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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

(Sixty-fifth session, 18 – 20 February 2003,
agenda item 2)

REPORT OF THE BUREAU OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

In accordance with the decision taken by the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its sixty-fourth session (ECE/TRANS/139, para. 124), its Bureau met on 21 February 2002, 8-9 July 2002, and 3-4 December 2002. The reports of the Bureau's meetings are reproduced below for consideration by the Committee. The Committee may wish to discuss the questions in greater detail under the respective items of the agenda.

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Annex 1

JOINT MEETING OF THE BUREAU AND THE CHAIRPERSONS OF ITC SUBSIDIARY BODIES TO DISCUSS STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

(21 February 2002)

ATTENDANCE

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee, which was chaired by Mrs. Virginia Tănase (Romania) was attended by the following members of the Bureau and Chairpersons of its subsidiary bodies: Mr. Henri Courtois (Belgium), Mr. Jouko Alaluusua (Finland), Mrs. Pascale Buch (France), Mr. Peter Päßgen (Germany), Mrs. Styliani Mnimatidou (Greece), Dr. G. Szabo (Hungary), Dr. Istvan Valkar (Hungary), Mr. Bert Jan Griffioen (Netherlands), Ms. Marjolein Masclee (Netherlands), Mr. José Alberto Franco (Portugal), Mr. Viacheslav Arsenov (Russian Federation), Mr. Boris Kisulenko (Russian Federation), Mr. Vadim Kutenev (Russian Federation), Mr. Nikolay I. Matushenko (Russian Federation), Mrs. Lyoudmila Renne (Russian Federation), Mr. Bernard Perisset (Switzerland), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. Umit Armangil (Turkey), Mr. Mykhailo A. Mezheryskyi (Ukraine).

SUGGESTIONS FOR A STRATEGIC APPROACH

2. The Meeting considered a paper entitled “Suggestions for a Strategic Approach” by Mr. Henri Courtois (Belgium), Vice-Chairman of the ITC (TRANS/2002/6, Appendix).

3. On the basis of the interventions by Chairpersons of the Committee’s subsidiary bodies, the Bureau **agreed** that :

- the paper “Suggestions for a Strategic Approach” is a working paper to raise a number of questions regarding the Committee’s activities and to undertake a brainstorming of possible options which may be examined in view of a strategic approach.
- such a strategic approach should aim at preserving and making better known the Committee’s strengths and at identifying measures to address any shortcomings.
- consideration was required to introduce greater flexibility in the working methods with a view to using scarce resources even more economically. The possibility of setting up Ad hoc working groups for specific tasks and within a limited time frame should be considered.
- many issues that are cross-sectoral in nature, e.g. visas, security, mobility, methodological questions, ageing, etc. could benefit from an inter-Working Party approach. It might also be useful to consider joint meetings of bodies of different organizations.
- in addition to technical and legal discussions which often lead to the development of international legal instruments, exchanges of views on best practices on issues on which legally binding commitment cannot be achieved could be organized.

- considering the financial limitations of resources, the Bureau discussed the possibilities of extending outputs through the reallocation of existing budgetary funds. This required an analysis of the work of the ITC Subsidiary Bodies, as well as the experience acquired by other international organizations. In this connection, the question of seeking external financing for activities from the industry or international organizations was also discussed. On this last point, a word of caution was expressed in order to maintain the independence of the decision-making process.
- the results of the work accomplished in the framework of a number of subsidiary bodies being on sale, the question was raised whether the related revenues could not be used for funding specific activities of the Committee.
- the revised strategic paper should make reference to links with other organizations doing similar work, e.g. EU, ECMT, OECD, etc. Cooperation with ECMT was particularly important since memberships of the two organizations were similar. Also, reflections on the impact of future EU enlargement should be included.
- how to improve the relationship with international financial institutions such as the World Bank should also be considered.
- further consideration should be given as to how to continue the discussion on strategy, whether a working group on strategy should be created or whether the Bureau should fulfil this task. There was agreement that the consideration of strategic questions should be pursued by the Bureau.

4. The Meeting decided that :

- members of the Bureau and Chairpersons of ITC subsidiary bodies should be invited to comment on the Courtois paper before 31 March 2002 in writing to the secretariat.
- the secretariat would subsequently forward the proposals to all Bureau members, including Mr. Courtois who offered to prepare a new draft of the paper on strategic objectives for consideration at the next Bureau meeting.

5. The next Bureau meeting should be held, in principle, in the first half of June 2002.

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Annex 2

**REPORT ON THE BUREAU MEETING OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
(8 – 9 July 2002)**

ATTENDANCE

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee, which was chaired by Mrs. Virginia Tănase (Romania) was attended by the following members: Mr. Henri Courtois (Belgium), Mrs. Pascale Buch (France), Mr. Peter Päßgen (Germany), Mrs. Zita Egyházy (Hungary), Mr. Bert Jan Griffioen (Netherlands), Mr. Nikolay I. Matushenko (Russian Federation), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mr. Dinos Stasinopoulos (European Commission). The representatives of Greece (Mr. G. Patsiavos), Turkey (Mrs. Ü. Armangil) and Ukraine (Mr. M. Mezheryskyi) were unable to attend.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda as circulated by the secretariat in document TRANS/BUR.2002/2.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

3. The Bureau:

- thanked Mr. H. Courtois for the revised version of the paper "Suggestions for a Strategic Approach", which was circulated in document TRANS/BUR.2002/3. It expressed its appreciation for the new text which is an excellent working basis for the Bureau to formulate its own position.
- commented on a number of aspects contained in the paper and agreed that a small drafting group (composed of Mrs. V. Tanase, Mrs. P. Buch, Mr. H. Courtois and Mr. P. Päßgen) should review the paper in light of the comments made. A copy of the paper (Working Paper, Revision 2), as agreed upon by the small drafting group, is reproduced in the annex.
- agreed that its members should comment on the new version of the paper (Working Paper, Revision 2) by 31 August 2002.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Transport, Environment and Health

4. The Bureau:

- was informed about the main results of the Second High-level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health which took place in Geneva on 5 July 2002. In this connection, it was noted that the Meeting had adopted a Declaration, in which it was decided to establish a Transport, Environment and Health Pan-

European Programme (THE PEP). THE PEP consists of the following three components : (i) THE PEP Policy Framework, (ii) THE PEP Work Plan, and (iii) the Steering Committee on Transport, Environment and Health, replacing the Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment (JMTE) of UNECE, as well as the London Charter Steering Group of WHO/Euro.

- noted that further development in the area of transport, environment and health would continue at the expert level.

- underlined the need for the transport sector to be adequately represented in future discussions on questions addressing transport, environment and health.

(b) Fifty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Europe (7 – 10 May 2002)

5. The Bureau:

- was informed by a member of the secretariat about the discussions at the Commission session on (i) the economic aspects of security in Europe, including the security-related work of the Principal Subsidiary Bodies of the Commission, and (ii) the reform process under way in ECE based on the secretariat's Self-Assessment with a view to strengthening the organization. In this connection, the Bureau was also acquainted with the contribution of the secretariat to the self-assessment of the programme of work of the ECE in the field of transport and to the follow-up to the paper on strengthening the organization.

- underlined the importance of ECE work in the field of transport and the need to have the requirements of the transport sector adequately reflected in the reform process.

Appendix to Annex 2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

Suggestions for a Strategic Approach

Working Paper (Revision 2)

1. General

1. The terms of reference of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of the UNECE are established in document ECE/TRANS/97 and were defined at its fifty-fifth session (1993), following major geopolitical changes in Europe. It should be recalled that the UNECE now totals 55 member States, of which 15 are members of the EU, 2 are members of the European Economic Area, 12 are candidates to join the EU, 2 are associated to the EU and 2 others have a special status with the EU. Moreover, half of its members could be considered as countries with transition economies. It therefore appears that the ITC is the only forum where common norms can be applied to both sets of countries, those part of the EU sphere as well as the others.
2. In the field of land transport, the ITC plays a crucial role since it fulfils a need not met by other international organizations : the development of a set of regulations for all land transport at the pan-European level with the participation of all its members. Such a regulatory framework includes Agreements and Conventions which serve as the basis for the national jurisdictions of member States. These legal instruments aim at establishing efficient and coherent transport infrastructure networks, facilitating border-crossing as well as harmonizing safety and environmental rules, technical standards and traffic rules.
3. The ITC has already achieved substantial tangible results: the E-road network, the railway, inland waterway and combined transport networks, the extension of these networks to the Caucasus and Central Asia, Regulations concerning the Construction of Vehicles, the creation of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations, the regulation of Road Traffic and Road Transport, as well as of the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the TIR Convention, etc. In addition, the ITC elaborates Recommendations and Resolutions and facilitates exchanges of best practices.
4. As a subsidiary body of the United Nations, the ITC plays a determining role internationally.
5. Owing to the wide range of its terms of reference, the ITC has always had to establish priorities. In the past, on the basis of decision O(45) of the Commission, the ITC had determined the following priority areas: construction of vehicles, transport of dangerous goods, road safety, transport infrastructure and combined transport. The Committee completed this list by adding customs questions relating to transport. More recently, further to recommendations in the 1997 ECE Plan of Action, the Committee refined the formulation of its Programme of Work by establishing priorities for each work element.
6. Current or future important changes such as European integration, new technologies, the growth in trade and the new expectations of society pose new challenges for the Committee that make it necessary to reconsider its priorities and its strategy.

7. A transport policy should serve economic and social development. It should therefore take three types of consideration into account :

- Accessibility and fluidity;
- Safety and security;
- Respect for the environment and health.

8. Out of these three types of goals, the first (accessibility and fluidity) emerges both as the most “traditional”, but also perhaps as the most neglected. The many problems of network capacity (congestion of traffic and bottlenecks, interoperability, underutilization of rail and inland waterway networks, management of flows, ...) are of key importance.

9. It is therefore indispensable that the ITC pays special attention to addressing these problems and to solving them.

10. A strategic vision also entails paying attention to new problems as they arise, to new technical or technological options and to the trends that will shape transport operations in the future, as well as to the identification of possible solutions applicable in member countries.

11. As an example, several issues may be noted that could become major problems for the future, or may change the course of our work today:

- The development of Europe-Asia transport links;
- The use of telematics and intelligent transport systems (vehicles, infrastructure);
- Population ageing;
- European integration;
- The emergence of cleaner propulsion technologies, taking into account new energy sources;
- Impact of electronic trade on transport;
- Transport security;
- Charging for infrastructure usage.

12. The ITC will take these questions into consideration in its strategy to the extent that they fall within its competence and it can contribute added value to activities carried out in other international fora.

2. Resources and Methods

13. The Inland Transport Committee has permanent and ad hoc groups. The secretariat services are provided by the Transport Division. The secretariat whose number of staff is limited must manage the whole of the activities of the ITC and of its subsidiary bodies as well as the Agreements and the Conventions.

14. Taking into account the urgency and magnitude of the problems and their technical complexity, the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies requires:

- a larger capacity of relevant services to ensure the material support for meetings (documentation, meeting rooms, interpretation, translation);
- greater availability of delegates;
- a strengthening of human resources in the Transport Division, including maintaining the two regional advisers;
- the adaptation of the budgetary framework of the ECE and its member countries.

15. These aspects require also that some thought should be given to the methods of work, the efficiency and priorities on the one hand, and possibilities of finding new resources on the other.

16. As far as methods of work are concerned, it is suggested that:

- The adoption of a report at the end of a meeting could be abolished with where this practice still exists;
- Reports could be shorter, and concentrate more on essential matters;
- Discussions could be limited to decisions and conclusions concerning the subjects dealt with;
- The late distribution of documents should be avoided at all costs since it often leads to postponement of consideration or decision-making because it makes it impossible for the delegates to prepare for the meeting;
- Recourse to groups of experts preparing a subject and meeting informally would make it possible to progress more rapidly; only their report would be considered and adopted in plenary;
- Some questions could be adopted as an "A item" - i.e. without a presentation or discussion - during meetings of Working Parties or the ITC.

It is also necessary:

- to pay more attention to priorities ;
- to determine clear and precise terms of references of bodies, which should be limited in time ;
- to abandon, even temporarily, some of the topics on which no progress can be made, either because of lack of political agreement or because of lack of interest ;
- to establish more often ad hoc groups for specific topics rather than addressing subsidiary bodies.

17. The efficiency of the Inland Transport Committee would certainly improve as a result of better coordination and more intensive cooperation:

- Internally (UNECE), for cross-sectoral questions or problems common to several Working Parties;
- Externally, with other international organizations (EU, ECMT, ...) or NGOs (technical questions).

18. Coordination and cooperation with ECMT seem particularly necessary, in order to:

- Define roles better with a view to making them complementary;
- Share the same strategic vision;
- Take into account the work and decisions of ECMT;
- Convene joint meetings at the levels of the Bureau and of the Working Parties;
- Carry out joint activities.

19. Where resources are concerned, new directions should be explored:
- To prompt more often member States to make experts temporarily available to the ECE Transport Division ;
 - To explore the possibility of allocating the proceeds of the sale of publications and documents to ITC activities ;
 - To develop partnerships in order to organize some specific activities and help in the preparation of technical documents.
20. Lastly, it seems desirable for the role of the Inland Transport Committee that the importance of its work and its achievements be better known.

3. Measures to be taken

21. The Committee should build on its existing strengths in areas of norms and standard setting and follow better the implementation and monitoring of them.
22. The list of "major problems for the future" - cf. paragraph 11 - should encourage the Inland Transport Committee to develop a real strategy for action.
23. The existing Working Parties are not in a position to include most of these problems in their work: either they fall outside their respective fields of competence or concern areas which go well beyond them, or else the working methods employed are such that concern is only with today's problems.
24. The Bureau will dedicate part of its time to elaborating a strategy basing itself on the work of its subsidiary bodies and the expertise of the respective Chairpersons.
25. It would seem to be indispensable first of all to organize a consultation with ECMT and the relevant services of the European Commission so as to define a common strategic vision, to distribute the roles to avoid any duplication, and to ensure the necessary exchanges of information.

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Annex 3

**REPORT ON THE BUREAU MEETING OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
(3 – 4 December 2002)**

ATTENDANCE

1. The Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee met on 3 and 4 December 2002 under the Chairmanship of Mrs. V. Tănase (Romania). The Bureau was attended by the following members: Mr. H. Courtois (Belgium), Mrs. P. Buch (France), Mr. P. Päßgen (Germany), Mrs. Z. Egyhazy (Hungary), Mr. B. Griffioen (Netherlands), Mr. I. Chtcherbakov (Russian Federation), Mr. J. C. Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. U. Armangil (Turkey) and Mr. C. Dufour (European Commission). The representatives of Greece (Mr. G. Patsiavos) and Ukraine (Mr. M. Mezheryskyi) were unable to attend.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The Bureau adopted its agenda, as circulated in TRANS/BUR.2002/5.

CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS CONCERNING THE AGENDA FOR THE SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Matters arising from the Economic Commission for Europe, the Economic and Social Council and other United Nations Bodies and Conferences

3. The Bureau:

- agreed to consider the different points raised in document TRANS/2003/3 under the relevant agenda items and take their content into account for any follow-up.
- recommended to the Committee to pay special attention in its activities to ECOSOC resolution 2002/23 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system.
- noting the deliberations of the Commission contained in document TRANS/2003/3 and particularly the chapter on “strengthening the organization”, had a detailed discussion on the 2004-2005 budget proposal for the transport subprogramme currently under preparation within the secretariat.
- was informed about a 10 per cent reduction of meeting days for a number of subsidiary bodies of the Committee and the criteria on which the cuts had been proposed.
- expressed its surprise at the reductions in meeting days in the transport subprogramme and at the fact that the Committee had not been consulted in this exercise.
- expressed its opposition to the reductions and requested the secretariat not to include the proposal in its submission to headquarters.
- underlined the Bureau’s readiness to cooperate with the secretariat in determining budgetary issues and in this connection underlined the importance of transparency.

- recalled that the prioritization of activities and improvement of working methods are a constant concern of the Bureau and the Committee and that opportunities to improve efficiency through Informal Groups, rapporteurs, etc. are continuously being explored.
- recalled that the Committee and its subsidiary bodies were the first to adopt the guidelines of the 1997 reform and that further reductions in meetings would have a harmful effect on the quality of work.
- noted that the Committee had the sole competence to redeploy resources according to its priorities if a final decision was taken to reduce meeting days, and the assurance made by the secretariat that there would be sufficient flexibility to add a few meeting days should the need arise.
- noted that any savings could be used for work on, e.g. transport infrastructure, Euro-Asian transport links and monitoring the implementation of transport agreements and conventions.
- noted the recommendation by the Commission that PSBs review in 2003, the number and length of the meetings of their respective subsidiary bodies, with a view to increasing cost-effectiveness and without hampering the agreed priorities of their programme of work.
- after discussion of this agenda item, the Bureau was informed of the decision of the Executive Secretary to abandon the proposed reductions in the length of meetings of Working Parties under WP.29 in the budget proposal for the 2004 – 2005 biennium. The Bureau expressed the wish that the other proposed reductions also be abandoned.

Draft strategic objectives of the Committee

4. The Bureau agreed to submit the draft Strategic Objectives which it had agreed to at its second meeting (8-9 July 2002) and which are reproduced in TRANS/2003/2, Annex 2, Appendix, to the Committee for consideration.

Intersectoral activities

Transport, environment and health

5. Noting the establishment of a Steering Committee on Transport, Environment and Health as well as the adoption of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) as reflected in the report of the second High Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health which was held on 5 July 2002 (ECE/AC.21/2002/6), the Bureau:

- recommended that members of the Committee should become actively involved in the Steering Committee.
- asked the Committee's subsidiary bodies to keep the Steering Committee informed about the results of their work in the three priority areas.
- noted the establishment of a trust fund for the implementation of the programme.

Blue Corridor Project

6. The Bureau recommended that the Committee continue to support the Blue Corridor Projects which offered important economic and environmental benefits for the road transport sector.

Transport and security

7. The Bureau recommended that the Committee ask Governments to identify and decide on specific actions to be taken at international level regarding transport security.

Assistance to countries with economies in transition

8. The Bureau recommended that the Committee support the proposals on (i) the TEM and TER Project master plans (TRANS/2003/7/Add.1); and (ii) facilitation of participation of Central Asian and Caucasus countries in the meetings of the ITC and selected subsidiary bodies (TRANS/2003/7/Add.2) and invite contributions to the TFACT for these specific projects.

Status of application of international UNECE transport agreements and conventions

9. The Bureau reiterated its earlier request that individual subsidiary bodies of the ITC monitor the implementation of the various legal instruments in the transport sector.

Road transport

10. The Bureau recommended that the Committee approve the convening of meetings requested by the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1).

Road traffic safety

11. The Bureau agreed that the Fourth Road Safety Week (5 - 11 April 2004) was an opportunity to take into account the current programmes (e.g., THE PEP) aiming at developing policy-oriented actions in cooperation with other international organizations concerned.

Inland water transport

12. The Bureau noted the paper prepared by the SC.3 "Group of Volunteers on Legislative Obstacles" on *"Inventory of existing legislative obstacles that hamper the establishment of a harmonized and competitive pan-European inland navigation market"* and underlined the importance of this document for the development of inland water transport policy in Europe.

Border crossing facilitation

13. The Bureau:
- noted the concerns of the Russian Federation in connection with the guarantee system for international road transport under the TIR Convention.
 - asked the representative of the Russian Federation to prepare a note for the Committee explaining the various aspects of the problems encountered.
 - noted that the staff of the secretariat of the TIR Executive Board was currently financed through a levy on TIR Carnets and that eventually any payments in this regard should be absorbed by the United Nations regular budget.

- recommended that the Committee request WP.30 to examine the problems which have arisen with the functioning of the TIR guarantee system and propose remedial measures.

Transport of Dangerous Goods

14. The Bureau:

- asked Governments to actively participate in the work on CRTD in order to reach a compromise solution.
- in this connection, recommended to the Committee to take a decision as to whether the Convention should continue to address all three modes together or whether a Convention for each individual mode should be prepared.

Transport Division Website

15. The Bureau recommended that the secretariat explore the possibilities to include on the conference registration form the following questions : (i) do you use the Transport Division Website? (ii) how do you currently receive documents (paper or electronic mail)? (iii) do you still wish to receive paper copies of documents?

DRAFT STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE COMMITTEE

16. The Bureau :

- noted that during the forthcoming session of the Committee, there should be the possibility for a brief exchange of views on the substance of the Strategic Objectives.
- expressed its wish that the Committee support the work done by the Bureau and ask it to continue work on the Strategic Objectives.
- noted further that the document as currently agreed upon by the Bureau contains strategic considerations which endeavour to integrate the working approaches of the Committee and its Subsidiary Bodies.

TRANSPORT, ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH

17. The Bureau :

- recommended to the Committee to ask its subsidiary bodies to provide a list of activities which are being carried out in the three priority areas of the Steering Committee.
- recommended to the Committee to ask the Ministries of Transport to make contact with the Ministries of Environment and Health, in order to determine national focal points for the Steering Committee and for THE PEP.

HOLDING OF A ROUND TABLE

18. The Bureau:

- noted that following the success of the Round Table on "New Vehicle Propulsion Technologies" held during the sixty-fourth session of the ITC, the Committee had agreed that the theme of the

Round Table to be held during the Committee's sixty-fifth session should be "Intelligent Transport Systems (ECE/TRANS/139, para. 6)", a proposal originally made by the World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) (TRANS/2002/6, annex 3, para.16).

- further noted that WP.29 felt that it was not feasible to prepare the Round Table for February 2003.
- in view of the new situation, the Bureau agreed to postpone the Round Table on "Intelligent Transport Systems" until its sixty-sixth session in 2004.
- recommended to the ITC to consider the convening of a Round Table on transport infrastructure development in a wider Europe, including Euro-Asian transport links, which should be held back to back with the sixteenth session of WP.5 (24-26 September 2003).

TRANSPORT AND SECURITY

19. See paragraph 7.

BLUE CORRIDOR PROJECT

20. See paragraph 6.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Documentation

21. The Bureau asked the secretariat to make relevant documentation for Bureau meetings available at least two weeks in advance of meetings.

(b) Dates of next meetings

22. The Bureau noted that its next meetings are scheduled to be held on:

- 17 February 2003 (afternoon)
 - 21 February 2003 (morning)
-