75 Years of Inland Transport Committee
75 Documents that Changed the World of Transport

The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was formally established in July 1947. For 75 years, ITC has provided a platform for intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate and develop international transport while simultaneously improving its safety and environmental performance. The main results of this critical work are reflected in the 59 United Nations international agreements and conventions which provide a legal framework and technical regulations for everything from the development of international road, rail, inland navigation and intermodal transport, to dangerous goods transport and vehicle construction. The Committee functions with the support of the work of its 20 Working Parties which are in turn supported by more than 40 formal and informal expert groups and in cooperation with 11 Treaty bodies (Administrative Committees).

Some of the most emblematic moments of the 75-year history of the Committee and its Working Parties are included in this publication. During the review of the history of ITC, it became obvious that the 75th anniversary presents a unique opportunity to celebrate the Committee's decades of achievements in shaping regional and global regulatory governance of inland transport. It is also the appropriate moment to reflect on the strategic direction of the ITC on the road to 2030, with a sense of urgency. A critical worldwide situation has emerged in environmental, social and economic development, further exasperated by the economic and social disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, megatrends - from demographic trends to new technological breakthroughs - that reshape the underlying "rules of the game" for transport and mobility are creating new dynamics, new opportunities and new challenges. Additionally, the development of inland transport also proved to be a challenge for traffic safety. Decoupling traffic increase and road crashes and even targeting vision zero are essential conditions for sustainable mobility. With new urbanism, walking and cycling are having a renaissance and are recognised as fundamental for sustainable urban mobility.

This is the context in which the Committee's dynamic role must evolve. This process of evolution is guided by the ITC Strategy until 2030, the adoption of which in 2019 prompted the continued expansion of the Conventions under the Committee's purview towards eventually covering all 193 UN Member States. Through this strategic direction on the road to 2030, ITC as the UN platform for inland transport stays true to its 75-year history that changed the world of transport and impacts the daily lives of billions around the world. It will ensure its continued contribution to the needs and priorities of its members and contracting parties, by leading change in inland transport, and by providing a level-playing field and inclusive platform of reliable solutions at a time when these are needed the most by the international community.
Foreword

The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe was created seventy-five years ago in the aftermath of the second World War to help promote recovery and prosperity in a war-ravaged Europe and beyond. Since the inception of the Committee, its core task has been to systematically address all elements related to the safety, facilitation and security of the international transport of goods and people via road, rail, inland waterways and other connections.

Today, the world is at another pivotal moment. Global challenges, from climate change to inequality and the economic and social disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, are threatening worldwide efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. With sustainable development at risk, coordinated global efforts among governments and key stakeholders are increasingly necessary.

The transport sector remains central – as part of the problem and the solution. Inland transport, for example, contributes significantly to global greenhouse gas emissions. As reflected in the discussions of the second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference, it is crucial that transport be integrated into a broader sustainable infrastructure agenda, especially in developing countries.

Sustainable transport is a key element of promoting sustainability, and the ITC is an established asset. As the only United Nations body specializing in inland transport, the ITC has a major role in shaping the international regulatory framework for inland transport and leading the global drive for more coordination, harmonization, and agreements among governments. May the ITC long continue its work to promote inclusive sustainable development for all people on a healthy planet.

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Introduction
The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was formally established in July 1947, four months after the founding of UNECE. It took over the roles of the European Central Inland Transport Organization (ECITO) which was established to restore international transport and support the reconstruction of Europe. One of the primary objectives of ITC was to stimulate international cooperation and promote agreements on long term inland transport policy in Europe.

Over the past 75 years, the ITC programme of work has been dynamically evolving in response to emerging demands. At the same time, it has remained a centre for inland transport. In essence, the main outcome of the work of ITC is a set of constantly renewed and updated international agreements, conventions, and other international legal instruments, as well as recommendations on key inland transport issues.

Today, ITC services 59 United Nations inland transport conventions. Several of the Conventions are global either by design or because their success has caused them to grow beyond the UNECE region. In addition to negotiating the amendments to existing legal instruments, ITC has been active in facilitating new legal instruments. Its normative activities are enhanced with developing methodologies, guidelines, and definitions on subjects such as transport planning, data collection and the collection of transport statistics.

ITC functions with the support of the work of its 20 Working Parties which are in turn supported by more than 40 formal and informal expert groups and in cooperation with 11 Treaty bodies (Administrative Committees).

Annual sessions of ITC are the crown moments of this comprehensive intergovernmental work, when results from all subsidiary bodies, as well as the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division, are presented to ITC members and contracting parties.

In addition to servicing ITC and its subsidiary bodies, the Division also services other intergovernmental bodies including the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, as well as 11 treaty bodies of United Nations legal instruments and the TIR Executive Board.

In cooperation with ESCAP, UNECE Transport supports the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. It also annually alternates with ESCAP as the secretariat to the SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity.

In cooperation with the UNECE Environment Division and WHO Europe, the Division services the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP). It ensures the management and oversight of the Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) and the Trans-European Railway (TER) projects.

Finally, since 2015, UNECE hosts the secretariat of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety and since 2018 the secretariat of the United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF). Additionally, as part of the United Nations, the secretariat has been responsible for supporting the accession and implementation of the legal instruments through policy dialogues, technical assistance, and analytical activities with the priority of promoting regional and subregional cooperation and capacity-building.

All these different bodies work in symbiosis, which is facilitated by the services ensured by the common vision and goals. The intra-Committee and cross sectoral coordination activities ensure high level of synergy and results that facilitate progress by its Working Parties in several areas, and especially in promoting multi-modal thinking, Intelligent Transport Systems and innovative technologies. Thus, ITC is much more than its constituent parts.

Some of the most emblematic moments of the 75-year history of the Committee and its Working Parties are included in this publication, organized into four periods:

- 1947: The establishment of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and UN activities on transport
- 1947-1991: The formation of the international regulatory system for inland transport
- 1991-2019: A transformed world at the turn of the century and the evolution of the international regulatory system
The establishment of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and UN activities on transport
The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was established on 28 March 1947 by a Resolution of the fourth session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Four months later, in July 1947, the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of UNECE was formally established by a Resolution of the UNECE as its subsidiary body "...specially qualified to deal with inland transport problems...". The scope and purpose of ITC, as defined by the Resolution, was to act in a consultative and advisory capacity in the field of inland transport in Europe, and to thereby:

- Provide a forum for the discussion among governments about subjects of a common interest in the field of inland transport in Europe.
- Stimulate international cooperation in European inland transport.
- Promote agreements between Governments on long-term inland transport policy in Europe.
- Complete the essential tasks of the European Central Inland Transport Organization (ECITO) left unfinished when that organization was terminated.
Immediately after World War II, the reconstruction of existing transport systems and the revival of trade was the main preoccupation of ITC, which therefore concentrated its efforts on emergency measures to revive transport systems, particularly road and railways. It helped to draw up agreements on problems created by the dispersal of railway wagons and locomotives and made arrangements to facilitate international freight transport by road. It is no accident that among the first subsidiary bodies established by ITC in its first sessions in 1947 and 1948 where those dealing with road transport, rail transport, customs formalities, transport of perishable goods and statistics.

In parallel, between 1948 and 1959, transport and communication at a global level was addressed by the Transport and Communication Commission of ECOSOC. The Commission held nine sessions, organized conferences and experts’ meetings that led to a number of conventions. The Inland Transport Committee of UNECE cooperated closely with this Commission.

In 1950, after examining the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Conference on Road and Motor Transport at its fourth session, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to study the transport of dangerous goods. At the next session of the Commission in 1951, a preliminary report of the Secretary-General led the Commission to recommend to ECOSOC that the problems of transport of dangerous goods should be examined and harmonized regulations for their safe transport, applicable worldwide for all modes, should be developed.

Two years later, on 15 April 1953, ECOSOC in its resolution 468G(XV) requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. Ten years later the Secretary-General decided to transfer the responsibility for the secretariat of the Committee to UNECE. Since 1963, these services have been provided by the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division and the recommendations made by the Committee have been taken into account by ITC subsidiary bodies to ensure harmonization of the inland transport of dangerous goods.

After the termination of the Transport and Communication Commission in 1959, its functions were assumed partly by ECOSOC and partly by UN regional economic commissions. From that point on, ITC has been deeply involved in the development of the regulatory framework for transport and servicing global conventions for transport and international movement of goods and people. The functional development of the subsidiary structure of ITC reflects these dynamics, as can be seen by the Working Parties that were established over the years by the Committee to ensure the achievement of the Committee’s mission and evolving priorities.
The formation of the international regulatory system for inland transport
Some of the early milestones achieved by ITC in allowing vehicles to move by road internationally includes: the mutual recognition in different countries of national driving permits and national registration certificates; the establishment of an intra-European system of insurance for motorists against third party risks (the green card system); the reduction or abolition of double taxation on vehicles engaged in international transport; abolition of discrimination based on the nationality of the carrier and in the taxing of international transport operations; and regulation of the hours of driving for crews of vehicles engaged in international road transport.

From the outset, ITC also began work on road safety. In 1949, the United Nations Conference on Road and Motor Transport asked the UNECE to draw up a Convention on Road Traffic and a Protocol on Road Signs and Signals. The aim of the Protocol was “to ensure the safety of road traffic and to facilitate international road traffic by a uniform system of road signalling”. This Protocol established the list of road signs that are now familiar to drivers and pedestrians alike all over the world. The harmonization of road signs has prevented innumerable accidents and saved countless lives.

At one time, the laws governing the relationship between road carriers and consignees or consigners were different among countries. Accommodating for these differences was hampering international transport of goods, passengers, and luggage by road. The 1956 Convention on the Contract for International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), and the 1973 Convention on the Contract for International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Road (CVR) (modified with their respective 1978 Protocols) defined these relationships and facilitated international road transport by providing a common transport contract, including a common consignment note (in the case of goods) and harmonized liability limit.

International road travel and transport had by the mid-60s reached a stage where they would be impeded if traffic rules, road signs and signals and regulations for road vehicle equipment varied from country to country. Due to complexities in amending the 1949 Convention, in 1968, a new convention on road traffic and another on road signs and signals (the “Vienna Conventions”) were negotiated in a global diplomatic conference under ECOSOC and with support from ITC. The Vienna Conventions entered into force in 1978. Two European agreements were prepared in 1971 supplementing these conventions. Work in this field has been kept up to date first by a group of experts on road traffic safety, which later evolved into the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1).
Also in 1975, preparatory studies were carried out on the construction of a system of motorways linking the Baltic region with South-Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Western Asia. They led to the establishment of a joint UNECE/UNDP regional cooperative project for a Trans-European North-South Motorway (TEM) in which originally ten directly concerned countries participated. A project office was established in Warsaw. By the end of the second phase of the project (1984), most of the work on the planning, design and construction of the motorway was completed. Further studies aiming at developing solutions to problems concerning the use of transport infrastructure in Europe were carried out by ITC in 1979. They addressed international road transport, including transit traffic and international financing, and the harmonization and simplification of road transport documents and procedures.

A Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic was first published under the Working Party for Road Transport (SC.1) in 1978. The Resolution has been updated on several occasions, latest in 2010, to take into account innovations, new developments, and successive amendments to the Convention on Road Traffic since 1968. The aim of the Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1) is to provide Member States with guidance on a framework for traffic rules, rules of behaviour, user communication, education and the safety of road infrastructure and vehicles. A consolidated resolution on the facilitation of road transport was adopted in 1984, grouping the essential provisions appearing in the 122 resolutions on this subject hitherto adopted by the ITC Working Party on Road Transport.

Border crossing facilitation

Work in the area of border crossing facilitation was very pronounced in the early years of ITC. Customs procedures tended to be lengthy and cumbersome because of differences in national laws that were already heavily marked by the protectionist policies of the pre-war era and the national security controls of wartime. The Working Party on Customs Formalities was established in 1948. The objective was to simplify and harmonize the various national laws and rules to reduce the formalities and speed up international traffic.

The first two border crossing facilitation conventions were concluded in 1952, one concerning the Crossing of Frontiers for Goods and the other for Passengers and Baggage Carried by Rail.

Norway signs Additional Protocol to Customs Convention, 1954
A convention defining the conditions to be fulfilled by containers acceptable for transport under customs seal (Customs Convention on Containers) was adopted also in 1956, while a revised version entered into force in 1975. A European Convention on the Customs Treatment of Pallets used in International Transport was adopted in 1960.

In 1959, a new legal instrument was developed, the Customs Convention on the International Transports of Goods under Cover of TIR (Transports Internationaux Routiers or International Road Transport). The TIR Convention, was a major milestone in the facilitation of the transit of goods originally across Europe. Under TIR the international carriage of goods by road is allowed under customs seal from a customs office in the country of departure to a customs office in the country of destination, without any intermediate checks of the goods in the countries the goods pass through. All the driver must do in the transit countries is to show the TIR Carnet, which gives details of the cargo. The International Road Union (IRU), a non-profit organization, delivers the TIR Carnets through its national associations and guarantees the duties and taxes at risk during international transit. This means that, if a lorry enters a transit country and does not show up at an exit customs point, the customs of this country will claim the duties corresponding to the cargo declared on the TIR Carnet from IRU.

The 1959 Convention was revised in 1975, embodying several modifications reflecting technological progress, changes in customs techniques and increases in container transport. This new convention entered into force in 1978. While originally drawn up for European road transport, the TIR system has gradually extended to other areas of the world including the Middle East, East Asia, Africa and South America. Under the new Convention, the system may be applied to goods carried by road vehicles, combinations of vehicles as well as containers. It also allows for the use of the TIR Carnet for all modes of transport, provided that some portion of the journey is made by road.

In 1982, ITC adopted the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, which entered into force in 1985 and is designed to reduce the formalities as well as the number and destination of controls, by coordinating control procedures and their methods of application. The convention applies to all goods being imported or exported, or in transit, when being moved across one or more maritime, air and inland frontiers.

Previously, in 1949, a provisional agreement had defined the concessions granted to tourists and set out the provisions regarding the use of triptychs and carnets de passage en douanes for motor vehicles. This agreement served as a basis for the 1954 Convention concerning Customs Facilities for Touring and the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, as well as, the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles in 1956.
Vehicle regulations

In 1952, the Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles was established. Known today as the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), it draws up international regulations and recommendations for the construction of motor vehicles and their equipment and parts. The purpose of these regulations is to improve safety and limit the harmful effects of motor vehicles on the environment. The Agreement concerning the adoption of Uniform Conditions of Approval and Reciprocal Recognition of Approval for Motor Vehicle Equipment and Parts was concluded in 1958 and revised in 1995 and 2017.

It provides the legal and administrative framework for establishing UN Regulations (annexed to the agreement) for wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted and/or used on wheeled vehicles. It provides uniform performance-oriented test provisions, administrative procedures for granting type approvals, and for conformity of production and the mutual recognition of type approvals granted by Contracting Parties who implement UN Regulations.

These UN Regulations constitute the international legislative framework for the approval of vehicles and their equipment and parts. The international recognition of type approval, without further tests or formalities, facilitates international trade and helps maintain high standards of safety and environmental protection.

Some of the most important vehicle regulations for road safety adopted by 1991 include Regulations Nos. 14 and 16 on Safety Belt Anchorages and Safety Belts, Regulation No. 22 on Protective Helmets and Visors, Regulations Nos. 17 and 25 on Seats and Head Restraints, Regulation No. 43 on Safety Glazing and Regulation No. 44 on Child Restraint Systems.

By the end of 2021, a total of 163 UN Regulations have been established and are annexed to the 1958 Agreement. Existing UN Regulations are in a continuing process of updating to keep pace with technological development. In addition, eight Resolutions were established providing recommendations for the implementation and application of the three UN Vehicle Agreements and their respective UN Regulations, UN Rules and UN Global Technical Regulations.

Transport of dangerous goods

At the UNECE level, the need to address transport of dangerous goods by rail, road and inland waterways in a coordinated manner was already addressed by ITC during its sixth session held in September 1950. At that time, the international transport of dangerous goods by rail was governed by Annex I to the International Convention concerning the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Rail (CIM, also known as the Bern Convention) developed under the auspices of the Central Office for the International Transport by Rail. Transport of dangerous goods by inland waterways was addressed to some extent by different pieces of legislation at the international and national level.

Work for the development of two separate conventions for transport of dangerous goods by road and by inland waterways, based on the provisions for rail transport, started in the early 50’s.

At the same time, the recommendation by the Transport and Communication Commission of ECOSOC in 1951 that the problems of transport of dangerous goods should be examined and that harmonized regulations for their safe transport, applicable worldwide for all modes, should be developed led to the establishment of the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods in 1953. The initial mandate given to the ECOSOC Committee was further enlarged by the Council over the years to cover other aspects of the transport of dangerous goods such as packing issues, mutually acceptable performance tests for packages, construction, and testing and use of tanks. In 1959, recognizing the necessity for coordination with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the agency was entrusted with drafting recommendations on the transport of radioactive material. Since then, these recommendations are consistent with the principles adopted by the Committee, established in consultation with the United Nations and the specialized agencies concerned and incorporated in the Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. This also led to continuous cooperation among the Committee, the International Maritime Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and UNECE ITC bodies dealing with inland transport of dangerous goods.
The European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of dangerous goods by road (ADR) was concluded in 1957 and entered into force on 29 January 1968. In 1975, the Agreement itself was amended by the Protocol amending article 14(3), regarding the process of adoption and entry into force of the amendments. The protocol entered into force on 19 April 1985. In 1992, the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods decided to restructure parts of ADR in order to make their requirements more accessible, user-friendly and easily applicable not only to international road transport but to domestic traffic as well. The restructuring exercise concluded in 2000 and the resulting structure has been maintained since then (see period 1991-2019 in this publication).

In 1970, the Agreement on Special Equipment for the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Use of such Equipment for the International Transport of some of those Foodstuffs was adopted. On 1 September 1970, the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for Such Carriage (ATP) was adopted, entering into force in 1976. In 1981, Morocco acceded to the ATP, becoming the first Contracting Party to the Agreement from outside the UNECE region.

Work on the development of a European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of dangerous goods by inland waterways (ADN) started in parallel to that of the ADR in the early 50's. However, ITC decided in 1973 to work on a resolution addressing transport of dangerous goods by inland waterways instead of pursuing the development of an agreement similar to ADR. Three years later, on 6 February 1976, ITC adopted Resolution No. 223 entitled European Provisions concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways and containing two technical annexes. Twenty-four years later, in 2000, these provisions were replaced by the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous goods by Inland Waterways (ADN) (see period 1991-2019 in this publication).

In addition to the development and updating of provisions applicable to road and inland waterways, ITC subsidiary bodies dealing with transport of dangerous goods continued to ensure their alignment and synchronization with the provisions applicable to rail transport, as well as with those applicable to all modes of transport developed by the ECOSOC Committee of Experts (see also period 1991-2019 in this publication).

The work of ITC on the transport of perishable foodstuffs goes back to 1948, when post World War II food shortages ravaged Europe. In that context, ITC decided in 1948 to set up the Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs, commonly known as WP.11, to look into the nature and extent of international traffic in perishable foodstuffs. The aim would be to ascertain operating difficulties and to study transport requirements for subsequent years.

From 1948 to 1962, WP.11 issued several recommendations consisting of methods for everything from obtaining adequate information on the movement of perishable goods, the packing of fruits and vegetables, to the transportation by semi-trailer lorries. In this time, WP.11 also drafted of the annex dealing with the transport of perishable foodstuffs that was appended to the Set of Rules for International Road Transport (E/ECE/TRANS/455, ITC eleventh session, Resolution 179).

In 1962, the Agreement on Special Equipment for the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Use of such Equipment for the International Transport of some of those Foodstuffs was adopted.

On 1 September 1970, the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for Such Carriage (ATP) was adopted, entering into force in 1976. In 1981, Morocco acceded to the ATP, becoming the first Contracting Party to the Agreement from outside the UNECE region.

The ATP sets uniform standards for the transportation of perishable foodstuffs, ensuring that deep-frozen and chilled foodstuffs are transported efficiently, safely and do not pose a danger to human health. The ATP mandates that specific types of equipment should be used to transport a selective range of perishable foodstuffs internationally and that such equipment should be regularly tested. The ATP applies to transport by road, rail, and also for sea crossings of less than 150 km.
On 10 January 1952 two rail-related conventions were opened for signature, the International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage carried by Rail, and the International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Goods Carried by Rail. These were followed by additional conventions with direct relevance for railway transport: the 1956 Customs Convention on Containers, the 1958 Customs Convention concerning Spare Parts Used for Repairing Europ Wagons, and the 1960 European Convention on Customs Treatment of Pallets Used in International Transport (see also border crossing section).

By regulating the above-mentioned technical specifications, the ATP also contributes to the overall reduction of food waste due to inadequate conditions of transport. Wasting foodstuffs is also a waste of very scarce or non-renewable production resources, such as land, water, energy, fertilizers and pesticides, and its decomposition contributes to global warming. Food security is also affected by the waste of foodstuffs.

WP.11 developed and regularly updates a Handbook intended to facilitate the interpretation and harmonized application of the Agreement. Comments included in the Handbook reflect the opinion of WP.11 related to the application of the ATP provisions, considering technological developments and economical requirements. Certain recommended practices might also be included.

To date, the ATP has 50 Contracting Parties with some countries adopting the ATP as the basis for their national legislation.

**Railway transport**

As in the case of road transport mentioned in the previous section, the revitalization of European railways was a key ITC priority from the outset. One of the fundamental driving forces for the establishment of ITC was to assist in redistributing displaced rail freight wagons across the continent after World War II. An agreement between six international non-governmental railway organizations was concluded in 1947 to ensure the coordination and unity in action while avoiding the duplication of work.

The Committee has subsequently initiated, supported and approved, on behalf of Governments, the work carried out by the international railway organizations on subjects such as the adoption of uniform technical specifications for rolling stock, establishment of a wagon pool among ten European railway systems (EUROP pool), the use of computers in rail transport, technical and organizational measures for achieving high speed in rail transport, and the preparation of studies on automatic coupling.
Between 1956 and 1969, a Group of Experts from UNECE member countries met to study technical questions concerning railways, such as: the mechanization of track operations and of railway loading and unloading operations; the rationalization of railway operations to reduce costs; the optimum duration of traffic interruptions required for work on the track; the use of plastics in the construction of passenger coaches, goods wagons and containers; and efforts to unify signalling procedures.

The work on railways in the 1970s focused primarily on facilitating border crossing procedures for international rail freight as part of broader conventions such as the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, of 1982, as well as initiating the preparatory work for the development of a European railway network.

In 1985, work was concluded on a European railway network, as determined by and thanks to the adoption of the European agreement on main international railway lines (AGC), with the objective of creating a homogenous railway network across Europe. The agreement identifies railway lines of major international importance (E-rail network) as well as technical characteristics to be adopted when developing the railway infrastructure. It provided a basis for coordinated action towards the modernization of the European railway network. The AGC has undergone major revision in recent years in order to include the international rail networks of the Caucasus and Central Asian countries. With the conclusion of the work on the network, attention turned to the location and role of marshalling yards for international rail traffic. These have been established based on the operational needs of European railways and not from the standpoint of customs and related regulations.

As the third major inland transport mode, work of the UNECE in the inland waterway sector began in 1956 with the establishment of the Sub-committee (later – Working Party) on Inland Water Transport (SC.3). Resolution No. 1 of the Working Party on Standardization of Signalling Systems on Inland Waterways, adopted in 1957, introduced for the first time a standardized system of signs and signals on European inland waterways. This lead to the drawing up of the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI) in 1962. In 1982, SC.3 adopted resolution No. 22 on the unified rules for signs and signals on inland waterways (SIGNI) and in 1985 a revised text of CEVNI followed as resolution No. 24.


In 1973, work began on introducing an internationally recognized certificate for pleasure craft operators.

The linking of large river basins to establish a coherent navigable network in Europe was a high priority. In 1969, a study of the economic implications of the connection between the Rhine, Main and Danube rivers was completed and discussed at ITC. The Federal Republic of Germany completed the connection in 1992.
It is interesting to note that the issue of environmental pollution was raised for the first time in the UNECE at a meeting of experts on inland waterway problems, in 1955. The experts were concerned that the pollution of European rivers might be blamed on inland navigation vessels which could lead to restrictions on their movement at a time when it was already difficult to compete with rail transport. In fact, inland navigation vessels bore little responsibility for the pollution of European rivers, which was mainly caused by the enormous quantities of urban and industrial waste. The issue was placed before the ITC, followed by the discussion at the Commission and as a result, a conference on water pollution in Europe was held in 1956. This highlighted the problems and called for rules for the control of pollution on international watercourses to urgently be introduced. Subsequently, SC.3 developed general principles for the prevention of water pollution from inland navigation vessels, adopted in 1981.

**Combined transport**

Already in 1951, by mean of Resolution No. 93 of 7 July 1951, a Working Party on Containers “to determine and study the various problems requiring governmental action in this field and to draft a general agreement on customs requirements for international transport of goods by containers.”

The Working Party has been renamed several times over the years, before the ITC renamed the Group of Rapporteurs to the Group of Experts on Combined Transport in 1979. In 1988, the Group of Experts, together with other ITC subsidiary bodies, was again renamed to become the Working Party on Combined Transport.

In the 1980s, work focused on technical and policy measures to promote combined transport services in Europe, including standardization of equipment, particularly container dimensions, combined transport statistics and facilitation of documentation required for the use of several modes of transport.

In 1987, the Working Party decided to identify a network of important international combined transport lines that would comply with commonly accepted uniform standards in line with prevailing best practices with the objective to improve quality standards for international combined transport services and to address the existing divergent “market conditions”. This work led to the adoption, in February 1991, of the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) which entered into force in October 1993. The AGTC currently has 33 Contracting Parties. The Working Party constantly monitored application of the AGTC standards and parameters in UNECE member States, initially through the so-called Yellow Book series and, as of 2006, through an on-line web-tool maintained by UNECE.

**Inland transport statistics and economics**

In the immediate aftermath of the establishment of ITC, obtaining reliable statistics was a key priority for the Committee’s members. As a result, one of the first subsidiary bodies established by ITC in 1948 was the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6).

The Committee endeavoured to complete and improve the international comparability of national transport statistics in particular those concerning road traffic, Road transport of goods and container transport. Towards this end, in 1969, to assist countries in developing their national statistics, a European programme of the basic (census type) inland transport statistics was prepared in cooperation with the conference of European statisticians.

Statistics of road traffic accidents were also published annually since 1956 as Road Traffic Accident Statistics in Europe and North America (RAS). The publication analyses, inter alia, the causes of accidents, the nature of the road and other criteria of relevance to road safety. The ABTS was computerized in 1987.

Several studies were undertaken in order to construct data sets over time for inland transport. Censuses of traffic on main international traffic arteries in Europe (“E” Roads) were published every five years. ITC also developed standards and methodologies for statistics concerning combined transport and the use of energy in transport as well as a glossary of terms used in Inland transport to establish the uniform terminology and set of definitions for the transport sector.

Governments showed great interest in the question of infrastructure costs and methods of calculating how much to invest in different modes of transport. To address this ITC carried out studies on track costs on roads and inland waterways and the methods for calculating the different costs of using and or combining different transportation modes. The question of modal split was also considered in the study of east-west European goods traffic flows, which reviewed the adequacy of the transport infrastructure to cope with such flows, to provide guidance on what measures may be required to accommodate them in the future.

In addition to the methodological studies of transport costs, the Committee prepared studies on the economic principles governing the coordination of various means of transport, studies analysing advantages and disadvantages of alternative investments, and studied evaluation techniques for transport infrastructure investments in order to develop multi-criteria analysis models. Trends in the volume of inland transport and economic indices were also studied.
A transformed world at the turn of the century and the evolution of the international regulatory system
The extraordinary and sudden developments in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union that started in 1989 constituted a major turning point in Europe's post-World War II history. These events were particularly relevant for UNECE and ITC as the outcome meant numerous new member States joined UNECE. Additionally, many new and existing member countries initiated their transitions from a centrally planned to a market economy.

In addition to TEM and TER, the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) project started to assist multi-country coordination of infrastructure development in order to meet the demand for fast-growing trade. The EATL project was UNECE and UNESCAP directly continuing a United Nations Development Account (UNDA) funded global connectivity project. In close cooperation with designated national focal points in the Euro-Asian region, the EATL project has identified main Euro-Asian road and rail routes for priority development and cooperation, nine rail and nine road corridors that link the two continents. It also aims at coordination and facilitation of financing of infrastructure projects, as well as facilitating and removing physical and administrative bottlenecks when crossing borders in overland transport.

In addition to the functions stemming from the new political geography in the UNECE region, since the beginning of the 1990s the work of ITC was profoundly influenced by two topics that have affected all sectors of the economy and segments of society, namely the impact of inland transport systems on the environment and applications of information and communication technologies. The former represents a challenge in terms of the need to improve the environmental sustainability of transport, particularly by reducing consumption of fossil fuels in road transport. The integration of new information and communication technologies and transport engineering through Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), meant among other things, digitalization of processes and documents (e-TIR or e-CMR). However, these new communications technologies are also an opportunity, not only for improving environmental sustainability, but also for making inland transport systems safer, more secure, efficient and accessible to all stakeholders.
Together with the advisory and technical assistance activities, ITC continued its work on developing legal instruments, with two European inland transport infrastructure agreements adopted in the 1990s. The European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) was adopted in 1991 and entered into force in 1993. The provisions of the Agreement represent a coordinated international plan for the development and operation of a network of important international combined transport lines and related installations (international combined transport network). The international combined transport network consists of the railway lines, combined transport terminals, border crossing points, gauge interchange stations and ferry links/ports important for international combined transport. In 1992, recognizing the growing importance of European inland waterways and coastal routes for intermodal and container transport, a report on minimum technical requirements for such transport services led to the preparation of a Protocol on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the AGTC that was adopted in January 1997 and opened for signature at the Ministerial Transport and Environment Conference in Vienna later that year. Since 1996, work has been undertaken in collaboration with ILO and IMO on safe stowage and securing of freight in cargo transport units.

Since recently, work under the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) has been carried out in four clusters: monitoring, review and updating of the AGTC Agreement and the Protocol to AGTC; development of policies for intermodal transport; addressing emerging issues in freight transport and logistics; and review and update of the Code of Practice for packing of cargo in intermodal transport units.

Working to create a unified railway law is also a primary objective to enhance regional and continental connectivity. In 2013, a joint declaration by Ministers of Transport was signed to express their interest to establish a level playing field for railways through a unified railway law on the contractual relations between shipper and rail operator.

Information technology is also being used to enable easier access to information about transport infrastructures. ITC (WP.24 and the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) launched in 2007 a Web Tool for monitoring the pan-European Rail Network (AGC, 1985) and the Combined Transport (AGTC) network - Electronic Inventory of standards and parameters of the AGC and AGTC Agreements. The inventory provides information on the performance of the AGC and AGTC networks and shows the degree of compliance with the infrastructure standards stipulated in the AGC and AGTC Agreements. This electronic system replaced the previous “Yellow Book” series of publications.

Steps to develop infrastructure connections between UNECE member States and between the sub-regions would be incomplete without mechanisms to facilitate border crossing and customs procedures. An extensive revision process of the TIR system started in 1996 aiming at introducing controlled access for national associations and transport operators into the TIR system, providing more transparency in the functioning of the international guarantee system and establishing an international supervisory organ. The TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) was established in 1999 to monitor the application of the TIR Convention and functioning of the guarantee system. TIRExB has been established by the contracting parties to the TIR Convention (Article 58) to enhance international cooperation among customs authorities in the application of the TIR Convention. It also establishes an inter-governmental organ to supervise and provide support in the application of the TIR procedure and the international guarantee system. TIRExB is mandated to supervise the centralized printing and distribution of TIR Carnets, oversee the operation of the international guarantee and insurance system and coordinate and foster exchange of intelligence among customs and other governmental authorities. Simultaneously, a large number of amendments to the TIR Convention were prepared, which clearly stipulate the legal and administrative responsibilities of customs authorities, transport operators as well as all other actors in the TIR regime.

By 2002, the annual number of TIR Carnets exceeded 3 million. To allow for the introduction of modern information management and control technologies, the contracting parties launched in 2003 the “eTIR Project”, aimed at providing an exchange platform for all actors (customs authorities, holders and guarantee chains) involved in the TIR system, known as the “eTIR international system".
In May 2021, the new Annex 11 of the TIR Convention that refers to the digitalization of the TIR system, the eTIR international system, came into force. The eTIR international system aims to ensure the secure exchange of data between national customs systems related to the international transit of goods, vehicles or containers according to the provisions of the TIR Convention and to allow customs to manage the data on guarantees. The eTIR system offers benefits to all actors involved in the TIR system by bringing additional security and risk management opportunities (thus reducing the risk of fraud), reducing actors’ administrative burden and maximizing the benefits of integrated supply chain management, and by providing of advance cargo information and the exchange of information in real time.

In addition to the TIR system overhaul, two new conventions addressing border crossing facilitation and customs procedures were adopted during this period. The Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers Used in International Transport was adopted in 1994 and entered into force in 1998, while the Convention on International Customs Transit Procedures for the Carriage of Goods by Rail under Cover of SMGS² Consignment Notes was adopted in 2006 (not yet in force).

Traffic safety in road, rail and inland water transport

From today’s perspective, it is obvious that intensive road safety activities undertaken by ITC at the beginning of the 1990s were more than called for.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, the UN inland transport conventions underwent a series of amendments to enhance their safety provisions. For example, amendments to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic entering into force in 1993 included stipulations on road safety education and general rules for drivers such as mandatory safety belts use and extra care towards vulnerable road-users such as pedestrians and cyclist, and children.

New groups of experts were also established to tackle both road and rail transport safety issues. A Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Safety in Road Tunnels (AC.7) was formed and first convened in 2000, while the Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Safety in Rail Tunnels (AC.9) held its first session in 2001. Both expert groups issued recommendations on tunnel safety.

A Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals was formed and held its first session in 2014. The first session of the Group of Experts on Improving Safety at Level Crossings was held in 2014, and the group completed its mandate in 2016, issuing recommendations on improving safety at level crossings.

Developments in UN Vehicle Regulations have also reflected the effort for making road transport safer through adoption of regulations designed to enhance the safety performance of vehicles. Working parties of the World Forum on Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) developed several new safety related vehicle regulations since 1990, including ten Active Safety¹ (Crash Avoidance), eight Passive Safety² (Crash Worthiness) and five³ General Safety regulations.

Furthermore, two new UN “vehicle” Agreements were adopted in the 1990s. The 1997 Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of Such Inspections provides harmonized technical and administrative provisions on Periodical Technical Inspections (PTI) for vehicles in use.

Contracting parties applying the UN Rules annexed to the agreement for PTI recognize international technical inspections issued by any other Contracting Party applying the same rule. This allows for one inspection to apply to multiple territories.

The 1998 Agreement on Global Technical Regulations for wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts that can be fitted and/or be used on wheeled vehicles stipulates that Contracting Parties will establish, by consensus vote, United Nations Global Technical Regulations (UN GTRs) in a UN Global Registry. The UN GTRs contain globally harmonized test procedures including performance requirements. Since the entry into force of the 1998 Agreement, several UN GTRs have been established in the Global Registry, including new GTRs on Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Vehicles, Pole Side Impact, Worldwide harmonized Light vehicle Test Procedures (WLTP) and Tyres.

In the area of transport of dangerous goods and activities towards the sound management of chemicals, several milestones were achieved since 1991.

The restructuring of annexes A and B of ADR, which was initiated in 1992, was completed in 2000. With the new structure their requirements became more accessible, user-friendly, and easily applicable not only to international road transport but also to domestic traffic. It also made it easier to identify the various participants in the transport chain and their duties and to group the requirements according to the different user groups. In addition, the new structure ensured consistency with that of the “Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods” developed by the ECOSOC Committee of Experts, the “International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code” (IMDG Code) and the “Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail” (RID). The ADR 2001 edition, applicable as from 1 July 2001, was the first “restructured” edition of the ADR.

In 2019, the title of the ADR Agreement was modified and the word “European” was removed from the title of the Agreement, further signals its openness for accession to all UN Member States. The Protocol entered into force on 1 January 2021. Since then, the ADR became the “Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road”.

To date, the ADR has 52 Contracting Parties 34 of which acceded to the agreement between 1991 and January 2020. ADR applies to transport operations performed on the territory of at least two of its contracting parties. In addition, in the interest of uniformity and free trade across the European Union, annexes A and B of ADR have also been adopted by European Union Member States as the basis their regulations for the transport of dangerous goods by road within and between their territories through EU Directive 2008/68/EC on the inland transport of dangerous goods. A number of countries outside the EU region have also adopted, totally or partially, the provisions of annexes A and B as the basis for their national legislation.

As regards transport of dangerous goods by inland waterways, the European Provisions concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways, and its related annexes, (adopted by ITC as Resolution No. 223 on 6 February 1976) were replaced by the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN). This was completed in Geneva on 26 May 2000 on the occasion of a Diplomatic Conference held under the joint auspices of UNECE and the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR). The ADN agreement entered into force on 29 February 2008 and has 18 contracting parties. The Agreement aims to ensure a high level of safety of international carriage of dangerous goods by inland waterways, contributing effectively to the protection of the environment by preventing any pollution from accidents or incidents, facilitating transport operations and promoting international trade in dangerous goods.

At a larger scale, global harmonisation of classification and labelling of chemicals was being considered at international level, following the mandate given in Chapter 19 of Agenda 21 as adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

Acknowledging the experience of the ECOSOC Committee of Experts in developing harmonized provisions for the safe transport of chemicals worldwide by all modes it was decided to reconfigure and extend its mandate as from 2001. This was to deal with the additional issue of global harmonization of classification and labelling of chemicals across all sectors. This resulted in the establishment of the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), as a new subsidiary body of the Committee serviced by the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division.

Since then, the GHS Sub-Committee develops and updates criteria to classify and label chemicals hazardous for human health and the environment. Regarding the transport of dangerous goods, the GHS criteria is consistent with the classification and labelling provisions contained in the “Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods” and their related transport instruments addressing air, maritime and inland transport (including those under the responsibility of ITC subsidiary bodies). This illustrates once more the relationship between the work the ECOSOC bodies serviced by the UNECE Transport Division and the specialized UN agencies and bodies dealing with transport of dangerous goods. This results in full harmonization across sectors, i.e.: when a country implements GHS for all sectors, the same criteria is used to identify the hazardous properties of chemicals (including household chemicals) and to communicate them through labels and pictograms to those who transport, handle and use them.

The adoption of the GHS in 2002 and its implementation at international, regional and national level also had a worldwide impact on regulatory instruments addressing occupational health and safety, pesticide management, consumer’s protection and chemical-related accidents prevention, to mention only a few.

In 2012, ITC adopted the UNECE Action Plan for the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020). The goal of the Decade was to stabilize and reduce the forecast level of road traffic deaths around the world.

[6] International organizations, United Nations programmes, specialized agencies and countries and national and regional level continue to implement the GHS by developing, amending or revising their legal instruments and national legislation dealing with transport of dangerous goods; pesticide management; occupational safety and health; characterization of wastes; and prevention of major industrial accidents, or consumer protection. Detailed information is available at: https://unece.org/ghs-implementation-0.
The UNECE Action Plan was directly aligned to the Decade’s Action Plan and aimed to achieve the UNECE’s overall road safety goals. In 2015, midway through the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020), the United Nations Secretary-General announced the appointment of his Special Envoy for Road Safety, with UNECE providing the secretariat to the Special Envoy.

Every two years, on even years, revised and consolidated editions of the recommendations prepared by the ECOSOC Committee of Experts, i.e.: the UN Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the GHS, and their related Manual of Tests and Criteria, are published. The ITC bodies dealing with transport of dangerous goods ensure that the recommendations are taken into account, as applicable, for the inland transport modes they are responsible for. As a result, consolidated revised editions of ADR and ADN are usually published every two years, on odd years. The modal instruments dealing with transport of dangerous goods by air and sea, which are prepared by ICAO and by IMO are also updated every two years, to take account of the recommendations of the ECOSOC Committee, thus ensuring synchronisation in the updating of the provisions applicable to transport of dangerous goods by all modes.

A road map to help countries with the implementation and accession of ADR was developed by the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and published in 2013. A revised and updated version is under preparation. Guidelines on use of electronic data exchange, on construction and approval of vehicles, on application of standards for compliance with ADR, and on calculation of risks in the transport of dangerous goods by road are also available.

The work of WP.29 and its impact on vehicle and road safety is discussed in the 2012 publication “World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) – How It Works, How to Join It”. It presents the organizational structure and operational process of WP.29 and its subsidiary bodies and their relationship to specific multinational agreements under the United Nations. The “WP.29 – How It Works, How to Join It” series, was complemented by the 2016 “United Nations Motorcycle Helmet Study”, which reads as a road map to joining the 1958 UN Agreement and adoption and possible modes of implementation of UN regulation No. 22 that sets safety requirements for helmets. The Helmets Study also examines issues, progress and challenges in efforts to improve the safety and wellbeing of powered two-wheeler riders through the appropriate use of type-approved motorcycle helmets.

In the inland waterways sector, the basic rules for ensuring navigation safety are CEVNI, which is regularly updated by SC.3 with the sixth revision adopted in 2021, and the European Code for Signs and Signals on Inland Waterways (SIGNI), adopted in 2018.

A series of recurrent and ad hoc dedicated publications contributed to awareness raising and knowledge generation in road safety. The UNECE Transport Review dedicated to Road Safety was published in 2008 and the Spectrum of Road Safety Activities, presenting the UNECE Action Plan for the UN Decade of Action on Road Safety (2010-2020), was published in 2011. The E-Book “Regional perspectives on preventing alcohol-related road crashes involving vulnerable road users” was published in 2013, while another two publications were issued in 2015, “Together with UNECE on the Road to Safety”, and “Preventing Drinking and Driving in Africa”. Most of these publications were follow-ups to round tables and workshops organized in partnership with other regional commissions, such as the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and with NGOs.
Environment, technology, digitalization and sustainable inland transport

As the transport sector has been a major contributor to air pollution, greenhouse gas emission, and the use of natural resources, mitigation and adaptation measures are called for urgently to reduce the impacts of climate change. The Committee administers and participates aimed at curtailing the environmental impact of inland transport systems in several activities, by working to develop legal instruments to create resilient transport infrastructure and use of innovative vehicle technologies.

The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) has developed several regulations in recent years to improve the environmental performance of vehicles. These include the development of globally harmonized test cycles to measure exhaust emissions, with tightening requirements over time: The Worldwide harmonized Motorcycle emissions Certification procedure (WMTC in UN GTR No. 2), the Worldwide harmonized Heavy Duty Certification procedure (WHDC in UN GTR No. 4) and the Worldwide harmonized Light vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP in UN GTR No. 15 and UN Regulation No. 154). The work of WP.29 also looks at future technologies such as battery durability in electric vehicles and issues such as the recyclability of cars to reduce the environmental footprint of road transport.

A number of those regulations that strive to improve the environmental performance of road vehicles (as well as the vehicle regulations for improving road safety mentioned in the previous section) require and rely on the utilization of computer systems and information technologies in vehicles for achieving their objectives.

The 2012 UNECE Sustainable Transport Division publication Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) for Sustainable Mobility set out a vision, strategy and road map describing how the application of information and communication technology can improve the management of inland transport systems. Its use in infrastructure and vehicles can lead to increased inland transport efficiency and safety, while providing users sustainable and accessible transport and mobility. Intelligent Transport Systems have been on the ITC agenda since 2003. Within their mandates, ITC Working Parties have been addressing several ITS applications that can be instrumental in improving the sustainability of inland transport.

WP.29 hosted a group of experts that provides general guidance on how to incorporate provisions of intelligent vehicle systems into the UN Vehicle Regulations (Informal Working Group on ITS – Automated Driving). The Global Forum on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) engaged in debates on liability concerns and is charged with maintaining, as well as modernizing in the context of ICT systems, the UN Convention on Road Signs and Signals and the UN Convention on Road Traffic (Vienna Conventions), such as the harmonization of variable message signs (VMS). The Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15) examined how Telematics can be used to enhance safety and security. The Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15) examined how Telematics can be used to enhance safety and security. The Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) works on applications of River Information Services[7], while the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) deals with the Digital Tachograph and e-CMR[8].

In addition, discussions regarding governance of ITS and the incorporations of their applications into transport systems also took place across within the Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Road Safety in Tunnels (AC.7), the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24), and the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30).

The environmental sustainability of transport infrastructures was addressed within the work of the Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for International Transport Networks, established in 2011. The outcome of activities undertaken by the Group of Experts and its final report included policy-oriented recommendations to improve the long-term sustainability of transport infrastructure emphasising international connections. It also included best practices of different national policies that address the issues of transport network resilience against climate change impacts. The results and output of the work formed the basis for the terms of reference for the Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes (WP.5/GE.3), established in 2015 with a two-year mandate, which was subsequently renewed with revised terms of reference.

[7] The Guidelines and Recommendations for River Information Services (Resolution No. 57), published in 2004, provide a basis for planning, implementation and use by UNECE Governments, intergovernmental organizations, river commissions and private entities of RIS in inland navigation, with the aim to enhance safety and efficiency in operation.

[8] The purpose of the e-CMR Protocol is to facilitate smoother international road freight transport and to improve good governance in road transport by allowing the use of electronic consignment notes. This Protocol relates to the United Nations CMR Convention (Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road) signed in Geneva on May 19th 1955. It refers to various legal issues concerning transportation of goods by road.
Efficient and effective action to combat environmental externalities of inland transport systems require first and foremost tools that allow the identification of the extent of the impact. The Committee initiated and led the UNDA “For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS)” project, which involved all five United Nations regional commissions. The project developed a decision-making tool for mitigating climate change impacts by calculating a country’s inland transport emissions of CO₂. Sustainable transport can be assessed in ForFITS by creating simulations of policy choices and allowing policy makers to easily visualize and compare their impacts on CO₂ emissions. Five capacity-building workshops – one in each of the regional commissions – were held in 2013 to raise awareness and disseminate technical information on using the tool. At each of the workshops, at least one regional pilot case study was developed for selected countries of the region.

In 2014, following the official launch of the tool, the project continued to grow. Analytical activities in 2014 included its use as a policy tool for countries and cities. ForFITS was used to assess CO₂ emissions in Lithuania and in Kaunas city. It was also used as part of the Environmental Performance Reviews of Georgia and Belarus.

The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Program (THE PEP) was launched in 2002 with the secretariat support by the UNECE Sustainable Transport and Environment Divisions and WHO Europe. It addresses key challenges to achieve sustainable transport patterns. It encourages governments, at national and local levels, to pursue an integrated approach to policymaking and to put sustainable mobility at the top of the international agenda.

A new strategy for Inland Transport to support regional and global sustainable development
The year 2019 was a milestone for inland transport as the UNECE Inland Transport Committee adopted the ITC Strategy until 2030 (ECE/TRANS/288/Add.2), with the participation of governments, Chairs and Vice Chairs of the Inland Transport Administrative Committees and Working Parties. The event took place during the ninth governments-only restricted session of the eighty-first session of ITC and was the culmination of two years of deliberations and inclusive consultations with member States and Working Parties/Chairs.

The ITC Strategy recognizes the Committee as the United Nations Platform for Inland Transport, based on four pillars meant to harmonize inland transport developments worldwide and create the safest and most sustainable mobility. The four pillars are:

(a) ITC as the UN Platform for regional and global inland transport conventions

Several key developments have taken place or are ongoing in the implementation of the ITC Strategy. The most consequential accomplishments thus far include:

• The adoption of the ITC Strategy further augmented the impacts of the work of ITC on people’s daily lives. At the time of preparation of this publication, 151 out of the 193 United Nations Member States were part of this framework as contracting parties of legal instruments under the purview of ITC.

• The Committee adopted the text of a new Convention on the facilitation of border crossing procedures for passengers, luggage and load-luggage carried in international traffic by rail, the 59th Convention under the purview of the Committee, and requested that the secretariat transmit the text to the Depositary to be opened for signatures. The new Convention was opened for accessions in April 2019.

• ADR Agreement: The word “European” was removed from the title of agreement. Although the Agreement was already open for accession by all UN Member States, it is understood that this amendment may facilitate accession from those for which the reference “European” could be perceived as an obstacle. This amendment entered into force on 1 January 2021.

• The 1997 Agreement on Periodic Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles: the reference to “Europe” was removed from the preamble of the Agreement through a 2020 amendment, to underpin the global scope of this Agreement.

• In reaction to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on international transport, following a tasking of ITC at its session in 2020 “To conduct necessary research on provisions in existing frameworks and new needed areas of work to promote cooperation between transport authorities in the field of countering the effects of emergency situations of cross-country nature, including epidemics and pandemics”, an Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group on Transport Responses to COVID-19 was established under WP.5 auspices;

• The ITC Capacity Development Action Plan (2020–2025), as contained in ECE/TRANS/2020/18 was adopted by ITC at its eighty-second session in 2020.

• The “LearnITC” Inland Transport and Connectivity e-learning platform has been developed to leverage the Division’s capacity to provide learning modules for core constituents, among other things, on legal instruments under the Committee’s purview.

(b) ITC as the UN Platform for supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport

Key developments since the adoption of the ITC Strategy include:

• The adoption of new Annex 11 and relevant amendments to the TIR Convention on eTIR during the February 2020 session of the Administrative Committee. The new annex came into force in May 2021. In parallel the TIR secretariat developed a digital platform that will support the implementation of the new Annex 11 - the eTIR international system - based on the latest version of the eTIR specifications including all supporting documentation required for stakeholders to connect to this digital platform (www.etir.org).

• The adoption in 2021 by the Committee of the updated ITS Road Map for the period 2021-2025.

• The creation of a Group of Experts tasked with drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in road traffic, WP.1 is discussing the need to amend 1968 Convention on Road Traffic and related instruments to address safe deployment of automated vehicles in road traffic.

• WP.29 is working on technical regulations for automated vehicles. A framework document on automated/autonomous vehicles, established by WP.29, was endorsed by ITC at its eighty-second session (Feb 2020). The work of WP.29’s Working Party on Automated/Autonomous and Connected Vehicles (GRVA), as the main body dealing with the introduction of frontier technologies and innovation in road vehicles, GRVA is working at high speed on the technologies that are likely to enter the market, focusing on those that affect safety, security and connectivity, resulting in a first set of UN Regulations governing automated vehicle certification, including elements related to Cyber-security, software update management and a first UN Regulation for approval of automated (SAE Level 3) driving functionality.
• The creation of a Group of Experts tasked with drafting a new legal instrument on international rail passenger hubs.

• The development of the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory on a Geographical Information System (GIS). The main pillars of services that the observatory provides are:

  a) Offering an electronic repository of ECE inland transport conventions, project outputs, and deliverables of designated Groups of Experts.

  b) Promoting sustainable regional and interregional connectivity.

  c) Financing transport infrastructure: the observatory operates as a marketplace for financing transport infrastructure by providing an electronic interface between Multilateral Development Banks and Governments.

• SC.3 has included automation in inland navigation and smart shipping in its agenda as a permanent item.

(c) ITC as the UN Platform for regional, interregional and global inland transport policy dialogues

High-level ministerial segments traditionally open ITC annual sessions:

• In 2019, the ministerial segment focused on Automation in Transport. The main outcomes of the Ministerial segment (see ECE/TRANS/288/Add.1) included the adoption of the Ministerial Resolution, "Enhancing Cooperation, Harmonization and Integration in the Era of Transport Digitalization and Automation" by Ministers and Heads of Delegations of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East and Latin America (ECE/TRANS/288, Annexes I and II). The Ministerial Resolution was endorsed by ITC.

• In 2020, the high-level segment was on environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport and was attended by Transport ministers from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, alongside close to 400 participants from 72 countries, including 36 non-ECE ones, and the heads and high-level representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and key inland transport stakeholders. The Ministerial concluded with the adoption of the ITC Ministerial Declaration, "Enhancing inland transport solutions to global climate and environmental challenges – a united call to action" by Ministers and Heads of Delegations of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East and Latin America (ECE/TRANS/294, Annexes I and II). The Ministerial Declaration was endorsed by ITC.

• In 2021, the ministerial segment was titled “Back to a sustainable future: achieving resilient connectivity for post-COVID-19 sustained recovery and economic growth”. 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 highlight of the Ministerial was the adoption of the ITC Ministerial Resolution, “Enhancing resilient inland transport connectivity in emergency situations: An urgent call for concerted action” by Ministers and Heads of Delegations of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and Middle East (ECE/TRANS/304, Annexes I and II). The Ministerial Resolution was endorsed by ITC.

• Furthermore, transport challenges from different regions have been incorporated in the agenda of the eighty-second and eighty-third sessions. Extensive research papers on trends and challenges in other regions were developed and provided the basis of discussions under these agenda items.
Road Safety as a special ITC priority under the ITC Strategy

Mindful of the shortfalls in achieving the SDG target on road safety by 2020, the ITC Strategy assigned special priority of global interest to Road Safety. Through the adoption of the ITC Strategy in 2019, the Committee formulated a 360-degree approach – regulatory, policy dialogue, analytical, capacity-building and technical assistance – to road safety in order to reap more benefits for its main beneficiaries.

For this purpose, ITC and its subsidiary bodies were mandated to strengthen their activities related to the United Nations Road Safety legal instruments, (a) to support contracting parties in developing, improving and sustaining their national road safety systems; (b) to further promote the accession and effective implementation of the United Nations legal instruments; (c) to support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety in promoting global accession to the United Nations legal instruments; and (d) to play an effective role as the international regulatory support provided in the United Nations Road Safety Trust Fund Global Framework Plan of Action for Road Safety.

The regulatory aspects of this persevering and essential work have been covered in other parts of this publication.
In direct implementation of the ITC strategy, the Committee adopted the ITC Recommendations for Enhancing National Road Safety Systems (ECE/TRANS/2020/9), as per Decision 40, and endorsed the “Road Safety System Assessment” concept note and outline (ECE/TRANS/2020/10), as a supporting assessment tool.

The ITC Recommendations were subsequently included in the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, that was developed in direct implementation of General Assembly Resolution 74/299. The ITC Recommendations will enhance the abilities of national administrations to systematically and efficiently identify gaps in national road safety systems, thus effectively improving safety and building a missing link between the international and national levels, particularly in new contracting parties, by offering guidance in implementing the legal instruments.

Despite strong and consistent efforts by Member States, the international community was not able to achieve by 2020 target 3.6 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on road safety to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020. In response to this setback, the General Assembly adopted on 31 August 2020 Resolution 74/299 on “Improving global road safety”, inaugurating the second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. As part of its response, at the request of the General Assembly, UNECE also contributed to the formulation of a coherent global plan of action to support the objectives of the second Decade of Action for Road Safety.

Additionally, through the application of Safe Future Inland Transport Systems (SafeFITS) – a road safety decision making tool – the Sustainable Transport Division continued assisting governments and decision makers to identify the most appropriate road safety policies and measures, by providing information on anticipated outcomes of different road safety scenarios. The full operation phase of the policy tool started in February 2018 and SafeFITS is available to the public at: https://unecetrans.shinyapps.io/safefits/. To test the SafeFITS model and web-based tool, two pilot projects were organized in Albania and Georgia in 2018.

To accelerate improvements in road safety globally, the Division contributed to efforts to mobilize political and policy support for road safety through the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Road Safety and the operation of the United Nations Road Safety Fund. It has successfully supported the submission and implementation of joint projects under the first and second formal calls of the Fund.

Furthermore, the Sustainable Transport Division continued working on Road Safety Performance Reviews (RSPR), which aim to identify the most critical road safety gaps and priorities in the countries under review and thus help governments to strengthen their road safety management capacities and effectively address and improve national road safety performance. Road Safety Performance Reviews for several ECE and non-ECE countries were undertaken either as part of UNDA projects or under the auspices of Special Envoy for Road Safety, with the support of the Sustainable Transport Division.
Conclusion
Looking into the future of sustainable mobility: 75 years of ITC that changed the world

For 75 years, the UNECE ITC has provided a platform for intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate and develop international transport while simultaneously improving its safety and environmental performance. The main results of this critical work are reflected in the 59 United Nations international agreements and conventions which provide a legal framework and technical regulations for everything from the development of international road, rail, inland navigation and intermodal transport, to dangerous goods transport and vehicle construction.

During the review of the history of ITC, it became obvious that the 75th anniversary presents a unique opportunity to celebrate the Committee’s decades of achievements in shaping regional and global regulatory governance of inland transport. It is also the appropriate moment to reflect on the strategic direction of the ITC on the road to 2030, with a sense of urgency. A critical worldwide situation has emerged in environmental, social and economic development, further exacerbated by the economic and social disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, megatrends - from demographic trends to new technological breakthroughs - that reshape the underlying ‘rules of the game’ for transport and mobility are creating new dynamics, new opportunities and new challenges. Additionally, the development of inland transport also proved to be a challenge for traffic safety. Decoupling traffic increase and road crashes and even targeting vision zero are essential conditions for sustainable mobility. With new urbanism, walking and cycling are having a renaissance and are recognised as fundamental for sustainable urban mobility.

The scale and scope of technological changes involve the transformation of entire systems. Digitalization is leading to one of the greatest transformations in transport. It is present in all modes, but it has been embraced at different speeds. Perhaps the biggest impact of digital technologies that can already be experienced is the new role of passengers and clients, i.e. a client culture is massively evolving in transport.

The fast progress in automation not only improves the performance of vehicles, but it creates the space for fundamentally new solutions, such as autonomous vehicles and driverless trains. Intelligent Transport Systems technologies can revolutionize operation management, which in turn requires policymakers and regulators to reconsider past practices in things like infrastructure development, management, and above all the position of transport in the public expenditure and revenue systems. Furthermore, infrastructure planning is under change, more and more moving away from resource-based infrastructure planning to international integration focused infrastructure planning. As a recent development, efficiency of network development is challenged by new priorities - especially the one for resilience of the network to be able to handle climate change adaptation. The accelerated spread of digitalization warrants closer policy cooperation between transport and telecommunication.

Transport is a major driving force behind a growing world demand for energy, and has a significant environmental footprint. Untangling the nexus between transport-energy-environment is one of the main challenges facing the inland transport sector as it transitions to become a driving force in sustainable development. Electric vehicles and alternative fuels are often referred to as the green transport revolution. The policy push has intensified the call for new vehicles and fuel technologies in order to move away from combustion engines and reduce local and GHG emissions. The growing market share of electric vehicles at the same time is calling for new infrastructure, safety regulations and circular economy management.

New technologies have also led to a data revolution; the benefits of this development have not yet been reaped.

The scale and scope of these technological changes mean that, as a result, the transport sector will undergo major changes and will be impacted by similar changes in other sectors of the economy. It still remains to be seen how countries at different levels of development will be able to access these new technologies and benefit from the gains in efficiency, increased safety and environmental performance.

This is the context in which the Committee’s dynamic role must evolve. This process of evolutions is guided by the ITC Strategy until 2030, the adoption of which prompted the continued expansion of the Conventions under the Committee’s purview towards eventually covering all 193 UN Member States. The expansion of the regulatory framework for inland transport increases the efficiency, safety, and sustainability of inland transport modes. Thus, the adoption of the ITC Strategy further augments the impacts of the work of ITC on people’s daily lives. At the time of preparation of this publication 151 United Nations Member States are part of this framework as contracting parties of legal instruments under the purview of the Inland Transport Committee.

Through its 4-Platform structure, ITC as the UN platform for inland transport will continue to provide a comprehensive regulatory framework for inland transport including road, rail, inland water and intermodal transport. This is comparable to the role of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). In so doing, the ITC strategic objectives include increased governance with equal participation of all contracting parties to UN legal instruments under its purview so as to lead the future development of inland transport.

Furthermore, UN transport conventions under its purview are to be universally accepted and implemented, open for accession/ratification by all UN Member States if feasible, keeping pace with technological developments in a timely manner, and enhancing regional and inter-regional connectivity. Increased support to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to be realized through: (a) improved traffic safety and urban mobility (SDGs 3 and 11); (b) reduced pollutant and GHG emissions (SDGs 3 and 13); (c) improved industry innovation and infrastructure efficiency and connectivity (SDG 9); (d) Affordable and clean energy (SDG 7); (e) decent work and economic growth (SDG 8); (f) gender equality (SDG 5) and (g) contributions to global monitoring of progress towards sustainable transport as much as feasible (all relevant SDGs).

Through this strategic direction on the road to 2030, the Committee stays true to its 75-year history that changed the world of transport and impacts the daily lives of billions around the world. It will ensure its continued contribution to the needs and priorities of its States and contracting parties, by leading change in inland transport, and by providing a level-playing field and inclusive platform of reliable solutions at a time when these are needed the most by the international community.
75 years of ITC landmarks

75 documents that changed the world of transport
Establishment of:
- UNECE
- Inland Transport Committee

Establishment of:
- Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) - Originally as the Subcommittee on Road Transport
- Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) - Originally as the Subcommittee on Rail Transport
- Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) - Originally as the Working Party on Road Customs Formalities
- Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs (WP.11) - Originally as the Working Party for the Transport of Perishable Goods
- Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) - Originally established as the Working Party of Experts on Statistical Information

Convention on Road Traffic and Protocol on Road Signs and Signals, of 19 September 1949

Declaration on the Construction of Main International Traffic Arteries, of 16 September 1950

European Agreement on the Application of Article 23 of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic concerning the Dimensions and Weights of Vehicles Permitted to Travel on Certain Roads of the Contracting Parties, of 16 September 1950

European Agreement supplementing the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic and the 1949 Protocol on Road Signs and Signals of 16 September 1950
Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles engaged in International Goods Transport, of 14 December 1956

Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), of 19 May 1956

Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles engaged in International Passenger Transport, of 14 December 1956

General Agreement on Economic Regulations for International Road Transport, of 17 March 1954

Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, signed in New York on 4 June 1954

Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles for Private use in International Traffic, of 18 May 1956

Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles, of 18 May 1956

Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation for Private Use of Aircraft and Pleasure Boats, of 18 May 1956

General Agreement on Economic Regulations for International Road Transport and set of rules, Additional Protocol and Protocol of Signature

Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles engaged in International Goods Transport and Protocol of Signature

Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles engaged in International Passenger Transport and Protocol of Signature

Convention on the Taxation of Road Vehicles for Private use in International Traffic and Protocol of Signature

Convention relative au regime fiscal des vehicules routiers et au transport international de marchandises et au transport de marchandises par route (CMR) et protocol de signature

Convention relative au regime fiscal des vehicules routiers et au transport international de marchandises et au transport de marchandises par route (CMR) et protocol de signature

Convention relative au regime fiscal des vehicules routiers et au transport international de marchandises et au transport de marchandises par route (CMR) et protocol de signature
Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and /or be used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these Prescriptions, of 20 March 1958

European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), of 30 September 1957

European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and Protocol of Signature


European Agreement on Road Markings, of 13 December 1957

European Agreement on Road Markings - originally as Sub-Committee on Inland Water Transport

Convention relating to the Unification of Certain Rules concerning Collisions in Inland Navigation, of 15 March 1960

Customs Convention on Containers, of 18 May 1956

Establishment of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) - originally as Sub-Committee on Inland Water Transport

Customs Convention on Containers, of 18 May 1956

Convention relating to the Unification of Certain Rules concerning Collisions in Inland Navigation, of 15 March 1960

European Agreement on Road Markings - originally as Sub-Committee on Inland Water Transport

European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and Protocol of Signature
37 1970
Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP), of 1 September 1970

39 1971
European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968), of 1 May 1971

41 1972
Customs Convention on Containers, of 2 December 1972

43 1973
Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Road (CVR), of 1 March 1973

38 1971
European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic, of 1 May 1971

40 1971
Establishment of: Working Party on Noise and Tyres (GRBP) - At the time established as the Group of Rapporteurs on Noise (GRB)

42 1973
Protocol on Road Markings, Additional to the European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals, of 1 March 1973

44 1973
Convention relating to the Limitation of the Liability of Owners of Inland Navigation Vessels (CLN), of 1 March 1973
45 1975
European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR), of 15 November 1975

46 1975
Agreement on Minimum Requirements for the Issue and Validity of Driving Permits (APC), of 1 April 1975

47 1975

48 1976
Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Inland Waterway (CVN), of 6 February 1976

49 1977
First sessions of the:
• Working Party on Brakes and Running Gear (GRBP) - At the time established as the Group of Rapporteurs on Brakes and Running Gear
• Working Party on Lighting and Light Signaling (GRE) - At the time established as the Group of Rapporteurs on Lighting and Light Signaling

50 1978
Trans European North-South Motorway (TEM)
Adoption, on 5 July 1978, of:
- Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR),
- Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Road (CVR),
- Protocol to the Convention relating to the Limitation of the Liability of Owners of Inland Navigation Vessels (CLN),
- Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Passengers and Luggage by Inland Waterways (CVN)


European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC), of 31 May 1985
61 1993
Protocol amending article 1 (a), article 14 (1) and article 14 (3) (b) of the European Agreement of 30 September 1957 concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), of 28 October 1993

62 1994
Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers Used in International Transport, 21 January 1994

63 1996
European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN), of 19 January 1996

64 1997

65 1997
Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of Such Inspections, of 13 November 1997

66 1998
Agreement concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and / or be used on Wheeled Vehicles, of 25 June 1998

67 1998
Establishment of ITC Bureau

68 1998
Establishment of ADN Safety Committee (WP.15/AC.2)
75 years of ITC landmarks

2000
European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterway (ADN), of 25 May 2000

2006

2008
Additional Protocol to the CMR concerning the electronic consignment note (e-CMR)

2019
Adoption of ITC Strategy until 2030

2019
Convention on the facilitation of border crossing procedures for passengers, luggage and load-luggage carried in international traffic by rail, of 22 February 2019

2020
Adoption of ITC Recommendations for Enhancing National Road Safety Systems
The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was formally established in July 1947. For 75 years, ITC has provided a platform for intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate and develop international transport while simultaneously improving its safety and environmental performance. The main results of this critical work are reflected in the 59 United Nations international agreements and conventions which provide a legal framework and technical regulations for everything from the development of international road, rail, inland navigation and intermodal transport, to dangerous goods transport and vehicle construction. The Committee functions with the support of the work of its 20 Working Parties which are in turn supported by more than 40 formal and informal expert groups and in cooperation with 11 Treaty bodies (Administrative Committees).

Some of the most emblematic moments of the 75-year history of the Committee and its Working Parties are included in this publication. During the review of the history of ITC, it became obvious that the 75th anniversary presents a unique opportunity to celebrate the Committee’s decades of achievements in shaping regional and global regulatory governance of inland transport. It is also the appropriate moment to reflect on the strategic direction of the ITC on the road to 2030, with a sense of urgency. A critical worldwide situation has emerged in environmental, social and economic development, further exasperated by the economic and social disruptions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, megatrends - from demographic trends to new technological breakthroughs - that reshape the underlying “rules of the game” for transport and mobility are creating new dynamics, new opportunities and new challenges. Additionally, the development of inland transport also proved to be a challenge for traffic safety. Decoupling traffic increase and road crashes and even targeting vision zero are essential conditions for sustainable mobility. With new urbanism, walking and cycling are having a renaissance and are recognised as fundamental for sustainable urban mobility.

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