



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

Geneva, 13–15 September 2023

Item 8 of the provisional agenda

**Report of the sixth session of the Group of Experts on
International Railway Passenger Hubs**
Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Attendance.....	1–3	2
II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)	4	2
III. Information on other complementary activities across the ECE region (agenda item 2).....	5–8	2
IV. Identification of stations on the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines network to be defined as an international passenger railway hub (agenda item 3).....	9–14	2
V. Identification of the technical and service parameters necessary for the definition of an international passenger railway hub (agenda item 4)	15–21	3
VI. Identification of the legal instrument or tool to be used for international railway passenger hub and drafting of the necessary legal provisions (agenda item 5)	22–24	4
VII. Report on the execution of the mandate of the Group (agenda item 6).....	25–27	5
VIII. Other business (agenda item 7)	28	5
IX. Summary of decisions and reading of the draft report (agenda item 8)	29	5

I. Attendance

1. The Group of Experts on International Railway Passenger Hubs (the Group of Experts or the Group) held its sixth session from 13 to 15 September 2023 in the Palais des Nations, Geneva.
2. The session of the Group of Experts was attended by representatives of the following countries: Belgium, Netherlands, Russian Federation, and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
3. The representatives of the following entities attended the session: European Passengers' Federation and the Trans-European Railway Project.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/7

4. The secretariat presented the agenda. The Group of Experts adopted the amended agenda as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/7.

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

5. The Group was updated on the activities of the Platform on International Rail Passenger Transport by the Netherlands and on the activities of the Trans European Railway (TER) Project.
6. The Platform on International Rail Passenger Transport is based on the 2020 Ministerial Declaration on international railway passenger transport endorsed by 27 countries. The Netherlands explained how work is ongoing within the platform and highlighted a number of areas of work including an important analytical study on the development of international passenger services in the period 2009 to 2023 and how this would be very useful for policy makers. Experts exchanged views on the work of the Platform and how it was working in good synergy with the work on Hubs.
7. The Project Manager of the TER Project updated experts on developments in the project and in particular the creation of the updated AGC/AGTC GIS tool on technical parameters on the rail network. This tool allows stakeholders to identify minimum technical parameters between any two destinations on the AGC/AGTC networks. The Group noted that, once a decision had been made on the identification of Hubs, then this could also be added to the tool to give it better relevance for the passenger rail sector.
8. The Group of Experts thanked the Netherlands and the TER Project Manager for their interventions and noted the importance and contribution that the presentations under this agenda item had made to the work of the Group.

IV. Identification of stations on the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines network to be defined as an international railway passenger hub (agenda item 3)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/9

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/2023/9 containing the final proposals for the Group on this agenda item.
10. The Group noted that the definition included on the first page of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/9 was different from the one in

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/11 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/12 and asked that it be updated to reflect the definition in these two other documents.

11. The Group also updated Annex I of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/9 to correct some editorial mistakes and to update the fifth column:

- by adding in the column's heading “/planned” in addition to “available”;
- by adding some international connections where they had been omitted;
- by replacing reference to “Regional, Long distance and Domestic connections” with “Other rail services”.

12. The Group also discussed the elements of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/11 that related specifically to ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/9 as set out primarily in section III of ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/11. In particular it agreed to:

- remove the square brackets around “and/or planned” to introduce some flexibility in the definition of future connections, reflecting also the new heading for column five of the table as mentioned in the previous paragraph;
- remove the definitions for Regional and Long Distance and leave only Domestic but renamed as “Other rail services”, and the explanation updated, in line with the decision in the previous paragraph;
- add “metro” to the examples in the “Urban public transport” explanation;
- update the explanations for the “Port connection” and “Airport connection” to highlight that it refers to “direct access” to these facilities.

13. The Group of Experts adopted, as amended during the session, document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/9 and asked that it be included in the information that is consolidated and transmitted to the Working Party on Rail Transport. With this, the Group noted that it believed that the terms of reference item covered by this agenda item had been successfully completed.

14. The Group of Experts noted the contents of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/11 relating to this agenda item and asked that the secretariat keep this document updated going forward as part of the activities of the Working Party on Rail Transport.

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/2023/4, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/11, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/10, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/13, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/14

15. 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 then introduced document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/10 incorporating the final provisions for this agenda item. The Group proceeded to discuss the different sections of the document.

16. The Group of Experts welcomed document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/10 on further developments in relation to the development of technical and service parameters at hubs, in the structure necessary for amendment proposals. It agreed a number of minor changes during the session modifying the text to better explain the individual parameters.

17. The Group then recalled and discussed the Guidance Note set out in document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/11 noting its importance going forward and the need to keep it updated. The Group requested that the following changes be made to the document:

- A number of minor editorial changes;
- The removal of the last sentence in the ticketing facilities explanation;
- The addition of the reference to the relevant UIC document on signage for passengers;
- The removal of the further explanations for Assistance to Passengers with Reduced Mobility (PRM) and Wireless connectivity as the description in the agreement is already sufficient;
- The modification of the title of Non-essential premium services to match what is in the agreement;
- To keep multiple references to explain PRM as this remains a non-binding guidance note;
- The addition of the definition of PRM taken from the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- To keep references to freely accessible toilets in the text;
- The addition of reference to adults accompanying children in the explanation for PRM.

18. The Group proceeded to discuss document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/14 on examples of information to passengers. It noted the importance of this work and the need to continue work in this area. The secretariat then introduced annex I of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/13 containing possible terms of reference for a new Group of Experts on Passenger Information in Stations and Hubs. The Group agreed that this would be an important next step in the work on making railway passenger journeys more accessible. It asked that the following changes be made to the Draft Terms of Reference:

- correct minor editorial mistakes;
- add reference to the outputs of CIT, OTIF, CEN and other transport sectors to the documents for consideration.

19. The Group of Experts adopted, as amended during the session, document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/10 and asked that it be included in the information that is consolidated and transmitted to the Working Party on Rail Transport. With this, the Group noted that it believed that the terms of reference item covered by this agenda item had been successfully completed.

20. The Group of Experts noted the amended contents of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/11 relating to this agenda item and asked that the secretariat keep this document updated going forward as part of the activities of the Working Party on Rail Transport.

21. The Group of Experts noted the importance of continuing this work with a focus on passenger information and asked that the secretariat transmit to the Working Party on Rail Transport the amended terms of reference included in the annex of ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/13 for their consideration and possible acceptance.

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

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/12

22. The secretariat introduced this agenda item noting that the updated text of the amendment proposal was included in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/12. The secretariat

explained the contents of the document. The Group proceeded to discuss the document and noted the following changes:

- editorial changes to Article 3bis to reflect the changes made in the proposed annexes;
- update to the title of Annex III.

23. The Group of Experts adopted, as amended during the session, document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/12 and asked that it be included in the information that is consolidated and transmitted to the Working Party on Rail Transport. With this, the Group noted that it believed that the terms of reference item covered by this agenda item had been successfully completed.

24. The Group of Experts thanked Belgium and Poland for making the amendment proposal to the Working Party on Rail Transport.

VII. Report on the execution of the mandate of the Group (agenda item 6)

Document: ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/13

25. The secretariat introduced the text of the report of the mandate highlighting the areas where the terms of reference for the Group had been achieved.

26. The Group of Experts requested that:

- Reference to the fact that differentiation of hubs had been discarded be inserted under activity A and removed from activity B;
- Reference to Belgium and Poland as the proponents of the amendment proposal be inserted into the relevant paragraphs under activity C and in the concluding comments to replace the square brackets.

27. The Group of Experts adopted, as amended during the session, document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/HUBS/2023/13 and asked that it be submitted to the Working Party on Rail Transport as a summary of the activities of the Group. With this, the Group noted that it believed that the terms of reference had been successfully completed.

VIII. Other business (agenda item 7)

28. No other business was discussed at the sixth session of the Group.

IX. Summary of decisions and reading of the draft report (agenda item 8)

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 sixth and final session and asked that the results of the activities of the Group are transmitted to the Working Party on Rail Transport along with the relevant proposals.