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FACILITATION OF BORDER CROSSING IN INTERNATIONAL RAIL TRANSPORT

Transmitted by the Governments of Finland and Turkey

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FINLAND

(a - d)

After Finland joined the EU new regulations or procedures have not been enacted concerning the border crossings of western railway traffic either in the rail passenger traffic or in the goods traffic.

From 1 June 1997 in eastern railway traffic, operated with the Russian Federation, the border crossing formalities (customs and passport controls) have also on the Finnish side been carried out in a moving train. On the Russian side the border crossing formalities have already been carried out earlier in a moving train.

After the border crossing formalities have been taken in Finland into the moving train, the stopping times in passenger traffic at the Vainikkala border station have been reduced to the time that is required for changing the locomotive and for passengers getting on or off the train, which is approximately 20 minutes per train. In goods traffic the stopping times on the Finnish side at Vainikkala, the main border station for goods traffic, are 4 to 5 hours.

In Finland and the Russian Federation, the ministries responsible for railway traffic have each set up a working group to prepare the speeding up of border formalities in rail traffic between the two countries. Apart from their own meetings, the working groups have held joint meetings, in which the above-mentioned measures for facilitating passenger traffic have been agreed upon. The working groups will continue to hold joint meetings in the future too.

The working groups preparing the speeding up of border formalities have decided to ask the competent ministries of their countries to prepare an intergovernmental agreement on the carrying out of border controls in a moving train across the border in order to speed up the border formalities in passenger traffic between Finland and the Russian Federation.

TURKEY

(a) Average time spent at main border crossings is 30 minutes by passenger trains and 90 minutes by goods trains.

(b) No progress has been achieved yet, although contacts with police and customs have been carried out.

(c) Since it is determined that the delays are caused mainly by police and customs controls, it has been envisaged that portable computers to be held by police officers during controls may reduce the stopping time of passenger trains.
