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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport
(Thirty-fourth session, 4-6 September 2000,
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**ACTIVITIES OF UN/ECE BODIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS
OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY**

Other organizations

**Transmitted by the Committee of the Organization
for Cooperation between Railways (OSZhD)**

**A. IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ORGANIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL RAIL
TRANSPORT VIA TRANSPORT CORRIDORS IN 1999**

1. With respect to OSZhD corridor No.1 a questionnaire was prepared on the parameters of the transport corridor. The information obtained will help to determine the economic benefits and competitiveness of the corridor and specify the technical equipment of railway sections for each country through which the corridor passes.
2. The Working Group on the Use of the Lianyungang-Alashankou (People's Republic of China)-Druzhba-Astana-Presnogorskaya (Kazakhstan)-Ekaterinburg-Moscow (Russia)-Minsk-Brest (Belarus)-Warsaw (Poland)-Berlin (Germany)-Western Europe (Northern Corridor of the Trans-Asian Railway) held its first meeting in September 1999 in Almaty (Republic of Kazakhstan).
3. For OSZhD corridors Nos. 3 and 5 a memorandum of understanding was signed in Astana in 1999.

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4. For OSZhD corridor No. 3 a memorandum was signed by all the parties concerned with this route.

5. For OSZhD corridor No. 5 a memorandum was signed by all of the parties except Azerbaijan and Georgia. We have requested these two OSZhD members to expedite the process of their signature of the memorandum.

6. The parties operating OSZhD transport corridors No. 3 and 5 which signed the memorandum of understanding decided to carry on work in future to finalize and implement a joint plan of action at the bilateral level.

7. Work on issues relating to the development and operation of the Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) transport corridor could not be fully completed in 1999 as a number of participants had not provided the lead executing agency with all the necessary information, in particular regarding interaction between rail and sea transport. The next meeting of experts is scheduled for 17-19 May 2000 in Odessa.

8. A draft final report for OSZhD corridor No. 13 (First Crete Corridor) was considered. The report is being prepared as a White Paper taking account of the additional information and comments received from participants in the drafting stage.

B. FORMULATION OF A COORDINATED OSZhD RAIL TRANSPORT POLICY

9. Documents and data are being gathered for a comprehensive study of issues relating to individual components of transport policy. This will include EU directives as well as laws of OSZhD member countries on transport policy, and proposals for the specification and simplification of rail transport corridors taking account of trans-European corridors and ESCAP projects. Existing and future goods and passenger flows will also be studied.

C. COMBINED TRANSPORT

10. Within the OSZhD framework there is the Agreement on Organizational and Operational Aspects of Combined Transport Services between Europe and Asia (TRANS/WP.24/1997/2), which entered into force on 5 August 1997.

11. During the twenty-fifth session of the OSZhD Ministerial Meeting the agreement was signed by the following members: Republic of Belarus, Republic of Hungary, People's Republic of China, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Republic of Poland, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Republic of Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Republic of Estonia. The Republic of Bulgaria, the Kyrgyz

Republic and the Republic of Latvia have acceded and become parties to the agreement. There are now 14 parties thereto.

12. During the twenty-seventh session of the OSZhD Ministerial Meeting (June 1999, Republic of Kazakhstan), the delegation of Kazakhstan expressed its wish to become a party to the agreement. Kazakhstan's accession is now the subject of inter-agency consultation.

13. As to combined transport, recommendations on technology enabling border stations to provide for the passage of combined transport trains on international routes have been agreed and issued in OSZhD leaflet R-201.

D. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WITHIN THE OSZhD FRAMEWORK

14. Concerning protection of the environment against the impact of rail transport, a set of organizational measures and technical solutions was prepared to deal with the environmental consequences of accidents during the transport of dangerous goods, as well as to improve operational checks on their carriage and temporary storage.

15. Recommendations on dealing with the environmental consequences of accidents during the transport of dangerous goods were adopted in March 2000 and issued in OSZhD leaflet R-003.

16. The safe transport of dangerous goods and the creation of conditions minimizing the risk of contamination of people and pollution of the environment have been and remain one of the main priorities of the OSZhD member countries' environmental specialists.

17. Work was undertaken and the interim results discussed in respect of the following matters:

- Assessment of the noise impact on the environment of rail transport;
- Electromagnetic radiation in rail transport.

18. A method of conducting inventories of sources of electromagnetic radiation was adopted in 1999 as part of this work.

19. This year OSZhD is beginning work on a new topic concerning the problems of eliminating waste associated with rail transport.

E. JOINT PROJECT WITH ESCAP FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTAINER TRANSPORT BY MAINLINE TRAINS FROM PACIFIC OCEAN PORTS TO EUROPE

20. A memorandum of understanding between OSZhD and ESCAP was signed in early 1999. The main areas of cooperation are:

- Coordination of the development of rail infrastructure over Asia-Europe land bridges;
- Development of container transport by mainline trains between Europe and Asia;
- Formulation of standards/requirements for effective and competitive international rail transport.

21. A meeting of the ESCAP group of experts was held at the intergovernmental level in February 2000 with the participation of an OSZhD representative to discuss the development of rail container transport by mainline trains between Asia and Europe via the Northern Corridor of the Trans-Asian Railway.

22. During consideration of the competitiveness of container transport by rail as compared with maritime transport, it was noted that aside from transport costs the decisive factors in the choice of mode of transport are the transit time and the level and quality of the services provided to customers.

23. To be competitive the railways must develop and offer to customers competitive tariffs and a door-to-door service as well as guarantee the delivery time and safe carriage of the goods and also provide them with all the requisite transport information.

24. The aims of the second stage of the project for the development of container transport by rail (2000-2003) are to prepare for and implement a demonstration run of mainline container trains on all the selected routes.