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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

(Sixty-seventh session, 15-17 February 2005,
agenda item 2)

RESULTS OF THE COMMITTEE'S BUREAU MEETINGS

In accordance with the decision taken by the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its sixty-fifth session (ECE/TRANS/152, para. 137), its Bureau met on 20 February 2004, 7 June 2004, and 2-3 December 2004. 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

**LIST OF DECISIONS OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF
THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
(20 February 2004)**

ATTENDANCE

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee was chaired by Mr. Peter Päßgen (Germany) and was attended by the following members: Mr. Henri Courtois (Belgium), Mr. Benoît Chevalier (France), Ms. Diamanto Zoi (Greece), Mr. Bert Jan Griffioen (Netherlands), Ms. Dana Constantinesu (Romania), Mr. Valery Timofeev, Mr. Vyacheslav Arsenov, Mr. Anatoli Voronine (Russian Federation), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. Ümit Armangil, (Turkey). The representatives of Belarus, Ukraine and the European Commission (EC) were unable to attend.

ASSESSMENT OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE'S SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION

2. The Bureau:

- agreed unanimously that the order of the items on the agenda of the Committee should be flexible and might change from one year to another;
- recalled that if problems had not been solved at the level of the subsidiary bodies, the Committee might endeavour to reach a solution;
- felt that discussion in the Committee should reflect all its areas of competence;
- proposed that the agenda could start with the most pressing items and that time guidelines could be provided for each item;
- reiterated the Committee's appeal to delegates to make succinct statements and to limit themselves to salient points. Their interventions could be distributed in full in writing at the Committee's session, if necessary;
- invited its members to make proposals in writing for improving the time management of Committee sessions which would be discussed at the summer session of the Bureau on 7 June 2004. Such proposals should be received by the secretariat at the latest by **31 March 2004**;
- made an overall positive assessment of the sixty-sixth session of the Committee.

CONSIDERATION OF THE NARRATIVE FOR THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME PLAN 2006-2007, SUB-PROGRAMME 2: TRANSPORT

3. The Bureau:

- reviewed ‘sub-programme 2: Transport’ of the narrative for the Biennial Programme Plan 2006-2007, which had been introduced to the Committee by Mr. P. Robineau, Acting Deputy Executive Secretary;
- noted that the UNECE secretariat had to comply with the request of the UN Headquarters and that the information requested could not reflect all the work of the Committee;
- felt that, although this sort of exercise was not ideally suited to the work of an international organization, there was no other choice than to accept it. It regretted the difficulty to reflect properly the large number and variety of activities of the Committee, as well as their quality. The Bureau suggested as possible additional indicators the “number of references to UNECE legal instruments on transport in the work of other organizations” and the “attendance to meetings and Seminars”;
- recalling that members of the Committee had been given until 27 February 2004 to comment on the draft, decided to review the final draft at its next session.

CONSIDERATION OF ASPECTS OF ITEM 02.8: TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT OF THE COMMITTEE’S SUB-PROGRAMME OF WORK

4. The Bureau:

- felt that the role of transport in THE PEP should be re-examined;
- was of the opinion that the visibility of transport should be enhanced through the active participation of representatives of the transport sector;
- asked the secretariat to prepare a report for its next session highlighting (i) the extent to which items emanating from the Vienna Conference have been integrated in THE PEP and (ii) the way in which THE PEP takes into account transport-related issues;
- decided to reconsider the wording of item 02.8 of the Committee’s programme of work.

ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION

5. The Bureau:

- noted that specific projects for assistance to countries in transition might be formulated by interested countries and the secretariat;
- proposed that support might be sought from specialized national development agencies in order to contribute to the implementation of those projects;
- noted, in this connection, that the Trust Fund for Assistance to Countries in Transition (TFACT) might be used to enable the participation of transition countries in meetings of the ITC and selected Subsidiary Bodies.

OTHER BUSINESS

6. The Russian Federation requested that the following items be dealt with at the next session of the Bureau:

- issuance of visas to professional drivers;
- development of transport corridors;
- the decision of the Court of Arbitration on the previous TIR insurance pool.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

7. The Bureau noted that its next meeting would be held on 7 June 2004.

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Annex 2**LIST OF DECISIONS OF THE BUREAU MEETING OF
THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE****(7 June 2004)****ATTENDANCE**

8. The meeting of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee was chaired by Mr. Peter Päßgen (Germany) and was attended by the following members: Mr. Dmitry Zorin (Belarus), Mr. Benoît Chevalier (France), Ms. Diamanto Zoi (Greece), Mr. Iouri Chtcherbakov (Russian Federation), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. Ümit Armangil, (Turkey). The representatives of Belgium, the Netherlands, Romania, Ukraine and the European Commission (EC) were unable to attend.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

9. The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda as circulated.

**ASSESSMENT OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE'S SIXTY-SIXTH
SESSION**

10. The Bureau:

- felt that, in view of the forthcoming sixty-seventh session of the Inland Transport Committee, the agenda might be divided into three discussion blocks: i) items of a political nature or which need discussion, ii) items needing approval by the Committee and iii) items of an informative nature or which do not require discussion;
- suggested that, for each major item, the Chairman could indicate the number of minutes for discussion;
- reiterated the Committee's appeal to delegates to make succinct statements and to limit themselves to salient points. Their interventions could be distributed in full in writing at the Committee's session, if necessary.

ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY

11. The Bureau :

- bearing in mind documents TRANS/BUR.2004/9 and TRANS/BUR.2004/11, welcomed GA Resolution A/RES/58/289 which invites the World Health Organization (WHO) in close cooperation with the UN Regional Commissions to act as a coordinator of road safety issues at a global level;

- felt that the World Health Organization had adequate resources but lacked the appropriate expertise for performing such a role;
- acknowledged the unique expertise of WP.1 in the field of road traffic safety as a guardian of the Vienna Conventions and supported UNECE's role in disseminating the experience made with the application of these Conventions;
- called on WP.1 and the secretariat, to establish close ties with WHO and to contribute fully to global work on road safety by injecting achievements and experience made by WP.1;
- appreciated the efforts made by the Chairman of WP.1 and the Director of the UNECE Transport Division in promoting the work of WP.1;
- underlined the importance of providing the greatest support to WP.1 to ensure the highest possible visibility of its work within the UNECE region and beyond;
- supported the proposal to open up participation in WP.1 to non-UNECE member countries Contracting Parties to the Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals.

ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION

12. The Bureau:

- noting documents TRANS/BUR.2004/8/Rev.1, Informal Document on the UNECE/ECMT Seminar on Intermodal Transport between Europe and Asia: Opportunities and Challenges, TRANS/BUR.2004/8/Add.1 and TRANS/2003/7/Add.2/Rev.2, a member of the secretariat elaborated on the information contained therein regarding new projects, projects under implementation, fund-raising efforts as well as workshops and Seminars scheduled in the framework of the TEM and TER projects;
- welcomed the proposal contained in document TRANS/BUR.2004/8/Add.1 regarding the Seminar on the implications for non-EU countries of the introduction of the digital tachograph;
- felt that the interests of Central Asian countries had to be taken into account sufficiently in the work of the Committee and given greater prominence in the activities of the Committee's Programme of Work;
- requested the secretariat to provide it with a document on the United Nations Development Account;
- reiterated its request for a second Regional Adviser post which the Bureau and the ITC had asked for on several occasions.

CONSIDERATION OF SUB-PROGRAMME 2: TRANSPORT OF THE BIENNIAL PROGRAMME PLAN 2006-2007

13. The Bureau:

- took note of the final text of the Biennial Programme Plan 2006-2007 and felt that additional criteria had to be taken into account in the preparation of the next Biennial Programme for 2008-2009, such as the “number of references to UNECE legal instruments on transport in the work of other organizations”, the “number of countries participating in seminars or meetings” and “total number of countries Contracting Parties to UNECE legal instruments”. The Bureau recognized that the latter indicator of achievement would necessarily show a declining trend since the number of potential Contracting Parties was reduced with each accession.
- requested delegations to inform the secretariat of other criteria which might be taken into account and agreed to consider this question again at its meeting the day after the sixty-seventh session of the ITC in February 2005;
- recommended that members of the ITC contact their colleagues of the Permanent Missions of their respective countries in Geneva and New York to ensure support for the work of the Committee during the negotiations of the next Biennium budget.

ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS

14. The Bureau:

- took note of letters and a technical note received from eight countries detailing the problems which their professional drivers routinely encountered in applying for visas to engage in international transport (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine).
- agreed that, because of the late arrival of the letters and the technical note, it had not been possible to arrange for their translation by United Nations translation services in time for the Bureau meeting and that, therefore, consideration of them should be postponed until the December meeting of the Bureau and the sixty-seventh session of the ITC in February 2005.
- requested the secretariat to prepare a consolidated document of the letters and the technical note to be submitted to the forthcoming session of the ITC as well as to the next Bureau meeting.

CONSIDERATION OF ASPECTS OF ITEM 02.8: TRANSPORT, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT IN THE COMMITTEE'S PROGRAMME OF WORK

15. The Bureau:

- took note of document TRANS/BUR.2004/7 prepared by the secretariat highlighting the extent to which items emanating from the 1997 Vienna Conference on Transport and Environment have been integrated in THE PEP and the way in which THE PEP takes into account transport-related issues.
- requested that the above-mentioned document be made available to the next session of the ITC for information and to increase the visibility of THE PEP.
- recommended that members of the ITC participate actively in the Steering Committee of THE PEP.
- requested its members to submit proposals in writing by **1 September 2004** indicating to what extent they wish to add certain activities to THE PEP in order to better reflect the interests of transport in the agreed priorities.

DEVELOPMENT OF TRANSPORT CORRIDORS

16. The Bureau:

- welcomed information from the secretariat on the 1st expert group meeting on developing Euro-Asian transport linkages (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 9-11 March 2004) (TRANS/BUR.2004/12) and on the subsequent ninth session of the SPECA Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12-13 March 2004) (TRANS/BUR.2004/13).
- encouraged the secretariat to actively pursue these projects in close cooperation with UNESCAP.
- requested that due consideration be given to the establishment of a UNECE-UNESCAP Task Force to coordinate the activities and efforts of countries and international organizations involved in the development of Euro-Asian land transport links, following support for such a proposal by the sixty-fifth session of the ITC, and expressed the expectation that WP.5 would consider this matter.

OTHER BUSINESS

17. The Bureau:

- took note of the letter from the UNECE Executive Secretary to the Chairman of the ITC dated 4 May 2004 outlining efforts which had been made to obtain an additional

P-4 post in the Vehicle Regulation Section of the UNECE Transport Division in response to a request made by the sixty-sixth session of the ITC as well as the endeavour to remedy this situation provisionally through temporary redeployment;

- with regard to preparations for a comprehensive evaluation of the UNECE which would be conducted by an external consultant in the second half of 2004 (TRANS/BUR.2004/10), recommended that its members stress the importance which they attach to work in the field of transport in any interviews which might be requested by the consultant;
- took note of the following subjects for a Round Table which might be held at the next session of the ITC: “International cooperation on transport in the UNECE region”, “Security in transport”, “Safety aspects of road transport infrastructure”, “Impact of transport on growth and competitiveness of UNECE economies”, and “Infrastructure charging”;
- in this regard, requested the secretariat to write to Bureau members to ask them whether they saw the need to hold a Round Table during the sixty-seventh session of the ITC and, if so, which of the five subjects they preferred. Responses should be requested by **30 June 2004**.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18. The Bureau was informed that its next meeting would be held on 2 and 3 December 2004.

REPORT OF THE MEETING

19. The Bureau:

- noting that it had adopted the text of items 1-6, requested the secretariat to finalize the remaining part of the report of its meeting in cooperation with the Chairman.

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Annex 3

**LIST OF DECISIONS OF MEETING OF
THE BUREAU OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
(2-3 December 2004)**

a) Attendance

20. The meeting of the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee was chaired by Mr. Peter Päßgen (Germany) and was attended by the following members: Mr. Dmitry Zorin (Belarus), Mr. Benoît Chevalier (France), Mr. Bert Jan Griffioen (the Netherlands), Mesdames Adriana Mihailescu and Gabriela Constantinescu (Romania), Messrs. Evgeny Mokeev, Andrey Troubitsin and Vyacheslav Arsenov (the Russian Federation), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. Ümit Armangil, (Turkey), Messrs. Mykhailo A. Mezheryskyi and Sergii Yampolskyi (Ukraine) and Mr. Christian Dufour (EC). The representatives of Belgium and Greece were unable to attend.

b) Adoption of the agenda

21. The Bureau adopted its agenda TRANS/BUR.2004/18 without modification.

c) Consideration of items concerning the agenda for the sixty-seventh session of the Inland Transport Committee

22. The Bureau commented upon the following items of the agenda for the sixty-seventh session of the ITC.

(i) Intersectoral activities: Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)

23. The Bureau:

- considered that the number of topics under THE PEP was sufficient for the time being and that focus should now be on the implementation of existing proposals, in particular, the Clearing House;
- stressed the importance of the transport sector to be adequately represented in THE PEP.

(ii) Review of the transport situation in UNECE member countries and emerging development trends

24. The Bureau:

- agreed to add the following text to the annotations to this item: "Discussion of this item may focus on international transport aspects of the information submitted";
- felt that when considering this item in future, the information received in response to the 5-year questionnaire on transport development should be duly taken into account.

(iii) **Assistance to Countries with Economies in Transition (see also para. 32 below)**

25. The Bureau:

- agreed to strengthen assistance to countries in transition in particular to countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia;
- to this end, reiterated its request for the allocation of a second Regional Adviser for this area of work;
- recommended that the Committee ask the European Commission to continue funding the travel of representatives of Central Asian and Caucasus countries in meetings of the ITC and its subsidiary bodies;
- noted that the TEM and TER Projects were now well structured and, therefore, needed less direct assistance from the Regional Adviser(s) than transition countries such as those in Central Asia and the Caucasus.

(iv) **Transport trends and economics**

26. The Bureau:

- agreed to modify the title of item 10(b) to read: “Infrastructure bottlenecks and missing links”;
- was of the opinion that the annotation to item 10(c) should read as follows:

“The Committee may wish to consider the problems of transport in the Mediterranean on the basis of the work of the centres, the EU and other groupings of countries or individual countries and provide guidance for future work to be undertaken in this field”.

(v) **Road transport**

27. The Bureau:

- agreed to modify the annotation of item 11 (a) (ii), second paragraph to read:

“B: The ITC may wish to ask the secretariat to start working on the development of projects like TEM in other sub-regions, notably central Asia.”

(vi) **Rail transport**

28. The Bureau:

- agreed to modify the annotation of item 14 (a) (ii), second paragraph to read:

“B: The ITC may wish to ask the secretariat to start working on the development of projects like TER in other sub-regions, notably central Asia.”

(vii) **Intermodal transport and logistics**

29. The Bureau:

- expressed its thanks to the Government of Ukraine for having hosted the “Seminar on Intermodal Transport between Asia and Europe: Opportunities and Challenges”.

(viii) **Schedule of Meetings in 2005**

30. The Bureau:

- asked the secretariat to include in the list of meetings a meeting of THE PEP Steering Committee on 11-12 April 2005.

d) **Road Traffic Safety**

31. The Bureau:

- recommended that the ITC approve the proposal of the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) to extend participation in its work to States not members of the UNECE which are Contracting Parties to the Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals, and grant them voting rights on issues related to these Conventions;
- recommended that the ITC request the approval of this proposal by the Commission at its sixtieth session;
- furthermore, recommended that the ITC also approve the same possibility for other ITC subsidiary bodies that administer legal instruments with Contracting Parties outside the UNECE region and request the approval by the Commission;
- supported the involvement of WP.1 in UN Road Safety Collaboration activities to implement General Assembly Resolution 58/289, including the offer to contribute with the Consolidated Resolutions on Road Traffic (R.E.1) and on Road Signs and Signals (R.E.2) and the possibility of holding the Fifth Road Safety Week in 2008 at the global level.

e) **Assistance to countries in transition (see also para. 25 above)**

32. The Bureau:

- in response to its request made at its meeting of 7 June 2004, noted the document on the United Nations Development Account Project on Capacity Building on Developing Interregional Transport Linkages (TRANS/BUR.2004/19) and the related activities on Euro-Asian transport links which have been carried out thus far;

- noted the outcome of the 2nd Expert Group Meeting on the development of Euro-Asian Transport Links, organized jointly by UNECE and UNESCAP, which took place in Odessa (Ukraine);
- recommended to the Committee to support the work carried out under this Project.

f) Preparation of 2006-2007 programme budget

33. The Bureau:

- noted the report prepared on the 2006-2007 programme budget for the Commission's Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW) outlining: (i) the directions and priority areas for the new cycle; (ii) activities to be continued, terminated or introduced; and (iii) possible streamlining of meetings, documents and publications;
- noted also that, since the Committee did not meet before the budget submission in December 2004, the note was approved by the Bureau through exchange of e-mails;
- recommended to the ITC that its members contact their Permanent Missions in Geneva and New York to ensure support for the work of the Committee at the UNECE level and during the negotiations of the 2006-2007 budget.

g) Issuance of visas to professional drivers

34. The Bureau:

- noted documents (i) TRANS/SC.1/2004/5 which contained letters and a technical note received from eight countries (Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Ukraine) detailing the problems which their professional drivers encountered in applying for visas to engage in international transport; (ii) TRANS/BUR.2004/21 submitted by the IRU on the facilitation of visa issuance, which proposes, inter alia, a harmonized list of documents, which should be required for issuing visas to professional drivers;
- noted that, on the basis of the difficulties encountered in connection with this item, agreement on the proposal concerning the establishment of an ad hoc group to study facilitation of visa issuance to professional drivers could not be reached;
- asked the Committee to take note of the technical Note provided to the secretariat and to recommend to Governments and the EU to undertake without delay negotiations to alleviate the visa issuance problems;
- agreed to annex to this report a proposal of the Russian Federation, supported by Belarus and Ukraine (see Appendix).

h) Consideration of aspects of item 02.8: transport, health and environment in the Committee's programme of work

35. The Bureau considered this item in para. 23 above.

i) Development of transport corridors

36. The Bureau:

- underlined the importance of the UNDA project funding the participation of the countries concerned in meetings related to the development of Euro-Asian transport links;
- noted the decision by WP.5 at its seventeenth session (20-21 September 2004) to convene a one-day informal meeting in Geneva, in April 2005, with the participation of a limited number of concerned countries to (i) study ways in which the monitoring and coordination of the ongoing work on the development of Euro-Asian transport links in various international bodies could be most efficiently ensured, and (ii) provide recommendations for cooperation by the countries involved, international organizations and institutions (TRANS/WP.5/36, para. 14).

j) European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN)

37. The Bureau:

- recommended that the Blue Book be published based on the information received from the Governments. Concerning the information submitted by the Government of Ukraine on the updating of the E80-09 waterway, it was agreed that the secretariat prepare a draft text for a footnote, based on the discussions held in the ITC Bureau meeting of 2-3 December 2004. This draft text will be subject to the approval by the Governments of Romania and of Ukraine by 20 January 2005 at the latest. In the absence of an agreement by this date, each Government will submit individual comments, which will be reflected in separate footnotes.

k) Other business

(ix) Adequate resources for carrying out the work programme

38. The Bureau:

- recommended that the Committee reiterate its request for an additional P-4 post in the Vehicle Regulation Unit of the UNECE Transport Division and to remedy this situation provisionally through temporary redeployment;

- reiterated its request for a second Regional Adviser for transport in order to ensure further development of activities for central Asian and Caucasus countries, as well as for other Eastern and South-Eastern European countries in need of assistance;
- also recommended that the Committee support the request of the Working Parties on Road, Rail and Inland Water Transport (SC.1, SC.2, SC.3) as well as the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) to maintain staff resources for the sectors concerned in the UNECE Transport Division at least at the current level.

(x) **Comprehensive evaluation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

39. The Bureau:

- was informed about preparations for a comprehensive evaluation of the UNECE which will be conducted by an external consultant starting in January 2005. It was expected that an interim report would be submitted to the next session of the Economic Commission for Europe;
- recommended that the Committee request its members to stress the importance which they attach to work in the field of transport in any interviews which may be requested by the consultant selected.

(xi) **Round Table**

40. The Bureau:

- at its last session had requested the secretariat to write to Bureau members to ask them whether they saw the need to hold a Round Table during the sixty-seventh session of the ITC and, if so, which of the five subjects they preferred: “International cooperation on transport in the UNECE region”, “Security in transport”, “Safety aspects of road transport infrastructure”, “Impact of transport on growth and competitiveness of UNECE economies”, or “Infrastructure charging”;
- noted that the secretariat inquiry revealed that the majority of Bureau members were not in favour of organizing a Round Table during the sixty-seventh session of the Inland Transport Committee;
- agreed to revert to this item at the meeting to be held immediately after the sixty-seventh session of the ITC.

(xii) **Date of next meetings**

41. The Bureau was informed that its next meetings will be held on 14 February 2005 (afternoon) and 18 February 2005 (morning).

Appendix to Annex 3

**PROPOSAL OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION CONCERNING
THE ISSUANCE OF VISAS TO PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS**

The Bureau was not able to reach a common position regarding the setting-up of an ad hoc group on visa problems. At its forthcoming session, the Committee could consider the possibility and need for the creation of such a group with due regard to the strategic objectives of the Committee as established in ECE/TRANS/156, annex 1. It could also request the secretariat to approach Governments of member States and the Executive Committee of the Schengen Agreement and invite them to consider possibilities for facilitating procedures for obtaining visas by professional drivers involved in international transport.
