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Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment

**REPORT OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE JOINT MEETING**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. The Joint Meeting held its second session on 6 July 1999.

2. The session was attended by members of the bureaux of the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Inland Transport Committee, by lead actors, and by national focal points, representing the following countries and international organizations: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, European Community (EC), European Environment Agency (EEA). The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), World Health Organization (WHO), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) were also represented.

**I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

3. The Joint Meeting adopted its agenda (JMTE/1999/1).

**II. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

4. The Joint Meeting elected as Co-Chairmen Mr. H. Courtois (Belgium), Chairman of the Inland Transport Committee, and Mr. U. Svidén (Sweden), Chairman of the Committee on Environmental Policy.

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### III. ANALYSIS OF SELECTED KEY ISSUES IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

5. Mr. Peter Wiederkehr (OECD Environment Directorate) presented the OECD project "Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST): scenarios for 2030". This project aims at characterizing and defining criteria for EST, developing long-term scenarios using a backcasting method, and identifying various policy instruments and measures to achieve EST. It examines the possibilities for reducing the environmental effects of transport by modelling three different EST scenarios based on technological improvements, transport demand management and a combination of both. The study will conclude with recommendations for strategies and policy guidelines for achieving environmentally sustainable transport. Through the support of UNEP and the Austrian Government, the EST study has recently been extended to countries participating in the Central European Initiative (CEI). A workshop was held in Slovenia at the end of May 1999 to discuss specific case studies. The report "Towards Sustainable Transport in the CEI countries" is now available.

6. Mr. Günter Hörmandinger (EC) presented the PHARE project "Transport and the Environment: A Multi-Country Approach", which covers all the Phare partner countries. The final objective of the project is to reduce environmental pollution resulting from the growth of the transport sector. This presentation did not constitute a policy statement by the EC, since a new Commission had not yet been appointed at the time of the meeting and work was still in progress. It was stressed that the project had to be seen in the light of efforts within the EC to integrate environmental concerns into transport policy. A conference to discuss the priority setting for strategies developed in this project was held in Budapest, 12-14 September 1999.

7. Ms. Ann Dom (EEA), presented the EC/EEA project "Transport and Environment Reporting Mechanism for the EU" (TERM). One of the main TERM outputs will be an annual indicator report on transport and the environment in the EU. It will include a set of the most relevant indicators for EU policy needs and decision-making. The aim is to develop an indicator set that will make it possible to measure the degree of environmental integration in the transport sector and the effectiveness of the various policy measures. A "zero version" of the transport and environment indicator report will be published in Autumn 1999, and serve as input to the Helsinki Summit (December 1999) under the Finnish presidency of the EU. This indicator report will be complemented by focus reports on specific technical or policy issues which require more in-depth investigation. In 2000, a feasibility study on extending TERM to the countries seeking accession to the EU will be examined.

8. The Joint Meeting noted that the presentations provided a good example for developing long-term objectives in transport and the environment, for drawing up regional and subregional strategies for policies towards these objectives and for preparing the statistical tools to assess progress. It realized that besides ECE itself, other organizations were developing important activities which had to be considered when implementing the Programme of Joint Action. The projects presented should be extended to cover all ECE member States, with the aim of constructing a pan-European approach. This was further discussed under agenda item 4 (c).

9. Mr. Robert Thaler, Chairman of the Preparatory Committee that drafted the Charter on Transport, Environment and Health, and Mr. Carlos Dora (WHO) presented the outcome of the Third Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, (London, 16-18 June 1999). They summarized the most important elements of the Charter, including its provisions for follow-up. They also highlighted the request made by Ministers to the ECE and WHO to prepare an overview of relevant existing agreements and legal instruments on transport, environment and health and a report containing recommendations covering the possibility of new non-legally binding actions and the feasibility, necessity and content of a new legally binding instrument. Finally, they informed the Meeting that the steering group established for the implementation of the Charter had used the occasion of the London Conference to hold its first meeting. It aimed to collaborate closely with the Joint Meeting.

10. The secretariat stressed that the Charter built on the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Joint Action, covering in particular the health impacts of transport. This might open the way for close cooperation between the three sectors concerned. Concerning the request made in the ministerial declaration to WHO and ECE, the secretariat highlighted that ECE was a forum specializing in the establishment and administration of legal instruments covering transport and the environment. ECE is cooperating closely with WHO by establishing, in the framework of the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution, a joint Task Force on the health impacts of air pollution that spent its first year preparing a report on the impacts of particulate matter.

11. The Joint Meeting:

(a) Noted with interest the outcome of the London Conference regarding transport, environment and health, and expressed its readiness to cooperate with WHO in the follow-up process;

(b) Urged its members to inform all relevant national authorities within their countries about the decisions taken at the London Conference;

(c) Agreed to study the implications of the decisions taken at the London Conference for its work and decided that the two Bureaux, coordinated by their Chairmen, should, by the end of November 1999, decide on the modalities of their involvement in this follow-up process;

(d) Requested the secretariat to contribute to the study of agreements and legal instruments by establishing an inventory of relevant provisions in ECE legal instruments.

#### **IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF JOINT ACTION**

##### **(a) National focal points and international lead actors**

12. The secretariat presented the status of nominations for national focal points and international lead actors up to 21 June 1999 (JMTE/1999/2) and informed the meeting of the nomination of the national focal point of Cyprus. The delegations of the Czech Republic and France informed the Joint Meeting of the nomination of their national focal points. With these nominations, 40 UN/ECE member States have now one or several focal points for transport and the environment.

##### **(b) Review of the national reports**

13. The secretariat introduced document JMTE/1999/3, summarizing the national reports, and JMTE/1999/3/Add.1, containing the general guidelines provided by the secretariat to all the national focal points to assist them in structuring their 1999 national reports. The secretariat informed the Joint Meeting that Germany and Turkmenistan had also submitted their reports and that all the national reports could be downloaded from the Programme of Joint Action's webpage.

14. The delegation of the Czech Republic announced that its Ministry of Transport and Communications had recently published a document on "transport and the environment in Czech Republic", which contained relevant information on the follow-up to the Programme of Joint Action and could be considered as the Czech national report.

15. The delegation of Slovenia informed the Joint Meeting that their national report was being prepared and briefly presented information on its national activities.

16. The Joint Meeting took note of the report (JMTE/1999/3) and the additional information provided by national focal points. It welcomed the progress in implementing the national activities in the Programme of Joint

Action. Finally, the Joint Meeting urged those national focal points that had not yet submitted their national reports to do so as soon as possible.

(c) Review of international activities in the Programme of Joint Action

17. The secretariat presented document JMTE/1999/4, and informed the Joint Meeting that additional information had been received from the Swedish Maritime Organization.

18. The secretariat also reported on progress in the negotiations of a new protocol to the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution to abate acidification, eutrophication and tropospheric ozone. This new protocol, to be adopted at a ministerial conference in Gothenburg (Sweden) in November 1999, would, inter alia, set national emission ceilings for four pollutants and establish limit values for emissions from new mobile sources. It could be considered as a contribution to the implementation of the Programme of Joint Action, in particular items II (a) and (h) and IV (a). The secretariat also informed the Joint Meeting about its activities in transport and environment statistics as indicators of sustainable transport, to be considered as a contribution to the implementation of element I (d) of the Programme. In addition, the Joint Meeting was informed about the ECE initiative to extend the TERM project (see para. 7 above) to ECE countries in transition, and of the organization of a workshop in Spring 2000 for this purpose. Finally, the secretariat reported that the third road safety week in ECE region would take place from 1 to 7 May 2000.

19. The representative of Switzerland indicated that document JMTE/1999/4 did not correctly contain the information on civil aviation provided by Switzerland (chapter VII of the Programme), and highlighted the reasons for the lack of international activities concerning element (k) of chapter III.

20. A number of lead actors reported on their activities:

(a) FINLAND: Two workshops, one on fuel quality standards and one on strategical environmental impact assessment, were announced as part of programme elements II (h) and III (h), respectively;

(b) NETHERLANDS: A workshop on cycling would be organized in June 2000, as part of programme element V (d);

(c) AUSTRIA: The OECD Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Transport is tentatively scheduled for the end of April or the beginning of May 2000. It will be held in Vienna and finalize phase 4 of the OECD EST project, as part of Programme element I (k). ECE countries were invited to participate and contribute to this Conference;

(d) OECD: The work on transport demand, part of Programme element I (b), was in progress.

21. Additional initiatives to implement international activities in the Programme of Joint Action were announced:

(a) OECD: A workshop on innovation for EST - new mobility services and logistics for passenger and freight transport - would be held in Berlin, 27-28 September 1999;

(b) ECMT: One of the major themes of the annual ECMT Ministerial meeting in 2000, to be held in Prague 30-31 May, will be the topic of sustainable transport.

22. The representative of UNEP expressed its interest in cooperating in the implementation of the Programme of Joint Action. He suggested establishing links between the relevant international activities and the Sustainable Cities Network created by UNEP and HABITAT.

23. Concerning chapter IV "Protection of sensitive areas", the delegation of Italy informed the Joint Meeting that it expected to be able to withdraw its reservation after a bilateral meeting that its Ministry for the Environment and the Bolzan authorities were organizing in early 2000 in Meran, to provide for a technical forum to deal with the problems related to the definition and identification of sensitive areas. Italy had invited Austria to participate actively and had sent it a preliminary work programme. Austria, which was now considering ways of cooperating with Italy, planned to hold a kick-off workshop, possibly in early October 1999, and has commissioned a study on the definition of sensitive areas to be ready for this workshop. Turkey informed the Joint Meeting that it maintained its reservation with regard to this chapter.

24. The Joint Meeting took note of the report (JMTE/1999/4) and of the additional information provided and welcomed the efforts to implement the international activities in the Programme of Joint Action. The Joint Meeting recognized priority setting as the main question to be solved regarding the Programme of Joint Action and urged member States to find new international lead actors for the elements not yet covered. It also recognized the importance of the extension of the TERM project to countries in transition, under the umbrella of the Programme of Joint Action.

d) Reporting mechanism and electronic information system

25. The secretariat presented the Programme of Joint Action's website ([www.unece.org/poja](http://www.unece.org/poja)) highlighting that its structure corresponded to that of

the Programme and gave access to all the relevant documents and information concerning the Programme, its implementation and follow-up.

26. The Joint Meeting expressed its satisfaction with the website. It requested the secretariat to remove the password to reach details of the focal points. Aware of the importance of sharing information, it also requested the secretariat to post the list of meetings, events and activities linked with the Programme, and to establish hyper links with the related websites.

27. The Joint Meeting also stressed the need for priority setting for the national reports, as well as the importance of harmonizing the tools by providing an efficient reporting mechanism.

#### **V. DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR AN AD HOC EXPERT GROUP**

28. The Joint Meeting discussed the draft terms of reference for an ECE joint ad hoc expert group on transport and the environment (JMTE/1999/5) prepared by the secretariat. It noted that all member States should have an opportunity, beyond the reporting mechanism, regularly to contribute their expertise and voice their concerns, and that there was an equally important need for expert assessments, analyses and proposals so that the Joint Meeting could fulfil its tasks. It also recognized that the outcome of the London Conference added a new dimension to this process.

29. The members of the Inland Transport Committee's Bureau stressed that, on the one hand, more time was needed to study the outcome of the London Conference and that, on the other, only partial information was currently available concerning national and international activities, as not all the national focal points and international lead actors had sent in their reports. They suggested that, prior to the creation of an ECE joint ad hoc expert group on transport and the environment, an inventory of the current situation be made.

30. The members of the Committee on Environmental Policy's Bureau stressed that a group of experts was needed to promote the implementation of the Programme. It also underlined that such an open group would be a platform for all ECE member States, particularly for countries in transition. They also noted that priority setting, done under an expert assessment, would facilitate the work of the Joint Meeting and the implementation of the Programme, both at the national and international level.

31. The Joint Meeting requested the secretariat to organize a meeting of national focal points, lead actors and other experts in January 2000 to assist the Joint Meeting in the tasks set out in items (a)-(d) of the draft mandate for an ad hoc expert group (JMTE/1999/5). The possibility of creating an

ad hoc expert group on transport and the environment would be re-examined at the third session of the Joint Meeting in the light of the outcome of that meeting.

## **VI. REPORT**

34. The present report was prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Co-Chairmen of the Joint Meeting.