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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE
INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Rail Transport
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DEVELOPMENTS IN VARIOUS RAILWAY FIELDS

Transmitted by the Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSZhD)

At its fifty-third session, the Working Party asked Governments and international organizations to provide information on new relevant developments in the following items (TRANS/SC.2/192, para. 65):

- (a) Environmental questions related to railway operations.
- (b) Safety in railway transport, particularly in the following areas: railway accidents, methodologies for risk assessment, and use of railway infrastructure for transport of dangerous goods.
- (c) Use of computers in rail transport operations, in particular in the management of rail goods traffic.
- (d) Introduction of new transport technologies and application of modern techniques to railway operations, in particular regarding the interface between rail transport and other transport modes.

The information received by the secretariat is reproduced below for consideration by the Working Party.

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INFORMATION ABOUT RECENT OSZHD ACTIVITIES CONCERNING TRANSPORT POLICY, THE ENVIRONMENT, COMBINED TRANSPORT AND COMPUTER USE ON RAILWAYS

Work on improving the organization of international rail transport via transport corridors.

With respect to OSZhD corridor No. 1 a questionnaire was prepared on the parameters of the transport corridor. The information obtained will help to determine the economic benefits and competitiveness of the corridor and specify the technical equipment of railway sections for each country through which the corridor passes.

The Working Group on the Use of the Lianyungang-Alashankou (China)-Druzhba-Astana-Presnogorskaya (Kazakhstan)-Ekaterinburg-Moscow (Russian Federation)-Minsk-Brest (Belarus)-Warsaw (Poland)-Berlin (Germany)-Western Europe (Northern Corridor of the Trans-Asian Railway) held its first meeting in September 1999 in Almaty (Republic of Kazakhstan).

An international meeting on the theme "Prospects for Development of Transit Traffic Along the Northern Corridor of the Trans-Asian Railway" was held in Almaty from 10 to 13 June 2000. To complement the conference, Kazakh Railways demonstrated the technical and operational features of the border crossing at Druzhba (Kazakhstan)-Alashankou (China).

An international conference "TRANSEURASIA-2000" took place in Astana on 14-15 June 2000 and considered issues relating to the improvement of the infrastructure and efficient utilization of transport corridors.

Mongolian Railways are also making preparations for the operation of an experimental container train on the route Pusang-Tianjin-Erlian-Dzhamin Üüd-Sühbaatar-Naushki-Lokot-Chengeldy-Andizhan. Timetabling and tariff conditions of carriage are currently being coordinated.

For OSZhD corridors No. 3 and 5 a memorandum of understanding was signed in Astana in 1999.

The parties operating OSZhD transport corridors No. 3 and 5 which signed the memorandum of understanding decided to carry on work in future to finalize and implement a joint plan of action at the bilateral level.

Work on issues relating to the development and operation of the Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) transport corridor could not be fully completed in 1999 as a number of participants had not provided the lead executing agency with all the necessary information, in particular regarding interaction between rail and sea transport.

The factors impeding completion of work on the TRACECA corridor include the absence during the drafting stage of the OSZhD representative from Turkmenistan, through which a significant section of the corridor passes (including the seaport at Turkmenbashi).

An international theoretical and practical conference on the theme "Problems of developing a Euro-Asian transport bridge" was held in Tashkent in May 1999. In terms of the issues discussed, the conference followed up on the earlier international conference held in Baku in 1998 at which the multilateral core agreement on the development of an international transport corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia was signed. The Tashkent conference once again highlighted the interest shown by the European Commission, banks and international organizations in developing the TRACECA corridor.

The most recent meeting of experts concerning this corridor was held from 17 to 19 May 2000 in Odessa.

Work is continuing on the ninth Crete Corridor. The first phase of this work is expected to be completed in the first half of 2000.

A draft final report for OSZhD corridor No. 13 (First Crete Corridor) was considered. The report is being prepared as a White Paper taking account of the additional information and comments received from participants in the drafting stage.

As regards express and high-speed rail traffic, the experts have completed a draft configuration of such links between Europe and Asia. This material includes proposals concerning the topology of the network of express and high-speed railway lines. These are seen as an extension of the network of West European high-speed lines with a possible outlet towards Asia. Timetabling options and recommendations as to choice of rolling stock and traffic engineering principles have also been specified. The final draft of the material will be presented for approval to the twenty-eighth session of the OSZhD Ministerial Meeting in June 2000.

Work on the formulation of a coordinated OSZhD rail transport policy has been pursued.

Documents and data are being gathered for a comprehensive study of issues relating to individual components of transport policy. This will include European Union directives as well as laws of OSZhD member countries on transport policy, and proposals for the specification and simplification of rail transport corridors taking account of trans-European corridors and ESCAP projects. Existing and future goods and passenger flows will also be studied.

With regard to **environmental protection**, the following work has been pursued within the OSZhD framework:

Concerning protection of the environment against the impact of rail transport, a set of organizational measures and technical solutions was prepared to deal with the environmental consequences of accidents during the transport of dangerous goods, as well as to improve operational checks on their carriage and temporary storage.

Recommendations on dealing with the environmental consequences of accidents during the transport of dangerous goods were adopted in March 2000 and issued in OSZhD leaflet R-003.

Work has been undertaken and the interim results discussed in respect of the following matters:

- Assessment of the noise impact on the environment of rail transport;
- Electromagnetic radiation in rail transport.

A method of conducting inventories of sources of electromagnetic radiation was adopted in 1999 as part of this work.

In 2000 OSZhD is beginning work on a new topic concerning the problems of eliminating waste associated with rail transport.

For **combined transport** within the OSZhD framework there is the Agreement on Organizational and Operational Aspects of Combined Transport Services between Europe and Asia (TRANS/WP.24/1997/2), which entered into force on 5 August 1997.

During the twenty-fifth session of the OSZhD Ministerial Meeting the Agreement was signed by the following members: Republic of Belarus, Republic of Hungary, People's Republic of China, Republic of Moldova, Mongolia, Republic of Poland, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Republic of Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Republic of Estonia. The Republic of Bulgaria, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Latvia have acceded and become parties to the Agreement. There are now 14 parties to the instrument.

During the twenty-seventh session of the OSZhD Ministerial Meeting (June 1999, Republic of Kazakhstan), the delegation of Kazakhstan expressed its wish to become a party to the Agreement. Kazakhstan's accession is now the subject of inter-agency consultation.

As to combined transport, recommendations on border-station operating practice in connection with the passage of combined transport trains on international routes have been agreed and issued in OSZhD leaflet R-201.

With regard to **computer use**:

The following computer systems for administering freight traffic are currently in use on the railways of OSZhD countries:

- Tracking of reception and transfer of wagons at border crossings;
- Tracking of wagons during loading and unloading operations;
- Management and surveillance of train movements;
- Monitoring of shunting over mechanized humps;
- Control of delivery of empty wagons to loading points;
- Inventory and management of wagon stock;
- Setting and calculation of international freight traffic rates.

Work is being pursued within the OSZhD framework on:

- Paperless international freight shipment;
 - Establishment of an inter-railway data transfer network for the organization of international traffic.
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