



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

Geneva, 5–6 September 2022

**Report of the fourth 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 fourth session from 5 to 6 September 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: Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Portugal, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan.
3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF).
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: Albanian Railways, Albanian Railway inspection directorate, Iran National Inventions and Innovation Team, JSC Russian Railways, "South Caucasus Railway" Closed Joint-Stock Company, TCDD Turkish Railways and TRA Consulting.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/6

6. The secretariat presented the agenda. The Group of Experts adopted the agenda as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/6.

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.
8. The Group thanked the Netherlands for its intervention 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)

Documents: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/3, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/8

9. The Group of Experts continued discussions on the identification of stations on the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) network to be defined as international railway passenger hubs based on discussions at previous sessions. The secretariat presented document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/8 setting out the definition of an International Railway Passenger Hub as agreed in the last session of the Group and an updated list of Hubs. The secretariat also presented Informal document SC.2/HUBS No. 2 (2022) supplementing the information in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/8 with key intermodal connections at each of the Hubs.

10. The Group noted that it was necessary to modify the definition of International Railway Passenger Hubs to say:

“An International Railway Passenger Hub is a rail station on the AGC network that provides passengers with connections to international destinations and can connect to national rail services, to other Hubs and to the services delivered by other modes. International Railway Passenger Hubs are established to facilitate international rail travel through the provision of common services and facilities to passengers and

operators. 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 III and annex IV respectively of the AGC.”

11. The Group noted that this definition should be the text that is included within the amendments to the AGC.

12. The Group welcomed document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/8 and noted that some changes are still needed to the list of stations to add and remove potential Hubs and invited delegates to, once again, review the list and to notify the secretariat by 31 October 2022 if further changes need to be made to this list. This updated list, along with the updated information included in Informal document SC.2/HUBS No. 2 (2022) will be provided for review in a new document for the next session of the Group with the aim of finalising it and presenting it in a format that would allow it to appear in a legal document.

13. The Group noted that annex II of the AGC already contains some explanatory notes on the treatment of the infrastructure parameters for main international railway lines and that the introduction of similar explanatory notes at the end of annex III could also be useful. It therefore asked the secretariat, when updating document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/8 to also include a section with explanatory notes setting out key definitions that would complement the annex including on the reference to heavy rail and the explanation of the use of “other modes”.

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

Documents: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/9, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/11

14. The secretariat introduced discussions on agenda item 4 by recalling discussions at previous sessions on the minimum technical and service parameters for international railway passenger hubs. The secretariat introduced document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/9.

15. The Group proceeded to discuss the different technical parameters set out in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/9 and the guidance note set out in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/11.

16. Delegates proceeded to review the text of ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/9 and noted the following changes to the text:

- Movement of the section on safety and security to be the first item on the list.
- Add reference to charging points in the description of the waiting area.
- Modify the section on passengers with reduced mobility to remove the reference to boarding and leaving in the title and to add text at the end of the paragraph saying: “...to facilitate boarding and leaving the train as well as their in-station mobility.”
- Modify the section on premium services renaming it non-essential premium services and reflecting this in the paragraph text.
- Separate out the reference to drinking water to ensure that its importance is guaranteed.

17. The Group also noted the importance of having explanatory notes as identified in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/11 noting that not all sections of the document needed further explanation but also noting the importance of the work of UIC in identifying common approaches to pictograms and other information delivery in stations. The Group requested that the contents of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/11 be updated to reflect comments received by delegates and possibly be integrated into the new document based on document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/9 for the next session.

18. The Group of Experts welcomed documents ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/9 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/11 on further developments in relation to the development of technical and service parameters at stations and asked the secretariat to incorporate the changes agreed under this agenda item in the updated documents. The Group invited delegates to, once again, review these documents and to notify the secretariat by 31 October 2022 if further changes need to be made. Experts asked the secretariat to finalise the list of technical and service parameters in a format that would allow it to appear in a legal document.

19. The Group also asked the secretariat to explore practices outside the rail sector on common pictograms and information delivery to passengers and provide examples for the next session of the Group.

20. The Group reiterated the importance of consulting more widely with the sector on the list of technical and service parameters to include in International Railway Passenger Hubs and asked that delegates provide suggested consultees to the secretariat by 16 September 2022. The Group asked the secretariat to send the document for consultation to SC.2 focal points and additional stakeholders as identified by experts. Responses are to be received by 31 October 2022 and the consultation document should be made available on the UNECE website with background information explaining the reasoning for the consultation.

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/2022/10

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/2022/10 highlighting the changes that would need to be made to the AGC for the items discussed in agenda items 3 and 4 to be operationalized.

22. The Group discussed document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/10 and noted the following:

- A modification should also be proposed to the preamble of the AGC to reflect the addition of Hubs in the articles and annexes.
- The definition included in article 3bis should be updated to reflect the definition agreed by the Group at this session.

23. The Group of Experts welcomed document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2022/10 on a possible amendment proposal to the AGC. The Group asked the secretariat to share this version, as amended during the session, with the UN Treaty section in New York for their comments. Experts also asked the secretariat to prepare an updated version of the document taking into account the comments received from the Treaty Section for finalisation at the next session of the Group.

24. The Group asked contracting parties to the AGC to discuss with their capitals potential interest in proposing finalised amendments to the AGC at the 2023 session of the Working Party on Rail Transport.

VII. Measures to support international rail carriers in pandemics (agenda item 6)

25. The secretariat reminded participants that a publication is being finalised as part of the work for this agenda item and presented the main contents of the document.

26. The Group of Experts noted the completion of the study on measures to support international rail carriers in pandemics and thanked the experts for their support in its preparation. It asked the secretariat to make sure that the study was shared widely.

VIII. Other business (agenda item 7)

27. There was no other business discussed at the fourth session of the Group.

IX. Date of the next session (agenda item 8)

28. The Group of Experts noted that the fifth session of the Group would be held from 19 to 21 April 2023 in the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

X. Summary of decisions (agenda item 9)

29. 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 fourth session.
