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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

### Working Party on Rail Transport

#### Special session

Geneva, 18–19 June 2024

## Report of the Special Session of the Working Party on Rail Transport

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## I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) held its special session on rail security from 18 to 19 June 2024 in Geneva.
2. The session of the Working Party was attended by representatives of the following countries: Netherlands (The); and Poland.
3. The Project Central Office of the Trans-European Railway was represented. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) were also represented.
4. The following Intergovernmental Organizations were represented: International Union of Railways (UIC); Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).
5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: European Passengers' Federation (EPF); International Justice Mission; and It's a Penalty.
6. Representatives of the following private and other sectors attended the session: CAMRAIL; Deutsche Bahn (DB); EUROSTAR; Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya (FGC); HUPAC Intermodal SA; National Railways of Zimbabwe; Polskie Linie Kolejowe (PLK S.A.); Polskie Koleje Państwowe S.A. (PKP S.A.); RAILPOL; Société national des chemins de fer français (SNCF); Správa železnic, státní organizace; Swedish Transport Administration; The OneGoal Initiative for Governance; and University of Zagreb, Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences.

## II. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda (agenda item 1)<sup>1</sup>

*Documentation:* ECE/TRANS/SC.2/244/Rev.1

7. The Working Party adopted the agenda as contained in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/244/Rev.1.

## III. UNECE/UIC Workshop on the Security of Vulnerable Users in Railways (agenda item 2)

*Documentation:* ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/1

8. In the framework of ongoing collaboration with UIC, this special session of the Working Party on Rail Transport focused on the Security of Vulnerable Users on the Railways. The final programme for the workshop is included in the annex of this report.

### A. Introduction

9. The workshop was introduced by welcome messages in session 1 from the Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Director General of UIC, the Chair of the UIC Security Platform, the Chair of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) (covering the work of the Inland Transport Committee on security) and UIC covering the security of vulnerable Rail Users.
10. The speakers noted that human trafficking is a terrible crime and a severe violation of human rights. They stressed the critical need to discuss how to protect vulnerable rail users and enhance the accessibility of railway for them.

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<sup>1</sup> Information on the session is available at:  
<https://unece.org/info/Transport/Rail-Transport/events/369040>.

11. The Chair of the UIC Security Platform highlighted the critical human trafficking situation in India, noting that vulnerable groups, such as children and women, are often targeted. He noted that in the past 27 months, over 31,000 children had been rescued from human trafficking. India introduced several measures in place to protect women and children, including increased surveillance technology, training to railway police, greater representation of women in the railway police force, and women-only compartments.

12. The Chair of the ITC WP.5 stressed that a secure inland transport system is essential for access to markets and employment. She emphasized that the use of railway is critical to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and noted that ensuring security is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders.

13. The UIC presented its Security platform and how it enhances security. The UIC Security platform organizes meetings and workshops to disseminate knowledge and facilitate collaborations between international organizations. The goal is to create a unified approach to tackling security threats and provide international guidance on reducing security challenges. The platform focuses on vulnerable groups, including children, women, and the elderly, while stressing that the vulnerability is always context-dependent, based on personal circumstances and specific situations. They encourage cultural changes to ensure equality. During the presentation, the importance of awareness raising campaigns and collaboration with external partners such as Interpol, law enforcement and private sectors was highlighted.

14. The delegates emphasized the importance of this meeting as a platform for sharing knowledge and best practices, raising awareness, and increasing opportunities for further partnerships.

## **B. Vulnerable Rail Users**

15. This point of the agenda was merged with point (a) and covered in the presentations included in session 1.

16. In the questions and answers segment that followed the presentations delegates noted the significance of integrating security and vulnerability considerations into transport infrastructure and policies. Speakers highlighted rail as a crucial player in decarbonizing transport sector, emphasizing the need to promote safe and secure rail transport to attract more and all possible users. Furthermore, opportunities for future collaboration with WP.5 were also raised.

17. The Working Party noted the work undertaken on Rail Security by UIC and UNECE. It acknowledged the intervention of the Chair of WP.5 on further collaboration in security matters and asked the secretariat to explore with the secretariat of WP.5 and with UIC, the possibility of developing dedicated indicators on passenger rail security to be included within the Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators.

## **C. Combatting Trafficking of Human Beings in the Rail Environment**

18. Session 2 focused on “Combatting trafficking of human beings in the rail environment”. Rail transport is one of the main transport modes for human trafficking. Presenters highlighted the critical role of staff training. The training provides guidelines to help staff detect potential threats and respond effectively. Presenters also stressed the need for raising awareness among staff and the public regarding the risks and consequences of human trafficking. Sufficient information and assistance should be provided to railway users through hotlines or mobile apps to facilitate early reporting of the crimes. Furthermore, international cooperation was underscored as essential, given the cross-border nature of many human trafficking cases. Facilitating collaboration among governments, civil society, railway companies and authorities was emphasized. Lastly, presenters noted the importance of addressing the data gap. The lack of data on in-person trafficking using the railways hinders the development of effective responses and policy making. It was encouraged to make efforts to improve data collection and analysis in this regard.

19. The representative of UNODC highlighted that consent is irrelevant in cases of human trafficking. According to the Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2022, fewer trafficking victims were detected globally during COVID-19 pandemic; however, female and child victims experienced more violent forms of trafficking during this period. They emphasized that 41 per cent of victims rely on “self-rescue” to escape exploitation, underscoring the importance of implementing better detection and support measures. The UNODC stressed the necessity of developing guidance and standard operating procedures for referral of in-person trafficking cases, along by using existing resources such as UNODC human trafficking indicators to detect instances of human trafficking. They recommended accompanying these measures with awareness raising campaigns and training.

20. The speaker from OSCE introduced their Action Plan with the four “Ps”: Protection of victims, prevention of trafficking in human beings, prosecution of perpetrators, and partnerships. They emphasized a victim and survivor-centred approach, advocating for trauma-informed and needs-based measures. The OSCE highlighted the importance of training programmes and establishment of national and international trafficking hotlines to report potential cases. They also showcased their campaigns, including the LOOK AGAIN and BeSafe campaigns, which primarily target Ukrainian refugees but are accessible to anyone in need.

21. The representatives of PKP S.A. and PLK S.A. addressed human trafficking in the context of the Ukrainian refugee crisis. The PKP S.A. reported that Polish train stations experienced high congestion following the outbreak of hostilities, particularly in February and March 2022. In response, they organized additional train and increased the number of security guards to ensure smooth and safe transport. They also deployed volunteers, established hotlines and mobile apps to provide assistance to Ukrainian refugees and for reporting suspicious activities. Additionally, posters were displayed in stations about the risks of trusting strangers. The PLK S.A. noted the decreasing trend in crimes on the railway area, especially during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. They highlighted their close collaboration with police and other security-related public services.

22. It's a Penalty utilizes social media and press to raise public awareness, prevent exploitation, and encourage reporting of suspicious activities. They collaborate closely with airlines, airports, transport hubs, tourism companies, hotels, and local communities to combat human trafficking. Their campaigns include distributing posters and lists of missing persons, which feature hotline numbers and QR codes linking to their webpage. For instance, during the 2022 campaign in Birmingham, they displayed posters on 36 screens across five train stations, potentially reaching over seven million people. This effort led to the discovery of 22 missing people.

23. The speaker from DB reported that approximately 300,000 Ukrainian refugees arrived in Germany between March and April 2022, with about 80 per cent entering via a DB central station. Many volunteers, including DB staff and citizens, assisted in identifying suspicious activities. Police or security personnel escorted individuals behaving suspiciously out of the train station. “Help for Refugee” flyers were distributed containing useful information and QR codes in multiple languages, including English, German, Russian and Ukrainian.

24. The International Justice Mission highlighted that, according to the International Labour Organization statistics, over 50 million people are in a situation of human trafficking worldwide. Eurostat reveals that 63 per cent of human trafficking victims among Ukrainian refugees are women and girls. They implement a European anti-trafficking programme, focusing on combating cross-border trafficking. The organization underscored the critical need for international collaboration, between source and destination countries. Additionally, they advocated for victim-focused solutions, early identification and reporting of crimes and a rapid response plan.

25. In the joint panel discussion and questions and answer segment that followed the presentations, delegates inquired about the sources of human trafficking data presented and asked whether data on the locations of incidents were available, which were not in most countries. They noted the importance of collecting reliable data.

## **D. Increasing the Security of Women in the Rail Environment**

26. Session 3 of the special session discussed “Increasing the security of women in the rail environment”. The main themes addressed by the presenters included staff training, ensuring adequate representation of women in decision-making processes, redesigning railway stations to enhance visibility and accessibility, increased surveillance and assistance using modern technologies (mobile apps, QR codes, Closed Circuit Television (CCTVs)), implementing clear reporting mechanisms for harassment. Gender sensitive planning was noted as essential, considering that women have different needs and travel patterns for public transportation.

27. The UN Women highlighted that women are the ones at higher risk of experiencing violence and insecurity during the use of transportation services, while women often use public transportation longer, making multiple stops for care activities. They stressed the importance of ensuring women representation in all decision-making process and value chains within the transport sector, which are currently male dominated. The UN Women also emphasized the importance of the conditions of routes and the waiting places and the need to establish the social norms that ensure sexual assaults are not acceptable behaviour within communities and among individuals.

28. The representative of FGC presented their efforts to promote gender equality within the transport sector and to improve security of all users, especially vulnerable groups. Their initiatives include staff training, redesigning railway spaces, including halls, corridors, stairs and platform to enhance visibility and safety. They conduct public awareness campaigns advocating zero tolerance for sexual harassment, educate passengers and staff on identifying abuse and harassment situations, and equip individuals with effective response strategies.

29. The representative of SNCF adopts a client centred approach to improve railway experience, including waiting for the train, on train and after arrival. They conduct questionnaires to analyse user perceptions of insecurity and actual events of harassment, recognizing the importance of addressing both. The SNCF provides hotlines across all railway territories for 24/7 access, including via SMS. They established safe zones and developed a mobile app called UMay for navigating safe locations. The SNCF also stressed the importance of awareness campaigns and training.

30. The National Railways of Zimbabwe stressed that railway planning should be inclusive for everyone, considering the different needs and mobility patterns of all users. They have enhanced security with increased CCTV surveillance, monitoring, and designated women-only compartments and seating. Their initiatives include increasing the number of female officers, training staff, and encouraging the reporting of suspicious activities. Collaboration with women’s organizations is crucial for providing tailored support for women, and they underscored the importance of policies and protocols to support victims.

31. The representative of UITP noted that women face greater challenges in using public transport, such as harassment and assaults, which result in reduced mobility, independence, economic disadvantages, and negative social effects. The UITP adopts a gender-based, holistic approach to improve infrastructure, decision-making processes, and company culture to empower women. The UITP emphasized the importance of data collection and the use of technologies like CCTV, mobile apps, and real-time location tracking tools. Additionally, the significance of awareness-raising campaigns, educational programmes, and collaboration with local authorities and stakeholders was stressed.

32. The representative of EPF underscored the importance of raising awareness and education along with the careful design of stations to enhance safety. The importance of digital connectivity for immediate assistance and charging facilities for phones to ensure passengers stay connected was also stressed. Implementing appropriate legislation and providing clear guidance were also highlighted as crucial measures.

33. In the joint panel discussion and questions and answer segment that followed the presentations, delegates stressed again that collective efforts and shared responsibilities, among governments, police, private sectors, and legal frameworks are essential to enhance the security of women in the rail environment. They noted that, in addition to improving rail station environment, long-term approaches, such as education, public awareness campaigns, and improving safety measures, are crucial to building safe and secure transportation systems.

## **E. Conclusions**

34. Following two days of intensive discussions on vulnerable users on the railways, the Working Party noted the following:

- The Working Party welcomed discussions highlighting the importance of combatting the trafficking of human beings on the railways. It noted that follow-up work in this area could focus on assistance on training of railway staff, on awareness raising on combatting human trafficking, on international cooperation between the railways and in the improvement of data availability. The Working Party asked the secretariat, in collaboration with UIC, to arrange for the preparation of recommendations for combatting human trafficking on the railways through the creation of a dedicated informal group of experts set up for this purpose. The Working Party asked the secretariat to prepare a document for the next session of SC.2 setting out the framework for this work as well as a terms of reference for the group identifying the tasks to undertake to reach a recommendations document.
- The Working Party welcomed the exchange of views on security of women in the railways. It asked that the secretariat, in discussion with UIC, to prepare a publication focusing on best practice guidelines on the security of women on the railways. The Working Party asked that those present at the meeting send any relevant inputs for this publication to the secretariat, or directly to UIC, by the end of September 2024. Following this, UNECE and UIC could proceed to prepare a document for publication on this subject.

## **IV. Adoption of Decisions (agenda item 3)**

35. As agreed, and in line with previous practice, the Working Party reviewed the draft list of decisions for the session as prepared by the Chair. The Working Party adopted its decisions and asked the Chair, with the support of the secretariat, to prepare a report of this special session.

## Annex

### **Programme of the UNECE/UIC Joint Workshop on the Security of Vulnerable Rail Users**

#### **18 June 2024**

##### **Adoption of the Agenda**

##### **Session 1: Introduction**

Mr Dmitry MARIYASIN, UNECE Deputy Executive Secretary

Mr François DAVENNE, UIC General Director (Video)

Mr Jakub KAPTURZAK, Chair Working Party on Rail Transport

Mr Manoj YADAVA, UIC Security Platform Chair (Video)

Ms Els DE WIT, UNECE on Security

Ms Marie-Hélène BONNEAU and Ms Laura PETERSEN, UIC Security Division on the Security of Vulnerable Rail Users

##### **Session 2: Combatting Trafficking of Human Beings in the Rail Environment**

Mr Alexandre SCHICK, UNODC

Mr Oleksandr KYRYLENKO, OSCE Office of Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

Ms Magdalena KUJACIŃSKA, PKP S.A.

Mr Jakub PODUBNY, PLK S.A.

Ms Elizabeth SPELLER, It's a Penalty

Mr Benjamin BURGHARD, DB

Mr Jay HAQUE and Mr Stefan COMAN, International Justice Mission

Joint panel discussion

#### **19 June 2024**

##### **Session 3: Increasing the Security of Women in the Rail Environment**

Ms Adriana QUINONES, UN Women

Ms Meritxell SALAS PÉREZ & Ms. Marina LOPEZ, FGC

Ms Anne MEUNIER, SNCF

Mr. Kingston MAGAYA, National Railways of Zimbabwe

Carmela CANONICO, UITP (Video)

Ms Bryony CHETWODE, Representative of the European Passenger Federation

Joint panel discussion