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Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Road Transport****Special session**

Geneva, 4-6 April 2018

Report of the Special session of Working Party on Road Transport**I. Attendance**

1. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) held a special session from 4 to 6 April 2018, chaired by Mr. R. Symonenko (Ukraine). The following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States were represented in the meeting: Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
2. The representative of a non-ECE member State also participated: Iran (Islamic Republic of).
3. The European Union and United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, (UNCITRAL) and International Telecommunications Union (ITU-T Study Group 20) were represented.
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), International Transport Company Association (ITCA), International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) and International Road Transport Union (IRU).
5. Attica Tollway Operations Authority, Julius Baer, SeaData, Sea Express Group and Telespazio also participated from the private sector.

II. Adoption of the agenda

6. SC.1 adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/S/397).

III. Additional Protocol to the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road concerning the Electronic Consignment Note (e-CMR)

7. At the last session, “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.” SC.1 was invited to consider and discuss options to operationalize the e-CMR including developing a common central platform and alternative solutions.

8. To facilitate discussion at SC.1, the secretariat wrote a short background paper (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/S/2018/1) and gave a presentation on the historical background in relation to the drafting of the e-CMR, recent accessions, key articles and issues on the operationalization of the e-CMR.

9. SC.1 was pleased to note that there have been five accessions to the e-CMR since its last meeting in October 2017. The new contracting parties include Iran (Islamic Republic of), Luxembourg, Turkey, Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova.

10. Finland, Poland, Romania, Ukraine and the United Kingdom informed the Working Party that they were considering acceding to the e-CMR.

11. UNCITRAL gave an overview of the 2017 Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR) which legally enables the use of electronic transferable records (ETR). UNCITRAL also outlined how the MLETR could potentially support the implementation of the e-CMR, and suggested to prepare a guidance note for SC.1 on the legal aspects.

12. The technical standards to support the creation and exchange of electronic consignment notes for the international transport of goods by road, which were developed by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) were approved on 19 February 2018 (www.unece.org/cefact/brs/brs_index.html). They were officially launched by the Directors of the ECE divisions of Economic Cooperation and Trade, and Sustainable Transport. A representative of UN/CEFACT also gave an overview of the standardized model which provides a ‘common language’ for trading parties.

13. The Netherlands provided information on its BENELUX pilot project and explained that its policy approach was to focus on data and multimodal sharing of data, and making use of what already exists (i.e. based on the information technology of companies). This is in line with the European Union’s concept of a federative platform to bridge and interconnect commercial and community platforms, and to integrate various technical solutions and different providers. The representative also listed some legal and technical considerations which contracting parties seeking guidance on the implementation of the e-CMR might find helpful.

14. IRU emphasized the importance of pilot trials as a way of trialing or implementing the e-CMR, and shared the video which it has produced on the e-CMR. A representative from Telespazio, a telecommunications company in Italy, provided some technical insights from its electronic dangerous goods pilot.

15. CIT shared the recent developments in relation to developing the rail equivalent of the e-CMR, known as the e-CIM.

16. The Russian Federation and Turkey expressed their interest in trialing e-CMR pilot projects in their respective countries.

17. SC.1 expressed its appreciation to the presenters for their informative and relevant presentations.

18. SC.1 invited UNCITRAL, in collaboration with the secretariat, to provide a guidance note on the legal aspects of the e-CMR for the next session of SC.1. It requested that the document be submitted by the middle of July 2018 so that it may be translated. SC.1 is invited to provide their legal questions to the secretariat as soon as possible to facilitate the preparation of the guidance note.

19. In relation to the request of some participants for case studies and best examples, SC.1 requested the Netherlands to share its Benelux project documents with the secretariat as soon as possible so that they may be translated in time for discussion at its next session.

20. To further facilitate discussion at its next session, the Chair invited SC.1. to write to the secretariat with their technical questions relating to the implementation of the e-CMR by the middle of July 2018. The secretariat will compile the list of questions prior to the next session.

IV. Digital/smart road infrastructure

21. During the last session, SC.1 stated that it would “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”.

22. The Director of the Sustainable Transport Division opened the workshop. He spoke of how innovation in transport (a) has revolutionized mobility, (b) changed the way people move, communicate, and pay for transport services, (c) as well as how transport legislation is evolving. He emphasized that sustainable transport for the twenty-first century is safe, high-quality, accessible to all, ecologically sound, economically viable, and a positive contributor to local, national and global sustainable development. He also drew links to the priorities of the Inland Transport Committee, as well as to Sustainable Development Goals 3, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13.

23. On behalf of SC.1, the secretariat invited speakers from:

(a) Julius Baer, who spoke about how new technology, regulation and changing lifestyles are rerouting energy expenditures and reshaping industries. The speaker also highlighted two alternative future scenarios of evolution or revolution of today’s trends which include population growth, a rising Asian middle class, urbanisation, fuel economy and electric mobility, automated driving and the sharing economy.

(b) The city of Ghent (Belgium), who introduced the concept of traffic management as a service. The speaker explained that virtual traffic management based on a central cloud-platform that integrates with local and global information sources was being developed in response to the challenge of traditional traffic management centres working independently and being hardware-oriented. The advantage is that authorities will be able to access the platform and manage traffic instantly.

(c) The Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (the Netherlands), who shared how the Netherlands is embracing digital/smart road infrastructure. The speaker provided examples of current public/private partnerships and projects to illustrate the Dutch approach.

(d) Hellastron, who introduced his organization which was founded in late 2014 with the participation of all modern motorways and toll infrastructures operating in Greece. The speaker used examples from the Aegean Motorway SA to demonstrate the continuous improvement in road infrastructures and services being provided to users, which in turn promote road safety and know-how concerning the development of the science of construction and management of road infrastructures.

(e) FIA, who provided the background as to how the FIA Smart Cities initiative came about. It was launched as a platform for knowledge generation and information exchange in the field of sustainable urban mobility. The initiative comprises three core pillars – the Forums, a Cities Aware and a Global Startup Context. Having a multidimensional approach has allowed FIA to bring together actors from various fields, from entrepreneurs to policymakers, and to hasten knowledge sharing with many stakeholders.

24. In addition, the following United Nations organizations working on smart infrastructure and mobility contributed:

(a) The secretariat (Forests, Land and Housing Division) informed the participants of the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) Initiative and the programme United Smart Cities. Based on these studies, the secretariat has formulated specific recommendations for smart sustainable city development. SC.1 was invited to engage on the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda as well as on the development of smart sustainable city profiles and demonstration projects in cities in the ECE region.

(b) The secretariat (Sustainable Transport Division) provided information on the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory which is being developed by the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics in cooperation with the Islamic Development Bank. The observatory is devised as an online platform (a) where governments can find all the relevant data to prepare, benchmark and present their transport infrastructure projects and (b) which financial institutions can consider, analyse and compare projects from a regional/international perspective and identify projects to finance.

(c) ITU-T Study Group 20 presented the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) related standardization activities – achievements as well as ongoing studies – progressed by ITU-T SG20 (Internet of things (IoT) and smart cities and communities (SC&C)), these activities being focused on the support provided by the Internet of things technologies to ITS. Addressed topics included transportation safety services, IoT-based automotive emergency response systems, cooperative ITS. In the context of all ITS related standardization activities progressed by ITU-T, complementary highlights were given on the “Collaboration on ITS Communication Standards (CITS)”, a globally recognized forum established by ITU-T and operating since a number of years with the aim to provide a platform for knowledge sharing and international coordination of ITS standardization.

25. SC.1 took note of the endeavours of the city of Ghent and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management (Netherlands), and expressed an interest in receiving updates from time to time at future sessions of SC.1, whether the information is presented in person or through the secretariat.

26. SC.1 appreciated the national and global initiatives that were underway including those of FIA through its Smart Cities Initiative and the Hellastron group of motorways.

27. SC.1 also took note of the work being undertaken by United Nations agencies such as the UNECE Divisions of Forests, Land and Housing, and Sustainable Transport, and the ITU-T Study Group 20. It also noted that there were other United Nations agencies such as United Nations-Habitat which are involved on this topic, but which were not able to participate at this meeting. It encouraged the secretariat to identify appropriate opportunities for joint collaboration across United Nations agencies. It also noted the potential links of this topic with Sustainable Development Goals 3, 7, 8, 9, 11 and 13.

28. SC.1 will make publicly available the report and presentations of this workshop so that stakeholders might be informed about emerging digital/smart technologies for the planning of new, or upgrading of existing, road infrastructure (at <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=48262>).

29. In recognition of the relevance of the topic (smart/digital road infrastructure) to road transport in general, as well as its alignment with several sustainable development goals and the Inland Transport Committee's "Road Map on Intelligent Transport Systems", SC.1 agreed to include it as an item on its agenda, with the aim of educating and raising awareness.

30. SC.1 invited Romania to provide a presentation on its early warning intelligent system for road transportation risks at the next SC.1 session. It also invited the secretariat to consider providing suggestions of potential activities for its next session.

31. SC.1 requested the secretariat to create a compilation of case studies or project excerpts based on the voluntary contributions of the workshop's speakers.

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

32. During its last session, SC.1 also 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.

33. To facilitate the recommencement of the work of SC.1 on this item, the secretariat summarized the chronology of working documents related to the draft OmniBUS Agreement.

34. SC.1 recommenced its discussion on ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2015/3 focussing on Articles 6, 8 and 25, as well as Annex VI. It made changes to Articles 6 and 8.

35. The Russian Federation retained its position with regards to its reservation on the draft text of Article 25 and Annex VI.

36. SC.1 requested the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Turkey to agree on and provide a proposal on draft text in relation to Article 25 and Annex VI for the next session of SC.1.

37. SC.1 also requested the European Commission to provide an update on the status of the InterBus agreement at the next session of SC.1. In this regard, a link to the InterBus agreement (should it be adopted in June 2018 by the European Council) will be provided in the annotated agenda of the next SC.1 session.

VI. Other business

38. The European Commission informed SC.1 about the inclusion of electronic consignment notes in the proposal of amendment to the European Union legislation on road transport.

39. SC.1 did not discuss other issues.

VII. Date of next session

40. The next session of SC.1 is scheduled for 16 to 18 October 2018 in Geneva.

41. SC.1 was reminded that the next meetings of the AETR Group of Experts are scheduled for 4 June and 15 October 2018.

VIII. Adoption of the report of the Special session

42. The Working Party adopted the report of its special session.
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