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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport
(20 April 2001)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRTY-FIFTH SESSION

**to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 09.30 hours on Friday, 20 April 2001^{*/}**

^{*/} In accordance with paragraph 2 of articles 14, 15 and 16 of the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC), any amendment proposed by a Contracting Party to the Agreement shall be considered by the ECE Working Party on Combined Transport. Therefore, agenda item 5 (b) will be considered and amendment proposals adopted in accordance with paragraph 3 of articles 14, 15 and 16 of the AGTC Agreement.

For reasons of economy, delegates are requested to bring copies of the documents mentioned in this provisional agenda to the meeting. There will be no documentation available in the meeting room. Before the meeting, missing documents may be obtained directly from the ECE Transport Division (Fax: +41-22-917-0039; e-mail (poul.hansen@unece.org). Documents may also be downloaded from the Internet web site of the UN/ECE Transport Division (www.unece.org/trans). During the meeting, documents may be obtained from the UNOG Documents Distribution Section (Room C.111, 1st floor, Palais des Nations).

In accordance with the accreditation procedures applicable for all meetings held at the Palais des Nations, delegates are requested to fill-in the attached registration form (also available from the web site of the UN/ECE Transport Division (www.unece.org)) and to transmit the duly filled-in form at the latest one week before the session to the UN/ECE Transport Division, either by fax (+41-22-917-0039) or by e-mail (poul.hansen@unece.org). In Geneva, prior to the session, delegates are requested to present themselves at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at Villa Les Feuillantines, 13 Avenue de la Paix (see attached map), for issuance of an identification badge. In case of difficulties, please phone the UN/ECE secretariat (Int. 73258).

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1. Adoption of the agenda TRANS/WP.24/90
2. Election of officers
3. Activities of UN/ECE bodies and other organizations of interest to the Working Party
 - (a) Subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) (www.unece.org)
 - (b) European Commission (EC)
 - (c) European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)
 - (d) Other organizations
4. Follow-up to the 1997 Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment TRANS/2001/9
TE/AC.1/2001/1
5. European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC)
 - (a) Status of the AGTC Agreement
 - (b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement C.N.983.2000.Treaties-2
C.N.18.2001.Treaties-1
6. Inventory of existing AGTC standards and parameters
7. Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC)
8. The role of railways in the promotion of combined transport TRANS/WP.24/2001/1
TRANS/WP.24/2001/2
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9. Terminology in combined transport
10. New developments in the field of combined transport in UN/ECE member countries

11. Possibilities for reconciliation and harmonization of civil liability regimes governing combined transport

12. Other business. Date of next session

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item to be considered is the adoption of the agenda (TRANS/WP.24/90).

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure and established practice, the Working Party will elect a Chairperson for its sessions in 2001.

3. ACTIVITIES OF UN/ECE BODIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

(a) Subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC)

The Working Party will be informed by the secretariat of the results of the sixty-third session of the Inland Transport Committee (14-15 February 2001) as it relates to matters of interest for the Working Party. Furthermore the Working Party will be informed of the activities of subsidiary bodies of the ITC, such as the Working Parties on Road Transport (SC.1), on Rail Transport (SC.2) and on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) as well as the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), as far as they relate to combined transport matters.

Detailed information on the activities of the UN/ECE and its subsidiary bodies, including the Working Party on Combined Transport (WP.24) is available on the UN/ECE Transport Division web site (www.unece.org/trans/).

(b) European Commission (EC)

The Working Party may wish to be informed of the latest activities of the EC in the field of combined transport.

(c) European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)

The Working Party may wish to be informed about recent activities undertaken by the ECMT Combined Transport Group.

(d) Other organizations

The Working Party may wish to be informed of current and planned activities in combined transport of other international organizations.

4. FOLLOW-UP TO THE 1997 REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Working Party may wish to recall the outcome of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment held in Vienna from 12 to 14 November 1997. In particular, the Conference had adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Joint Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./2/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL). The Working Party may also wish to recall that it had prepared earlier two background documents for the Conference on the promotion of combined transport to foster a sustainable transport policy in Europe (TRANS/WP.24/R.85/Rev.1; TRANS/WP.24/R.80/Rev.1).

The Working Party will be informed of the follow-up activities undertaken by UN/ECE member countries, and concerned international organizations and the UN/ECE secretariat in the implementation of the above Programme of Joint Action (POJA). In particular, the Working Party may wish to note the results of a Meeting of the Joint Ad Hoc Experts on Transport and Environment that will take place in Geneva on 26 and 27 February 2001.

An overview of the activities of the subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee in implementing the POJA is contained in secretariat document TRANS/2001/9 prepared for the sixty-third session of the ITC.

The Working Party may also wish to be informed about the follow-up activities undertaken jointly by UN/ECE and the World Health Organization (WHO) on the implementation of the so-called London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health.

A report containing an overview of instruments relevant for transport, environment and health as well as recommendations for further actions, prepared by UN/ECE and the WHO secretariats, is contained in document TE/AC.1/2001/1.

5. EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC)

(a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

As of 1 January 2001 the following 23 countries are Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia, Switzerland and Turkey. The following countries have signed the AGTC Agreement, but have not yet become Contracting Parties to it: Finland and Poland. The Governments of the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine are considering accession to the Agreement.

Up-to-date information on the status of the AGTC Agreement as well as of other United Nations treaties developed and/or administered by the UN/ECE may be obtained from the web site of the UN/ECE Transport Division (www.unece.org/trans - Legal instruments).

The Working Party may wish to be informed by delegations about the intention of ECE member countries to accede to the AGTC Agreement and may wish to invite in particular, Finland, Poland, the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine to undertake all necessary steps with a view to becoming Contracting Parties to the Agreement as soon as possible.

(b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement

The Working Party may wish to note that, the amendment proposals to Annexes I and II to the AGTC Agreement adopted by the Working Party at its thirty-second session (6-8 September 1999) have come into force on 1 February 2001 (Depository Notification C.N.983.2000.TREATIES-2).

The amendment proposals adopted by the Working Party at its thirty-fourth session (6-8 September 2000) also relating to Annexes I and II to the AGTC Agreement have been transmitted to the legal office of the United Nations in New York and have been transmitted for review to all Contracting Parties on 17 January 2001 (Depository Notification C.N.18.2001.TREATIES-1).

6. INVENTORY OF EXISTING AGTC STANDARDS AND PARAMETERS

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its thirty-fourth session (6-8 September 2000), it took note of the publication of the so-called "Yellow Book", an inventory of existing AGTC and AGC standards and parameters covering the year 1997.

As requested by the Working Party, the secretariat has translated the short analysis on the implementation of the AGTC and AGC standards and parameters as contained in the “Yellow Book” into French and Russian (TRANS/WP.24/2000/5).

7. PROTOCOL ON COMBINED TRANSPORT ON INLAND WATERWAYS TO THE EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC)

The Working Party may wish to recall that, on the occasion of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 12-14 November 1997), the Protocol to the AGTC Agreement has been signed by the following 12 UN/ECE member countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland. Subsequently, the Protocol has been signed by Slovakia on 29 June 1998 and Bulgaria on 28 October 1998.

As of 1 January 2001, the Protocol has the following five Contracting Parties: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Romania and Switzerland. It will come into force following ratification by at least five States that are linked, in a continuous manner, by the waterways identified in the Protocol.

Amendment proposals submitted to the Working Party at its twenty-ninth session by France, Hungary and Romania (Informal document No. 1 (1998); TRANS/WP.24/79, para. 20) as well as amendment proposals transmitted by the Government of Bulgaria to the secretariat may be considered by the Working Party as soon as the Protocol enters into force.

The final text of the Protocol to the AGTC Agreement (in English, French and Russian) is contained in document ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1 (F) and Corr.2 (R). Up-to-date information on the status and the text of the Protocol may be obtained via the Internet from the web site of UN/ECE Transport Division (www.unece.org/trans/).

The Working Party may wish to encourage all concerned Contracting Parties to the Agreement to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible in order that the Protocol will come into force and the above amendment proposals can be considered.

8. THE ROLE OF RAILWAYS IN THE PROMOTION OF COMBINED TRANSPORT

In line with its mandate, the Working Party may wish to continue its exchange of views on the contribution of railways, acting increasingly as commercial enterprises, in the promotion of competitive combined transport services.

The Working Party may wish to have a preliminary exchange of views on the result of the Joint Meeting of WP.24 and the UN/ECE Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) that will take place on 19 April 2001. In particular, the Working Party should focus the attention on any follow-up action that might be justified as a result of the meeting. In particular, the Working Party may wish to consider the note containing a checklist identifying border-crossing problems in combined transport that has been prepared by the Chairman and the secretariat (TRANS/WP.24/2001/3).

The provisional agenda for the Joint Meeting on Combined Transport and Rail Transport is contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2001/1. Relevant documentation for this meeting is contained in the following documents: TRANS/WP.24/2001/2, TRANS/WP.24/2001/3, TRANS/WP.24/2001/4, TRANS/WP.24/2001/5.

9. TERMINOLOGY IN COMBINED TRANSPORT

An inter secretariat working group composed of representatives of the European Commission (EC), the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the UN/ECE secretariat has prepared a glossary of terms used in combined transport (TRANS/WP.24/2000/1). All the definitions referring specifically to the geographical framework of Europe may also be applied in other regions of the world. The purpose of this glossary is to determine the meaning of the terms in current use and to make them easier to understand by the increasing number of people who use them.

The glossary will be made available for the session. The glossary is also available on the UN/ECE Transport Division web site (www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/wp24/documents/wp24-00-1).

10. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF COMBINED TRANSPORT IN UN/ECE MEMBER COUNTRIES

The Working Party may wish to continue its exchange of information on this subject. Delegations are expected to report orally on recent operating experiences, on new and planned administrative procedures and on new technologies with regard to combined transport in their countries or organizations. Audio-visual aids, as well as written material, would be welcomed and could be distributed by the secretariat if received in time before the session.

11. POSSIBILITIES FOR RECONCILIATION AND HARMONIZATION OF CIVIL LIABILITY REGIMES GOVERNING COMBINED TRANSPORT

The Working Party may wish to recall that its programme of work contains as a priority item, the “... analysis of possibilities for reconciliation and harmonization of civil liability regimes governing combined transport operations.” Following a request by the Inland Transport Committee to investigate existing difficulties for combined transport operations (ECE/TRANS/128, para. 86), the Working Party decided to further consider possible difficulties arising from differences in modal liability regimes and/or gaps in full coverage during combined transport operations (TRANS/WP.24/1999/1).

Following the recommendations of a small working group (TRANS/WP.24/1999/2), the Working Party requested the secretariat to initiate an informal consultative process with participation by government representatives and representatives of the interested intergovernmental organizations as well as international organizations representing the interests of transport industry, insurance and shippers as well as private companies. The results of the two hearings organized by the secretariat are contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2000/3.

The consultation showed that, in particular, maritime shipowners’ interests (including relevant insurance groups) as well as freight forwarders were not in favour of modifications in the existing non-harmonized private law arrangements on civil liability regimes and were not supportive of new mandatory legal regimes. Land transport interests, on the other hand, generally were in favour of unification or at least harmonization of existing mandatory public law regimes, including the preparation of a complementary legal regime.

The Working Party will be informed in detail about the outcome of the discussions of the Inland Transport Committee concerning this issue, which is expected to provide guidance for the Working Party on further activities in this field.

The Working Party will also be informed about other initiatives in the field of cargo liability including a study undertaken by the Comité Maritime International (CMI) on the possibilities for a new maritime/intermodal cargo liability instrument and in the same context about the hearing organized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on Cargo Liability that took place on 25 and 26 January 2001.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

Date of next session

The Working Party may wish to decide on the date for its next session. The secretariat has tentatively made arrangements to convene the thirty-sixth session of the Working Party from 3 to 5 September 2001.



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