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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Rail Transport

Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law

Twenty-second session

Geneva, 28-29 September 2020

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Revised annotated provisional agenda for the twenty-second session*, **

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Monday, 28 September 2020

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Execution of the Mandate of the Group of Experts.
3. Other business.
4. Date of the next session.
5. Summary of decisions.

* Delegates are requested to register online at the following address:

<https://uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=LyVlgk>.

Upon arrival at the Palais des Nations, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate (14, Avenue de la Paix). In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone (+41 22 917 24 32). For a map of the Palais des Nations and other useful information, see website www.unece.org/meetings/practical.htm.

** Due to COVID-19, delegates are requested to bring copies of all relevant documents to the session. There will be no documentation available in the conference room. Before the session, documents may be downloaded from the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division's website at www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2.html.

II. Annotations

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law (Group of Experts) will be invited to adopt the session's agenda.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/01

2. Execution of the Mandate of the Group of Experts

The Working Party on Rail Transport at its seventy-third session (Geneva, 25–27 November 2019) decided to extend the mandate of the Group of Experts for two more sessions, to be held in 2020, under the existing Terms of Reference, as set out in document ECE/TRANS/2018/13/Rev.1 to conclude on tasks (c) and (d) and to report to the Working Party at its seventy-fourth session in November 2020. The Inland Transport Committee, at its eighty-second session (Geneva, 25-28 February 2020) approved this extension.

Further to the decisions of the parent bodies, the Group of Experts is expected to complete its work on its tasks below:

(a) Task (c) of the Terms of Reference: Draft a document (or systems of documents) on Unified Railway Law which could be adopted as a legally binding instrument:

The Group of Experts concluded that the Unified Railway Law (URL) should be possibly developed as a system of conventions (see ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2019/4, para 16). To this end, with reference to task (c) of the Terms of Reference, the Group of Experts may wish to complete the text of the convention on the contract for international carriage of goods by rail.

In doing so, the Group of Experts should take into account the documents it developed and or/requested so far, as follows:

- ECE/TRANS/2016/15 which contains the draft relevant substantive legal provisions;
- ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2019/15 which provides modifications to Article 4 as presented in ECE/TRANS/2016/15;
- ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2019/10 which contains the draft preamble; and
- ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2019/11 which contains the draft final provisions.

The Group of Experts should also consider proposals for possible further changes to substantive legal provisions available in ECE/TRANS/2016/15 further to concerns raised by the Russian Federation at twenty-first session regarding the provisions on carrier liability and lack of provisions about the period of limitation for action, competence of court, and procedures for recourse between carriers. Experts are requested to table documents which would provide specific text for provision modifications and which could be issued as ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/4 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/5.

Finally, the Group of Experts may also consider ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/3 which contains a proposal for provisions about negotiable transport document in URL.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/2016/15, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2019/10,
ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2019/11, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2019/15,
ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/3, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/4,
ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/5

(b) Task (d) of the Terms of Reference: Discuss other relevant issues related to international rail freight transport with a view to adding, where appropriate, provisions to the document referred to in task (c):

The Group of Experts is invited to consider and, if possible, conclude on issues for which unified provisions in the form of conventions should be developed to constitute the URL system of conventions.

In doing so, the Group of Experts should take into consideration the suggestions from the Russian Federation for the URL system of conventions to cover, in addition to the contract for international carriage of goods by rail, issues such as (i) use of wagons/rolling stock, and (ii) use of infrastructure.

In order to facilitate the execution of this task, experts are requested to provide the secretariat with specific justifications on the need to develop URL conventions on specific issues considered essential to the organisation of effective transport of goods by rail between Europe and Asia. Based on inputs received, the secretariat will prepare ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/6.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/GEURL/2020/6

3. Other business

At present, there are no proposals under this item. Proposals can be transmitted to the secretariat (sc.2@un.org).

4. Date of the next session

The secretariat will inform about provisional schedule for the next session.

5. Summary of decisions

In accordance with established practice, the Chair will briefly summarize the decisions taken. Following the session, the Secretary, in cooperation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, will draft the final session report.
