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Report of the Working Party on Road Transport on its 112th session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) held its 112th session on 17-18 October 2017, chaired by Mr. R. Symonenko (Ukraine). The following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States were represented in the meeting: Austria, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.
2. The following non-UNECE members were represented: Islamic Republic of Iran and Lebanon.
3. The European Union, EuroMed and the following non-governmental organizations were represented: the Council of Bureaux (CoB) and International Road Transport Union (IRU).
4. Finally, representatives from the following private transport operators attended: Aselsan (Turkey), PARS ARGE (Turkey), and Setir (Spain).

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

5. SC.1 adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/407).

III. Activities of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 2)

A. National delegations

6. There were no updates by national delegations at this session.

B. International organizations

7. The IRU informed SC.1 about the accessions by China and India to the TIR Convention over the past 12 months. The IRU representative also advised about the progress made by the ECMT Road Group in developing a Quality Charter and the next steps. This was confirmed by the representatives of the Netherlands and Turkey.
8. The European Commission informed that two rounds of negotiations have been finished with contracting parties on the Interbus Agreement. A third round of negotiations is expected to occur in November 2017. The objective being to extend the agreement from occasional to regular transport services. The European Commission is also negotiating with Morocco the matter of their accession to the Interbus Agreement.

C. Activities of UNECE bodies and other United Nations organizations

9. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the results of the relevant recent sessions of the Inland Transport Committee, its subsidiary bodies and other United Nations entities of interest to the Working Party. In particular, the secretariat updated SC.1 on the key decisions made at the seventy-ninth annual session of the Inland Transport Committee (ECE/TRANS/270, ECE/TRANS/270/Add.1, Informal document ITC (2017) No. 11).
10. The secretariat drew attention to paragraphs 6, 10, 32, 34 and 35 of Informal document ITC (2017) No. 11. In particular, SC.1 was informed that Working Parties should consider preparing contributions to the draft strategy of the Inland Transport Committee

that would be considered by the Committee at its session in 2018. SC.1 appreciated the opportunity to provide comments and its discussion on this topic was reflected in its discussion on agenda item 10 below.

11. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the signing of a new supplement to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) which recognizes JRC as the AETR authority for root certification and for interoperability certification for the non-EU Contracting Parties to AETR (Informal document no.1). The new supplement has extended the validity of the MOU until 31 December 2018.

12. SC.1 was informed that the UNECE Working Party on Noise (GRB), at its September 2017 session, had considered an initiative from the Netherlands to introduce labelling of road surfaces based on the following criteria: skid resistance, noise reduction, rolling resistance and lifespan (Informal documents GRB-66-05 and Add.1), with the aim to contribute to road safety, public health, sustainability and economies. The secretariat to GRB advised that the project went beyond the scope of legal instruments administered by GRB (vehicles, equipment and their parts) and that GRB had invited other ITC working parties, including SC.1, to consider if they would be interested in pursuing the project. Following a brief exchange of views, SC.1 concluded that the inclusion of this initiative does not presently fit within its terms of reference, but that it would remain open to considering this work in the future if circumstances change.

13. Finally, the secretariat presented the work of the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6), focussing on the E-Road census and the Glossary for Transport Statistics. An interactive map of the census results was demonstrated, and SC.1 members with relevant expertise were invited to join the newly established WP.6 informal group of experts to provide inputs to the next edition of the glossary.

IV. European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) (agenda item 3)

A. Status of the Agreement

14. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the unchanged status of the AETR Agreement. There are still 51 Contracting Parties.

15. SC.1 was informed that at the sixteenth session of the AETR Group of Experts, the Government of Lebanon and a representative of the EU-funded EUROMED Transport Project, stated that the Governments of Egypt and Lebanon were interested in seeking accession to the AETR Agreement, and requested that Article 14 be amended to make their countries eligible to accede to the AETR Agreement. The Group of Experts had taken note of this and agreed to forward the requests to SC.1.

16. While SC.1 welcomed the interest expressed by both Egypt and Lebanon, some countries reserved their agreement to a decision to amend the AETR Agreement to enable the countries to accede until further consultation with their capitals. In view of the concerns expressed on the absence of the Egyptian officials at SC.1, through the representative of EUROMED, the Government of Egypt withdrew its expression of interest and indicated that it would apply formally at a later time.

17. In principle, SC.1 adopted the following amendment to Article 14 of the AETR Agreement to allow Lebanon to accede to it.

“Article 14

18. This Agreement shall be open for signature until 31 March 1971 and thereafter for accession, by States members of the Economic Commission for Europe and States admitted to the Commission in a consultative capacity under paragraph 8 or 11 of the Commission's terms of reference. Accessions under paragraph 11 of the Commission's terms of reference shall be limited to the following States: Algeria, Jordan, **Lebanon**, Morocco and Tunisia ."

19. Noting the secretariat's advice that an AETR Contracting Party could lodge an objection to a potential depositary notification of a proposal to amend the AETR Agreement to make Lebanon eligible to accede to it, SC.1 invited an AETR Contracting Party to formally propose the above amendment at the earliest opportunity and requested the secretariat – upon the receipt of such communication - to submit it to the Secretary-General. The secretariat recalled that the Governments of Turkey and Ukraine were the proponents of a similar amendment proposal to make Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia eligible to accede to the AETR Agreement two years ago.

B. AETR Group of Experts

20. The Chair of the Group of Experts on AETR provided an update on the work of the AETR Group of Experts since the last SC.1 session (detailed information is available in ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/35, ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/37, and ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/39).

21. The secretariat drew the attention of SC.1 to the possible desirability to consider changing the name of the AETR Agreement by deleting the term "European" from the title (as per para. 14, ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/37). The Chair requested that members of SC.1 consult their respective capitals and provide their views at the next session.

22. Following an exchange of views regarding the amendment proposal by the Government of the Slovak Republic (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2017/1) which proposed a new Article 10bis with the main objective of ensuring that drivers do not hold more than one driver card which could be issued by different national card issuing authorities, SC.1 requested this issue be further discussed at the next session of the Group of Experts on AETR, and that the secretariat prepare ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.21/2017/2/Rev.2 consolidating the existing proposals of the Government of the Slovak Republic (ie Articles 22, 22bis, 14, 10 and 10bis) to facilitate the discussion. The European Commission expressed its perplexity about the resubmission of the proposed Article 10bis to the AETR Group of Experts on the basis of technical remarks, which should already have been addressed in previous sessions of the AETR Group of Experts.

23. The Government of Turkey presented new developments in its project to establish a national driving times and rest periods data monitoring centre (as per para. 18, ECE/TRANS/SC.1/406). It informed that a protocol was signed with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange of Turkey on 9 February 2017. Through this project, the data recorded in Turkish trucks will be collected, stored and analysed. The database is expected to be established by mid-2018. Turkey will provide an update at the next session.

24. Two Turkish digital tachograph manufacturers provided information on the tachographs which they manufacture. PARS ARGE provided information on their adoption of technological advances such as bluetooth, while Aselsan provided an overview of their company, the pending international patents on its digital tachographs and the awards which their products have received.

V. European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) (agenda item 4)

A. Status of the Agreement

25. The secretariat informed SC.1 about the status of the AGR Agreement. The number of Contracting Parties has remained the same (37) since the last SC.1 session.

B. Amendments to the Agreement

26. The secretariat informed SC.1 that the amendments to the AGR Agreement proposed by the Governments of Norway (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2016/1) and Finland and Norway (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2016/2) to Annex I of the Agreement, which were adopted at the last session, will enter into force on the same date of 5 December 2017 (see Depository Notifications C.N.491.2017.TREATIES-XI.B.28 and C.N.492.2017.TREATIES-XI.B.28).

VI. Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) Project (agenda item 5)

27. SC.1 took note of the presentation provided on the TEM project. The TEM Project Manager advised that a new strategy and funding for the project was approved in February 2017. The strategy lists five strategic fields of interest decided by TEM member countries, as well as a work plan for the period 2017 to 2021. The latter may be found in the Annex of ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2017/3/Rev.1.

VII. Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) (agenda item 6)

A. Status of the Convention

28. The secretariat informed SC.1 that that the number of contracting parties to the Convention has remained unchanged (55) since the last SC.1 session.

B. Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR)

29. The secretariat informed SC.1, since the last SC.1 session, one State (Croatia) has acceded to the Protocol, bringing the total number of contracting parties to 43.

C. Additional Protocol to the CMR concerning the Electronic Consignment Note

30. The secretariat informed SC.1 that, since the last SC.1 session, two States (Estonia and Slovenia) have acceded to the Additional Protocol to the Convention, bringing the total number of contracting parties to 12.

31. The Government of Turkey advised that it had finalised its internal legal procedures to accede to the CMR Additional Protocol. The Government of the Russian Federation

indicated that they had the intention to accede to the CMR Additional Protocol in the near future, and had begun their internal procedures to do so.

32. The secretariat – in cooperation with the International Road Transport Union - organized a special e-CMR session to take stock and map future directions in the development of electronic consignment notes on the basis of the Additional Protocol (Informal document no.2). The session was opened by the Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNECE and included the following presentations: “Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road and the Additional Protocol concerning the electronic consignment note” (Secretariat); “Report on the development of internationally recognised standard of Electronic Consignment Note message (UN/CEFACT project) (UN/CEFACT); “Current status of e-CMR implementation and its geographical expansion” (IRU); and “Electronic consignment notes: operations and pilot projects” (the Government of the Netherlands and Spanish transport operator Setir).

33. SC.1 appreciated the presentations. Much interest was expressed but in view of the limited time to discuss the information provided, SC.1 requested the secretariat to organize a special SC.1 session dedicated to e-CMR in early 2018 with interpretation to further discuss this issue and to decide on a way forward. IRU indicated that it would be prepared to support SC.1 in the organization of this meeting.

VIII. Facilitation of international road transport (agenda item 7)

A. International Motor Insurance System (Green Card)

34. The Working Party was informed by the President of the Council of Bureaux about recent developments in the “Green Card system” (detailed information is available in ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2017/2).

B. Proposal for a global multilateral agreement on the international regular transport of passengers by coach and bus (OmniBUS)

35. At the last session, SC.1 noted that the procedure adopted by the European Union in developing the new InterBus Agreement would not allow all ECMT members to participate in the negotiations if they are not Contracting Parties to the InterBus Agreement. Consequently, SC.1 invited the European Union to reconsider the procedure so that the negotiations are open to all ECMT members, including those countries that played an important role in elaboration of the draft OmniBus Agreement (para 33, ECE/TRANS/SC.1/406). The European Union affirmed its position on this matter. SC.1 repeated its request for feedback from the European Union concerning the relationship of the InterBus Agreement with the draft OmniBus Agreement.

36. SC.1 agreed to continue working to complete the draft OmniBus Agreement and requested the secretariat to find suitable dates in 2018 for meetings dedicated to this task.

C. Quantitative restrictions imposed on international road transport of goods

37. At the last session, SC.1 discussed a European Commission study on the economic analysis of an agreement between European Union and Turkey which had estimated that the European Union and Turkey had sustained large financial losses due to transport quotas and restrictions.

38. SC.1 took note of the information provided by the European Commission on new developments on the extension of the mandate of the Customs Agreement. The European Commission also advised that the issue was presently with the Council and that DG Trade was the responsible EC service. The Government of Turkey requested DG Move to further discuss this issue within the EC.

D. The relationship between the origin of goods and transport operations

39. At the last session, Latvia and Poland presented a proposal (Informal document No. 6 which formed the basis of ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2017/4) to amend the Revised Consolidated Resolution on the Facilitation of International Road Transport (RE.4) to introduce the definition of ‘bilateral carriage’ as a new subpoint 4.1.9 as follows:

40. “Bilateral transport means a road transport operation undertaken by a laden or unladen vehicle registered in one country, the point of departure of which is from the territory of registration of the vehicle, and the destination of which is in the territory of the other country, or vice versa, irrespective of the country of origin of goods and the country of the final recipient of goods.”

41. Following extensive discussion, SC.1 agreed to continue discussing this issue at its next meeting and requested that Latvia and Poland prepare ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2017/4/Rev.1 taking into account the concerns expressed at SC.1.

42. In this regard, Turkey agreed with the proposal from Latvia and Poland, but it expressed the view that a revised definition of “bilateral transport” was unlikely to solve the practical challenges of ensuring that CMR consignment notes were secure and reliable. The Russian Federation suggested that the text after “...vice versa” was unnecessary and could be deleted, or that alternative text could be proposed.

IX. Safety at Level Crossings Group of Experts (agenda item 8)

43. The secretariat presented an overview of the group of experts’ final report which included key findings such as availability of data on safety at level crossings, evaluation of accident costs as well as developments in the areas key to safety at level crossings (infrastructure, education and training, legislation, enforcement, institutional framework, human factors, and risk management). The report also recommended that a level crossing specific safe system approach be established and acted upon.

44. The secretariat also briefed SC.1 on the international plan of action believed by the group of experts to be necessary for assisting countries in implementing the recommendations including establishing an international working group to support the implementation of this plan. In this regard, the Executive Secretary of the UNECE has written to the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the European Railways Agency (ERA) to enquire as to their interest, and has yet to receive replies. The secretariat will provide an update at the next session. It also took the opportunity to extend the same invitation to SC.1 members. SC.1 appreciated the secretariat’s presentation and commended the report and its recommendations.

X. Revision of SC.1 terms of reference and rules of procedure (agenda item 9)

45. At the last session, Belgium and Germany submitted a proposal for changes to SC.1 terms of reference and rules of procedures (Informal document (2016) Nos 3 and 4).

46. SC.1 agreed to defer its discussion on this item until its next session given the absences of the representatives of the Governments of Belgium and Germany with the expertise to address this issue.

47. To facilitate the discussion, the secretariat will table the terms of reference anticipated to be adopted by the Global Forum on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) in 2018 which could be used as a template for SC.1 terms of reference.

XI. Programme of work and biennial evaluation

48. In accordance with the decision of the Inland Transport Committee to review its programme of work every two years, SC.1 reviewed and adopted its programme of work for 2018–2019 (amended by the secretariat) and the relevant parameters allowing for its biennial evaluation (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2017/3). SC.1 reviewed and adopted with modifications its programme of work for 2018-2019. It requested the secretariat to submit the revised document ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2017/3/Rev.1 to ITC, and to table the same document for “formal” approval at its next session.

49. SC.1 also considered its contribution to the draft strategy of the ITC. SC.1 is open to and supportive of intelligent transport systems especially those relating to road infrastructure. With the assistance of the secretariat, SC.1 will endeavour to organize events related to “digital/smart infrastructure” so that it may be better informed of emerging issues and consider how it may incorporate these developments into its work programme.

XII. Other business (agenda item 11)

50. There were no issues raised under this agenda item.

XIII. Date of next session (agenda item 12)

51. The Working Party was informed that its next session has been scheduled for 17–18 October 2018.

XIV. Adoption of the report (agenda item 13)

52. The Working Party adopted the report of this session.
