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MONITORING AND ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL POLICY MEASURES TO PROMOTE
INTERMODAL TRANSPORT

ECMT Consolidated Resolution on Combined Transport

Note by the secretariat

The secretariat reproduces below the text of the Consolidated Resolution on Combined Transport approved by the ECMT Council of Ministers (Bucharest, 29 and 30 May 2002).

CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTION No 2002/2 ON COMBINED TRANSPORT

[CM(2002)3/FINAL]

The Council of Ministers, meeting in Bucharest, on 29 and 30 May 2002,

HAVING REGARD to Resolutions No. 59, No. 65 and No. 67 and reports CEMT/CM(91)25, CEMT/CM(94)13/FINAL, CEMT/CM(95)12, CEMT/CM(96)16, CEMT/CM(98)15/FINAL and CEMT/CM(2000)3/FINAL and their recommendations on actions for promoting combined transport;

CONSIDERING it useful to gather together the essentials of the decisions taken on the subject into a clear and concise reference text, though without replacing the most recent detailed reports [CEMT/CM(95)12, CEMT/CM(98)15/FINAL, CEMT/CM(2000)3/FINAL];

NOTING that other Resolutions adopted by ECMT Ministers, including Resolution 2000/3 on Charges and Taxes in Transport [CEMT/CM(2000)13/FINAL] and the draft Resolution on the development of European Railways [CEMT/CM(2002)2] have a direct effect on the development of combined transport;

CONVINCED that combined transport must play a significant role as an alternative to road haulage in future transport systems in order to meet the environmental and economic requirements for sustainable transport systems;

NOTING the problems that still occur in the field of combined transport, in particular:

- the present failure in setting up and charging for true costs, which distorts competition in favour of road transport at the expense of combined transport, which can be a more environment-friendly transport mode since it includes rail, inland waterways and/or short sea shipping;
- the need to develop not only combined transport by rail and road, but also by inland waterways and short sea shipping, as well as the relevant interfaces (terminals and ports) between those modes,

- problems with terminal facilities and equipment, inter-operability between and within transport modes (including the dimensions of intermodal transport units), overall journey times and punctuality, administrative formalities and rules (including border crossing operations) all of which affect quality of service;
- the general lack of competitiveness of combined transport, both in terms of quality and of costs/prices;

RECALLS

That the terms "intermodal", "multimodal" and "combined" are defined in the framework of a terminology related to combined transport adopted by the Council of Ministers of the ECMT in 1992, in perfect agreement with the European Union and the UN/ECE, and which was updated by the three Organisations in 2001;

UNDERLINES:

- That the development of combined transport is not only an important objective of transport policy in many of the Member Countries in its own right, but can contribute to sustainable transport policy;
- That the increase in goods traffic, in particular on roads, in recent years and the growth rates which are forecast may lead to bottlenecks on the principal international and national roads in many countries, and that such bottlenecks already exist on certain links;
- That the competitiveness of combined transport must be improved, both in terms of quality and cost/price;

RECOMMENDS:

That National and International Bodies:

- reinforce, both at national and international levels, co-ordination of the interaction between environmental, land use and transport policies;
- improve the framework for sound development and promotion of combined transport;

With regard to costs and prices

- set up fair competition conditions between the various modes of transport (in particular through internalisation of external costs) as well as to ensure transparency of the conditions of competition between each mode;
- encourage the development of cheaper and more efficient interfaces between modes;

With regard to networks

- implement and ensure compliance with the standards adopted at international level (e.g. the AGTC Agreement* and its Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways) on the itineraries agreed;
- ensure that regional plans integrate terminal facilities for combined transport into the planning of commercial freight traffic activities and logistics centres, including cases where neighbouring countries are involved, and in that respect make possible investment subsidies for terminals, whilst respecting rules on State aids and competition;
- concentrate financial efforts in order to eliminate bottlenecks;
- allocate public resources directly or indirectly to infrastructure to improve access to terminals and improve terminal facilities for the handling, storage and processing of Intermodal Transport Units (ITUs), whilst respecting rules on State aids and competition;

With regard to interoperability

- improve the compatibility of the different networks;
- ensure, as far as possible, that obstacles to international combined transport due to shortcomings in infrastructure, transshipment facilities or rolling stock are eliminated by appropriate measures, where net benefits to society can be expected;
- ensure stability in maximum road vehicle dimension limits within the legal framework drawn up by the European Union (Directive 96/53/EC), in order to establish a commonly-agreed basis for standards for combined transport units;
- accelerate improvements in better compatibility between railway information systems and signalling systems to obtain smoother traffic flows, as covered in the draft Resolution on the development of European Railways (CEMT/CM(2002)2);
- support the development of stackable ITUs, suitable for short sea shipping and inland waterway transport;
- promote the use of effective and interoperable electronic information systems to enable exchange of data between transport operators in different Member countries and automatic issuing and processing of transport and accompanying documents, and to provide efficient information to cargo owners, dispatchers and other participants during the transport process;

With regard to financial measures, whilst respecting rules on State aids and competition

- facilitate, through financial and/or fiscal support, initial purchases of transport equipment such as rolling stock or ITUs;
- grant, under present circumstances (as long as transport taxes and charges are not designed to internalise external costs) and with respect to competition rules, financial assistance for certain operational costs or for the initial phase of new combined transport services;
- provide support for measures designed to improve the efficiency and quality of combined transport services;

* AGTC = European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations - 1991 UN/ECE.

- grant, wherever possible, part or total exemption from taxes, tolls and fees relating to the use of road infrastructure by vehicles engaged in combined transport operations, especially for initial and terminal hauls;
- attract private capital, which in any case is needed to develop combined transport;

With regard to regulatory measures and controls

- consider the possibility of granting exemptions from certain restrictions and traffic bans usually applied to international road haulage;
- liberalise, at least on the basis of reciprocity, initial and terminal road hauls in international combined transport;
- maintain higher weight limits for the road vehicles used for the transport of ITUs during initial and terminal hauls;
- support all efforts made with a view to reducing, standardising and simplifying the documents used in combined transport;
- make provisions for carrying out customs and border control operations (including veterinary and phyto-sanitary controls) at loading and unloading points, as far as possible, in order to accelerate combined transport operations, achieve shorter delivery times and make combined transport schedules more reliable;
- enforce more rigorously existing road haulage regulations, particularly the regulations on driving and rest times, speed limits and vehicle weights and dimensions and to this end strengthen their control and impose appropriate penalties, so as to ensure greater safety in road traffic and fair competition both within and between modes;

With regard to operations

- take steps to ensure that all modes concerned -- rail, inland waterways, short sea shipping -- are put on an equal footing in the market for combined transport, by favouring in the first place a better co-operation between networks and by developing at the same time further market opening, with competition between the different operators;
- take steps to improve combined transport quality by securing access to railway networks, as covered in the draft Resolution on the development of European Railways CEMT/CM(2002)2;
- continue the policy of liberalising access to European fluvio-maritime transport networks under non-discriminatory terms and to harmonise and simplify the legal regulations and administrative procedures for this type of transport;

With regard to the monitoring of the market

- take measures to ensure that coherent and reliable statistical data is available;
- carry out on a regular basis, and as precisely as possible, an inventory of bottlenecks that could hinder the development of combined transport;
- encourage the development of short sea shipping information offices, as already set up in some European countries, regions and ports;
- more generally, promote the creation of united information centres for combined transport, ensuring equal access to information in all Member countries;

With regard to innovation

- avoid losing sight of the special requirements and possibilities of combined transport in the course of work to reduce obstacles to international transport and make use of progress in information technology;
- encourage operational research concerning all components of the transport chain, whether it be in connection with ITUs, interfaces or information systems;
- keep in mind the necessity for rolling stock dimensions to remain compatible both with infrastructure and ITUs, whatever innovation is pursued;

That all operators involved in the combined transport chain:

- co-operate more closely, whilst respecting competition rules, in order to provide a reliable, efficient and flexible service, through, for instance, the use of the most efficient technologies and work together to identify and open up new markets;
- use combined transport more intensively for the transport of certain types of dangerous goods, and without prejudice to the intrinsic qualities of the railways and waterways in this area;
- make efforts to achieve a level of prices for combined transport operations that is as competitive as possible with road haulage services and ensure that methods of cost calculation are as transparent as possible;
- consider the possibility of increasing terminal capacities by offering longer opening hours and more efficient services, particularly with regard to transshipment operations;
- establish, whenever possible and compatible with economic efficiency and technical requirements, international pools of wagons;
- take into account that the best way to offer a competitive and attractive combined transport service is to operate block trains between terminals;
- make use of effective and interoperable electronic information systems to provide clients information from real-time monitoring of combined transport movements;

REQUESTS, as far these Recommendations are concerned, that the Committee of Deputies continues to monitor the development of this transport sector and reports, at regular intervals, on the implementation of these Recommendations.