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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport

**DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE WORKING PARTY ON  
COMBINED TRANSPORT ON ITS TWENTY-NINTH SESSION  
(30-31 March 1998)**

ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party held its twenty-ninth session on 30 and 31 March 1998.
2. The session was attended by representatives from the following countries: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Hungary; Italy; Netherlands; Poland; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Switzerland; Turkey; United Kingdom. A representative of the European Community (EC) was also present.
3. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was represented.
4. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSZhD); European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT); Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF).
5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Road Transport Union (IRU); International Union of Railways (UIC); International Container Bureau (ICB); European Intermodal Association (EIA); International Organization for Standardization (ISO); International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR).

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6. On the invitation of the secretariat, representatives of the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA), France and of the TER Project Office in Budapest participated at the session of the Working Party.

#### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

7. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the ECE secretariat (TRANS/WP.24/78).

#### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

8. Mr. H. Maillard (Belgium) was re-elected Chairman of the Working Party for its 1998 sessions.

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

(a) ECE Inland Transport Committee

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/125 and Add.1.

9. The Working Party was informed about the results of the sixtieth session of the ECE Inland Transport Committee (12-16 January 1998). It felt that a small group of interested delegations should review the adopted programme of work of the Working Party with a view to ensuring its compatibility with the decisions of the Committee.

(b) European Commission (EC)

10. The Working Party took note of information relating to general Community policies that have implications for combined transport.

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

11. The Working Party was informed of the completion of work on a report on the status of combined transport in Europe and took note of a proposal for the convening of a joint ECMT/ECE informal expert group on combined transport terminology.

(d) Other organizations

Documentation: Informal document No.2 (1998) transmitted by the UIC.

12. The representatives of OTIF, OSZhD, UIC, UIRR and ICB informed the Working Party of recent activities of their organizations in the field of combined transport.

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

Documentation: ECE/RCTE/CONF./2/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF./7/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF./8/FINAL; TRANS/WP.24/R.85/Rev.1.

13. The Working Party took note of the outcome of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment, held in Vienna from 12 to 14 November 1997 and considered in particular Chapter III of the Programme of Joint Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF.3/FINAL) adopted by the Conference: "Promoting efficient and sustainable transport systems" with a view to identifying programme elements to be undertaken at the international level that could be implemented by the Working Party. The following elements were identified as being of particular interest to the Working Party: III (b), (d), (j),(k),(l); and IV (d). Delegations were invited to contact their national focal points who have been designated by their respective Governments to monitor and implement the Programme of Joint Action.

14. The Working Party welcomed the proposal of Switzerland to be lead country for programme element (k) of chapter III and to act as catalyst for the distribution of know-how and information on the establishment of combined transport terminals.

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

##### (a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/88 and Corr.1.

15. As of 1 March 1998 the following 21 countries were 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.

##### (b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/71, annex 1.

16. The secretariat has not received any indication from the Legal Office of the United Nations in New York that objection had been raised to the package of amendment proposals adopted by the Working Party at its twenty-fifth session. Therefore, these amendments would come into force on 16 June 1998.

17. The representative of the Republic of Moldova pointed out that the border crossing point to the Ukraine on line C-E 95 would be designated in due course. The Working Party requested the Ukraine to transmit to the secretariat, until September 1998 at the latest, its designated combined transport lines and related installations for inclusion into the AGTC Agreement.

18. The Working Party noted that no further proposals for amendment of the AGTC Agreement have been submitted.

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

Documentation: Informal document No.1 (1998) prepared by the secretariat; ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1 (F) and Corr.2 (R).

19. 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 representative of Slovakia reported that his country would also sign shortly.

20. The representatives of France, Hungary and Romania indicated that the amendment proposals pertaining to their countries, as contained in Informal document No. 1 (1998), were correct. They would be considered by the Working Party as soon as the Protocol had come into force.

21. In accordance with operative paragraph 2 of the Resolution adopted by the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (ECE/RCTE/CONF.7/FINAL), the Working Party decided to monitor the implementation of the Protocol and to conduct an inventory of its parameters and standards in cooperation with the ECE Working Party on Inland Water Transport.

22. The final text of the Protocol in English, French and Russian is contained in document ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1 (F) and Corr.2 (R).

#### INVENTORY OF EXISTING AGTC STANDARDS AND PARAMETERS

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/1998/2; Yellow Book and Addendum.

23. The Working Party approved the questionnaire contained in document TRANS/WP.24/1998/2 and requested the secretariat to add to each of the pre-filled questionnaires the new lines that are part of the amendment proposals adopted at its twenty-fifth session. Relevant AGC parameters and AGC lines, not part of the AGTC network, should also be added in consultation with the secretariat of the ECE Working Party on Rail Transport to arrive at one consolidated questionnaire covering both the AGTC and the AGC

Agreements.

## INTERREGIONAL LINKS IN COMBINED TRANSPORT

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/1998/3 and Corr. 1 and Add.1/Rev.1; TRANS/WP.24/1997/2; TRANS/WP.24/R.86; TRANS/WP.24/R.81; Informal document transmitted by the Russian Federation.

24. The Working Party took note of the requested secretariat document on the three interregional combined transport corridors linking Europe and Asia and felt that, on that basis, the consolidation of the three existing networks based on the AGTC Agreement, the OSZhD Agreement and the Trans-Asian Railway network should be envisaged. At a first step, the AGTC Agreement should be extended to all ECE member countries taking account of the newly established OSZhD Agreement. The secretariat was requested to contact the countries concerned with a view to obtaining their approval for such extension.

25. The Working Party also felt that information, similar to that contained in the Yellow Book on AGTC standards and parameters, should also be collected on these interregional lines. The offer of the OSZhD to transmit by 1999 detailed information on the parameters and standards of the OSZhD network was welcomed.

26. A map, showing the three interregional combined transport corridors, is annexed to this report - for information only.

## BIMODAL ROAD/RAIL TRANSPORT: EXPERIENCES GAINED AND LESSONS LEARNED

Documentation: Informal document No.4 (1998).

27. The Working Party recalled that it had considered in 1990 and 1991 the then emerging bimodal road/rail transport technologies and, noting the incompatibility of the various systems, had adopted resolution No. 1 on "European Cooperation towards Harmonization of Technical Requirements of Bimodal Road/Rail Transport Systems" (TRANS/WP.24/47, paras. 72-74 and annex 2; TRANS/WP.24/49, paras. 60-64).

28. The Working Party felt that market force would determine which of the combined transport or bimodal technologies were successful. It decided to continue its monitoring of new developments in this field and to leave resolution No. 1 unchanged.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF COMBINED TRANSPORT IN ECE MEMBER COUNTRIES

Documentation: Informal documents No.3 (1998) and No.5 (1998).

29. The Working Party was informed by the representative of CIPRA (France) of the status, scope and application of the Alpine Conventions and their effect on the development of combined transport.



30. On the basis of a document, the Working Party was also informed by the representative of Italy of new developments in the field of combined transport in his country. It felt that, at future sessions, an exchange of views and experiences in ECE member countries on the organization of combined transport in the context of privatized railway operations should be undertaken.

#### OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Possibilities for reconciliation and harmonization of civil liability regimes governing combined transport

Documentation: Informal document No.6 (1998).

31. The Working Party stressed that, before any concrete work in this field could be initiated, all ECE member countries should conduct consultations at the national level on the problems encountered and on the feasibility and the approach to be taken to resolve difficulties arising from the differences in liability regimes governing the various transport modes. At the next session of the Working Party this information would then be considered in detail.

- (b) Publication of IMO/ILO/ECE Guidelines

32. The Working Party was informed that Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTUs), that had been prepared by the Working Party in cooperation with IMO and ILO, have been published by the IMO in English. The French and Spanish versions will be published at a later stage.

- (c) Publication of the EUROSTAT, ECE, ECMT Glossary for Transport Statistics

33. The Working Party noted that the second edition of the inter-secretariat glossary for transport statistics has recently been issued in English, French and Russian.

- (d) Date of next session

34. The Working Party decided to convene its next session from 7 to 9 September 1998. Deadline for documents: 19 June 1998.

- (e) Restriction on the distribution of documents

35. The Working Party decided that no restriction should be placed on the circulation of documents issued for the current session.

ADOPTION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE WORKING PARTY

36. The Working Party decided to formally adopt the present decisions at its forthcoming thirtieth session (7-9 September 1998).

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