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Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics
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EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS

Organization of demonstration trains

Note by the secretariat

In the context of the item on Euro-Asian transport links and the related joint ECE/ESCAP programme of work on Euro-Asian land transport the Working Party, at its thirteenth session, also discussed the question of demonstration runs of block trains. In order to demonstrate block trains ability to compete with sea routes it agreed to organize demonstration runs along the following two routes:

- (i) Europe (Pan-European transport corridor No.2 (PETrC No.2))-Russian Federation-Korean Peninsula/Japan, with two branches from the Russian Federation to
 - Kazakhstan-China and
 - Mongolia-China.
- (ii) South-eastern Europe (Pan-European transport corridor No.4 (PETrC No.4))-Turkey-Islamic Republic of Iran-South Asia - Southeast Asia/Southern China.

While for the first route Russia is the responsible lead country, Turkey has the responsibility for the second route (TRANS/WP.5/28, paras.31-33).

In the following a succinct note is reproduced outlining the activities which have been undertaken, thus far, by the Turkish State Railways in respect of the demonstration train project between Istanbul and Almaty:

The preparatory steps which have been carried out, so far, in respect of the demonstration train project are as outlined below.

The main objective is to develop modern, fast and reliable railway transport allowing the movement of rail freight without any stops at the border. With this objective in mind, we are establishing short, medium or long term plans and activities in order to promote international rail traffic.

Under the auspices of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), it is expected that the development of railway freight traffic among ECO countries will enable an increase of the volume in trade and contribute thereby to a further strengthening of trade and economic relations among the countries concerned.

In view of this aim, we fully support the proposed demonstration train which is scheduled to run from Istanbul to Almaty. In the framework of this project the Turkish State Railways (TCDD) participated in all meetings held to date and contributed to (i) solving organizational, technical, legal and financial problems of the preparatory phase, (ii) the preparation of a "preliminary traffic schedule" as well as (iii) the identification of bottlenecks and problems on the route envisaged for the demonstration train.

Simultaneously, the experts of the competent Working Group agreed upon a number of activities foreseen to attract cargo to the rail mode on the envisaged route and elaborated rules and requirements for operators involved in the transport of containers.

Furthermore, the Working Group also dealt with the establishment of a common and flexible rail tariff policy.

During its last meeting, held in Almaty (3-4 May 2001), the question of an extension of the existing schedule of the demonstration train (from Akaltyn to Istanbul) and aspects related to ferry transportation have been addressed. The next meeting of the Working Group is scheduled to take place in Van (Turkey).

In view of Turkey's unique geographical situation representing the bridge between Europe and Asia Turkish transport operators have an increasingly important role to play. Thus, we are ready to assume this function and will ensure a proper forwarding of the goods from the European corridors to the Asian freight corridors.
