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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

Fifty-first session

Geneva, 19-20 March 2009

Item 11 (d) of the provisional agenda

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

New amendment proposals (minimum infrastructure and performance standards)

Note by the secretariat

**I. INTRODUCTION AND MANDATE**

1. In March 2005, the Working Party had considered the results of a secretariat survey on the relevance of the existing infrastructure and performance standards as well as target values contained in the AGTC Agreement (TRANS/WP.24/2005/5). The replies from 15 countries showed that a number of such standards might need to be reviewed and could possibly be substituted by benchmarks that better reflect today's requirements for efficient intermodal transport services.

2. With a view to analysing the coherence between the various rail and intermodal infrastructure and service parameters and to examining, if necessary, their harmonization in the longer term, the Working Party, at its fortieth session, had felt that it was of particular importance to cooperate with the relevant railway groups within UNECE and ECMT as well as

with the competent authorities within the European Union dealing with infrastructure standards of access to national rail networks in accordance with European Directive 2001/14/EC (TRANS/WP.24/107, paragraphs 13 and 14).

3. In September 2005, at its forty-first session, the Working Party had analysed the coherence between the various rail and intermodal infrastructure and service parameters and considered how to harmonize them in the longer term. It had noted that the European rail network still had considerable spare capacity that could be tapped, in the short term, mainly by more competition and operational and administrative measures (composition and length of trains, interoperability, telematics, train path allocation, etc.). With regard to infrastructure parameters as enshrined in the AGC<sup>1</sup> and AGTC Agreements, it was noted that loading gauge, length of trains and axle loads were of major importance for shippers.

4. It was felt that, for the construction of new railway lines, the main AGC and AGTC infrastructure parameters were quasi-mandatory. However, the use of relevant AGC and AGTC parameters for the upgrading of existing lines depended on the results of line-specific cost-benefit analyses. These parameters, as in fact indicated in article 3 of the AGC and AGTC Agreements, could often only be attained in the very distant future, even on the heavily used railway lines along the North-South European transport corridors.

5. Finally the Working Party had decided to revert to this issue at one of its forthcoming sessions with a view to possibly adjusting the current infrastructure standards of the AGC and AGTC Agreements and/or to adding elements that, in the meantime, have become important for the “development and operation of a network of important international combined transport lines and related installations” (AGTC, article 2) (TRANS/WP.24/109, paragraphs 34-36).

## II. MINIMUM STANDARDS IN THE AGC AND AGTC AGREEMENTS

6. The AGC Agreements contains 11 and the AGTC seven rail infrastructure parameters. In addition, the AGTC Agreement contains six performance standards for combined transport trains, five standards for combined transport terminals, two standards for rail border crossing points, one standard for axle gauge interchange stations and two standards for rail ferry links/ports.

7. The table below provides a consolidated summary of the AGC and AGTC standards as well as target values for existing and new important railway and combined transport lines. As indicated above, the survey undertaken in 2005 had shown that some of these standards as well as target values did not seem to be any longer of relevance and/or needed to be modified. These standards and target values are indicated *in italics* in the table below.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) (Geneva, 1985).

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed description of the proposed modifications of AGC and AGTC parameters and standards refer to document TRANS/WP.24/2005/5.

**AGC and AGTC minimum standards and target values**

	AGC/AGTC Parameter/Standard		AGC/AGTC Target Value	
	Description		Existing railway lines	New railway lines
<b>Infrastructure Parameters for Railway lines (AGC - Annex II; AGTC - Annex III)</b>				
1	Number of tracks		Not specified	2
2	Loading gauge of vehicles		UIC B	UIC C 1
3	Minimum distance between track centres		4.0 m	4.2 m
4	Nominal minimum speed		160km/h (AGC) 120km/h (AGTC)	250 / 300 km/h (AGC) <sup>a</sup> 120 km/h (AGTC)
5	Authorized mass per axle	Locomotives	22.5 t (AGC)	22.5 t (AGC)
		Rail cars and rail motor sets	17 t (AGC)	17 t (AGC)
		Carriages	16 t (AGC)	16 t (AGC)
		Wagons	18 t / 20 t / 20 t (AGC) <sup>b</sup> 20 t / 22.5 t (AGTC) <sup>c</sup>	18 t / 20 t / 22.5 t (AGC) <sup>d</sup> 20 t / 22.5 t (AGTC) <sup>e</sup>
6	Authorized mass per linear meter <sup>f</sup>		8 t (AGC)	8 t (AGC)
7	Test train (bridge design)		UIC 71 (AGC)	UIC 71 (AGC)
8	Maximum gradient <sup>g</sup>		Not specified	AGC (12.5 / 35 mm/m) <sup>f</sup> AGTC (12.5 mm/m)
9	Minimum platform length in principal stations		400 m (AGC)	400 m (AGC)
10	Minimum useful siding length		750 m	750 m
11	Level crossings		None (AGC)	None (AGC)
12	Capacity bottlenecks <sup>g</sup>		Seldom (AGTC)	Seldom (AGTC)
<b>Performance Parameters of Combined Transport Trains (AGTC - Annex IV)</b>				
13	Maximum authorized length of train		750 m	
14	Maximum authorized weight of train		1,500 t	
15	Maximum authorized axle load of wagon		20 t (22.5 t at 100 km/h)	
16	Operating speed		120 km/h	
17	Priority rating		High	
18	Direct (block) trains or wagon groups		Often	
<b>Minimum Standards for Terminals (AGTC - Annex IV)</b>				
19	Average time for formation of trains		Max. 60 min.	
20	Average waiting time for lorries		Max. 20 min.	
21	Accessibility by road		Good	
22	Accessibility by rail		Good	
23	Capacity bottlenecks		Seldom	
<b>Minimum Standards for Border Crossing Points (AGTC - Annex IV)</b>				
24	Maximum average length of stop		No stop or 30 minutes max.	
25	Joint border station		Yes	
<b>Minimum Standards for Axle Gauge Interchange Stations (AGTC - Annex IV)</b>				
26	Duration of interchange		As short as possible	
<b>Standards for Ferry links /Ports (AGTC - Annex IV)</b>				
27	Average duration of ro-ro operation		As short as possible, but 60 minutes max.	
28	Ferry/rail timetable co-ordinated		Yes	

<sup>a</sup> 250 km/h (passenger and goods traffic) and 300 km/h (passenger traffic only).<sup>b</sup> For wagons ≤ 100 km/h: 20 t; for wagons ≤ 120 km/h: 20 t; for wagons ≤ 140 km/h: 18 t.<sup>c</sup> For wagons ≤ 100 km/h: 22.5 t; for wagons ≤ 120 km/h: 20 t.<sup>d</sup> For wagons ≤ 100 km/h: 22.5 t; for wagons ≤ 120 km/h: 20 t; for wagons ≤ 140 km/h: 18 t.<sup>e</sup> For wagons ≤ 100 km/h: 22.5 t; for wagons ≤ 120 km/h: 20 t.<sup>f</sup> 35 mm/m for passenger traffic only.<sup>g</sup> Evaluation by the UNECE secretariat (“never-seldom-occasionally-often-always”).

8. In addition to a review of the present AGC and AGTC standards, additional standards that have been suggested for inclusion (see TRANS/WP.24/2005/5) were the electrification of railway lines, specific performance parameters for container block trains and the minimum number and length of rail tracks in terminals.

9. In the field of infrastructure, additional standards could be determined by an analysis of national railway and combined transport infrastructures in UNECE member countries. In particular, the so-called national network statements, published by rail infrastructure managers in the member States of the European Union in accordance with Directive 2001/14/EC, might provide useful information on modern infrastructure requirements.

10. With regard to the performance of combined transport trains and related installations (terminals, border crossing points, axle gauge interchange stations and ferry links/ports) the key performance indicators identified in the UNECE Model Action Plans and Public-Private Partnership Agreements prepared by the Working Party in 2004 and endorsed by the (the) ECMT Council of Ministers in 2005 could be used to determine additional benchmarks and minimum standards for efficient international combined transport services (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2006/1). In addition, in close cooperation with the industry, such as UIC, CIT, UIRR, FIATA/CLECAT, transport quality indicators, particularly punctuality indicators could be agreed upon that would allow for an evaluation of the performance of combined transport operations on the whole AGTC network.

11. Furthermore, given the increasing importance of safety and security issues relating in particular to the transport of containers by rail and their handling and storage in terminals, pertinent parameters and minimum standards could be developed for inclusion into the AGTC.

### **III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE WORKING PARTY**

12. As a follow-up to its earlier decisions, the Working Party may wish to consider whether it is now appropriate to review the minimum infrastructure and performance standards and parameters in Annexes III and IV of the AGTC Agreement. The objective of such a review would be to bring the AGTC parameters and minimum standards, dating back to the 1980's, in line with modern rail and intermodal transport requirements and to possibly add additional parameters in line with new needs. In view of the recent expansion of the AGTC network to Central Asia and to the Caucasus, a modern and forward-looking set of AGTC parameters and minimum standards would, in the longer term, ensure harmonization of rail and intermodal transport infrastructure and performance standards and could contribute to efficient and interoperable intermodal transport services at the pan-European level and along Euro-Asian rail transport corridors.

13. The Working Party may also wish to decide on the procedure and time-table to be established for such a review to allow for the views of all competent authorities and stakeholders to be taken into account.

14. Finally, the proposed review of the AGTC minimum standards would need to be carried out in close cooperation with the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport in order to ensure that the relevant infrastructure parameters of the AGC and AGTC Agreements will remain aligned.

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