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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports

**REPORT OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON HINTERLAND
CONNECTIONS OF SEAPORTS ON ITS SECOND SESSION
Geneva, 28 October 2008**

I. ATTENDANCE

1. The Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports held its second session on 28 October 2008. The session was held under the chairmanship of Mr. I. Protopapas (Greece) and Mr. E. Dincer (Turkey) as Vice-Chairman. Representatives of the following UNECE member States participated: Greece, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Turkey and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

2. The following non-governmental organizations were also present: European Sea Ports Organisation (ESPO) and International Union of Railways (UIC). The representatives of P & O Ferries Limited and the University of Westminster attended at the invitation of the secretariat.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/4

3. The provisional agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/4) was adopted.

III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT (Agenda item 2)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/3

4. The Group of Experts adopted the report of the first session that took place on 18 April 2008.

IV. UNECE CONFERENCE IN PIRAEUS (Agenda item 3)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/2008/3; Informal document No. GE.1-02-1

5. Following introductory remarks of the Director of the Transport Division, the secretariat presented a report on the UNECE Conference in Piraeus and post-conference activities, including the distribution of the questionnaire (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.1/2008/3) prepared by the Expert Group. Subsequently, the representative of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) informed the Group of Experts about selected activities of BSEC that complement the UNECE work on hinterland connections and offered to assist the Expert Group with the distribution of its questionnaire to BSEC member States. Representatives of ESPO and UNCTAD also indicated that they could distribute the questionnaire via their respective networks of seaport authorities. It was also mentioned that the Association of Greek ports could help with the questionnaire. The Group decided that the secretariat should take advantage of all the external assistance offered.

V. REGULATORY INITIATIVES (Agenda item 4)

Documentation: Informal document GE.1-02-2

6. The representative of ESPO made a comprehensive presentation on the European Union (EU) policy framework for ports and hinterland connections. During the subsequent discussion, two key issues were emphasized: State aid and sustainability. Experts agreed that the emerging EU policy on ports and hinterland should be considered by authorities in other parts of the ECE region. Turkey underlined the importance of developing small ports in order to balance the trend towards concentration of traffic in mega ports. The Expert Group expressed its appreciation to ESPO for an excellent presentation.

VI. STATISTICAL INITIATIVES (Agenda item 5)

Documentation: Informal documents Nos. GE.1-02-3 and GE.1-02-4

7. Following the introduction by the secretariat (Informal document No. GE.1-02-3), the representative of Statistics Netherlands made a comprehensive presentation about the ongoing pilot project on container transport chains and codification of commodities (Informal document No. GE.1-02-4). It was emphasized that the pilot project had been demand driven and its preliminary results could be representative of port-hinterland traffic patterns in the Hamburg-Le Havre range. The pilot project provided important object lessons for other countries on how to effectively use customs and trade statistics as well as the available data on hinterland corridors. The Expert Group expressed its appreciation to Statistics Netherlands for the valuable information provided in the presentation on the pilot project.

VII. FINAL REPORT (Agenda item 6)

Documentation: Informal document No. GE.1-02-5

8. The Expert Group considered the draft outline of the final report and took note of the presentation by its author (Informal document No. GE.1-02-5). The Group was of the opinion that the draft outline represented a solid framework for the elaboration of its final report. Specific comments emphasized that the following issues should be addressed in the report: long-term planning and financing, country or subregion specific recommendations, definition of hinterland, main focus on container traffic and secondary focus on Ro-Ro traffic, recommendations mainly to Governments but also for public-private partnerships, role of smaller ports, environmental sustainability, amendments to existing legal instruments, role of the private sector in the development and management of port-hinterland linkages, future involvement of the UNECE Working Parties dealing with modal and intermodal transport, transport facilitation and economics in hinterland connections of seaports.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 7)

9. There were no issues discussed under this agenda item.

IX. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda item 8)

10. The next meeting of the Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports will take place in Geneva on 23 January 2009.
