
Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)

12th Session
13-14 March 2007
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

**Accession to and implementation of international conventions
recommended by the Group**

(Item 4 a(iii) of the agenda)

Note by UNECE

1. At the 11th session the Working Group welcomed progress in the accession by SPECA countries to international transport agreements and conventions. The Group also made the following recommendations.

(a) SPECA countries, which have not yet acceded to all international conventions reflected in the UNESCAP Resolution 48/11, were requested to consider undertaking all necessary national steps to become Contracting Parties to those conventions by November 2006.

(b) Noting the importance for SPECA countries of other international Agreements and Conventions in the field of transport developed under the auspices of the UNECE, particularly those indicated in the Protocol of the second session of PWG-TBC, the Working Group recommended to SPECA countries to consider undertaking all necessary steps to become Contracting Parties and to UNESCAP to consider the possibility of some other international conventions to be included in the enlarged scope of Resolution 48/11.

(c) The Group also stressed the need for the UNECE and UNESCAP technical assistance related to the accession to and implementation of the International Conventions to which SPECA countries have not yet acceded.

2. Since the 11th session, accessions to UNECE international transport conventions in the SPECA region increased further as a result of two ratifications by Kyrgyzstan in August 2006 (Convention on Road Traffic, 1968, and Convention on Road Signs and Signals, 1968) and one ratification by Azerbaijan (Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), 1956) in September 2006. These three are among the group of seven conventions recommended by the UNESCAP Resolution 48/11. The accession status to the seven conventions recommended by Resolution 48/11 remains uneven (see Table 1). To date, only one SPECA country (Uzbekistan) acceded to all seven conventions while three SPECA countries acceded to six (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan). The scope of the Resolution 48/11 has not changed since the 11th session of the Working Group. However, the UNESCAP secretariat is undertaking a study on the implementation of Resolution 48/11 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures and the possible inclusion of additional conventions, as mandated by the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Busan, Republic of Korea in November 2006

3. The accession status pertaining to the remaining nine conventions indicated in the Protocol of the second session of PWG-TBC has remained unchanged over the last year. Kazakhstan acceded to five of these conventions, Azerbaijan to four, Uzbekistan to two, Turkmenistan to one, and Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan ratified none of them.

4. Although the majority of SPECA countries have accepted the most important UNECE road safety and transport facilitation conventions (see Table 1), the available data indicate that relatively high levels of traffic fatalities¹ and significant border-crossing delays persist throughout the region.² While no country has achieved perfect road safety and border-crossing records, the experience available from the SECI region and some EECCA countries suggests that the effectiveness of implementation of these transport conventions might improve with a more active involvement of the business sector than hitherto.³

5. Over the last year a number of SPECA countries received technical assistance related to the accession and implementation of the conventions mentioned above. This assistance was provided in the following national and international workshops. Joint UNECE-UNESCAP national workshops on the facilitation of international transport along Euro-Asian transport links took place in Baku, Azerbaijan and Tbilisi, Georgia (May 2006)⁴ and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (December 2006). A high-level UNECE-UNESCAP-Eurasian Economic Community conference on trade facilitation, followed by a joint OSCE-UNECE Seminar on Harmonization of Border and Customs Controls, took place in Moscow, Russian Federation (October 2006), and provided training on the implementation of the 1982 Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods for participants from a number of East European and SPECA countries. Further, UNECE facilitated, through the EU-funded project, the participation of delegates from five SPECA countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) in meetings of the Inland Transport Committee and some of its subsidiary bodies.⁵ This has provided experts from these countries with a possibility to participate in the decision-making process of the Inland Transport Committee and some of its subsidiary bodies (for more details, see document 4 c(iii)). In addition, UNESCAP has organized technical assistance workshops/advisory services on trade and transport facilitation including international transport conventions in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and Dushanbe, Tajikistan (May 2006) and Astana, Kazakhstan (July 2006).

6. In conclusion, the implementation of the PWG recommendations mentioned above can be summarized as follows. The first recommendation has been partly implemented by two SPECA countries. The second recommendation has not been implemented. The third recommendation has been implemented by both regional commissions. Technical assistance can lead to harmonization of legal regimes and integration in emerging market economies of the SPECA region while supporting national efforts in this area.

¹ For details, see the UNECE statistics on road traffic accidents at www.unece.org/trans/main/wp6/transstatpub.html.

² The forthcoming UNECE-UNESCAP in-house study confirms that long border delays and other non-physical obstacles remain the main barrier to the dynamic development of Euro-Asian land transport routes.

³ For instance, the public-private road safety partnership on the Sakhalin Island in the Russian Federation illustrates non-negligible advantages of the business sector participation. See www.grsroadsafety.org/?pageid=321.

⁴ For details see www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl/1stNatlWrkshp.html.

⁵ See document SPECA/PWG-TBC/(12)/11.

7. The recent extension of the first phase of the Interregional Transport Linkages project⁶ until the end of 2007 permits the organization of national workshops in Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan that could provide technical assistance pertaining to the accession to and implementation of the major international transport conventions mentioned above. The availability of technical assistance funds next year would depend largely on the outcome of the efforts to ensure funding for the implementation of a Phase II of the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Euro-Asian Transport Linkages project and the UNECE-EU Pilot project (see agenda item 4 c(iii)).

Issues for consideration

8. The Project Working Group may wish to consider the following recommendations to improve the acceptance and implementation of the key UNECE transport conventions in the SPECA region.

- a) Reaffirm the importance of the 16 international transport conventions indicated in the protocol of its second session and invite SPECA countries to intensify their efforts to accede to all of them as soon as possible.
- b) Noting that accession to the international legal instruments would only serve transport facilitation if followed by proper implementation/enforcement conduct, regular consultations and effective cooperation of national authorities with representatives of the private business sector are encouraged in order to identify the most urgent implementation issues and most efficient ways to resolve them.
- c) Acknowledge the technical assistance received from regional commissions and ask them to persist in their fund-raising efforts to continue the flow of advisory activities through national workshops and international conferences.

⁶ This project, entitled "Capacity Building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages," has been financed by the UN Development Account and implemented by all five UN regional commissions (ECE, ESCAP, ECLAC, ECA and ESCWA).

Table 1

**Accession Status to the UNECE International Agreements and Conventions indicated in the
Protocol of the second session of the PWG-TBC**

Status at 23 January 2007

№	UNECE International Agreements and Conventions	AFG	AZE	KAZ	KGZ	TJK	TKM	UZB
1	Road Traffic (1968)*		x	x	x	x	x	x
2	Road Signs and Signals (1968)*			x	x	x	x	x
3	Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR, 1956)*		x	x	x	x	x	x
4	Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)*	x	x		x			x
5	International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (1975)*	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
6	Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982)*		x	x	x			x
7	Containers (1972)*		x	x				x
8	Supplementary Agreement on Road Traffic (1971)							
9	Supplementary Agreement on Road Signs and Signals (1971)							
10	Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Traffic (AETR, 1970)		x	x			x	x
11	Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954)							
12	International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR, 1957)		x	x				
13	International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs (ATP, 1970)		x	x				x
14	Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR, 1975)		x	x				
15	Main International Railway Lines (AGC, 1985)							
16	Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC, 1991)			x				

Notes:

- * Conventions recommended by UNESCAP Resolution 48/11
- x Final signature, ratification, accession (47 in 2007, 44 in 2006)