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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport

(30 and 31 March 1998)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION ^{*/}

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 10.30 a.m. on Monday, 30 March 1998

^{*/} 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. As a consequence, agenda item 5 (b) will be considered and amendment proposals may be 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 in Geneva (Fax: +41-22-917-0039; E-mail: martin.magold@unece.org). They can also be downloaded (English only) from the home page of the ECE Transport Division on the Internet (www.unece.org). During the meeting, missing documents may be obtained from the Documents Distribution Section (room C.111, 1st floor, Palais des Nations).

PLEASE NOTE: The distribution of documents of the Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies is no longer "restricted". Accordingly, the secretariat has adopted a new numbering system whereby all documents other than reports and agenda will be numbered as follows: TRANS/WP.24/year/serial number. Reports and agenda will retain their previous numbering system (e.g., TRANS/WP.24/78).

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| 7. Inventory of existing AGTC standards and parameters | TRANS/WP.24/1998/2
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"Yellow Book" and
Addendum |

¹ For consideration of this item, see footnote on page 1.

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| 8. Interregional links in
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| 9. Bimodal road/rail transport:
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| 10. New developments in the field
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| 12. Adoption of decisions taken by the Working Party | |

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

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.24/78).

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 1998.

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

(a) Inland Transport Committee

The Working Party will be informed about the results of the sixtieth session of the Inland Transport Committee (12-16 January 1998) as it relates to matters of interest to the Working Party. In particular, the Working Party may wish to consider its mandated programme of work in the light of the resources (meeting days, secretariat) made available to the Working Party in 1998.

Information on the activities of the ECE, the Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies is available on the ECE Internet home page (www.unece.org).

The Working Party will also be informed of the activities of other subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee, such as the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), as far as they relate to combined transport matters.

(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 of the latest activities of the ECMT in the field of combined transport.

(d) Other organizations

The Working Party may wish to be informed of current and planned activities in combined transport of other international organizations, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), International Maritime Organization (IMO), Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSZhD), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Union of Railways (UIC), International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR) and others.

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

The Working Party may take note of the outcome of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment, held in Vienna from 12 to 14 November 1997. The Conference has adopted a Vienna Declaration and a Programme of Joint Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./2/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL) as well as a Resolution (ECE/RCTE/CONF./7/FINAL) and a report (ECE/RCTE/CONF./8/FINAL). The Conference was also addressed by the Chairman of the Working Party, Mr. H. Maillard (Belgium), whose statement, reflecting the views of the Working Party, is reproduced in document TRANS/WP.24/1998/1.

The Working Party may wish to note that Chapter VIII of the adopted Programme of Joint Action on implementation and monitoring invites ECE member States and international organizations to designate, by March 1998, Focal Points as well as volunteering Lead Actors to take responsibilities for the implementation of programme elements. Programme elements at the national and international levels relating to combined transport are contained in Chapter III of the Programme of Joint Action.

In particular, the Working Party may wish to take note of operating paragraph 1 of the Resolution adopted by the Conference which stipulates that the Working Party is invited to promote the effective implementation of the standards and parameters contained in the new Protocol to the AGTC Agreement (ECE/RCTE/CONF./7/FINAL).

The Working Party may recall that, at its twenty-seventh session, it had prepared proposals for a declaration and a programme of joint action pertaining to combined transport (TRANS/WP.24/R.85/Rev.1) which were based on a previous background document (TRANS/WP.24/R.80/Rev.1). The objective of these submissions had been to show possible contributions of combined transport for a sustainable transport policy in Europe.

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

(a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

As of 1 January 1998 the following 21 countries are Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement: Austria; Belarus; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; 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: Belgium; Finland and Poland.

Up-to-date information on the status of the AGTC Agreement as well as of other United Nations treaties may be obtained via the Internet from the Legal Office of the United Nations in New York (www.un.org/depts/treaty).

The Working Party may wish to be informed by delegations about the intention of ECE member countries to become Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement.

(b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement

The Working Party may wish to note that the package of amendment proposals, adopted at its twenty-fifth session in 1996 (TRANS/WP.24/71, annex 1), has been issued by the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 16 September 1997 as Depositary Notification C.N.345.1997.TREATIES-2. These amendments will therefore come into force on 16 June 1998 unless a sufficient number of objections is being registered by 16 March 1998.

The Working Party will be informed of further developments with regard to the inclusion into the AGTC Agreement of railway lines and related installations in the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine.

Governments which intend to propose further amendments to the AGTC Agreement, but have not yet transmitted their proposals to the ECE secretariat, are invited to do so as soon as possible.

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

In line with the mandate given by the Inland Transport Committee, the Working Party, at its twenty-seventh session (15 and 16 April 1997), had finalized the text of a Protocol to the AGTC Agreement covering inland water transport and certain coastal routes (TRANS/WP.24/75, paras. 26-31). Subsequently the Protocol was opened for signature by all States which are Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement from 1 November 1997 to 31 October 1998.

On the occasion of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 12-14 November 1997), the Protocol has been signed by the following 12 ECE member countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland.

The Working Party may wish to be informed of the intention of other Governments to sign or accede to the Protocol in accordance with its articles 6 and 8 respectively.

The Working Party may also wish to consider how to respond to the request of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment inviting it to promote the effective implementation of the standards and parameters contained in the Protocol (ECE/RCTE/CONF./7/FINAL).

The final text of the Protocol in English, French and Russian is contained in document ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1.

7. INVENTORY OF EXISTING AGTC STANDARDS AND PARAMETERS

In September 1993 the secretariat had issued a first inventory of technical and operational standards and parameters for combined road/rail transport in Europe ("Yellow Book") covering the year 1992. The objective of the inventory is to show, on an internationally comparable basis, the actual situation of international combined transport infrastructure and the status of service standards in Europe, as compared to the minimum standards laid down in the AGTC Agreement.

In early 1995 an addendum to the Yellow Book was issued by the secretariat covering additional countries, Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement.

In line with the decisions taken by the Working Party at its twenty-seventh session (TRANS/WP.24/75, paras. 32-36), the secretariat has prepared a first draft of a new questionnaire for the 1997 inventory of current technical and operational standards and parameters of the AGTC Agreement (TRANS/WP.24/1998/2). The Working Party may wish to consider this questionnaire for distribution to all ECE member countries concerned.

8. INTERREGIONAL LINKS IN COMBINED TRANSPORT

At its twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth sessions, the Working Party felt that efforts had to continue to promote combined transport between an extended AGTC network, covering the Trans-Siberian railway and the railways of the newly independent Central Asian countries on the one hand, and the Trans-Asian Railway system on the other. Such railway land bridges between Europe and Asia might become viable container transport alternatives to sea transport for certain regions in Europe and Asia (TRANS/WP.24/75, paras. 32-36; TRANS/WP.24/77, paras 24-27).

With a view to establishing a single coherent international combined transport network covering Europe and Asia, the secretariat has prepared a note allowing for a possible consolidation, as requested, of the railway lines contained in the AGTC Agreement (ECE/TRANS 88 and Corr.1; TRANS/WP.24/71, annex 1), the OSZhD Agreement on combined transport lines (TRANS/WP.24/1997/2) and the Trans-Asian Railway Network adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok (TRANS/WP.24/1998/3).

The Working Party may wish to have a first exchange of views on the feasibility of such an inter-regional network of combined transport lines. It may also request the secretariat to transmit the identified lines that are not yet contained in the AGTC Agreement to ECE member States concerned.

9. BIMODAL ROAD/RAIL TRANSPORT: EXPERIENCES GAINED AND LESSONS LEARNED

Following a discussion on the latest developments in the field of bimodal road/rail technologies and its application in Europe at its twenty-eighth session (TRANS/WP.24/77, paras. 28-30), the Working Party may wish to review and possibly update Resolution No. 1 "European Cooperation towards Harmonization of Technological Requirements of Bimodal Road/Rail Transport Systems", adopted by the Working Party on 17 May 1990 (TRANS/WP.24/47, annex 2).

10. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF COMBINED TRANSPORT IN 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.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Date of next session

The Working Party may wish to decide on the date for its next session.

The secretariat has tentatively made the necessary arrangements to convene the thirtieth session of the Working Party from 7 to 9 September 1998. The deadline for documents to be translated and distributed in time for this thirtieth session would be 19 June 1998.

(b) Restriction on the distribution of documents

The Working Party should decide whether there shall be any restriction with respect to the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session.

12. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE WORKING PARTY

The Working Party is expected not to adopt a report on its present session, but only a short list of decisions taken (TRANS/WP.24/63, para. 54). Following the session, the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chairman, will establish a short report of the session that could then be formally adopted at the autumn session of the Working Party in September 1998.
