ECE/TRANS/WP.6/2018/8, setting out recommendations to Governments on the 2020 E-Rail census.

2. Following the last session, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe sent out letters to all concerned member States in June 2019, informing them of Inland Transport Committee resolutions 266 and 267 (ECE/TRANS/288, Annex IV) which invited Governments to conduct both censuses, and encouraging them to participate. This document is a reminder to WP.6 delegates of the need to conduct these censuses in 2020, and also aims to highlight the value of the censuses, and traffic monitoring in general, as a tool for measuring short term economic impacts.

II. Current importance of the census

3. The E-Road traffic census allows an assessment of traffic volumes, measured in Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT), on specific corridors (namely roads that are covered by the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR)). The E-Rail traffic census performs a similar function, measuring trains per year on specific segments of the network covered by the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines

(AGC). Both of these tools are useful geospatial complements to transport statistics on a national level, which allow mapping of traffic volumes thus taking into account population centres, important commercial locations and international borders.

4. While the censuses collect these data on an annualised basis, knowing how these traffic volumes change on a monthly (or even daily) basis is obviously a very useful way to track the impacts on transport systems of economic, social and seasonal changes across a country or countries. The census already does this to a certain extent, asking for peak holiday traffic (typically during July and August weekends for many European countries). At the time of writing, the COVID-19 virus has had a significant impact on all aspects of daily life (commuting, education and shopping) in many ECE countries, which has had a noticeable effect on traffic volumes in affected areas. Traffic monitoring in the style of the census is a useful way to quantify the impacts to commerce and personal travel habits.

III. Conclusions

5. Member States are once again encouraged to complete both the E-Road and E-Rail censuses, and transmit them to the secretariat by the agreed deadlines. In addition, delegates may wish to share views on how traffic monitoring on a more frequent basis can be used as an analytical tool for tracking transport volumes more generally, especially within the context of the COVID-19 virus lockdowns.
