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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics¹
(29 and 30 March 2006)

UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics
(30 March 2006)

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS
FOR THE FORTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY^{2 3}**

**to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
starting at 10.00 hours on Thursday, 30 March 2006**

Note by the secretariat

1. Adoption of the agenda [ECE/TRANS/WP.24/110⁴](#)
2. Inland Transport Committee (ITC) [ECE/TRANS/164](#)

¹ The UNECE and ECMT have adopted cooperative arrangements in establishing the “Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group on Intermodal Transport and Logistics” consisting of separate ECMT and UNECE segments, the UNECE segment consisting of its Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24).

² For reasons of economy, delegates are requested to bring copies of the documents mentioned in this provisional agenda to the meeting. There will be no documentation available in the meeting room. Before the meeting, missing documents may be obtained directly from the UNECE secretariat (Fax: +41-22-917-0039; e-mail: WP.24@unece.org). Documents are also available at: <http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>. Delegations are requested to complete the attached registration form (also available at: <http://www.unece.org/trans/info.delegates.html>) and to transmit it to the UNECE secretariat, at the latest, two weeks prior to the session.

³ The ECMT segment will be held on Wednesday, 29 March 2006 also at the Palais des Nations, Geneva (for draft agenda and documents refer to <http://www.cemt.org/>). The session of the UNECE Working Party will be concluded on Thursday, 30 March 2006, at 18.00 hours.

⁴ Document references are hyperlinked, allowing on-line access (in PDF format); just click on reference number.

3. New developments in intermodal transport [ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/3](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/109](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/2005/7](#)
4. Follow-up to the ECMT/UNECE Seminar on Intermodal Transport between Europe and Asia (Kiev, 27-28 September 2004) [ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/1](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/109](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/107](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/2005/1](#)
5. Border crossing facilitation procedures relating to intermodal transport operations in a pan-European context [TRANS/WP.24/109](#)
[TRANS/2005/15](#)
[TRANS/SC.2/2004/7](#)
[TRANS/2005/13 and Corr.1](#)
6. Reconciliation and harmonization of civil liability regimes in intermodal transport [TRANS/WP.24/2002/6](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/107](#)
[ECE/TRANS/162](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/101](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/2000/3](#)
7. Role of intermodal transport in European express freight and parcel markets [TRANS/WP.24/109](#)
[Informal Document No.3 \(2005\)](#)
8. European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations ([AGTC](#))
 - (a) Status of the AGTC Agreement [ECE/TRANS/88/Rev. 3](#)
 - (b) Status of amendment proposals adopted by the Working Party [TRANS/WP.24/107](#)
[C.N.6.2005.TREATIES-1](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/2005/2](#)
[TRANS/WP.24/2005/6](#)
 - (c) New amendment proposals [ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/2](#)
9. [Protocol](#) on Combined Transport on Inland Waterways to the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) [ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/4](#)
[ECE/TRANS/122 and Corr.1, 2](#)
10. Date of next sessions
11. Summary of decisions taken [TRANS/WP.24/63](#)
[ECE/TRANS/156](#)

ANNOTATIONS

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The first item to be considered is the adoption of the agenda ([ECE/TRANS/WP.24/110](#)).

2. INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE (ITC)

The Working Party will be informed about the results of the sixty-eighth session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (7-9 February 2006). The provisional agenda of this ITC session is contained in document ECE/TRANS/2006/1.

3. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT

The Working Party may wish to review recent developments and trends in volumes and quality of intermodal transport in Europe. A status report transmitted by the International Union of Combined Road/Rail Transport Companies (UIRR) is contained in document TRANS/WP.24/2006/3. Reference is made in this context to the “model” action plans and partnership agreements prepared by the Working Party and adopted by the ECMT Council of Ministers in 2005 (TRANS/WP.24/109, paras. 21 and 22; TRANS/WP.24/2005/7).

4. FOLLOW-UP TO THE ECMT/UNECE SEMINAR ON INTERMODAL TRANSPORT BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA (KIEV, 27-28 SEPTEMBER 2004)⁵

The Working Party may wish to continue its considerations on the follow-up activities to the Kiev Seminar ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/1](#)) taking into account the discussions at its March and September 2005 sessions ([TRANS/WP.24/107, paras. 4-6](#), [TRANS/WP.24/109, paras. 4-12](#)) as well as the [framework action plan](#) for the promotion of intermodal transport on transport links between Europe and Asia adopted by the ECMT Council of Ministers in 2005.

In line with this action plan, the Joint Working Party had decided to designate, as a first step, an observatory on two or three major intermodal transport lines along Euro-Asian transport corridors. Such an observatory or mechanism should serve as an information centre, provide a forum for the exchange of views among operators and Governments and allow, if necessary, for the introduction of corrective measures on the basis of best practices.

The Working Party may wish to consider a note prepared by its Chairman on a possible mechanism to collect and disseminate such best practices on major intermodal transport lines (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/1).

⁵ Basic consideration of this item will be held during the ECMT segment of the Joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group on 29 March 2006. Decisions on specific follow-up activities of the UNECE Working Party will be taken under this agenda item.

5. BORDER CROSSING FACILITATION PROCEDURES RELATING TO INTERMODAL TRANSPORT OPERATIONS IN A PAN-EUROPEAN CONTEXT

The Kiev Seminar has identified the persistent problems at border crossings, particularly in rail transport, as one of the main weaknesses for the effective development of transport linkages between Europe and Asia. Subsequently, the ECMT Council of Ministers, in its action plan, has underlined that priority needs to be given to facilitating border crossings, all components and all modes combined, but with the focus on rail transport. At its last session, the Working Party agreed that the following elements should constitute the cornerstones of international activities in this field in the years ahead:

- (a) Negotiation of a unified railway law system, replacing the present artificial separation between COTIF and SMGS regimes. In the short term, the development of a common CIM/SMGS consignment note as currently pursued by CIT and OSZhD, providing evidence for the existence of both contracts of rail carriage, should be completed as soon as possible. The Working Party decided to closely monitor progress in this matter and to report to the ECMT Council of Ministers in 2007 at Sofia on lessons learned and conclusions to be drawn.
- (b) Development of a common pan-European rail Customs transit system allowing for use of rail consignment notes as Customs declarations, for the introduction of international Customs control and guarantee systems and thus for the establishment of a level playing field with road transport.
- (c) Insertion of an annex on international rail transport into the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982)⁶, similar to the already developed annex on road transport. It should address the specific needs of container transport and different types of cargoes, such as perishable and dangerous goods (TRANS/WP.24/109, paragraphs 13-20).

The Working Party will be informed of the considerations and decisions taken by the ITC on this subject (7-9 February 2006) and on progress made in the above fields by other UNECE bodies and international organizations.

⁶ The UNECE Inland Transport Committee has decided to prepare an annex on railway border crossing facilitation to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982) ([ECE/TRANS/162](#)). This UNECE Convention has at present 47 Contracting Parties.

6. RECONCILIATION AND HARMONIZATION OF CIVIL LIABILITY REGIMES IN INTERMODAL TRANSPORT

The Working Party may wish to be informed of progress made by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) [Working Group III \(Transport Law\)](#) in the preparation of an international instrument on maritime transport that would, in its present form, extend to all contracts of carriage involving a sea leg, including short-sea shipping and port hinterland transport by road, rail or inland water transport (for background information and the results of two UNECE hearings with the industry, refer to [TRANS/WP.24/2002/6](#) and [TRANS/WP.24/2000/3](#)).

The Working Party may recall that the ITC had expressed interest in establishing a civil liability regime applicable to European intermodal transport, covering road, rail, inland water and short sea shipping. It had requested the Working Party to continue to closely monitor and evaluate all pertinent activities in this field and to prepare, if appropriate, proposals for solutions at the pan-European level ([TRANS/WP.24/107](#), paras. 23-25; [ECE/TRANS/162](#), para. 104; [TRANS/WP.24/101](#), paras. 24-28).

Taking note of a study commissioned by the European Commission on civil liability regimes applicable to intermodal transport, the Working Party may wish to consider and recommend any possible follow-up action.

7. ROLE OF INTERMODAL TRANSPORT IN EUROPEAN EXPRESS FREIGHT AND PARCEL MARKETS

On the basis of a document and questionnaire prepared by the “Groupement européen du transport combiné (GETC)” ([Informal Document No.3 \(2005\)](#)), the Working Party, at its last session, had an exchange of views on the possibilities that intermodal transport could play in the booming European express freight and parcel markets. The Working Party agreed to analyze the replies to the GETC questionnaire and to reflect on possible inter-governmental measures that could be taken to facilitate the use of intermodal transport by express freight and parcel operators ([TRANS/WP.24/109](#), paras. 32 and 33).

The Working Party will be informed of the results of the questionnaire.

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

(a) Status of the AGTC Agreement

With the accession of Serbia and Montenegro, entering into force on 4 January 2006, and of Ukraine, entering into force on 23 March 2006, the AGTC Agreement will have 28 Contracting Parties⁷. The Working Party may wish to be informed of the intentions of other UNECE member Governments to accede to the Agreement.

The up-to-date and consolidated text of the AGTC Agreement is contained in document ECE/TRANS/88/Rev.3 and is available at the web site of the Working Party in English, French and Russian (<http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>).

(b) Status of amendment proposals adopted by the Working Party

The Working Party may wish to note that a large package of amendment proposals ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/6](#)) adopted by the Working Party on 8 March 2005 ([TRANS/WP.24/107](#), para. 11) has been issued as Depositary Notification [C.N.646.2005.TREATIES-1](#) on 19 August 2005. If, within a period of six months, no objection will be received from a Contracting Party directly concerned, these amendments are expected to enter into force by the end of May 2006.

(c) New amendment proposals

The Working Party may wish to take note of new amendment proposals transmitted by Poland and Slovakia relating to a new AGTC line "C 63" (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/2).

The Working Party will also be informed of progress made with another package of amendment proposals extending the AGTC network to Central Asia and the Caucasus ([TRANS/WP.24/2005/2](#)).

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

The Working Party may wish to be informed of progress made in the ratification of the Protocol following transmission of a communication by the secretariat to concerned Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement. The Protocol has been signed by 15 countries and ratified so far

⁷ 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; Serbia and Montenegro; Slovakia; Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and Ukraine.

by seven countries, but is not yet in force⁸. Its text is contained in document ECE/TRANS/122 and Corrs.1 and 2 (<http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>).

The Working Party may wish to consider a note of the secretariat identifying the reasons that may have led to the (so far) non-entry into force of the Protocol (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/4).

10. DATE OF NEXT SESSIONS

The autumn 2006 session of the joint ECMT/UNECE Working Party/Group will be hosted by ECMT and is scheduled for 2-4 October 2006 in Paris. The ECMT segment is planned to be held on 2 October 2006 and the UNECE segment on 3 and 4 October 2006.

Tentative dates for the spring 2007 sessions: 8-9 February 2007 (Paris).

11. SUMMARY OF DECISIONS TAKEN

In line with established practice (TRANS/WP.24/63, para. 54) and in accordance with the decision of the Inland Transport Committee (ECE/TRANS/156, para. 6), at the end of the session the Chairman will make a brief summary of the decisions taken. Following the session, the UNECE secretariat, in cooperation with the Chairman, will establish a short report for formal adoption at the autumn session of the Working Party.

⁸ Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Denmark; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Romania; Switzerland.



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