



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

TRANS/WP.24/2002/10  
22 August 2002

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

---

**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Combined Transport  
(Thirty-eighth session, 7-9 October 2002  
agenda item 3 (b))

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

**Proposed amendments to AGCT submitted by the Russian Federation**

Note: The Secretariat reproduces below the document submitted by the Russian Federation.

\* \* \*

## **ELABORATION OF A EURO-ASIAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES**

### **Proposals submitted by the Russian Federation to the Economic Commission for Europe Inland Transport Committee Working Party on Combined Transport (WP.24)**

Having regard to the completion of the European combined transport network and its connection with Asian transport lines,

Noting that the growth of Euro-Asian transport links is a perceptible trend occasioned by the globalization of the world economy and the priority development of foreign trade,

Bearing in mind that, at the informal meeting of experts from the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and, subsequently, at the second International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport, held in St. Petersburg in September 2000, the main transport corridors linking the European and Asian continents were defined,

Attaching particular importance to ensuring conformity and applying internationally approved standards on the agreed routes with a view to enhancing the compatibility of European and Asian transport networks, and railway networks in particular,

Wishing to extend the benefits provided by the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGCT), signed in Geneva on 1 February 1991, to Euro-Asian transport services,

Recognizing the need to create a unified technical, technological, legislative and regulatory framework for combined transport lines throughout the Euro-Asian continent,

The Russian Federation submits to the ECE Inland Transport Committee and its special body, the Working Party on Combined Transport, its proposal for the elaboration of a Euro-Asian agreement on important international combined transport lines, which will make possible the creation of an all-inclusive system of transport links between Europe and Asia.

The said agreement must be elaborated jointly by ECE, ESCAP, OSZhd, UIC, IRU and other relevant international organizations. The Russian Federation stands ready to participate in the elaboration process and also to submit a comparable initiative at the next meeting of the ESCAP Committee on Transport, Communications, Tourism and Infrastructure Development.

### **1. Brief background**

The swift development of combined transport lines in Europe and in the world as a whole over the last few decades has created the need to set in place multilateral or international regulations in the form of a legislative and regulatory framework which would shape the coordinated development of the necessary infrastructure and technology to ensure that these combined transport lines are operated on the basis of agreed international parameters and standards.

The need to develop Euro-Asian transport links has become particularly pronounced in the last few years. The issue of the development of such links has been raised at many international conferences, including:

- On 1 February 1991, in Geneva, the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) was signed, providing a basis for the development of combined transport lines in Europe;
- At the first ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure, held in New Delhi in October 1996, the New Delhi Declaration on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific was adopted and work launched on the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, comprising 64 projects, including a project on the development of multimodal transport links, the implementation of which will involve the participation of, among other countries, the Russian Federation. In addition, ESCAP adopted its resolutions 48/11, on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures, and 52/9, on intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges;
- On 5 August 1997, the OSZhD Agreement on Organizational and Operational Aspects of Combined Transport Services between Europe and Asia, signed by 13 countries in both continents, entered into force. The Agreement lists the railway lines, the terminals and their associated operational and technical requirements. Work has been concluded on the development and coordination of a network of railway lines linking ports situated on the shores of the Baltic and Black seas. A joint ESCAP-OSZhD project on the organization of container block-trains on agreed routes is currently being prepared;
- To give effect to the initiatives adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its sixty-second session, on 16 May 2000 a meeting of experts was held in Geneva on the development of Euro-Asian transport links, with the participation of representatives of ECE, ESCAP, the Commission of the European Communities, IUC, OSZhD, Russia and Germany. Following consultations, provisional agreement was reached on five major Euro-Asian transport links;
- At the second International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport, held in St. Petersburg on 12 and 13 September 2000, final agreement was reached on four main Euro-Asian transport corridors.

At all the above meetings, the development of Euro-Asian links and combined transport services was viewed as a key element in the implementation of economic development strategies, the fostering of international trade and the creation of a robust land communications system interlinking the Euro-Asian continent.

In the view of the Russian Federation, elaboration of a Euro-Asian agreement on important international combined transport lines will generate additional benefits for the users of this emerging transport system.

## **2. Goals of the Euro-Asian agreement on important international combined transport lines**

The primary long-term goal of the proposed Euro-Asian agreement is the efficient integration of the transport systems of Asia and Europe, which, in turn, will help boost volumes of international trade, cut delivery times and ensure the safety of goods and, ultimately, reduce customers' costs on the Euro-Asian continent.

To attain this goal, the Euro-Asian agreement must include clearly formulated requirements for the Euro-Asian combined transport lines, criteria for the identification of important lines and performance parameters. The agreement is designed to coordinate European and Asian performance parameters, to harmonize the technical and technological requirements for trains used in combined transport operations and to standardize transport and auxiliary infrastructure facilities, such as frontier stations, ferry links, ports, border-crossing points, etc.

## **3. System of railway lines of importance to Euro-Asian international combined transport services**

The primary Euro-Asian transport corridors, which were identified at the informal meetings of experts and at the second International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport, held in St. Petersburg, may be taken as the basis for the development of a transport network for Euro-Asian combined transport services. The following Euro-Asian corridors run across the Russian Federation and partially coincide with lines of the AGTC network, which could also be included in the proposed agreement:

- “Transsib” Euro-Asian international transport corridor (continuation of line C-E-20 from Ekaterinburg to Nakhodka and Lianyungang, passing through the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and China);
- Northern corridor of the trans-Asian railway (China-Kazakhstan-Russia-Europe);
- “North-South” Euro-Asian transport corridor (continuation of line C-E-99 from Astrakhan, across the Caspian to its southern shore in Iran).

A special federal programme is currently under way in the Russian Federation to upgrade the Russian transport system over the period 2002-2010, with the aim of developing and improving the country's transport infrastructure, as well as its transport technology, including combined transport lines.

As part of the comprehensive Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID) project, the Russian Federation has conducted demonstration runs of container trains along the northern corridor of the trans-Asian railway.

The development of combined transport services in Russia is being promoted by a number of measures specifically designed to harness the benefits offered by combined transport lines by providing a better service for both consignors and consignees. Among these we might note in particular the development of new types of specialized railway rolling stock, such as

special high-speed wagons for the transport of containers. Work is also under way on the development of wagons with adjustable-gauge wheelsets for the transport of containers, road trains and piggyback semi-trailers, designed in such a way as significantly to reduce waiting time at border-crossing points where the track switches from narrow to wide gauge and vice versa. This will ensure that goods reach the consignee much more quickly.

Lift-on lift-off machines and equipment capable of handling 40-foot containers and piggyback semi-trailers are also being developed.

Work is being completed on the development and introduction of an automated system for tracking containers en route on Russian railways. The system will give rail transport customers prompt access to information about the location of containers and will also enable the railways to monitor compliance with delivery schedules more efficiently.

Efforts to improve the technology and the operation of intermodal container terminals are being conducted hand-in-hand with work to computerize the container depot management systems. By setting up a centralized database and a computerized system by which marine and rail transport companies can exchange essential information, it will be possible to eliminate bottlenecks in the transshipment process and, accordingly, to speed up the delivery of goods to the consignee.

Work is under way to harmonize the transport rules, transport documentation and other laws and regulations relating to combined transport services operated in the various Eastern and Western European countries which belong to different transport systems.

Given all these factors, the transport facilities of the Russian Federation could serve as the foundation for a basic network of Euro-Asian combined transport services. The elaboration and implementation of a Euro-Asian agreement on important international combined transport lines will help boost Euro-Asian economic growth and will also be conducive to the development of a sound transport policy.

-----