



Economic Commission for Europe
Inland Transport Committee
Working Party on Rail Transport
Group of Experts on International Railway Passenger Hubs
Third session

Geneva, 23–25 May 2022

**Report of the third session of the Group of Experts on
International Railway Passenger Hubs**
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I. Attendance

1. The Group of Experts on International Railway Passenger Hubs (GE_HUBS or the Group) held its third session from 23 to 25 May 2022 as a hybrid meeting, taking place simultaneously online and in-person in Geneva.
2. The session of the Group of Experts was attended by representatives of the following countries: Albania, Austria, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
3. The representative of the ECE Trans-European Railway Project attended the session.
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: European Passengers' Federation and International Union of Railways (UIC).
5. The representative of the following private sector group attended the session: TRA Consulting, Albanian Railways, JSC Russian Railways, Centro per la Cooperazione Internazionale/OBC Transeuropa and TCDD Turkish Railways.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/1

6. The Secretariat presented the agenda. The Group of Experts adopted the draft agenda as amended for the third session of the Group of Experts on International Railway Passenger Hubs as contained in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/1.

III. Information on other complementary activities across the ECE Region (agenda item 2)

7. The Group was updated on the activities of the Platform for international rail passenger transport by the Netherlands, on relevant railway projects by Albanian Railways, on the Study by Centro per la Cooperazione Internazionale/OBC Transeuropa, and by UIC on its activities with a particular focus on the work during the Station Managers Global Group days held during May. The secretariat noted that the work of Centro per la Cooperazione Internazionale/OBC Transeuropa would be studied in more detail during the upcoming session of the Working Party on Transport Statistics 13-15 June 2022.
8. The Group thanked the Netherlands, Albanian Railways, Centro per la Cooperazione Internazionale/OBC Transeuropa and UIC for their interventions and encouraged experts to update participants on developments on other complementary activities across the ECE region at the next session of the Group.

IV. Identification of stations on the AGC network to be defined as an international railway passenger hub (agenda item 3)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/8, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/4

9. The Group of Experts continued discussions on the identification of stations on the AGC network to be defined as international railway passenger hubs based on the analysis included in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/8 and the comments provided by experts as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/4. The secretariat presented Informal Document 1 (2022) with a potential definition for an International Railway Passenger Hub. Following discussions on possible changes, the following definition was proposed:

“An International Railway Passenger Hub is a rail station that provides passengers connections to multiple international and national rail services, to other Hubs and to the services delivered by other modes. International railway passenger hubs can be “Primary” or “Secondary” as defined by member States and depending on the level of service offered.

“The technical and service parameters that member States are to work towards providing in “Primary” and “Secondary” International Railway Passenger Hubs are identified in Annex X of...”

10. The Group agreed to base future discussions on the definition on this proposal and asked experts to provide any comments on this formulation by 15 June 2022 to allow for a definitive proposal to be prepared in three languages for the fourth session of the Group in September 2022.

11. The Group noted the development in the list of stations provided in Annex I of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/3. It agreed that a further iteration should be prepared including potential rail connected airports and ports and as such asked experts to provide a list of additional stations by 15 June 2022. Following this date, the secretariat will consolidate additions and proposals as well as add information on other connections at these stations where available for discussion in a document at the next session of the Group.

12. Experts reiterated that the decision of whether each station would be identified as primary or secondary would be left to member States but suggested that a guidance note could be developed by the Group to facilitate member States in their decision making. This guidance note would be based on document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/8 and could be elaborated later in the mandate of the Group.

V. Identification of the technical and service parameters necessary for the definition of an international passenger railway hub (agenda item 4)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/9, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/5

13. The secretariat introduced discussions on agenda item 4 by recalling the contents of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/9 and by introducing document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/5.

14. The Group proceeded to discuss, item by item, the different technical parameters set out in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/9 based on the comments received and included in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/5.

15. The Group noted that the technical and service parameters should have only a short explanation and that they should be output focused. Additional information could be placed in a guidance document if experts decide that it is necessary to produce such a document. The secretariat noted that it would redraft the text where descriptive elements were still included.

16. Delegates proceeded to review the text of ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/9 item by item and introduced drafting changes to each item of the passenger facing station facilities section.

17. The Group also introduced drafting changes to section B on connectivity and accessibility for passengers but asked that the secretariat also introduce a single, all-encompassing item to cover all modes as an alternative to this section.

18. Delegates agreed that the items identified in section C were important to keep in the text but noted that they were mainly descriptive in nature and as such should be replaced by more concrete text. In addition, the Group asked the secretariat to consolidate the elements in section C into two macro groups focused on outputs, removing also reference to station size.

19. The Group asked delegates to send any additional comments they may have to document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/9 no later than 15 June 2022. The Group asked the secretariat to update document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/9 to reflect the drafting changes made during the session and any additional comments received after the session. The updated document would be discussed at the next session of the Group.

20. Following discussions at the next session, the Group noted that it may wish to consult more widely with the sector on the list of technical and service parameters to include in International Railway Passenger Hubs.

VI. Identification of the legal instrument or tool to be used for international passenger railway hub and draft the necessary legal provisions (agenda item 5)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/5

21. The secretariat introduced this agenda item recalling that at the previous session delegates had agreed to focus their attention on the development of amendments to the AGC. The secretariat presented document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/5 highlighting the possible next steps in the amendment process to the AGC and the comments received from Belgium which would be discussed further at the next session.

22. The Group reiterated the importance of continuing with the approach focused on the amendment of the AGC and asked the secretariat to draft possible amendments to the main text of the AGC for discussion at the next session of the Group. It also reiterated the importance of accession to the AGC especially considering the role that the changes that the Hubs work would introduce to the AGC.

VII. Analysis of the legal framework governing international passenger transportation (agenda item 6)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/7

23. The secretariat recalled the important work undertaken by OSJD in its document submitted to the Group as ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/7. The secretariat noted that, with the support of experts, it had undertaken a review of the document and found it to be an excellent and complete document and that no comments had been received from experts highlighting missing components.

24. The Group once again thanked OSJD for their excellent work on this document and noted that document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2021/7 as prepared by OSJD meets the requirements of the terms of reference under this agenda item and that therefore there is no further analysis necessary at this stage as this part of the work is complete.

VIII. Measures to support international rail carriers in pandemics (agenda item 7)

25. The secretariat reminded participants of the requirements under this agenda item and recalled that a survey on measures to support international rail carriers in pandemics had been prepared by the secretariat with the support of experts. Based on the information provided in the survey responses, the workshop on the matter held during the seventy-fifth session of the Working Party on Rail Transport and desktop analysis a study has almost been completed covering these support measures. The secretariat noted that the final version of the study would be completed shortly and that it is planned to be made available before the next session of the Group.

IX. Other business (agenda item 8)

26. There was no other business discussed at the third session of the Group.

X. Date of next session (agenda item 9)

27. The Group of Experts noted that the fourth session of the Group would be held from 5 to 7 September 2022 in the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The secretariat noted that the meeting would probably also be available in hybrid form with in-person and online participation possible. Further details relating to this would be made available to experts by the secretariat closer to the date. The Group noted with dissatisfaction that the September session clashed with the upcoming session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics. The secretariat explained that this was as a result of room and interpretation limitations at the UN in Geneva.

XI. Summary of decisions (agenda item 10)

28. Given discussions at the session, the Group decided to read and consider the entire draft report of the session, as prepared by the Chair and Vice-Chair, under this agenda item, rather than just the decisions. The Group of Experts adopted its report of the third session.
