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RAIL TRANSPORT

Facilitation of border crossing in international rail transport

**Sixth Interdepartmental Meeting of Representatives of the Border, Customs,
Railway State Bodies and Transport Ministries of Member Countries of
the Organisation for Co-operation between Railways (OSZhD)**

(Russian Federation, Sochi, October 21-23, 2003)

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D E C L A R A T I O N

**of the Sixth Interdepartmental Meeting
of Representatives of the Border, Customs, Railway State Bodies and
Transport Ministries of Member Countries of the Organisation
for Co-operation between Railways (OSZhD)**

(Russian Federation, Sochi, October 21-23, 2003)

The Meeting of representatives of ministries of transport, border, customs, railway state bodies that participated in the 6th Interdepartmental Meeting in Sochi, Russian Federation, October 21-23, 2003,

Taking into account that the process of globalisation and development of market relations between countries on the Eurasian space raises the need to create prerequisites and conditions, favourable for crossing of border by goods, that will promote the expansion of the trade dialogue between states of Europe and Asia, the development of railway traffic and the strengthening economic potential of these countries, accordingly.

Being conscious of the important role of the railway transport in achieving the sustainable development of European and Asian countries under conditions of the further development and improvement of the international railway traffic and the increase in railways competitiveness on the Eurasian continent,

Considering that deepening the integration in the transport sector through development of international transport corridors will enable railways to determine conditions of closer co-operation in the field of transport between states of Europe and Asia,

Reckoning that the transport law should be based on rapprochement between national legislation and rules within the international agreements and conventions on transport, on facilitation of border, customs and other procedures at crossing the state frontiers,

Recognising the importance of Interdepartmental meetings under participation of border, customs, railway bodies and ministries and authorities being in charge of railway transport, which are held within the framework of OSZhD, and being governed by recommendations and decisions of the previous Interdepartmental meetings taken for a broader co-ordination of joint efforts, aimed at the solving of problems related to border crossing issues,

Deem it necessary:

To request:

- Governments of OSZhD member countries to
- approve the resolution No. 50 “Use of SMGS Consignment Note as a Customs Transit Declaration” and promote the signature the UNECE Convention on International Transit Customs Procedures for the Carriage by Rail, with its subsequent ratification;
- contribute to adoption and implementation by border, customs and railway authorities of joint integrated measures, directed at reduction of border crossing time by railway transport, first of all along the OSZhD railway corridors;
- support the creation of a common information space for transport systems including customs and border structures of OSZhD member countries, through integration of communications networks of telecommunication companies from these countries, by dedication the required informational and telecommunication resources along international transport corridors

- customs and border authorities to
 - co-operate more purposively and co-ordinated with railway administrations in questions concerning the reduction of time at border crossings along OSZhD railway corridors;
 - develop, on a basis of mutual confidence, relations between customs bodies of countries along the same one railway corridor;
 - implement more actively up-to-date information technology achievements and those of science and engineering for controlling the transported goods;
- railway authorities to
 - improve together with border and customs authorities the co-ordinated technological process of border crossing by passengers and goods based on time allowance, determined for border crossing points;
 - take efficient measures to avoid delays of passengers and goods for operational and technical reasons.

I. With regard to questions requiring co-operation between authorities and support on the governmental level of OSZhD member countries

1. Elaborate a draft convention comprising requirements to border crossings, their maintenance and border-crossing time standards.
2. For co-ordination of joint efforts within the frame of international railway corridors draw up draft bilateral and multilateral agreements on adjusting border crossings in compliance with international standards.
3. Support proposals of Russian Federation, Mongolia and Ukraine for creation of Co-ordination Councils for examination of railway, border and customs problems within the II and the V OSZhD railway corridors.
4. Seek setting up of Co-ordination Councils for dovetailing border-crossing issues along main transport corridors connecting Europe and Asia.
5. Establish a specialised fund for conducting research, in order to standardise border-crossing points and categorise them.
6. Analyse possible implications of applying requirements of Schengen Agreement at borders of the widening EU with regard to international passenger traffic, above all, at border crossings in the main transport corridors between Europe and Asia.

With regard to improvement of administration of railway border crossings

1. Draw up a list of issues concerning border-crossing points that shall be agreed at the state level.
2. Introduce railway border crossing categories and, at this basis, define standards for each of them.
3. Carry out border crossing studies with the aim of revealing bottlenecks and working out co-ordinated measures targeting their rearrangement.
4. Elaborate an agreed mechanism for information in advance of passengers travelling by international trains on the rules of border crossing, visa requirements and luggage declaration along the passenger train service route.
5. Implement a preliminary transmission in electronic form the personal data of passengers crossing the border in order to perform the computer-aided inspection of data.
6. Aiming at improvement of technology at the railway border crossings, realise electronic interaction of information systems; first of all, those of railways, customs and border police.

III. With regard to international co-operation on a large scale

1. Support organisation and convening under UN umbrella of International meeting on facilitation of railway border crossing procedures under participation of governments, customs, border, railway bodies, ministries of transport, OSZhD, UIC and other involved organisations and authorities.
2. Set up an International Working Group from OSZhD member countries for preparation of the International meeting under the UN umbrella, comprising representatives of customs, border authorities, ministries of transport and railway administrations, UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport, OSZhD and UIC.

Devise draft decision of the UN International meeting on railway border crossing facilitation.

3. Representatives of customs and railway authorities should participate more actively in activities of UNECE ITC Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport.

Recognising the necessity to reduce train waiting-times at border crossings and facilitation of border crossing in international railway traffic, the participants of the meeting stressed the need to further develop the co-operation between border, customs, railway bodies and ministries of transport of OSZhD member countries.

Measures and recommendations for railway border crossing facilitation, adopted at the previous interdepartmental meetings, are considered as relevant and valid.

Aiming at preparation of subsequent Interdepartmental meetings as well as assessment of implementation of recommendations, measures taken and process of their realisation, the participants of the meeting deem it reasonable to establish a Working Group on border crossing facilitation comprising interested countries under participation of representatives of customs, border bodies, ministries, authorities being in charge of railway transport and railway administrations of Belarus, China, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Poland, Russia, Ukraine.

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The participants of the meeting express appreciation to MPS Russia and the Open Joint-Stock Company “Russian Railways” for the organisation of this Interdepartmental meeting.

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The participants of the meeting will inform management of their ministries, authorities, railways on results of the 6th Interdepartmental meeting of representatives of border, customs, railway state bodies, ministries of transport of member countries of Organisation for Co-operation between Railways.

Sochi, October 23, 2003
