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Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Rail Transport

Seventy-eighth session

Geneva, 13 (pm)–15 November 2024

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

Annotated Provisional Agenda for the Seventy-eighth session*, **

to be held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Salle XXIV
starting at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, 13 November 2024

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda.
2. Workshop: “Improving the performance of the rail sector”.
3. Towards Unified Railway Law in the Pan-European Region and Euro-Asian Transport Corridors.
4. European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines.
5. The Revision Committee of the Model Rules for the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock.
6. Passenger Information in Stations and Hubs.
7. Euro-Asian Rail Transport.
8. Trans-European Railway Project.
9. Railway Financing and Public-Private Partnerships.

* For reasons of economy, delegates are requested to bring copies of all relevant documents to the session. Documentation will not be available in the conference room. Before the session, documents may be downloaded from the website <https://unece.org/info/Transport/Rail-Transport/events/392597>. On an exceptional basis, documents may also be obtained by email (sc.2@un.org).

** Participation is possible only in person. Delegates are requested to register online at the following address: <https://indico.un.org/event/1007287>. Upon arrival at the Palais des Nations, delegates should present their digital badge at the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate Pavillon (14, Avenue de la Paix), opened on weekdays from 8.00 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. In case of difficulty, please contact the secretariat by telephone (+41 22 917 2432) or by email (sc.2@un.org). For a map of the Palais des Nations and other useful information, see website: www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html.



10. Rail Security.
11. Innovation in Rail Transport.
12. Productivity in Rail Transport.
13. Climate Change and Rail Transport.
14. Railway Reform and Review.
15. Facilitation of International Rail Transport in the Pan-European Region.
 - (a) Facilitation of Rail Border Crossings;
 - (b) Harmonization of Technical Specifications on Different Railway Systems.
16. Rail Statistics.
17. Improving Safety in Rail Transport.
18. Activities of the Inland Transport Committee and its Subsidiary Bodies.
19. Activities of the European Commission in Rail Transport.
20. Activities of International Organizations in Rail Transport.
21. Other Business.
22. Date and Venue of the Next Session.
23. Adoption of Decisions and Report.

II. Annotations

1. Adoption of the Provisional Agenda

The first item to be considered is the adoption of the draft agenda.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/246

2. Workshop: “Improving the performance of the rail sector”

The Working Party may wish to consider the workshop on “Improving the performance of the rail sector”. For the railways to grow and increase their market share, both for passenger and freight, the performance of the sector needs to improve in terms of economic performance as well as the quality and reliability of services. This workshop aims to discuss the challenges slowing down the railways as well as gathering best practice examples of efforts in the passenger and freight sectors to improve performance. Member States, associations and the rail sector will be invited to intervene and share their experiences on developments in this area.

3. Towards Unified Railway Law in the Pan-European Region and on Euro-Asian Transport Corridors

The Working Party may wish to recall that at its seventy-seventh session, it adopted the Convention on the contract for international carriage of goods by rail as a first Convention in a system of Unified Railway Law Conventions. The Convention was open for signature on 12 January 2024. The Working Party may wish to be informed on the status of the Convention and the dissemination activities of the secretariat.

The Working Party may also wish to consider possible options for next steps in Unified Railway Law, considering options for possible work on the next Convention. On this, the Working Party may wish to consider document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/2 collecting previous discussions on this topic within the Group of Experts on Unified Railway Law.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/2

4. European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines

The Working Party may wish to be informed by the secretariat about its activities to increase the number of contracting parties to the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC). Detailed information on the AGC, including the up-to-date and consolidated text of the agreement (ECE/TRANS/63/Rev.4),¹ a map of the AGC network, an inventory of compliance with AGC standards, information on the background, benefits and accession requirements for AGC (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2020/2) and the relevant Depository Notifications are available on the website of the Working Party.

The Working Party may also wish to be informed about the notification of changes to the AGC agreed at previous session of the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2023/11, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2023/12 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2023/13) and notified to the depository in New York as well as new amendment proposals (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/3 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/11).

The Working Party will be updated on the joint AGC-AGTC online tool on technical parameters for operation on the E-Rail network.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/63/Rev.4, C.N.83.2024.TREATIES-XI.C.3, C.N.84.2024.TREATIES-XI.C.3.a, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/3, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/11

5. The Revision Committee to the Model Rules for the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its seventy-seventh session a summary was provided of the inaugural session of the Revisions Committee to the Model Rules on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock following the adoption of the Model Rules as the sixtieth legal instrument under the purview of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC). The Working Party, at its last session adopted changes to the Model Rules as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2023/3. The Working Party may wish to be updated about the results of the second session of the Revision Committee to the Model Rules. In particular, the Working Party may wish to consider document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/4 containing an amendment proposal to the Model Rules. The Working Party may also wish to review the draft Terms of Reference for an informal group of experts, proposed by the Revisions Committee, on digital aspects related to the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/12).

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/4, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/12

6. Passenger Information in Stations and Hubs

The Working Party may recall that at its seventy-seventh session it agreed the terms of reference for a new Group of Experts on passenger information in stations and hubs (INFO) as set out in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2023/6. These terms of reference were subsequently adopted by ITC at its eighty-sixth session and subsequently by the Executive Committee of UNECE.

¹ www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2_AGC_text.html.

The Working Party may wish to discuss the outcomes of the first session of the new INFO Group of Experts (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/INFO/2024/2).

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2023/6, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/INFO/2024/2

7. Euro-Asian Rail Transport

The Working Party may wish to recall that at its seventy-third session in 2019 a workshop was held on: “Making rail freight more competitive and the coordinated development of the rail network with a focus on how to work together at the government and sectoral levels on EATL”. Following the seventy-third session, a summary publication was prepared by the secretariat and is available on the Working Party’s webpage.

The Working Party may wish to be informed about and discuss new developments on Euro-Asian rail transport corridors, including work on corridor development and coordination.

Following the decision of the Working Party at its seventy-second session, the Working Party may wish to be informed about developments in the Eurasian Rail Alliance Index.

8. Trans-European Railway Project

The Working Party will be informed by the project manager of the Trans-European Railway (TER) project about the activities of 2024: the concrete results, the plan for subsequent years and the efforts to increase the number of participating countries. A written report (in English only) of the activities of TER can be found in Informal document WP.5 (2024) No. 2.

The Working Party may wish to review the results and consider how to further support and contribute to the TER project.

9. Railway Financing and Public-Private Partnerships

The Working Party may wish to be informed about developments in railway financing and public-private partnerships in railways including the results of the “Workshop on the role of PPPs in the financing of investment in railways” held within the framework of the Revisions Committee on the Model Rules for the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock.

10. Rail Security

The Working Party may wish to be informed about developments in rail security, including updates on the Rail Security Observatory and the ongoing collaboration with the International Union of Railways (UIC) on security matters. In particular, the Working Party may wish to be informed about the joint UNECE-UIC workshop on vulnerable rail users (with a focus on combatting human trafficking on the railways and the security of women on the railways) held within the Special Session of the Working Party on Rail Transport, 18-19 June 2024 (ECE/TRANS/245). In this framework, the Working Party may wish to consider documents ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/5 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/9 setting out a way forward for this joint work including through the setting up of an informal expert group on combatting human trafficking on the railways.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/245, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/5, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/9

11. Innovation in Rail Transport

In line with the ECE road map for promoting the use of Intelligent Transport Systems, the Working Party continues work in this area.

The Working Party may wish to recall that it agreed to the creation of a rail innovation observatory aimed at sharing with member States best practice innovations that could further help develop the competitiveness of the railways. The aim is to assist in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and work towards the achievement of the technology pillar of the ITC strategy. The Working Party may wish to be updated on the observatory.

12. Productivity in Rail Transport

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its last session, it requested that the secretariat prepare an updated questionnaire for the rail productivity work considering additional sources of information and alternative approaches. The Working Party may wish to consider document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/6 setting out the proposed questionnaire and the modalities for gathering the necessary data.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/6

13. Climate Change and Rail Transport

The Working Party will be updated on the new ITC Strategy on Climate Change and how the work of the Working Party continues to be central to achieving the goals within it. The Working Party may wish to consider document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/7 on this subject.

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may recall that at its seventy-seventh session it discussed energy efficiency in the railways and in particular document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2023/10. The Working Party asked that further information is gathered on this subject. Document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/8 provides the questionnaire to be filled for this purpose. The Working Party may wish to comment on this document before it is sent to stakeholders for compilation.

The Working Party will also be updated on other work of ITC in this area including the Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes, on climate change mitigation and the For Future Inland Transport Systems tool and on green logistics, eco-scoring and related matters.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/7, ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/8

14. Railway Reform and Review

The Working Party may wish to be informed about the developments on railway reform and developments in the sector, building on the workshop held at the seventy-first session of the Working Party. The Working Party may also recall that at its last session it held a Workshop on “The Future of International Rail Passenger Transport”. A summary of this workshop is provided in ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/10.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2024/10

15. Facilitation of International Rail Transport in the Pan-European Region

(a) Facilitation of Rail Border Crossings

The Working Party may wish to be informed about developments in annex 9 to the Harmonization Convention on facilitating rail border crossings in the pan-European region. The Working Party may also wish to return to the discussion at the seventy-sixth session of SC.2 on the results of the questionnaire on annex 9 of the Harmonization Convention.

Member States may also wish to share best practices in implementing the Harmonization Convention at the session.

(b) Harmonization of Technical Specifications on Different Railway Systems

The Working Party may wish to be informed by the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) and/or the European Union Agency for Railways (ERA) about improvements in the 1,435 mm and the 1,520 mm broad gauge railway systems, and about the results of the work of the OSJD/ERA Working Group on Interoperability.

16. Rail Statistics

The Working Party may wish to be informed about the ongoing work in rail statistics and its relevance to the Working Party, in particular, about the work of the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6).

17. Improving Safety in Rail Transport

The Working Party may wish to recall that at its seventy-second session, it had decided to widen the scope to safety at level crossings to cover all relevant areas of rail safety. The Working Party may wish to be informed about developments in this area.

In line with discussions at the seventy-third session of SC.2, the Working Party may also wish to discuss developments related to the Code of Practice on the Packing of Cargo Transport Units administered by the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24). In particular the joint SC.2-WP.24 session on the CTU Code to be held 16-17 December 2024.

18. Activities of the Inland Transport Committee and its Subsidiary Bodies

The Working Party will be informed about activities of ITC, its Bureau, subsidiary bodies and other United Nations organizations on matters of interest to the Working Party in addition to the new Climate Change Strategy that has already been discussed under agenda item 13.

The Working Party will also be informed about the progress and take-up of the Inland Transport and Trade Connectivity eLearning Platform – LearnITC.

19. Activities of the European Commission in Rail Transport

In line with standard practice, the Working Party may wish to be informed about recent activities and plans for the future work of the European Commission (DG Move) in rail transport.

20. Activities of International Organizations in Rail Transport

The Working Party may wish to be informed about recent activities and plans for the future work of other international organizations and stakeholders in the field of rail transport.

21. Other business

The Working Party may wish to discuss other business.

22. Date and Venue of the Next Session

The next session of the Working Party is tentatively scheduled to be held from 12 to 14 November 2025 in Geneva.

23. Adoption of Decisions and Report

In accordance with the decision of the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/190, paragraph 6) and established practice, the Chair will briefly summarize the decisions at the end of the session. If time allows, the report of the session will also be reviewed and adopted, if not, following the session, the Chair and Vice-Chair, in cooperation with the secretary, will draft a report on the outcome of the session for transmission to ITC.

III. Tentative Timetable

Wednesday, 13 November	3-6 p.m.	Items 1 and 2
Thursday, 14 November	10 a.m.-1 p.m.	Items 3-8
	3-6 p.m.	Items 9-15
Friday, 15 November	10 a.m.-1 p.m.	Items 16-20
	3-6 p.m.	Items 21-23
