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Strategic questions of a horizontal and cross-sectoral policy or regulatory nature: Draft Annual Report of activities undertaken by the Committee's subsidiary bodies in 2021

2021 Draft Annual Report of the Sustainable Transport Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Note by the secretariat*

I. Introduction

1. The year 2021 saw the continuation of unprecedented challenges and unique accomplishments for the ECE Sustainable Transport Division (ITC).

2. Among the challenges faced in 2021, the COVID-19 global pandemic continued to disrupt all areas of life including transport. While there was hope of greater improvement at the beginning of the year, the pandemic continues to be a global challenge as we enter 2022. However, improvements have been made and the ECE Sustainable Transport Division continued to adapt its work and output to the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Hybrid meetings have become more common place, and in some cases have allowed for wider attendance.

3. A second major challenge is the liquidity crisis for the United Nations which is still, among other problems, limiting the Division's ability to provide full services and receive simultaneous interpretation and meeting facilities for the intergovernmental meetings.

4. However, despite these challenges, the Division continued to rise to the challenge this difficult year. While every country continues to deal with the pandemic independently, the need for continued international cooperation in the transport sector persisted, and the ECE Sustainable Transport Division was able to assist member States in dealing with the impact of COVID-19 in several areas. For example, supporting the Observatory on Border Crossing Status due to COVID-19, or finding ways to produce current statistics more quickly in order to deal with these challenges in real-time.

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.

5. This document provides an accounting of the accomplishments of the Sustainable Transport Division in 2021. It also documents where appropriate the instances where the Division was able to assist in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19.

II. Major Accomplishments of the Sustainable Transport Division in 2021

6. At the eighty-third session of the ITC, the Ministerial Resolution, "Enhancing resilient inland transport connectivity in emergency situations: An urgent call for concerted action" was adopted by Ministers and Heads of Delegations of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and Middle East (ECE/TRANS/304, Annexes I and II) at the end of the High-level Policy Segment.

7. Also at the eighty-third session, the publication "Sustainable Transport in the Age of COVID-19 - Practices, Initiatives and Responses: Building pandemic-resilient transport systems" was officially launched. The publication provides a comprehensive overview of the efforts made by the ECE Sustainable Transport Division and the various Working Parties of the Inland Transport Committee to support member States in their responses to this crisis.

8. On 25 May 2021 the package of amendment proposals entered into force which introduce introducing the computerized TIR procedure, known as the eTIR procedure, in the legal text of the TIR Convention, 1975 and, in particular new Annex 11. The eTIR procedure not only further secures the TIR system, but also allows paperless and contactless border crossing for goods. This is particularly significant during the current COVID-19 pandemic and can keep drivers and costumes officers safe while ensuring boarders can remains open.

III. Accomplishments of the Sustainable Transport Division in 2021

A. Annual Session of the Inland Transport Committee

9. The eighty-third session of ITC (hybrid, 23-26 February 2021) was opened with the High-level Policy Segment on "Back to a sustainable future: achieving resilient connectivity for post-COVID-19 sustained recovery and economic growth." This High-level Segment saw the participation of Transport ministers from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, as well as a keynote speech by the European Commissioner for Mobility and Transport. There were 440 participants from more than 83 countries, including 40 non-ECE ones, and the heads and high-level representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as key inland transport stakeholders. The main highlights of the High-level Policy Segment (see ECE/TRANS/304, Annex III) aside from what is listed in the previous section included:

(a) A high-level side event on "Sustainability of transport and trade connectivity in the Caspian Sea region in the age of pandemics", organized jointly by the Permanent Mission of Turkmenistan to the UN Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and ECE (ECE/TRANS/304, Annex IV);

(b) A high-level ITC Roundtable on "Road safety at a crossroads at the dawn of the new Decade of Action" (ECE/TRANS/304, Annex VII).

B. Horizontal activities

The Transport Health and Environment Pan-European Programme THE PEP

10. The fifth High-level meeting on Transport, Health and Environment was held 17-19 May 2021. It brought together over 800 participants and 46 Ministers and Deputy-Ministers to agree on how member States can make transport greener and healthier. Member States

adopted the Vienna Declaration setting out a clear plan of action on working towards a better transport system for the future including, as annexes, the Cycling Promotion Master Plan, Recommendations for Green and Healthy Sustainable Transport (a report on the task force established in 2020, referred to in the ITC Report of 2020), and Guidelines on Eco-Driving. A number of policy documents and studies were prepared in support of this work.

11. At the subsequent Steering Committee meeting in October 2021, member States started the implementation of the Vienna Declaration with the agreement to start work on the development of a strategy for THE PEP and a review of potential legal instruments to develop for the programme.

C. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1)

12. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) remains one of the permanent bodies in the United Nations system that focuses on improving road safety. In 2021, WP.1 continued its work in ensuring that new technology is - when deemed necessary - accompanied by new traffic rules. In this context, the Forum made steady progress on amendment proposals related to harmonizing the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic provisions related to lights and light-signalling. It also extensively considered the issues on domestic and international driving permits such as security features and digital (mobile) driving permits. In addition, the Forum held preliminary discussions on personal mobility devices (e.g., e-scooters) as it is likely micro-mobility issues will become more prominent at WP.1 in a near future. Finally, it is expected that an important amendment proposal, when it enters into force, will facilitate automated driving in contracting parties to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic.

13. In addition, WP.1 continued to explore the definition and role of the driver, driver education and training, remote driving, and a possibility contributing to developing a glossary of terminology for automated vehicles. Developing a framework of key principles for automated vehicle safety and human centred needs may become an important element of the WP.1 workplan in 2022. Also, in 2022, in the context of intelligent transport systems, the exchange of views will be continued with expected contributions from eminent academics and experts on issues ranging from future advanced studies and anticipatory systems, human-machine learning in the field of artificial intelligence, automation, human factors and ethics, and the herd immunity as applied to automated vehicles in traffic.

D. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1)

14. Digitalization related initiatives continued to receive an impetus from the Covid 19 pandemic in 2021. This was reflected in the interest in SC.1's work on the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) and its two protocols (Protocol to CMR, and Additional Protocol to CMR concerning the electronic consignment note (e-CMR)), particularly the latter.

15. SC.1's informal group of experts continued to meet virtually, resulting in the completion of a paper on the operationalization of e-CMR which was requested at the 81st session of the ITC. The paper (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2021/1) was submitted by Slovenia, Germany, Latvia, the International Road Transport Union, and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey.

16. SC.1's secretariat was also pro-actively engaged on the matter and prepared two papers as a follow up to the paper by the informal group of experts. The first (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2021/2) was a comparison analysis of the operational procedures stipulated in the e-CMR protocol and the services provided by the several pilot projects to date. The second paper (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/2021/3) contained several scenarios for a possible high-level architecture of a future e-CMR system. The scenarios presented in this paper include a concrete proposal made by the secretariat on the development of an international e-CMR registry/system in the framework of ECE.

17. Based on these papers, SC.1 decided to establish a formal group of experts on the operationalization of the eCMR procedure for two years (2022 and 2023). The group will discuss and if possible agree on the requirements of article 5 of the Additional Protocol to CMR including the objective/scope, the high level architecture, and the conceptual specifications for a future environment that would support the conclusion and exchange of electronic consignment notes in accordance with the provisions of CMR and its Additional Protocol. Such work would also include an impact assessment of possible implementation scenarios of a future eCMR environment.

18. Finally, driving times and rest periods for professional drivers remained an important element of SC.1's work. Its subsidiary body, the Group of Experts on the European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) continued its work towards reconciliation of the AETR regime in the European Union and non-EU AETR contracting parties following the introduction of the smart tachograph in the European Union in June 2019. The AETR Group of Experts also considered a solution as to how article 14 could be amended so that the AETR Agreement could be acceded to by countries which are not ECE member States. With SC.1's support, a contracting party to the AETR Agreement is being encouraged to submit such an amendment proposal.

E. Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2)

19. Building on the successes of previous years, the Working Party on Rail Transport continued to provide cutting-edge policy and regulatory contributions to the sector. During the Working Party session, a workshop was held titled "Railways at the centre of the post-pandemic recovery – Connectivity through the railways". Over ninety delegates exchanged views, best practices and concrete examples on how best to ensure that the railways remain at the centre of the recovery.

20. The European Agreement on Main and International Railway Lines (AGC) is being updated to facilitate the use by member States and generate more accessions. A guide has been prepared for member States which will make accession and implementation of the agreement easier.

21. Following the creation of the Group of Experts on International Railway Passenger Hubs at the ITC in February 2021, experts started work in developing a framework and potential legal agreement on these hubs. The group's aim is to further facilitate access to the railways and shifting long distance passenger journeys from other modes.

22. Significant progress was made in the work of the Trans European Railway Project (TER). The TER developed a strategy for the coming years as well as initiated several key studies aimed at modernizing the activities of the Project through an assessment of technical parameters and the preparation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) tool to support the development of freight flows within the region.

F. Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3)

1. Regulatory

23. Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) adopted two amendments:

(a) Amendment No. 4 to the third revision of the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of E Waterway Network (the Blue Book) with the updated information on waterways of Belgium, Czechia, Germany and Slovakia, and

(b) Amendments to the Inventory of most important bottlenecks and missing links in the E Waterway Network (resolution No. 49, revision 2).

24. Additionally, SC.3 and its subsidiary bodies in 2021 delivered the following outputs:

(a) The adoption of the sixth revision of the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI) as resolution No. 102. The sixth revision of CEVNI has considered best practices

from the up-to-date traffic regulations of ECE member States and the river commissions, provisions of the European standards adopted by the European committee for drawing up standards in the field of inland navigation (CESNI) and new developments in the sector. It builds on the outcome of 17 meetings of the CEVNI Expert Group held between 2017 and 2021 incorporates amendments Nos. 1 to 4 to CEVNI 5 adopted by SC.3 between 2017 and 2020, modifications approved by the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) at its fifty-eighth and fifty-ninth sessions and editorial modifications and was finalized at the Special session of SC.3/WP.3 on CEVNI on 22 June 2021;

(b) As a part of its work on ensuring safety of inland navigation SC.3 adopted amendment No. 3 to the Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (Resolution No. 61, revision 2), which updates to appendix 1, List of European inland waterways divided geographically into zones 1, 2 and 3 and other modifications, as its resolution No. 103;

(c) In order to reduce and prevent pollution from inland vessels, SC.3 adopted amendment No. 1 to the list of reception facilities for transfer of waste generated on board vessels on European inland waterways (appendix to the annex to resolution No. 21, revision 2).

25. For the revised ECE road map on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) for 2021–2025 which aims to develop River Information Services, discussions were held among SC.3 and SC.3/WP.3 about updating resolution No. 58, Guidelines and Criteria for Vessel Traffic Services on Inland Waterways. The revision would be based on based on Recommendation V-120 "Vessel Traffic Services in Inland Waters" of the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA). In March–November 2021, SC.3 experts from the Russian Federation and Ukraine and the secretariat took part on behalf of ECE in the IALA work on preparing the new IALA Guideline "Vessel Traffic Services in Inland Waters", approved at the fifty-first session of the IALA Committee on Vessel Traffic Services, that will replace V-120.

26. With the aim to promote the development of River Information Services (RIS) in the ECE region and following the substantial revision of SC.3 resolutions on RIS in 2019–2020, the booklet "River Information Services in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe" was prepared in 2021 and approved by SC.3 at its sixty-fifth session. It will be available in the beginning of 2022 as a printed and electronic publication in the three official languages.

2. Capacity development

27. The workshop "Climate change and the extreme water situation on European waterways and its impact on inland water transport" was held on 17 February 2021 at the fifty-eighth session of SC.3/WP.3. The presentations and the discussion were on

(a) associated impacts of climate change events on inland and coastal navigation;

(b) measures and strategies aimed to cope with climate change impact on inland water transport;

(c) obstacles to the integration of climate change adaptation measures into the planning and operational processes in the sector;

(d) data sources and methodologies for climate projections and;

(e) recommended actions for SC.3 to assist countries in addressing this challenge.

28. The participants highlighted the severe economic damage from low water on the European rivers and emphasized the need for a harmonized approach for urgent adaptation measures and coping strategies.

29. A workshop entitled "Building up a solid international regulatory framework aimed at increasing the efficiency and safety of inland water transport" was held on 23 June 2021 at the fifty-ninth session of SC.3/WP.3. The participants discussed

(a) the advantages of acceding to international conventions and agreements;

(b) possibilities for improving the existing international regulatory framework;

(c) obstacles for countries to accede to and to implement international conventions and agreements;

(d) ways for improving the efficiency of mandatory instruments; and

(e) recommendations for SC.3 to increase the efficiency of international conventions and agreements under ITC and the number of contracting parties to them.

3. IWT Publications in 2021

30. The sixth revision of the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI), adopted by SC.3 at its sixty-fifth session, was published in 2021 as ECE/TRANS/SC.3/115/Rev.6.

31. The booklet “River Information Services in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe” was prepared in 2021, approved by SC.3 at its sixty-fifth session and published in the beginning of 2022.

G. Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5)

1. WP.5 Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group on Transport Responses to COVID-19 Crisis

32. In response to the tasks assigned to WP.5 by the ITC at its eighty-second and eighty-third sessions two additional sessions of Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group (IMAG) were held in June and September 2021 resulting in a revised and finetuned set of recommendations

33. Recommendations have been formulated at three levels:

(a) At international transport regulatory level

- Prioritize a human centred approach/ recognize the essential role of transport workers.
- Evaluate how COVID-19 induced “temporary” measures (temporary extension of validity of permits and documents or temporary exemptions and facilitations measures) can be turned into emergency protocols.

(b) At the level of existing international legal instruments

- Assess how infrastructure agreements AGTC, AGR, AGC and AGN could serve as the backbone for the identification of critically important routes and nodes that need to remain open under any circumstances.
- Assess how in the framework of the Harmonization Convention for instance criteria could be defined for land border crossings that need to stay open at any time to enable the international transport of essential cargo and supplies.

(c) At the level of continued sectoral and inter-sectoral dialogue on pandemic preparedness:

- Have pandemic / emergency preparedness as a recurrent agenda item for the forthcoming sessions of mode-specific WPs (SC.1, SC.2, SC.3, WP.24 and WP.30).
- Build further on the work done by the informal Advisory Group so far and continue to explore specific measures/ tools that could be developed aimed at increasing the resilience of the inland transport system to future pandemics such as for instance the development of a contingency planning concept for rail, road and inland waterway sectors.

2. Urban mobility

34. On 17 September 2021, a Workshop on Green Urban Transport was organized as part of the WP.5 cluster of work on "sustainable urban mobility, public transport, and cycling".

The workshop which was co-organized by the ECE Sustainable Transport Division and the Urban Development, Housing and Land Management section at the ECE secretariat drew upon policy recommendations put forward in the ECE Nexus publication entitled "People-Smart Sustainable Cities – Sustainable and Smart Cities for All Ages" (April 2021).

35. Euro-Asian Transport Links at the eighty-third session of the Committee (February 2021), the Governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and Ukraine expressed their interest to provide feedback on and contribute towards the development of a corridor management mechanism on EATL route 3. Following discussions by WP.5 at its thirty-fourth session, the initiative has in the meantime been launched and a progress reported will be delivered at the next session of the Working Party in September 2022.

36. As part of the WP.5 thirty-fourth session (September 2021), the secretariat organized a discussion on interregional connectivity which benefited from the participation of representatives from all five United Nations regional commissions (ECE, ECA, ESCAP, ECLAC and ESCWA) as well as the following member States of the United Nations: Azerbaijan, Egypt, Turkey, Russian Federation and Paraguay. Presentations focused on national and region-specific efforts to establish stronger interregional transport connectivity.

3. International Transport Infrastructure Observatory

37. On the occasion of the WP.5 thirty-fourth session (September 2021), the ECE secretariat, jointly with the secretariats of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) held a joint presentation of the Geographic Information System based International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO) which will be launched in a test phase from early 2022 onwards.

38. ITIO, funded through the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) in the framework of an extrabudgetary project, offers a multi-stakeholder, web-based platform which hosts data on a large variety of transport infrastructure networks and nodes across different modes including road, rail, inland waterways, ports, airports, intermodal terminals, logistics centres and border crossing points. Core ITIO user categories include Governments, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), Regional Cooperation Organizations (RCOs), and the broader public.

4. Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators

39. The thirty-fourth session of WP.5 in September 2021 featured the launch of a set of 215 Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators (SITCIN) which have been developed in the framework of a United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project entitled "Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport related Sustainable Development Goals in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries" implemented by ECE in cooperation with ESCWA and ECLAC.

40. The main objective of the indicators, which have been tested and validated from 2019-2021 in five pilot countries, (i.e. Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Paraguay, and Serbia) is to offer a tool to Governments to measure and qualify their degree of transport connectivity, both domestically and bilaterally/subregionally as well as in terms of soft and hard infrastructure. The indicators also offer Governments the possibility to measure the extent to which they implement the relevant United Nations legal instruments, agreements, and conventions and the degree to which their inland transport systems are inter-operable with the systems within their respective subregions.

41. In order to promote the use of the SITCIN assessment and make it as user-friendly and accessible as possible, an automated SITCIN user and data collection platform as well as an interactive e-learning course have been developed and will be deployed in 2022.

5. Adaptation of transport to climate change

42. The Group of Experts on Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Inland Transport continued its work in 2021 to raise awareness, build capacity and integrate knowledge from countries and the scientific community on climate change impact assessment and adaptation for inland transport. The Group of Experts also supported

organization of an international conference held in Moscow in November 2021 - Assessment of Climate Change Impacts: Deployment of New Technologies and Materials for Maintaining Design Road Characteristics During Adaptation of Transport Infrastructure to Climate Change (https://rosdornii.ru/press-center/news/mezhdunarodnye-novosti/rosdornii-i-evropeyskaya-ekonomicheskaya-komissiya-oon-otkryli-konferentsiyu-po-teme-vozdeystviya-iz/).

H. Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6)

43. A publication, "Road Accident Statistics in Europe and North America" was developed and is set for release early in 2022. The publication compiles data on road traffic accidents across countries in a comparable way. In addition to top-level comparisons, specific inferences can be made due to the data breakdown of number of persons killed by category of road user, type of accident, age group and sex. These data are crucial for understanding road safety trends in countries across the ECE region, and directly measure Sustainable Development Goal indicator 3.6.1 on halving the number of road traffic fatalities by 2030.

44. Additionally, with COVID-19 continuing to cause disruption to transport networks, there was member State interest in improving transport statistics in the short-term, rather than wait for the results of traditional surveys on an annual basis. WP.6 helped countries to integrate new data sources into their statistical production; two webinars were arranged together with the International Transport Forum on new data sources, and the WP.6 session in June covered further examples of how countries can mainstream big data sources into official statistics production, considering issues relating to cost, timeliness, completeness and quality.

I. Working Party on Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs (WP.11)

45. The Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP) is intended to ensure that deep-frozen and chilled foodstuffs are transported efficiently, safely and hygienically, and do not pose a danger to human health.

46. The Islamic Republic of Iran acceded to ATP in 2021, bringing the total number of Contracting Parties to 51. WP.11 adopted provisions to define a procedure for the replacement of fluorinated gases for other refrigerants with lower Global Warming Potential (GWP), that might emerge in the near future, facilitating the reduction of emission and combating climate change. In 2021, the ECE secretariat prepared a revised consolidated edition of the ATP agreement, that will enter into force in 2022 to take account of accepted amendments during 2019-2020.

J. Transport of dangerous goods and classification and labelling of chemicals, including the Work of ECOSOC bodies serviced by the Sustainable Transport Division

47. The Sustainable Transport Division work on administering and making available legal instruments as well as the related ECOSOC recommendations for transport of dangerous goods by all modes, and for the classification and labelling of chemicals contribute to the safe management of chemicals through their life cycle (production, storage, transport, workplace and consumer use)." In 2021, the following international legal instruments regulating air, maritime and land transport of dangerous goods that were updated following the transposition of the provisions contained in the Model Regulations (21st revised edition) and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (8th revised edition) prepared by ECE secretariat in 2020 entered into force or may be applied in a voluntary basis as from 1 January 2021:

- For air and maritime transport, “ICAO Technical Instructions for the safe transport of dangerous goods by air (2021/2022 edition)” and “International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code” (IMDG Code, 2020 edition, including amendment 40-20)
- For inland transport, the provisions of the 2021 edition of ADR, RID and ADN which were adopted by the relevant intergovernmental bodies in 2020, ensure alignment with those in the twentieth revised edition of the Model Regulations and entered into force on 1 January 2021. They became mandatory for the international transport of dangerous goods by road, rail and inland waterways between the contracting parties to these agreements (52 for ADR, 45 for RID and 18 for ADN) and for domestic traffic in the territories of all EU Member States

48. At its 110th session, the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods adopted the revised version of the Road Map for Accession to ADR and Implementation prepared by the secretariat. The Working Party considered that the road map would be a good tool to advance the implementation of the strategy of the ITC until 2030 and recognized its usefulness as a tool for promoting ADR and the work of the Working Party.

49. The ADN Safety and Administrative Committees adopted, at their thirty-seventh and twenty-fifth sessions in January 2021, respectively, as well as at their thirty-eighth and twenty-sixth sessions in August 2021, respectively, a first set of proposals of amendments for entry into force on 1 January 2023 including amendments intended to harmonize ADN provisions with those of ADR and RID.

50. Following the endorsement by the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals of the recommendations made by its two sub-committees, the secretariat prepared, for worldwide implementation and use, new consolidated revised editions of the Model Regulations (Rev.22) and the GHS (Rev.9) as well as an amendment to the 7th revised edition of the Manual of Tests and Criteria.

51. For 2021 the secretariat received so far information about new or updated national and or regional legislation implementing the GHS provisions in Chile, Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the European Union. Detailed information on the implementation of the GHS worldwide is compiled by the secretariat and made publicly on the website.[1]

52. Regarding the provision of technical advice and expertise in 2021, the secretariat was invited to deliver information:

53. Within the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) funded project entitled “Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport related Sustainable Development Goals in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries” (SITCIN), the secretariat conducted a workshop for Georgia’s national administrations on the ADR Dangerous Goods Safety Advisers (DGSA). The workshop aimed to help the national competent authorities to organize the examinations and preparatory trainings for the certification of the DGSAs and to define the necessary structure to manage the certified DGSAs and monitor their regulatory obligations. The secretariat also participated in the workshop organized for national administrations of Georgia and Serbia with a view to clarify applicable regulations for the restriction of dangerous goods in road tunnels and share best practices.

- The secretariat participated in the teleconference organized within the EuroMed Transport Support Project for Lebanon national administrations to raise awareness on the ADR and the necessary steps for its implementation.
- The secretariat also participated in the organisation of the Workshop on Security Aspects of Dangerous Goods Transportation held in conjunction with the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) and made a presentation on the security provisions in transport of dangerous goods by road.

[1] https://unece.org/ghs-implementation-0

- The secretariat contributed several webinars on the GHS for Morocco (organised by OECD in March 2021), Colombia (organised by industry and UNIDO in June 2021); Countries members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) (organised by GCC in July 2021) and on several technical aspects addressed by the Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods in an online seminar for Mexico in February 2021.
- The secretariat also contributed to a seminar on 14 December 2021 organized by ECE together with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on the 2020 Beirut port explosion in particular on lessons learned, experiences and good practices in managing risks of ammonium nitrate storage, handling and transport in port areas, preventing accidents and mitigating their consequences.

54. Due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the official sessions in 2021 of the Working Parties on the transport of dangerous goods were held in a hybrid format, allowing the participation by delegates in person or remotely. The organization of these hybrid sessions caused an additional burden to the secretariat.

55. Following the cancellation of the official sessions of the TDG and GHS sub-committees mid of 2020, the secretariat had set up an online platform to exchange written comments on the proposals that were initially submitted for discussion at the June-July 2020 session. Subsequently several informal virtual discussions have been held to clarify and help progress proposals following the comments received in writing through the online written platform. Since these were considered informal sessions, no decisions could be taken. These arrangements were highly appreciated by delegations as they allowed the sub-committees to make progress on its work program in preparation of the subsequent official sessions. Both sub-committees acknowledged the efforts by the secretariat for having again set up an online platform for the exchange of comments in writing and a number of delegations even suggested using the platform for the usual business of official sessions in future. Due to additional burden of tasks for managing the platform, the secretariat was not in the position to ensure these services in 2021.

K. Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24)

56. The Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) continued its effort to strengthen the frameworks for sustainable intermodal transport and logistics operations as well as the intermodal transport and logistics policies in the ECE region. They also worked to enhance cooperation of ECE member countries on intermodal transport and logistics through the exchange of experiences and good practices.

57. WP.24 held a workshop on recent actions and projects in support of sustainable development of intermodal transport and logistics. The workshop discussed the actions and measures included in the Handbook for national master plans for freight transport and logistics prepared in 2020 and published in early 2021. The various measures and solutions that were discussed to increase the freight transport and logistics sector's efficiency, enhance its environmental performance, create decent jobs, improve professionalism and workers' competences and increase resilience can be viewed here: https://unece.org/info/Transport/Intermodal-Transport/events/358253.

58. WP.24 also supported workshops for Georgia and Kazakhstan, respectively in March and December 2021 to promote the roles of the government and business to make freight transport more sustainable.

59. In its efforts to further strengthen the frameworks for intermodal transport, WP.24 agreed to establish the monitoring mechanism for the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) lines and related installations vis-à-vis their technical parameters by creating the AGTC inventory in GIS environment. This mechanism should be in place by October 2023 by which time data on the AGTC lines and their existing parameters should be pooled into ECE GIS environment.

60. WP.24 began to explore on the challenges faced with intermodal transport document digitalization and on the ways to support automation in intermodal transport and logistics sector.

61. WP.24 also started its discussion on how to further update the Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units so that is could serve the industry even better by referring latest cargo packing and handling practices. It is also exploring possibilities to make the Code available in the mobile application and so be accessible in a more user-friendly.

L. The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29)

1. Vehicle automation

62. Following the establishment of the Working Party on Automated/Autonomous and Connected Vehicles (GRVA), WP.29 and its subsidiary bodies worked according to the Framework Document on Automated/Autonomous Vehicles (ECE/TRANS/WP.29/2019/34/Rev.2). This document, which was endorsed by ITC at its eighty-second session, has guided the work on automated vehicles. This work, led by Co-Chairs from America, Asia and Europe is aimed to be suitable for the countries under the regime of type approval and the countries under the regime of self-certification. These activities form a novel initiative aimed at harmonizing globally automated vehicles regulations and creating a more productive environment for innovation. In 2021, the highlights produced under the Framework Document include the first iteration of the New Assessment/Test Method for Automated Driving (NATM) – Master Document as well as the draft recommendations for automotive cyber security and software update.

63. These highlights noted above follow the achievements in 2020 with the adoption of a first set of UN Regulations for automated vehicles which entered into force on 22 January 2021. These new UN Regulations not only covered the UN Regulation No. 157 on Automated Lane Keeping System (ALKS) – the first level 3 vehicle automation application, with a narrow Operational Design Domain, but also forward-looking UN Regulations Nos. 155 and 156 on Cyber Security and on Over the Air Software Updates respectively. UN Regulation No. 157 was amended since its adoption to include provisions for the approval of heavy vehicles equipped with ALKS. Further developments are in discussion to increase the maximal speed of operation as well as the inclusion of lane change provisions.

2. 1958 Agreement

64. Two new UN Regulations entered into force in 2021 aiming at the protection of vulnerable road users:

(a) UN Regulation No. 158 on devices for Reversing Motion and motor vehicles with regard to the driver's awareness of vulnerable road users behind vehicles; and,

(b) UN Regulation No. 159 on the Moving Off Information System for the Detection of Pedestrians and Cyclists.

65. WP. 29 adopted at the March 2021 session the following four new UN Regulations, which; entered into force on 30 September 2021:

(a) UN Regulation No. 160 on Event Data Recorder;

(b) UN Regulation No. 161 on Devices against Unauthorized Use;

(c) UN Regulation No. 162 on Immobilizers; and,

(d) UN Regulation No. 163 on Vehicle Alarm Systems.

66. Existing UN Regulations were updated by 134 amendments, which adapt the regulations to the most recent technological innovations and introduce more stringent limits aimed at increasing both the safety and environmental performance of vehicles.

3. 1997 Agreement

67. WP.29 started the consideration of the draft framework document on vehicle whole-life compliance, which provides for a compliance regime for vehicles from type-approval via periodic technical inspections, roadside technical inspections until its end-of-life and scrapping by applying a holistic approach.

4. 1998 Agreement

68. In 2021, WP.29 concluded several years of work on amendments to UN Global Technical Regulations No. 4 (Test procedure for compression-ignition (C.I.) engines and positive-ignition (P.I.) engines fuelled with natural gas (NG) or liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) regarding the emission of pollutants (WHDC)) and one Mutual Resolution on Panoramic Sunroof Glazing. These were adopted during 2021. This will adapt the UN GTRs to the most recent technological innovations and introduce more stringent requirements aimed at increasing both the safety and environmental performance of vehicles.

M. Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30)

69. In the field of border crossing facilitation, the main event of 2021 was, undoubtedly, the entry into force of a package of amendment proposals, introducing the computerized TIR procedure, known as the eTIR procedure, in the legal text of the TIR Convention, 1975 and, in particular new Annex 11. It happened on 25 May 2021. The eTIR procedure further secures the TIR system, making it more efficient, competitive and allowing paperless and contactless border crossing operations, which are more important than ever since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. By keeping drivers and customs officers safe, eTIR is an important tool to ensure that borders remain open.

70. At its 158th session (October 2021), WP.30 welcomed a complete set of conceptual, functional and technical eTIR specifications, version 4.3.[2]. WP.30 decided to transmit the eTIR specifications to the, newly established, Technical Implementation Body (TIB) and, ultimately, the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention (AC.2) for adoption by the countries bound by Annex 11.

71. Further to the introduction of eTIR, the TIR secretariat has engaged in several activities to assist countries to start interconnection projects between their national customs Information Technology (IT) systems and the eTIR international system. The eTIR international system is a centralized platform, developed and maintained under the auspices of ECE, that ensures the secure exchange of data about the international transit of goods, vehicles or containers according to the provisions of Annex 11 of the TIR Convention between national customs systems and allows customs to manage the data on guarantees, issued by guarantee chain to holders authorized to use the TIR system. In the course of 2021, the following countries have indicated an interest in such interconnection project, either in the form of a request for additional information or the willingness to start a connection project: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The following ten countries already started an interconnection project: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan. To support the interconnection projects, the TIR secretariat prepared and published a total of nineteen technical guides.[3]

72. In the course of 2021, the secretariat, with financial support from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) launched a dedicated, modern and business-oriented website for eTIR. [4]This website works as an e-learning platform and it includes, in addition to the already mentioned technical guides, case studies, news, interviews, access to

[2] See Informal documents WP.30/GE.1 (2021) No. 11 (Introduction), No. 13 (concepts), No. 14 (functional specifications) and No. 12 (technical specifications)

[3] See unece.org/etir-specifications

[4] See unece.org/transport/etir

different services such as the International TIR Date Bank (ITDB) etc. The eTIR website does not replace the regular ECE website, where all documentation of intergovernmental bodies will still be uploaded. The address of the new web site is: etir.org.

73. On 22 November 2021, ECE and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to implement the TIR Convention and, more specifically, Annex 11 of the TIR Convention, establishing the eTIR procedure, by ensuring the interconnection of IRU systems to the eTIR international system as well as the interconnection of as many as possible national customs systems to the eTIR international system following the eTIR technical specifications.

74. Another improatnat development for the future of the TIR Convention was the entry into force, on 1 June 2021, of an amendment to Annex 6 of the Convention, introducing new Explanatory Note 0.49. This Explanatory Note grants operators greater facilities within the context of the TIR Convention, such as, but not limited to, the possibility to become authorized consignee or consignor, under the application of a set of strict requirements, prescribed the competent authorities.

75. On 20 October 2021, ECE and the International Touring Alliance / International Automobile Federation (AIT/FIA) signed a MoU on the revitalization and digitalization of relevant United Nations inland transport conventions and, in particular the development of an eCPD (Carnet de Passage en Douane) system.

76. Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat, with the support of the other regional commissions and the private sector, maintains the Observatory on Border Crossing Status due to COVID-19[5], with information from almost all United Nations Member States, providing daily updates on the status of inland transport border crossings. Updated information is collected and provided for 174 United Nations Member States. The Observatory is officially supported by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), World Customs Organization (WCO), International Transport Forum (ITF), International Road Transport Union (IRU), Federation International de l automobile (FIA), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and International Union of Railways (UIC). The secretariat, in collaboration with IRU also published a flyer on how TIR keeps borders open in the age of COVID-19.[6]

[5] unece.org/transport/border-crossing-facilitation

[6] unece.org/DAM/trans/bcf/news/documents/TIR_during_COVID-19.pdf