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ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION

Note by the secretariat

This note summarizes the UNECE operational activities in the transport sector conducted during the period June 2001 to June 2002.

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OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE UNECE TRANSPORT DIVISION

June 2001 - June 2002

I. Activities in specific countries and/or groups of countries

1. Bilateral Missions

At the invitation of the Czech Ministry of Transport and Communications, and on the occasion of the Czech Republic having joined SECI, the Regional Adviser briefed and advised the Ministry officials on transport activities concerning, *inter alia*, SECI, SPECA, BSEC, and the Black Sea PETrA and on the development of Euro-Asian Transport Links including the St. Petersburg Conference held in September 2000 (July 2001).

The Regional Adviser, as part of a high-level advisory mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), headed by the UNECE Executive Secretary, addressed, *inter alia*, the coordination of transport activities between UNECE and FRY and, in consultation with the latter, formulated the basis of a work programme on transport initiatives for FRY (June 2001).

At the invitation of the Serbian Republic, the Regional Adviser undertook two missions to Belgrade. He briefed the Ministry and exchanged views on a number of transport topics including SECI, SPECA, BSEC and Danube navigation. He also provided advice on the formulation of transport projects and their implementation/financing (September and November 2001).

2. Black Sea Pan-European Transport Area (BS-PETrA)

The UNECE secretariat, through its Regional Adviser, continued to be active in the implementation of the work programme of the Black Sea Pan-European Transport Area (PETrA). At the request of the BS-PETrA Steering Committee (Bucharest, 2-3 April 2001) he drafted the report *Comparative analysis of the Action Plans/Programmes of the Black Sea PETrA and BSEC* (15 May 2001). The report was tabled and adopted at the subsequent BS-PETrA Steering Committee (Bucharest, 27 February 2002).

II. Cooperation with subregional organizations

1. Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC)

The UNECE Regional Adviser on Transport, as the UNECE focal point on BSEC has promoted the accession to UNECE legal instruments by BSEC member States on a number of occasions. He represented UNECE at the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Antalya, October 2001). He held a number of meetings with the Management of BSEC on UNECE/BSEC cooperation and assisted in the drafting of the *UNECE-BSEC Cooperation*

Agreement. The latter document was approved by the BSEC Council of Ministers (Moscow, May 2001) and was subsequently signed by the UNECE Executive Secretary and the BSEC General Secretary at a ceremony in Istanbul (July 2001).

He contributed to the formulation of the *Transport Action Plan* and of the *Joint Statement of the Ministers of Transport* approved at their meeting in Sochi (30 March 2001). He also co-chaired the *1st International Transport Forum* (Antalya, October 2001). At the request of the Chair (Turkey), he contributed to the drafting of documents for the meetings of the BSEC Working Group on Transport (Istanbul, June and September 2001) before and during the meetings.

At the Second International Black Sea Transport Conference (Kyiv, Ukraine, 5-6 March 2002), he contributed to the finalization of the *Ministerial MoU on the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region* and to the formulation of the *Conference Declaration*; he advised on the Coordination of transport activities in the Black Sea region among various organizations and initiatives (BSEC, Traceca, EC, (PETrA and PETrCs), UNECE and SECI); and he presented the paper *Improved Transport in the Black Sea region and the role of UNECE*.

III. Activities under regional and subregional programmes

1. Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and other initiatives in Southeast Europe

1.1 SECI Project Group on Border Crossing Facilitation

The work of this Group resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding, which was signed by the Ministers of Transport of the SECI participating States in Athens on 28 April 1999 and which had been drafted initially by the UNECE secretariat. The MoU establishes specific and concrete measures to be implemented by the end of the year 2002 with a view to facilitating international road transport of goods in the region. It foresees, in particular, progressive liberalization and sustainability of international road transport and, as a short-term measure, the establishment of a quota-free regime for "green" and "greener and safer" lorries. It also provides, *inter alia*, for the application of an international vehicle weight certificate which will do away with repetitive weighing procedures at the borders. In accordance with the provisions of the MoU, a Regional Road Transport Committee (RRTC) has been established to ensure adequate coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the provisions of the MoU and prepare eventually the elaboration of a multilateral framework agreement on road transport. The UNECE Transport Division provides all relevant secretariat services for the Committee, including preparation of agendas, reports and most documentation and administers using the UNECE server the mandated Regional Road Transport Information system for the participating countries (http://www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/seci/intro.htm). A representative of the Division also co-chairs, together with a representative of the host country, the two regular annual sessions of the Committee. In 1999 and 2000, the sessions of the Committee were hosted by Greece. Since 2001 Turkey is host of the Committee.

Progress highlights include the following: E-Road sections in the SECI region have been identified on which lorries in international transport are allowed without requiring payment of

charges for excess weight and dimensions; an international vehicle weight certificate (IVWC) has been finalized, approved in principle and is expected to be tested in the SECI region as of 1 January 2002; a Joint Statement on the implementation of a quota-free regime for “green” and “greener and safe” lorries has been adopted and is being implemented; and work is focusing on the quick and unbureaucratic delivery of visas for professional drivers without jeopardizing internal security and administrative control.

As of 18 September 2001 all SECI participating States, including Yugoslavia, are members of the Committee as they have signed the MoU.

The fifth session of the Committee and the first session of the Group of Experts on Charging Policies, were held in Antalya from 9 to 12 October 2001. RRTC representatives reviewed progress made in the implementation of the provisions of the MoU. The Committee received a new questionnaire compiled by the UNECE secretariat in accordance with Article 6 paragraph 1 of the MoU to monitor Parties' efforts to determine and upgrade sections of their E-Road network in order to allow for lorries complying with European Community (EC) regulations on maximum permissible weights and dimensions to circulate without being charged for excessive weight or dimensions. The Committee noted that the International Goods Road Vehicle Weight Certificate is expected to be formally adopted in May 2002 and to enter into force in the second half of 2002. Based on a document prepared by the UNECE secretariat in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport of Turkey, the Committee initiated work with regard to the preparation of a draft Multilateral Framework Agreement on road transport (including transport of passengers) as provided for in the MoU. The Committee also started work towards rationalization and gradual convergence of charging policies in the region. The Group of Experts on Charging Policies examined issues of harmonization of road transport charging policies in the light of the provisions of the MoU and the respective Joint Statement, and in accordance with the “acquis communautaire” and ECMT recommendations. The Group developed a matrix table to be filled-in by the participating experts following the session in order to obtain a complete picture on the compatibility of the existing road transport charges with the requirements of the MoU and the “acquis communautaire”.

With a view to finalizing some of the technical provisions of the International Goods Road Vehicle Weight Certificate, the Committee convened an expert group which met in Istanbul on 4 and 5 December 2002. The experts finalized most of the technical elements of the Certificate and requested the UNECE secretariat to prepare, together with the International Organization for Legal Metrology (OIML), a Code of Practice facilitating the application of the Certificate.

On 6 and 7 December 2001, a second session of the expert group on charging policies was convened by the Committee to consider methodologies to calculate road user costs and to identify concrete steps towards harmonization of road user charges in the region in line with the “acquis communautaire” of the European Union.

1.2 SECI Project Group IV on Transport Infrastructure Development along Main International Routes, chaired by Bulgaria

The UNECE Transport Division provides secretariat services for this Group, which is hosted by Bulgaria. The Group has been inactive since its last meeting held in Sofia in May 2000 because it has been waiting for reaction to its proposal to the Stability Pact to cooperate with it in implementation of transport projects in the subregion.

1.3 SECI Agenda Committee

UNECE Transport Division Staff briefed the SECI Agenda Committee Meetings on the SECI Transport activities and commented on future actions and strategies (Geneva, 10 December 2001).

1.4 Project Working Group on Transport on the Danube

A new *Project Working Group on Transport on the Danube* was established during the meeting with Yugoslavia being the host country. The UNECE secretariat contributed to all meetings of the Group (Belgrade, July 2001, November 2001 and April 2002).

2. Special Programme For The Economies Of Central Asia (SPECA)

Kazakhstan is the lead State for the *SPECA Project Working Group on the Development of Transport Infrastructure and Border Crossing Facilitation Project*. Due to the critical developments in the region connected with the war in Afghanistan, the 7th meeting of the Group, scheduled to be held in October 2001, was cancelled. The Chair has not yet scheduled any further meetings.

VIII. UNECE Trust Fund for Assistance to countries in Transition (TFACT)

Information Notice

1. The integration of the countries with economies in transition into the international community depends to a considerable extent upon their capacity to participate in the meetings of international organizations and other international fora. These countries are encountering great difficulties in financing their **participants in seminars, symposia, workshops and other informal fora organized within the framework of UNECE.**
2. The above-mentioned Trust Fund provides a channel through which Governments, international organizations, institutions and other donors may contribute funds to help the countries with economies in transition defray the costs of their participation in seminars, symposia, workshops and other informal fora organized within the framework of UNECE. Its funds can also be used to cover the cost of consultants, etc. related to particular activities.
3. The Trust Fund is administered and audited in accordance with United Nations financial regulations and rules. In this connection, a programme support charge of 13 per cent is applied to contributions.
4. Banking information

The contributions could be made to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in the following manner:

By Bank Transfer:

Account number: 001-1-508629
Bank name: Chase Manhattan Bank. New York
Account title: UNOG General Fund
General Ledger: UN-0503456 (for UNOG/Finance reference only)
Bank address: International Agencies Branch
270 Park Avenue , 43rd Floor
New York, N.Y. 10017, USA
ABA: 021000021 (US Banking Code)
Reference: For the credit of fund code: MEA/TFACT (Allotment account number: MEC-25-800)
