



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/WP.24/101
15 October 2003

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Combined Transport

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY AT ITS FORTIETH SESSION
(29 September - 1 October 2003)**

ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party held its fortieth session from 29 September to 1 October 2003 under the chairmanship of Mr. M. Viardot (France).
2. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Cyprus; Czech Republic; France; Germany; Hungary; Italy; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Switzerland. The European Community (EC) was also represented.
3. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was represented.
4. The following inter-governmental organization was represented: European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT).
5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Container Bureau (ICB); International Union of Railways (UIC); International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR); International Organization for Standardization (ISO); Groupement Européen du Transport Combiné (GETC); Europlatforms.

GE.03-24064

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/100.

6. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (TRANS/WP.24/100) with the addition of the item: "Monitoring of weights and dimensions of loading units used in combined transport".

ADOPTION OF THE DECISIONS TAKEN AT THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/99 and Add.1.

7. The Working Party adopted the decisions taken at its thirty-ninth session on the basis of the draft prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson and amendments proposed by Hungary (TRANS/WP.24/99 and Add.1).

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

(a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/88/Rev.1.

8. As of 1 October 2003 the following 26 countries were Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Luxembourg; Kazakhstan; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia, Switzerland and Turkey. 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 UNECE may be obtained from the web site of the UNECE Transport Division (www.unece.org/trans - Legal instruments).

9. The Working Party decided to await the outcome of the consultations with UNECE member countries not yet Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement before considering further steps on the extension of the scope and of measures to improve the application of the Agreement.

(b) Status of amendments proposed to the AGTC Agreement

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/97, annexes 1 and 2; Depositary Notification C.N.749.2003.TREATIES-1; TRANS/WP.24/2003/9 and Add.1; TRANS/WP.24/2003/1; TRANS/WP.24/2002/10; Informal Document No. 11 (2003).

10. The Working Party noted that the amendments to the AGTC Agreement proposed by Norway and Slovenia as contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2002/97, annexes 1 and 2 have been circulated on 16 July 2003 by the Depositary to all Contracting Parties directly concerned for acceptance (Croatia; Hungary; Norway; Slovenia; Sweden).

11. The Working Party considered concrete proposals made by the Russian Federation to extend the scope of the AGTC network and to include therein a number of important combined Euro-Asian links on the territory of the Russian Federation (TRANS/WP.24/2003/9 and Add.1; TRANS/WP.24/2003/1; TRANS/WP.24/2002/10).

12. The Working Party welcomed and approved in principle the five proposed lines extending the AGTC network to Nakhodka Vostochnaya, Kasan, Kotelnich, Kurgan and Kaliningrad. It requested the secretariat, to finalize, in cooperation with the Russian Federation, the required amendment proposals to Annex 1 including also relevant installations on the newly proposed lines into Annex II of the AGTC Agreement for formal adoption by Contracting Parties at its next session.

13. The Working Party requested its ad hoc expert group on the development of Euro-Asian links to consider and possibly complement the proposals made by the Russian Federation with other links taking into account earlier views expressed by the Working Party (TRANS/WP.24/97, para. 18), similar extensions made recently to the AGC (rail) and AGR (E-road) networks as well as the work undertaken by OSZhD and ESCAP in this field.

(c) Inventory of existing AGTC standards and parameters

Documentation: UNECE Publication “Yellow Book” and Corr.1 and 2 (www.unece.org/trans/wp24/pub/html).

14. Further to its considerations on this subject at its thirty-ninth session, the Working Party noted that the secretariat was in the process of establishing an electronic database containing information on infrastructure and service parameters pertaining to the AGR (road), AGC (rail), AGN (inland water) and AGTC Agreements, including census data on E-road traffic, possibly also complemented, as of 2005, by rail census data (TRANS/WP.24/99, para. 5). It also noted that pre-filled questionnaires for the collection of 2002 data relating to the AGTC Agreement would be

transmitted to Contracting Parties shortly. This questionnaire, covering also AGC data, would be supplemented by a questionnaire on the appropriateness of the present standards and parameters contained in the AGTC and of the publication of these data in the UNECE Yellow Book series.

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

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1 and 2; TRANS/WP.24/79.

15. The Working Party decided to invite, using appropriate diplomatic channels, in particular those countries that had already signed the Protocol in 1997 to accede to it in order to ensure that it would come into force and could then be updated in line with several requests made by UNECE member countries (for details refer to the provisional agenda TRANS/WP.24/100 and the references therein).

ROLE OF RAILWAYS IN THE PROMOTION OF COMBINED TRANSPORT

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2003/6; TRANS/SC.2/2002/9; TRANS/WP.24/2002/9; TRANS/WP.24/2002/1 to 4; TRANS/WP.24/2001/1 to 8; Informal documents No. 3, 5 and 12 (2003); Informal document No. 10 (2002); Informal documents No. 1 and 3 to 6 (2001).

16. The Working Party considered document TRANS/WP.24/2003/6 prepared by its ad hoc expert group on partnership models and best practices and its ad hoc expert group on combined transport terminal efficiency that had held a joint session on 19 and 20 June 2003 in Paris. The document contained “model” action plans or framework agreements as well as “model” partnership agreements. The objective of these “models” was to assist Contracting Parties to the AGTC and actors involved in international combined transport services to cooperate with each other at the policy level as well as at technical and commercial levels.

17. The expert groups had been of the view that the Working Party, by endorsing such best practice and good experiences made in some UNECE member countries, would contribute to the promotion of international combined transport services at the pan-European level. An additional signal could be given by including such “models” or elements thereof in a newly to be established Annex to the AGTC Agreement.

18. Noting the good results that had already been achieved by such international action plans and partnership agreements, such as the “Brenner 2005 Action Plan” or the “95/20 Quality Development Charter” (for details see TRANS/WP.24/2003/6, paras. 10, 11, 20-22), the Working Party approved document TRANS/WP.24/2003/6 and decided to transmit it for review to all Contracting Parties and interested combined transport operators.

19. Following this review to be organized by the secretariat, the Working Party would, at its forthcoming session, decide on the adequate implementation procedures of such best practices, in close cooperation with the ECMT (TRANS/WP.24/2003/6, paras. 7-9 and 16-19).

MONITORING OF WEIGHTS AND DIMENSIONS OF LOADING UNITS USED IN COMBINED TRANSPORT

20. The Working Party was informed of progress on the draft of a European Directive on Intermodal Loading Units that also proposes the introduction and acceptance, on a voluntary basis, of a European intermodal loading unit (EILU) complying with the essential European intermodal requirements in terms of security, safety, interoperability, handling, securing, strength, coding and identification of units.

21. The representative of ISO informed the Working Party on the outcome of the Plenary session of ISO Technical Committee TC 104 that had considered the possible standardization of 45 ft containers and requested an answer to its query to the UNECE on the applicability of Inland Transport Committee resolution No. 241 of 5 February 1993 on “Increasing Dimensions of Loading Units in Combined Transport”.

22. Finally, the representative of ICB informed the Working Party about the first results of a study undertaken for the European Commission on optimum dimensions for a European Intermodal Loading Unit (EILU). On the assumption that, for efficient European transport operations, road transport services served as the benchmark for all other competing modes, such as short sea, inland water and rail transport, the ideal EILU, among the two proposed by the European Commission, would seem to have the following external dimensions: Height: 2.9 m; Width: 2.55 m; and Length: 13.60 m. Such a box, able to accommodate 33 standard pallets, could be utilized by all modes important for European transport, including short-sea shipping using cellular ships (on-deck) and ro-ro ferries.

23. In line with its mandate and recognizing the importance of the issue, the Working Party requested delegations to inform the secretariat about their views on this matter.

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

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/97; TRANS/WP.24/2002/6; TRANS/WP.24/2000/3.

24. The Working Party recalled that, following the organization of two hearings with interested industry groups in 1999 and 2000 (TRANS/WP.24/2000/3), on several occasions, it had considered the preparation of a civil liability regime applicable to European intermodal transport operations, including possibly short-sea shipping (TRANS/WP.24/2002/6; TRANS/WP.24/97, paras. 38-51).

25. Recalling also the results of an UNCTAD survey that had shown that, at the global level, a large majority of respondents favoured the preparation of a new international legal instrument covering multimodal transport contracts, the Working Party noted that the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) was now considering an international instrument on maritime transport that extends, in its latest version, to all contracts of carriage involving a sea leg, irrespective of their length or economic importance, i.e. covering also short-sea shipping or port hinterland transport by road, rail or inland water transport.

26. The Working Party noted that its ad hoc expert group, at a session held in Geneva on 8 and 9 September 2003, had felt that this “coming to shore” of the originally maritime transport instrument, i.e. its extension to all transport contracts whenever a sea leg is included, might come into conflict with the existing European inland transport law, such as CMR for road or COTIF for rail. As this legislation had proven its value for efficient European inland transport operations, it was considered as the benchmark and basis for any multimodal transport convention - rather than maritime legislation with its considerably lower liability and responsibility levels applicable to carriers.

27. With a view to clarifying the position of UNECE member States on this issue, the Working Party requested the secretariat to analyse the responses to the UNCTAD survey and to prepare a summary of the results for consideration by the Working Party.

28. Until such time, the Working Party requested the secretariat to continue its close monitoring of the relevant activities of UNCITRAL and proposed to prolong the mandate of its ad hoc expert group during 2004.

COMBINED/INTERMODAL TRANSPORT AND SECURITY

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2002/13.

29. The Working Party was informed that the World Customs Organization (WCO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the International Labour Office (ILO) and the International Standardization Organization (ISO) were actively working on transport security issues relating to security criteria for container transport, seafarer's identity documents, security of port areas and of ships (new Chapter XI-2 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS, 1974)) as well as on high-duty mechanical and electronic seals and related documentation.

30. The Working Party also noted that discussions on the application of the Container Safety Convention (CSC) were undertaken in international fora that might lead to proposals for modification of the Convention with regard to quality of container repair and a review of the current regime on continuous inspection of containers in circulation (ACEP).

ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN UNECE MEMBER COUNTRIES, OF UNECE BODIES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

(a) New developments in the field of combined transport in UNECE member countries

Documentation: Informal Documents No. 7 to 9 (2003).

31. The Working Party was informed by the delegates of Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania on recent developments in combined transport in their respective countries. The representative of the Russian Federation informed the Working Party about the results of the 3rd International Euro-Asian Conference on Transport (Saint-Petersburg, 11 and 12 September 2003) and the establishment of a centre responsible for container transport within the Russian Ministry of Transport.

(b) Subsidiary bodies of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC)

Documentation: Informal Documents No. 10 and 11 (2003); TRANS/WP.6/AC.4/1;
<http://www.unece.org/trans/welcome>.

32. The Working Party was informed about recent activities of the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) and the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) with regard to the E-Rail census planned to be undertaken in 2005 in cooperation with EUROSTAT, as well as on an expert

group meeting on combined transport (Budapest, 30 June and 1 July 2003) that had been organized by UNECE in the framework of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI).

(c) Other organizations

Documentation: Informal Document No. 13 (2003).

33. The representative of ICB briefed the Working Party on recent work undertaken by his organization.

34. The representative of Europlatforms informed the Working Party about the role of freight villages as part of intermodal transport services and offered to share their experiences with the Working Party.

**TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT PAN-EUROPEAN PROGRAMME
(THE PEP)**

Documentation: ECE/AC.21/2003/6; ECE/AC.21/2002/2; ECE/AC.21/2002/3; ECE/RCTE/CONF.3/FINAL; ECE/RCTE/CONF.2/FINAL.

35. The Working Party was informed of new developments and activities carried out in the framework of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) that has consolidated and takes forward the previous Vienna and London follow-up processes on transport and environment and on transport and health respectively (ECE/AC.21/2003/6) (www.the-pep.org).

TERMINOLOGY IN COMBINED TRANSPORT

Documentation: UNECE Publication (www.unece.org/trans/wp24/pub/html).

36. The Working Party felt that the glossary of terms used in combined transport that had been prepared jointly by the European Commission (EC), the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the UNECE secretariat continued to be an important tool in the promotion of intermodal and combined transport at the pan-European level.

37. The glossary is available in four languages: English, French, Russian and German in hard cover format and on the following UNECE web site (www.unece.org/trans/wp24/pub/html).

38. The Working Party stressed that it was of the utmost importance to keep the glossary in line with the latest developments in intermodal transport and logistics and decided to review and, if necessary, amend the definitions contained in the glossary as soon as possible. Taking account of the proposals made in this regard by delegations during the session, the secretariat was requested to initiate work on possible amendments to the glossary and to convene, if possible, a group of interested experts in the margins of one of the next sessions of the Working Party or the ECMT Group on Combined Transport.

COOPERATION WITH THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT (ECMT)

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2003/8.

39. The Working Party welcomed document TRANS/WP.24/2003/8 that had been prepared by the secretariats of the UNECE and the ECMT in cooperation with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Working Party in accordance with the mandate given by the Working Party and the Inland Transport Committee (TRANS/WP.24/99, para. 12; ECE/TRANS/152, para. 95). The Working Party endorsed the proposed cooperative arrangements contained therein and expressed the hope that the newly created “Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics”, consisting of separate ECMT and UNECE segments, would not only streamline the already existing cooperative procedures between the two organizations, but would also create synergies in intergovernmental policy, technical and legal activities at the pan-European level.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2004 TO 2008

Documentation: TRANS/WP.24/2003/7.

40. In accordance with the decision of the Inland Transport Committee (ECE/TRANS/152, para. 95), the Working Party reviewed thoroughly its future activities and programme of work, also taking into account the proposed new cooperative arrangements with the ECMT. In this context, it also decided to modify its name: “Working Party on Combined Transport (WP.24)” to “Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24)” which would better reflect the future scope of work and focus of attention.

41. The newly adopted programme of work covering the years 2004 to 2008 is contained in the annex to this report for approval by the Inland Transport Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

Date of next sessions

42. The Working Party noted that, pending approval by the Inland Transport Committee, the first (spring) session of the joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics would be hosted by ECMT and held in Paris on 24 and 25 March 2004. The ECMT segment would be held on 24 March 2004 and the UNECE segment on 25 March 2004. The second (autumn) session of the joint Working Party/Group has already been scheduled to be held from 27 to 29 September 2004 in Geneva and would be hosted by UNECE (ECMT segment: 27 September 2004; UNECE segment: 28 and 29 September 2004).

43. The deadline for transmission of official documents to be translated for the UNECE segment of the first joint meeting in Paris would be 9 January 2004.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

44. The Working Party adopted the report on its fortieth session.

Annex

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2004 TO 2008 ^{1/}

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.9: [COMBINED TRANSPORT] INTERMODAL TRANSPORT

Promotion of combined and [multimodal] **intermodal** transport

Priority: 1

Description: Consideration of legal, administrative, documentary, technical, economic and environmental aspects of combined and [multimodal] **intermodal** transport with a view to the development of measures to promote combined and [multimodal] **intermodal** transport as well as the maximum utilization of equipment, infrastructure and terminals used for such transport.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on [Combined] **Intermodal Transport and Logistics** will pursue the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

(a) **Consideration of measures to promote efficiency of intermodal transport as part of a sustainable transport system whereby goods are moved in one and the same loading unit or road vehicle using successively two or more modes of transport without handling the goods themselves in changing modes. Analysis of ways to implement a harmonized set of best practices and partnership models for intermodal transport operations (road, rail, inland water transport and short-sea shipping).**

Priority: 1

Output expected in 2004:

Preparation of models or best practices for international action plans or agreements among Governments and private and public actors involved that can provide a framework and benchmarks for collaborative action towards the development of competitive international intermodal transport services.

^{1/} Text in square brackets [...] refers to text proposed for deletion; text in **bold** characters indicates newly proposed text.

[(a)] **(b)** Review and updating of the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) with a view to:

- Extending the AGTC network to all UNECE member countries concerned taking account of the work already undertaken by ESCAP and OSZhD;
- Taking into account new developments in transport markets (demands and requirements), including new East-West traffic flows;
- Implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters;
- Raising environmental, energy **as well as** safety **and security** standards. Priority: 1

Output expected in 200[3] 5:

Adoption of an extended AGTC network covering all UNECE member countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

Inclusion into the AGTC Agreement of new East-West combined transport lines.

[(b)] Review and analysis of possibilities to develop inter-regional combined transport services, including the use of the Trans-Siberian railway. Priority: 2

Output expected in 2003:

Report to be prepared as the basis of information provided by concerned UNECE member Governments and international organizations.]

[(c)] Monitoring of the efficiency of various modes of transport of relevance for combined transport operations. Analysis of ways to implement a harmonized set of best practices and partnership models for combined rail/road transport. Priority: 1

Output expected in 2003:

Review of the efficiency of various modes of transport of relevance for combined transport in the sessions of the Working Party and cooperation with other relevant subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee. Final report by an informal Ad hoc expert group on best practices and partnership models.]

[(d)] Analysis of data requirements for transshipment and handling requirements, of marking, coding and identification systems for means of transport and loading units in combined transport, including the promotion of electronic data processing, with a view to improving the flow of information among the various operators and to allow for a better integration of production and distribution systems (logistics) using combined transport techniques. Priority: 2

Output expected in 2003:

Review and analysis of standardized data systems for combined transport operations with a view to possibly preparing international recommendations on this subject.]

[(e)] (c) Monitoring of weights and dimensions of loading units used in [combined] **intermodal** transport in accordance with resolution No. 241 adopted by the Inland Transport Committee on 5 February 1993. This includes consideration of possibilities for standardization of loading units and the compliance with safety regulations. Priority: 1

Output expected in 200[3] 4:

Review of the issues based on one annual report to be prepared by the UNECE secretariat on latest developments in this field.

(d) **Analysis of modern transport chains and logistics that allow for an integration of production and distribution systems providing a rational basis for Governmental decisions on efficient intermodal transport regulations and infrastructures.** Priority: 2

Output expected in 2004:

Review of technical and legal issues and development of regional implementation tools and measures based on considerations and analyses made by the ECMT.

[(f)] (e) [Monitoring] **Analysis** of technical and organizational measures to optimize terminal and transshipment procedures allowing for more cost-effective handling procedures of loading units. Analysis of possibilities to improve efficiency and quality of terminal operations in [combined] **intermodal** transport.

Priority: 2

Output expected in 200[3] 4:

Report to be prepared on the basis of information provided by UNECE member Governments and international organizations **allowing the preparation of benchmarks for the efficient operation of intermodal terminals**. [Final report by an informal ad hoc expert group on efficiency and quality of terminal operations in combined transport.]

[(g) Analysis of economic and environmental aspects of combined transport, including administrative measures and activities of the transport industry, with a view to promoting sustainable transport development. Priority: 1

Output expected in 2003:

Follow-up to the 1997 Regional Conference on Transport and the Environment (Vienna, 12 to 14 November 1998) on the basis of the Programme of Joint Action adopted at the Conference, to be determined in accordance with the decisions taken by the Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment and inter-secretariat consultations.]

[(h)] **(f)** Monitoring **and reports** by the secretariat on behalf of the Working Party on the following subjects for consideration by the Working Party upon specific request only:

- Translation **and updating** of the [combined] **intermodal** transport terminology into Arabic, Chinese and Spanish in order to contribute to the dissemination of the joint ECMT, EC and UNECE glossary of terms used in this field;
- [Combined] **Intermodal** transport techniques and operations (including inland waterways and coastal shipping techniques) as a basis for a possible international compendium of measures for the safe handling and temporary storage of dangerous goods;
- National approval procedures for containers and swap-bodies in the framework of relevant conventions, such as the CSC Convention, with a view to better harmonizing such procedures;
- New services and technologies in combined and intermodal transport, including sea/inland waterways and sea/land interfaces, and the use of bimodal road/rail vehicles with a view to be able to analyse the potential of [combined] **intermodal** transport;
- **Data requirements for transshipment and handling operations, of marking, coding and identification systems for means of transport and loading units in intermodal transport, including electronic data processing;**

- **Analysis of economic and environmental aspects of intermodal transport, including administrative measures and activities of the transport industry, with a view to promoting sustainable transport development.** Priority: 2

Output expected in 200[3] 4:

Report(s) to be prepared by the secretariat as a basis for discussion by the Working Party, as appropriate.

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- [(i)] **(g)** Analysis of possibilities for reconciliation and harmonization of liability regimes governing [combined] **intermodal** transport operations. Priority: 1

Output expected in 200[3] 4:

Review of relevant activities undertaken by international organizations and, if appropriate, preparation of a draft legal instrument for multimodal overland transport covering the UNECE region.

- [(j)] **(h)** Analysis of the consequences on the organization of [combined] **intermodal** transport in Europe resulting from the development of [combined] **intermodal** transport services on interregional rail links between Europe and Asia, **including the Trans-Siberian railway, and vice versa**. This includes the organization of an inter-regional meeting harmonizing the legal and administrative work carried out by relevant international organizations in Europe and Asia (e.g. ESCAP, UNCTAD, EC, OSZhD). Priority:2

Output expected in 200[3] 4:

Based on work carried out by ESCAP, study on the feasibility of an intergovernmental meeting, jointly organized with ESCAP, in a country in Central Asia, the Caucasus **or in the Russian Federation** to agree on common measures to facilitate [combined] **intermodal** transport services along interregional links.
