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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport
(10 and 11 April 2000)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE THIRTY-THIRD SESSION ^{*/}

**to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 11.00 hours on Monday, 10 April 2000**

^{*/} In accordance with paragraph 2 of articles 14, 15 and 16 of the **European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC)**, any amendment proposed by a Contracting Party to the Agreement shall be considered by the ECE Working Party on Combined Transport. Therefore, agenda item 5 (b) will be considered and amendment proposals adopted in accordance with paragraph 3 of articles 14, 15 and 16 of the AGTC.

^{*/} For reasons of economy, delegates are requested to bring copies of the documents mentioned in this provisional agenda to the meeting. There will be no documentation available in the meeting room. Before the meeting, missing documents may be obtained directly from the ECE Transport Division (Fax: +41-22-917-0039; e-mail: martin.magold@unece.org). Documents may also be downloaded from the Internet web site of the UN/ECE Transport Division (www.unece.org/trans). During the meeting, documents may be obtained from the UNOG Documents Distribution Section (Room C.111, 1st floor, Palais des Nations).

ATTENTION

In accordance with the accreditation procedures applicable for all meetings held at the Palais des Nations, delegates are requested to fill-in the attached registration form (also available from the web site of the UN/ECE Transport Division (www.unece.org)) and to transmit the duly filled-in form at the latest one week before the session to the UN/ECE Transport Division, either by fax (+41-22-917-0039) or by e-mail (martin.magold@unece.org). In Geneva, prior to the session, delegates are requested to present themselves at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at Villa Les Feuillantines, 13 Avenue de la Paix (see attached map), for issuance of an identification badge. In case of difficulties, please phone the UN/ECE secretariat (Int. 72453).

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1. Adoption of the agenda TRANS/WP.24/86

2. Election of officers

3. Activities of UN/ECE bodies and other organizations of interest to the Working Party
 - (a) Inland Transport Committee TRANS/WP.24/85, annex 2
(www.unece.org)
 - (b) European Commission (EC)
 - (c) European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)
 - (d) Other organizations

4. Follow-up to the 1997 Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment ECE/RCTE/CONF./2/FINAL
ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL
TRANS/WP.24/R.85/Rev.1
TRANS/WP.24/R.80/Rev.1

5. European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC)
 - (a) Status of the AGTC Agreement ECE/TRANS/88 and Corr.1
(www.un.org/trans - Legal instruments)
 - (b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement^{1/} TRANS/WP.24/85, annex 1
6. Inventory of existing AGTC standards and parameters TRANS/WP.24/1998/2
Revised "Yellow Book"
(available at the session)
7. Protocol on combined transport on inland waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) ECE/TRANS/122, Corr. 1 and 2
ECE/RC/CONF./7/FINAL
8. Role of railways in the promotion of combined transport Informal documents to be transmitted by delegations
9. Terminology in combined transport TRANS/WP.24/2000/1
10. New developments in the field of combined transport in UN/ECE member countries Informal document No. 1 (2000)
prepared by the secretariat
Informal documents to be transmitted by delegations
11. Possibilities for reconciliation and harmonization of civil liability regimes governing combined transport TRANS/WP.24/2000/2
TRANS/WP.24/85
TRANS/WP.24/1999/2
12. Other business
- Date of next session
13. Adoption of decisions taken by the Working Party

^{1/} For consideration of this item, see footnote on page 1.

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item to be considered is the adoption of the agenda (TRANS/WP.24/86).

2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure and established practice, the Working Party will elect a Chairperson for its sessions in 2000.

3. ACTIVITIES OF UN/ECE BODIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

(a) Inland Transport Committee

The Working Party will be informed by the secretariat about the results of the sixty-second session of the Inland Transport Committee (15-17 February 2000) as it relates to matters of interest to the Working Party. In particular, the Working Party may wish to consider the implementation of its mandated programme of work in the light of the resources (meeting days, secretariat resources) made available to the Working Party in 2000 (see also TRANS/WP.24/85, annex 2).

Detailed information on the activities of the UN/ECE, the Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies are available at the UN/ECE web site (www.unece.org/trans).

The Working Party will also be informed about the activities of other subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee, in particular the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) (see also TRANS/WP.24/85, para. 44), the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3), the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) and the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), as far as they relate to combined transport matters.

(b) European Commission (EC)

The Working Party may wish to be informed of the latest activities of the EC in the field of combined transport.

(c) European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)

The Working Party may wish to be informed about recent activities undertaken by the ECMT Combined Transport Group.

(d) Other organizations

The Working Party may wish to be informed of current and planned activities in combined transport of other international organizations participating at its sessions.

4. FOLLOW-UP TO THE 1997 REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The Working Party may wish to recall the outcome of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment held in Vienna from 12 to 14 November 1997. In particular, the Conference had adopted a Declaration and a Programme of Joint Action (ECE/RCTE/CONF./2/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF./3/FINAL). The Working Party may also wish to recall that it had prepared earlier two background documents for the Conference on the promotion of combined transport to foster a sustainable transport policy in Europe (TRANS/WP.24/R.85/Rev.1; TRANS/WP.24/R.80/Rev.1).

The Working Party will be informed of the follow-up activities undertaken by UN/ECE member countries and concerned international organizations in the implementation of the above instruments. In particular, the Working Party may wish to note the results of a Meeting of National Focal Points and International Lead Actors for the Programme of Joint Action which will be held in Geneva on 7 and 8 February 2000. Apart from decisions on priorities to be accorded in the implementation of the Joint Programme of Action, the Meeting is expected to prepare for a mid-term review of the follow-up process to Vienna planned to be undertaken in 2002. Information will also be provided on the implementation of the so-called London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health which will be undertaken jointly with the World Health Organization (WHO).

5. EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC)

(a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

As of 1 January 2000 the following 23 countries are Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia, Switzerland and Turkey. The following countries have signed the AGTC Agreement, but have not yet become Contracting Parties to it: Finland and Poland. The Governments of the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine are considering accession to the Agreement.

Up-to-date information on the status of the AGTC Agreement as well as of other United Nations treaties developed and/or administered by the UN/ECE may be obtained from the web site of the UN/ECE Transport Division (www.unece.org/trans - Legal instruments).

The Working Party may wish to be informed by delegations about the intention of ECE member countries to accede to the AGTC Agreement and may wish to invite in particular, Finland, Poland, the Republic of Moldova and the Ukraine to undertake all necessary steps with a view to becoming Contracting Parties to the Agreement as soon as possible.

(b) Amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its thirty-second session in September 1999, the Working Party had adopted amendments to Annexes I and II to the AGTC Agreement as contained in the report of the session (TRANS/WP.24/85, annex 1). The required legal procedures for consultation of all Contracting Parties to the Agreement have been initiated by the secretariat and the relevant Depository Notification will be issued by the Legal Office of the United Nations in due course.

Governments which intend to propose further amendments to the AGTC Agreement, but have not yet transmitted their proposals to the secretariat, are invited to do so as soon as possible.

6. INVENTORY OF EXISTING AGTC STANDARDS AND PARAMETERS

The Working Party may recall that, at its twenty-ninth session, it approved a standard questionnaire (TRANS/WP.24/1998/2) and requested the secretariat to add to each of the pre-filled country questionnaires the new lines and related installations that are part of the amendment proposals adopted at the twenty-fifth session of the Working Party. Relevant AGC parameters and AGC lines, not part of the AGTC network, should also be added in consultation with the secretariat of the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2), to arrive at one consolidated questionnaire covering both the AGTC and the AGC Agreements (TRANS/WP.24/79, para. 23).

On 28 May 1999 the secretariat transmitted the pre-filled questionnaires to the Contracting Parties of the AGTC Agreement with a deadline for completion and return by 1 September 1999. By 1 January 2000 the secretariat, unfortunately not yet having received adequate replies from all Contracting Parties to the Agreement, finalized the tables of the so-called Yellow Book containing all data received in a standard presentation. It is expected that work on the Yellow Book can be concluded in the weeks to come and it is planned to make copies available at the session.

7. PROTOCOL ON COMBINED TRANSPORT ON INLAND WATERWAYS TO THE EUROPEAN AGREEMENT ON IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL COMBINED TRANSPORT LINES AND RELATED INSTALLATIONS (AGTC)

The Working Party may recall that, on the occasion of the Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 12-14 November 1997), the Protocol to the AGTC Agreement has been signed by the following 12 UN/ECE member countries: Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Switzerland. Subsequently, the Protocol has been signed by Slovakia on 29 June 1998 and Bulgaria on 28 October 1998.

As of 1 January 2000, the Protocol has the following five Contracting Parties: Bulgaria; Czech Republic, Denmark, Romania and Switzerland. It will come into force following ratification by at least five States that are linked, in a continuous manner, by the waterways identified in the Protocol.

Amendment proposals submitted to the Working Party at its twenty-ninth session by France, Hungary and Romania (Informal document No. 1 (1998); TRANS/WP.24/79, para. 20) as well as amendment proposals transmitted by the Government of Bulgaria to the secretariat may be considered by the Working Party as soon as the Protocol enters into force.

The final text of the Protocol to the AGTC Agreement (in English, French and Russian) is contained in document ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1 (F) and Corr.2 (R).

8. THE ROLE OF RAILWAYS IN THE PROMOTION OF COMBINED TRANSPORT

In line with its mandate, the Working Party may wish to continue its exchange of views on the contribution of railways, acting increasingly as commercial enterprises, in the promotion of competitive combined transport services.

At its thirty-second session, the Working Party analysed the present unsatisfactory development of combined transport which seemed to be, to a large extent, the result of inadequate service quality, particularly unreliability, on the part of railway operators and only, in a second place, a result of uncompetitive prices (TRANS/WP.24/85, paras. 38-43).

Written contributions on this subject from delegations would be greatly appreciated and will be distributed by the secretariat before or during the session as a basis for discussion.

9. TERMINOLOGY IN COMBINED TRANSPORT

An intersecretariat working group composed of representatives of the European Commission (EC), the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the UN/ECE secretariat has prepared a glossary of terms used in combined transport (TRANS/WP.24/2000/1). All the definitions referring specifically to the geographical framework of Europe may also be applied in other regions of the world. The purpose of this glossary is to determine the meaning of the terms in current use and to make them easier to understand by the increasing number of people who use them.

The Working Party may wish to consider in detail the various provisions contained in the directory with a view to its formal adoption at the autumn session of the Working Party.

10. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF COMBINED TRANSPORT IN UN/ECE MEMBER COUNTRIES

The Working Party may wish to continue its exchange of information on this subject. Delegations are expected to report orally on recent operating experiences, on new and planned administrative procedures and on new technologies with regard to combined transport in their countries or organizations. Audio-visual aids, as well as written material, would be welcomed and could be distributed by the secretariat if received in time before the session.

As a basis for discussion, the Chairman of the Working Party and the secretariat will prepare an informal document No.1 (2000) for transmission to delegations well before the session.

11. POSSIBILITIES FOR RECONCILIATION AND HARMONIZATION OF CIVIL LIABILITY REGIMES GOVERNING COMBINED TRANSPORT

The Working Party may wish to recall that its programme of work contains as a priority item, the "... analysis of possibilities for reconciliation and harmonization of civil liability regimes governing combined transport operations." Following an informal meeting of interested experts (Frankfurt, 7 and 8 December 1998) which considered the feasibility and the approach to be taken to resolve possible difficulties arising from differences in modal liability regimes and/or gaps in full coverage during combined transport operations (TRANS/WP.24/1999/1), the Inland Transport Committee had requested that further investigations should be made in order to ascertain the existing difficulties for combined transport operations (ECE/TRANS/128, para. 86).

The Working Party, at its thirty-first session, requested the secretariat to convene another informal meeting of experts to consider in depth the conclusions of the first expert group meeting. The meeting should provide guidance to the Working Party and to the Inland Transport Committee on possible legal instruments to be prepared at the international level in this field and on the arrangements and procedures to be used in order to finalize such instruments within a reasonable time frame (TRANS/WP.24/83, paras. 31-36)

At its thirty-second session, the Working Party considered the report of this second expert meeting, held on 12 and 13 July 1999 in Geneva (TRANS/WP.24/1999/2), and endorsed in principle its results. The Working Party welcomed the continuing work of a small group of experts in drafting an outline of a possible international Convention on the Liability of Operators in Multimodal Transport, also with a view to identifying specific problems that would need to be addressed in the establishment of such a Convention. The Working Party also stressed that close cooperation should be established between the various organizations working in this field in Europe, particularly with the European Commission and UNCTAD (TRANS/WP.24/85, paras. 32-37).

In accordance with the views expressed by the Working Party, the secretariat convened an informal consultative meeting on 24 and 25 January 2000 in Geneva which was attended by representatives of interested UN/ECE Governments (Austria, Belgium, Germany, Netherlands), the European Commission, UNCTAD as well as by most international organizations dealing with combined transport, maritime transport and civil liability insurance. The consultation showed that, in particular, maritime shipowners interests (including relevant insurance groups) as well as freight forwarders were not in favour of modifications in the existing unharmonized private law arrangements on civil liability regimes and were not supportive of new mandatory legal regimes. Land transport interests, on the other hand generally were in favour of unification or at least harmonization of existing mandatory public law regimes, including the preparation of a complementary legal regime.

With a view to providing an overview of civil liability regimes in the fields of public as well as private law, the secretariat has prepared a document which, quite comprehensively, compares the salient provisions of such legal regimes (TRANS/WP.24/2000/2).

The Working Party will be informed in detail about present and possible future activities in this field.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

Date of next session

The Working Party may wish to decide on the date for its next session. The secretariat has tentatively made arrangements to convene the thirty-fourth session of the Working Party from 13 to 15 September 2000.

13. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE WORKING PARTY

The Working Party is not expected to adopt a report on its present session, but only a short list of decisions taken (TRANS/WP.24/63, para. 54). Following the session, the secretariat, in cooperation with the Chairman, will establish a short report of the session that could then be formally adopted at the autumn session of the Working Party in September 2000.



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE - GENEVA

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Date:

Title of the Conference

UN/ECE Working Party on Combined Transport (WP.24)

Delegation/Participant of country, Organization or Agency

Participant: Name Mr. Mrs. Ms. First name(s)

Participation Category

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| Delegation Member | <input type="checkbox"/> | NGO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
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Participation from/until

from 10 April 2000 to 12 April 2000

In which language do you prefer to receive documents

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