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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Seventieth session
Geneva, 19-21 February 2008
Item 4 of the provisional agenda

RESULTS OF THE COMMITTEE'S BUREAU MEETINGS

Note by the Secretariat

1. The Bureau of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee met on 9 February 2007, 4 June 2007, and 29 and 30 November 2007.
2. The Decisions of these three meetings and the documents annexed to them are reproduced below for consideration by the Committee.

Annex I

LIST OF DECISIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2007

I. ATTENDANCE

1. The meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Inland Transport was chaired by Mr. Evgeny Mokeev (Russian Federation) and was attended by the following members: Mr. Xavier Guérin (France), Mr. Ralph Kellermann (Germany), Mrs. Domna Papamichail (Greece), Mr. José Alberto Franco (Portugal), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland), Mrs. Ümit Armangil (Turkey) and Mr. Yurii Gerzhod (Ukraine). The representative of the European Commission was unable to attend.

II. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 69TH SESSION OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

2. In discussing the outcome of the 69th session of the Committee, the Bureau felt that this session had been successful, as it had taken a number of important decisions for the future of the Committee, such as the implementation of the Work Plan on UNECE reform in the field of transport, development of intersectoral activities, and the setting up of an ad hoc multidisciplinary expert group on transport security.

3. Noting that a meeting of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the ITC and the Committee on Trade was foreseen during the forthcoming ECE session, the Bureau requested the Transport Division, in cooperation with the Trade and Timber Division, to prepare a note for that meeting.

4. In view of the experience gained from the implementation of the Work Plan on UNECE reform and from previous exercises aimed at identifying new priorities, the Bureau felt that the agendas of the subsidiary bodies to the ITC could include in future a brain-storming session on important new developments in their field of expertise. In this respect, it agreed to discuss this matter further at a future meeting.

5. The Bureau undertook a preliminary discussion on whether Chapter IV Rule 16 of the ECE Terms of Reference on the participation of an alternate representative of its Chairperson is applicable in the case of its meetings, and agreed to revert on this subject at its next meeting, following further investigation by the secretariat.

6. The Bureau considered the points to be presented by the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee in the meeting with the Executive Committee.

III. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

7. The Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting on Monday, 4 June 2007.

Annex II

LIST OF DECISIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU HELD ON 4 JUNE 2007

I. ATTENDANCE

1. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Evgeny Mokeev (Russian Federation) and was attended by the following members: Mr. Xavier Guérin (France), Mr. Ralph Kellermann (Germany), Mrs. Domna Papamichail (Greece), Mr. José Alberto Franco (Portugal), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland) Mrs. Ümit Armangil (Turkey) and Ms. Olena Shumeyko (Ukraine). The representative of the European Commission could not attend.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

2. The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda as prepared by the secretariat (TRANS/BUR.2007/4).

III. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

3. The Bureau considered Informal Documents of the Executive Committee and additional information provided by the Director of the Transport Division on decisions of the UNECE 60th anniversary session and on the outcome of the high-level panel on “Secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation”, held on 27 April 2007.

4. The Bureau also considered the proposals contained in Informal Document No. 0 prepared by the secretariat for a possible follow-up to the above-mentioned transport panel and recommended to the Committee to endorse them. The Bureau recommended caution when referring to transport infrastructure financing so as to avoid misunderstandings from the side of the countries concerned.

IV. MEETING WITH THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

5. The Bureau considered the Conclusions of the Chairman of the Executive Committee on its meeting of 9 February 2007 with the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee (Informal document No.1) and noted with satisfaction that at its meeting on 7 March 2007 (Informal document No.2) the EXCOM had endorsed the ITC proposals.

6. The Bureau expressed gratitude to its Chair and Vice-Chairs for their meeting with the EXCOM and to Mr. Kellermann, who, as representative of his country at the EXCOM meeting, was instrumental in ensuring the approval by the Executive Committee of the ITC proposals, including that of granting the ITC additional meeting days for ADN.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE UNECE REFORM

A. Strengthening border crossing and trade facilitation activities

7. The Bureau was informed of the outcome of the first meeting of the Chairs of the ITC and of the Committee on Trade (CT), held on 27 April 2007, on possible areas of cooperation

between the two Committees and additional information provided by the Director of the Trade Division on the UN/CEFACT work related to documents and on the Recommendations elaborated by the CT that may be of interest to the ITC.

8. The Bureau asked the Transport Division, in cooperation with the Trade Divisions, to draft a “road map” on the possible cooperation between the two Committees for consideration at its forthcoming meeting.

B. Strengthening THE PEP and environmental aspects of transport

9. The Bureau was informed of the outcome of the last session of THE PEP Steering Committee and about the preparation of the High Level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, which will take place in 2008.

10. The Bureau discussed the feasibility and implications of aligning the various UNECE transport infrastructure agreements (AGR, AGC, AGTC, AGN) with the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, 1991), and asked the secretariat to draft a note for consideration at its forthcoming meeting.

C. Strengthening implementation and monitoring of legal instruments

11. The Bureau was informed by the secretariat of the state of preparations for the proposed monitoring of the implementation of the Vienna Conventions and the AETR.

12. Noting that the introduction of the digital tachograph in non-EU countries Parties to the AETR would have serious implications and pose challenges to transport operators in those countries, the Bureau asked the secretariat to prepare an inventory of these implications and challenges for consideration at its forthcoming meeting.

D. Strengthening Euro-Asian transport links

13. The Bureau was informed of activities carried out in the framework of the UNDA project on Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL), including: the organization of national capacity-building workshops in 2007; progress made the elaboration of an in-house study on EATL; and fundraising activities of the secretariat for ensuring the continuation of the project after 2007. The Bureau was also informed of the availability of some funds for supporting participation of National Focal Points from Central Asian and Caucasus countries to the 20th session of WP.5 and of the holding of an informal EATL expert meeting under WP.5, initially planned for early July.

14. The Bureau welcomed this information and reiterated its support to the secretariat efforts in obtaining funds for the continuation of the project after 2007. It felt that such financial support was crucial for strengthening the EATL.

15. In order to ensure higher participation of governments and have more time for a better preparation of the informal meeting of EATL experts, the Bureau agreed that the planned EATL expert meeting be held back-to-back with the 20th session of the WP.5.

E. Strengthening the TIR Convention and improving transparency

16. The Bureau was informed about the secretariat's continued efforts to strengthen the Convention, in particular through computerization of TIR procedures and new procedures to ensure more transparent collection and transfer of funds to finance the operation of the TIRExB and the TIR Secretariat.

VI. BIENNIAL EVALUATION BY SECTORAL COMMITTEES

17. Recalling the Commission's request to Sectoral Committees to conduct biennial evaluations of their respective sub-programmes and, noting that, at its 70th session, the ITC would have to review and endorse, for each cluster of activities, an expected accomplishment, related indicators of achievement and methodologies, for the 2008-2009 biennium, the Bureau undertook a preliminary discussion on the subject on the basis of the "Guide for biennial evaluations of subprogramme performance by UNECE sectoral committees" and of Informal Document No. 4 prepared by the secretariat.

18. The Bureau agreed in general with the proposals put forward by the secretariat and asked the secretariat to submit them for approval by the respective Working Parties and subsequently to the Bureau for consideration at its forthcoming meeting.

VII. COOPERATION WITH THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN STATISTICIANS

19. The Bureau was informed of the progress made in the cooperation between the ITC and the Conference of European Statisticians aimed at jointly analyzing the ITC work on transport statistics and requested to be kept informed of future developments.

VIII. TRANSPORT AND SECURITY

20. The Bureau took note of the outcome of the first session of the Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Inland Transport Security, held in Geneva, on 24 – 25 May 2007 and of the low participation of experts from Members States.

21. The Bureau reiterated its support to this important activity and asked the secretariat to continue its efforts in order for the group to develop recommendations for improving inland transport security for consideration by the ITC in 2008.

IX. FIRST UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK

22. Informed by the secretariat of the First UN Global Road Safety Week, including the organization of the World Youth Assembly for Road Safety and Global Stakeholders Forum, in Geneva, 23-25 April 2007, which had been a great success in terms of participation, media coverage and outcome, the Bureau expressed its appreciation for the secretariat efforts and requested to be informed about future developments.

X. TRANSPORT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

23. On the basis of information provided by the secretariat on the work undertaken so far by the ITC subsidiary bodies, the Bureau undertook a preliminary discussion on the possible continuation by the ITC of the work so far carried out by the ECMT.

24. Taking into account the relevance of the subject to SC.1, SC.2, SC.3, WP.1 and WP.29, and a new EU Directive on accessibility of transport that could serve as a basis for further UNECE work, the Bureau asked the secretariat, in consultation with the respective chairpersons, to draft a note for consideration at its forthcoming session.

XI. MATTERS CONCERNING THE FUNCTIONING OF THE ITC AND ITS BUREAU

A. Raising the interest of UNECE Member States in the work of the ITC

25. The Bureau considered Informal Document No. 3 ^{1/} prepared by the secretariat and noted that the proposed new structure of ITC sessions in three parts -policy oriented, technical and reporting- might render ITC sessions more efficient and appealing to higher level and higher number of participants from UNECE Members States.

26. While noting that such structure should not affect negatively the ITC and SBs core business, the Bureau agreed with the proposed structure of the ITC sessions. It also agreed that the first part of its 70th session could be a Meeting of Ministers of Transport of countries in the Euro-Asian region to endorse the Euro-Asian routes identified under the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Project and sign statements pledging priority development of these routes as well as the creation of a permanent mechanism for future cooperation.

27. The Bureau asked the secretariat to proceed with the organization of the 70th session of the Committee, its Agenda and annotations along the lines described in Informal Document No 3, attached as Appendix I, and to circulate the draft Agenda to the members of the Bureau by mid-October 2007 for comments.

B. Participation of an alternate representative of the Chairperson in the meetings of the ITC Bureau

28. The Bureau noted the results of the secretariat findings on the subject, according to which, Chapter IV Rule 16 of the ECE Terms of Reference on the participation of an alternate representative its Chairperson is not currently applicable to its meetings, but that the Committee could change the rules of its Bureau if it so wished.

C. Schedule of the ITC annual sessions

29. The Bureau agreed with the proposal of the secretariat on a new schedule of its meetings and those of the ITC for the next three years, in particular, with the holding of the ITC meetings two weeks later in February each year (Appendix III). However, since the meeting in February

^{1/} Reproduced in Appendix I of this document.

2008 has already been agreed by the ITC, it would be necessary to inform the Committee members as soon as possible of the new dates.

XII. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Staff issues in the Transport Division.

30. The Bureau was informed about the main staff issues in the Transport Division.

B. Date of next meeting

31. The Bureau noted that its next meeting would be held on 29-30 November 2007.

Appendix I^{2/}

RAISING THE INTEREST OF UNECE MEMBER STATES
IN THE WORK OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

1. At its February 2006 meeting, noting the declining number and level of participants in Committee sessions, the Bureau had agreed that sessions should be more policy relevant, effective and appealing and had decided to revert to the question of the length, organization and agenda of the Committee session at its November 2006 meeting.
2. At its November 2006 meeting, the Bureau undertook a preliminary discussion on the matter. However, noting that little could be done for the 69th session of the Committee, the Bureau decided to revert to this question at its June 2007 meeting and asked the secretariat to prepare proposals in consultation with Member States.
3. The Bureau may wish to consider the attached proposals, which have been prepared by the secretariat and provide guidance.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR RAISING THE INTEREST OF
UNECE MEMBER STATES IN THE WORK OF COMMITTEE

4. The objective of the suggestions below is to render Inland Transport Committee (ITC) sessions more policy relevant, effective and appealing to higher level and higher number of participants from UNECE Member States and international organizations. Thus, the objectives of the ITC would be better served and higher support and stronger commitment from Member States on the ITC work would be ensured in the years ahead.
5. The suggestions take due account of the need for the ITC and its SBs to remain focused on their core business, namely the development of the international legal instruments and recommendations on transport, as the common technical and legal basis for the development of coherent international transport networks and for the facilitation of international transport while improving safety and environmental performance.
6. The suggested changes might concern one or more of the following areas:
 - (a) Organization and programme
 - (b) Agenda
 - (c) Reporting system
 - (d) Publicity

A. Possible organizational and programme changes

7. The ITC sessions might be divided in three main parts, as follows:

^{2/} This Appendix was originally circulated as Informal Document No. 3 of the Bureau meeting of 4 June 2007.

First Part:

8. **The first part of the ITC session could be a Policy oriented** session that could be held in the morning of the first day or all the first day, depending on the substantive event/programme associated with it. The target of this session would be the attendance of **high-ranking officials** from UNECE Member States, the EC and other international Organizations.
9. This session could be a Ministerial Meetings, possibly linked to the signature of an Agreement or Declaration or similar, or a Round Table addressing a main issue or a hot topic of interest to UNECE Member States.
10. The Chairperson of the ITC, or a Minister or a high-level participant may be invited to moderate the discussion and the session would deliver concrete conclusions and suggestions on follow up activities in the respective topic(s) discussed and on the ITC role in this regard.
11. For example, the first part of the 70th ITC session could be a Conference/Meeting of Ministers of Transport of countries in the Euro-Asian region to endorse the Euro-Asian routes identified under the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Project and agree on the follow up activities. Ministers could sign a statement pledging the priority development of these routes and the creation of a permanent mechanism to ensure future cooperation. An example of WHO statement, pledging support to address health care-associated infection, is attached as a possible model in the **Appendix**.

Second Part:

12. **The second part of the ITC session could be the Technical part** of the session, dealing with the work of the ITC and its SBs and main issues that need to be noted, discussed or decided by the ITC. This part could start in the afternoon of the first day, or the morning of the second (depending on the programme of the 1st Part) and last up to the end of the 2nd day. This session would **target the attendance of current ITC delegates and experts** from UNECE Member States, the EC and other international organizations (no need for high-level participation).
13. Discussions would focus on issues that need consideration and require decisions by the ITC. All other items of informative character and of formal approval by the ITC would be considered at the end of the day, as a whole, on the basis of the annotations to the provisional agenda circulated by the secretariat.

Third Part:

14. **The third part of the ITC session would be Reporting** and would last less than a half a day only and would normally be held in the afternoon, or possibly in the morning, of the 3rd day.

B. Possible changes to the agenda

15. The ITC agenda and its annotations would be prepared in accordance with the organizational and programme changes suggested above.

C. Possible changes to the reporting system

16. The adoption of the report could be limited to the adoption of a list of the main decisions taken during the second Part. The report on the 1st Part of the session, in the form of Chairman's conclusions, would be circulated at a later stage, together with the full complete report of the session. ITC delegates would be able to make comments to the report, with the exception of the decisions adopted.

D. Publicity

17. The secretariat would explore ways and means of improving publicity before, during and following the holding of the ITC session. The secretariat would also send invitations, as appropriate, to all Member States, international organizations and bodies concerned.

18. Based on the experience gained from the implementation of these suggestions, the Bureau, could reconsider the structure and decide upon the appropriate changes that would be deemed necessary.

Appendix II

WHO TEMPLATE: AN EXAMPLE OF A STATEMENT PLEDGING SUPPORT TO ADDRESS HEALTH CARE-ASSOCIATED INFECTION

I, the [INSERT TITLE (*Minister of Health or representative*)], and on behalf of all at the [INSERT NAME OF GOVERNMENT BODY (Ministry of Health)] of [INSERT MEMBER STATE NAME], meeting in [INSERT CITY] on 2005 [INSERT DATE],

Recognizing the serious disease burden and significant economic impact that health care-associated infection places on patients and health systems throughout the world,

Considering that the majority of these infections are treatable and avoidable,

Appreciating the momentum that the Global Patient Safety Challenge programme of the WHO World Alliance for Patient Safety is bringing to reduce health care-associated infection at the global level,

Emphasizing that a unique opportunity now exists to reverse the incidence of health care-associated infection in [INSERT MEMBER STATE NAME],

I resolve to work to reduce health care-associated infection through actions such as:

- (a) Acknowledging the importance of health care-associated infection;
- (b) Developing or enhancing ongoing campaigns at national or sub-national levels to promote and improve hand hygiene among health care providers;
- (c) Making reliable information available on health care-associated infection at community and district levels to foster appropriate actions;
- (d) Sharing experiences and, where appropriate, available surveillance data, with the WHO World Alliance for Patient Safety;
- (e) Considering the use of WHO strategies and guidelines to tackle health care-associated infection, in particular in the areas of hand hygiene, blood safety, injection and immunization safety, clinical procedures safety and water, sanitation and waste management safety;

I resolve to work with health professionals and associations in this country:

To promote the highest standards of practice and behaviour to reduce the risks of health care-associated infection;

To foster and sustain collaboration with research institutions, training schools, educational centres, universities and health care settings of other WHO Member States to ensure full utilization of knowledge and experience in the field of health care-associated infection;

To encourage senior management support and role-modelling from key staff to promote the implementation of interventions to reduce health care-associated infection.

[INSERT MEMBER STATE NAME]

[SIGNATURE]

Appendix III

PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF THE COMMITTEE AND ITS BUREAU MEETINGS
FOR 2008 -2010

2008

- Bureau meeting proposed **18 February 2008, Monday**
- 70th session of the ITC proposed **19-21 February 2008, Tuesday-Thursday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **22 February 2008, Friday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **2 June 2008, Monday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **27-28 November 2008, Thursday-Friday**

2009

- Bureau meeting proposed **23 February 2009, Monday**
- 71st session of the ITC proposed **24 - 26 February 2009, Tuesday-Thursday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **27 February 2009, Friday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **1 June 2009, Monday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **30 November - 1 December 2009, Monday-Tuesday**

2010

- Bureau meeting proposed **22 February 2010, Monday**
- 70th session of the ITC proposed for **23 - 25 February 2010, Tuesday-Thursday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **26 February 2010, Friday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **7 June 2010, Monday**
- Bureau meeting proposed **29-30 November 2010, Monday-Tuesday**

Annex III

LIST OF DECISIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE BUREAU HELD ON 29 AND 30 NOVEMBER 2007

I. ATTENDANCE

1. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Evgeny Mokeev (Russian Federation) and was attended by the following members: Mr. Xavier Guérin (France), Mr. Ralph Kellermann (Germany), Mrs. Domna Papamichail (Greece), Mr. José Alberto Franco (Portugal), Mr. Jean-Claude Schneuwly (Switzerland) Mrs. Ümit Armangil (Turkey) and Ms. Olena Shumeyko (Ukraine). The representative of the European Commission could not attend.

2. Mrs. Eva Molnar, new Director of the Transport Division, also attended the meeting and was warmly welcomed by the members of the Bureau.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

3. The Bureau adopted the provisional agenda as prepared by the secretariat (TRANS/BUR.2007/7) with the inclusion in item 2(a) the consideration of Informal Document No. 14 on quota restrictions to road transport permits, submitted by the Government of Turkey.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE UNECE REFORM AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

4. The Bureau considered in detail under below sub-items the progress made so far in the implementation of the priorities of the UNECE reform in the field of transport and the proposed intersectoral cooperation contained in the Work Plan on the UNECE Reform (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1).

5. Following the request of the EXCOM to all Sectoral Committees to report to it annually on the progress of the reform, the Bureau asked the secretariat to prepare a note in this regard for consideration at its forthcoming meeting.

6. Noting the request of the EXCOM to all Sectoral Committees to identify areas of gender mainstreaming in their programme of work (Meeting EXCOM 29/9/06-Chairman's conclusions), the Bureau recommended the Committee to ask its subsidiary bodies do comply with this request.

A. Strengthening border crossing and trade facilitation activities

7. The Bureau considered Informal Document No.2 containing a "road map" with specific proposals on possible cooperation of the Inland Transport Committee and the Committee on Trade (CT) prepared jointly by Transport and Trade Divisions as well as additional information provided by the secretariat.

8. Stressing that such cooperation should focus on specific actions rather than participation in meetings, the Bureau accepted the actions proposed in the "road map" with some modifications,

asked the secretariat to submit the revised text of the “road map” to the Committee and recommended to the Committee to endorse it.

9. Considering Informal Document No.14, the Bureau recognised quota restrictions to road transport permits as obstacles posed to road transport operators of some UNECE member countries and agreed that SC.1 is the appropriate body to deal with this matter, without excluding that the matter could be also addressed in the framework of future cooperation between ITC and CT.

10. The Bureau asked the secretariat to include Informal Document No. 14 in the documents of the ITC 70th session and recommended to the Committee to request SC.1 to examine the matter and report to it at its 71st session.

B. Strengthening Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) and environmental aspects of transport

11. The Bureau considered Informal Document No. 3 and additional information provided by the secretariat about the last session of THE PEP Steering Committee and the preparation of the High Level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment to be convened in 2008.

12. On the basis of Informal Document No.3 the Bureau also considered the feasibility and implications of aligning the UNECE transport infrastructure agreements (AGR, AGC, AGN and AGTC) with the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) in a Transboundary Context (Espoo, 1991).

13. The Bureau felt that, from a systematic and legal point of view, it would be difficult to integrate EIA provisions into the UNECE transport infrastructure agreements beyond those already contained therein. Furthermore, the large majority of Parties to these agreements had already ratified the Espoo Convention and thus had to abide to its provisions. However, in order to strengthen environmental and health aspects of transportation, the Bureau recommended that ITC should strengthen its cooperation with and its input to THE PEP. It also recommended to cooperate closely with the International Transport Forum and, following the 2008 Forum on "Transport and Energy: The Challenge of Climate Change", to possibly prepare a road map on future activities in this field.

C. Strengthening implementation and monitoring of legal instruments

14. The Bureau considered Informal Document No. 4 and the oral information provided by the secretariat on the progress of preparations of the monitoring of the implementation of Vienna Conventions and the AETR.

15. The Bureau thanked the secretariat for its efforts and recommended to the Committee to invite non-EU Contracting Parties to rapidly reply to the request of the secretariat concerning the designation of the person responsible for the digital tachograph in their country, in order to ensure closer cooperation with the secretariat, and to organize contacts in the future with the laboratory in charge in Ispra (Italy) to deliver the cryptographic keys and the interoperability certificates. It also recommended to accept the request of SC.1 to hold an extra session in May

2008 (26th and 27th) with the aim to finalise the amendments to the AETR concerning driving and rest periods.

D. Strengthening Euro-Asian transport links

16. The Bureau was informed on the main results of the UNDA financed project on developing Euro-Asian transport links (EATL), which was jointly implemented by UNECE and ESCAP in the course of 2003-2007, including the identification of main Euro-Asian inland transport routes, prioritization of a good number of infrastructure projects, development of GIS database, analysis of non-physical obstacles, organization of capacity-building workshops and elaboration of a joint UNECE-UNESCAP study containing results and conclusions of the work as well as recommendations for participating Governments.

17. The Bureau welcomed these results as a solid basis for further cooperation among countries and reiterated its support for the continuation of this activity in a new Phase II (2008-2011).

18. The Bureau considered the proposals of the WP.5 to the ITC to assign the monitoring and coordination responsibility of future work on further developing the EATL to UNECE-UNESCAP Expert Group established under the project, for a period of two years (2008-2009) with possible further extension if necessary and appropriate. The Group would function as an ad hoc Group of Experts under WP.5 according the UNECE Rules and Procedures and the proposed TOR contained in Informal Document No 6.

19. The Bureau appreciated the proposal of WP.5 and recommended to the Committee to endorse it.

20. The Bureau considered Informal Documents Nos. 5 and 13 containing the draft Joint Statement of Ministers of Transport to be signed at the Meeting of Ministers of countries in the Euro-Asian region to be held on 19 February 2008 and the Provisional Agenda of the Meeting proposed by WP.5, as well as additional information provided by secretariat, on the progress of preparation of the Meeting of Ministers of Transport. The Bureau was informed that these documents had been sent to the Ministers of the countries concerned for consideration together with the official invitation to that Meeting signed by the Executive Secretary of UNECE on 6 November 2007.

21. The Bureau, noting that the development of Euro-Asian links is in the interest of all UNECE member countries, agreed that the holding of the Ministerial Meeting as part of the 70th session of the ITC would provide an excellent opportunity to concerned countries to express their commitment and support toward this objective and at the same time it would promote the ITC's work and increase its visibility.

22. Noting that the draft Joint Statement and Preliminary Agenda have already been submitted for comments to the Ministers invited to participate in the Meeting, the Bureau asked the secretariat to finalize the text of the final document and the Preliminary Agenda taking into account Minister's replies.

23. The Bureau asked its members, whose Ministers are invited to the Meeting, to engage themselves in ensuring the participation of their Ministers in this important event. It also asked its Chairman, Mr. Mokeev, and its member Mr. R. Kellermann, on behalf of the Bureau, to liaise with the secretariat for facilitating the organizational details of the Ministerial Meeting and for finalizing the text of the final document and the Provisional Agenda.

24. The Bureau recommended the Committee to encourage ECE and ESCAP concerned Member States, IFIs, international organizations and other donors to provide adequate financial support that would ensure the uninterrupted continuation of the EATL project in a new Phase II (2008-2011).

E. Strengthening the TIR Convention and improving transparency

25. The Bureau considered Informal Document No.7 prepared by the secretariat containing an overview of recent activities aimed at strengthening the TIR Convention and improving its transparency.

26. The Bureau, in particular, welcomed the signing of the amended UNECE/IRU agreement for the years 2008-2010 and supported the decision by the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) to study all relevant issues concerning the price of TIR Carnets at the national level.

27. Noting that the WP.30 and the TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) agreed with the description of the eTIR Project contained in Chapter 2 of the so-called eTIR Reference Model, the Bureau recommended the ITC to encourage Contracting Parties to participate in WP.30 both through their Customs representatives and also through representatives of the Finance Ministries and the Transport Ministries. This would provide a unique opportunity for discussion and agreement on border crossing facilitation issues, including the further development of TIR and the introduction of the eTIR.

F. Intersectoral cooperation between the Inland Transport Committee and the Conference of European Statisticians

28. The Bureau considered Informal Document No.8 and additional information provided by the secretariat on the progress made in the cooperation between the ITC and the Conference of European Statisticians aimed at increasing the value for Member States of the ITC's work on transport statistics and ensuring production of user-oriented results.

29. The Bureau expressed appreciation for the progress made and noted with satisfaction that from mid-September 2007 an increasing part of transport statistics have been disseminated online using the PC-Axis software, which allows users retrieve data according to number of variables and formats.

IV. TRANSPORT AND SECURITY

30. The Bureau considered Informal Document No. 9 and additional information provided by the secretariat on the progress made so far by the Group of Experts on Inland Transport Security in developing recommendations to Member States for improving inland transport security and

the outcome of the second and third sessions of the group, held in Geneva, on 9-10 October and 26 November 2007.

31. Noting that in January 2007, the group will meet for the last time in order to finalize its report, the Bureau decided to revert to this matter at its next meeting.

V. ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION ON THE CONTRACT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CARRIAGE OF GOODS BY ROAD (CMR)

32. The Bureau was informed by the secretariat on the adoption by SC.1 of the Protocol Additional to the CMR concerning the electronic consignment note and the necessity to modify the text adopted following the requests of the Treaty Section in New York. For this reason, the Committee will be asked to officially approve the final text at its next session. Given that many countries announced that they would not be ready to sign the Protocol at the 70th session of the ITC, the Bureau supported the proposal of the secretariat to use the possible extra session of SC.1 in May for a signature ceremony.

VI. TRANSPORT OF PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

33. The Bureau considered Informal Document No. 10 prepared by the secretariat on possible continuation by the Committee of the work on transport of people with reduced mobility so far carried out in the framework of the ECMT.

34. The Bureau noted that the matter of people with reduced mobility has become an important policy issue in Western Europe, that about one-quarter of the population has some kind of mobility impairment at any point of time and that approximately two-thirds of this group consist of elderly persons aged 65 or more.

35. Considering that the issue addresses horizontally the work of a number of the Committee's subsidiary bodies, the Bureau recommended to the Committee to ask its subsidiary bodies SC.1, SC.2, SC.3, WP.1 and WP.29 to consider ways and means of incorporating the related issues in their programme of work, including the joint organization of a workshop focused on selected aspects of accessibility with a broad participation of government experts, academic researchers and representatives of major NGOs that deal with the matter, and report to it at its next session.

VII. BIENNIAL EVALUATION BY SECTORAL COMMITTEES AND THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR 2010-2011

36. The Bureau considered Informal Document No.11 containing the proposals of its subsidiary bodies on expected accomplishments, related indicators of achievement and methodologies for the 2008-2009 biennium, for each cluster of activities, approved by the respective Working Parties as well as a proposal on the sub-programme's 2010-2011 strategic framework drawn up in the context of the UN programme budget preparations.

37. The Bureau recommended to the Committee to endorse the proposals for the 2008-2009 biennium.

38. The Bureau also reviewed the proposed sub-programme's 2010-2011 strategic framework and accepted to be submitted to the United Nations Headquarters in early 2008 with some modification.

39. The Bureau was also informed by the secretariat that the evaluation of the implementation of the Transport sub-programme in the biennium 2006-2007 including self-evaluations carried out in the areas of the TIR Convention and THE PEP is ongoing and that as soon as it will be ready it will be submitted to it and to the Committee for consideration.

40. The Director of the Transport Division presented to the Bureau an outline of the proposed Division's strategy. The Bureau welcomed the initiative and encouraged the secretariat to continue this work taking stock of similar exercises undertaken by the Committee and its Bureau in the past with a view to prepare concrete proposals for consideration at its June 2008 meeting.

VIII. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE HINTERLAND CONNECTIONS OF SEAPORTS

41. The Bureau was informed by the secretariat on the progress made so far by the WP.5 in considering the hinterland connections of seaports and its recommended future activities in this field, including the establishment of an ad hoc Group of Experts and convening an international conference, which the Greek Government kindly offered to host.

42. The Bureau considered above information as well as Informal Document No.12 containing the TOR of the proposed ad hoc Group of Experts, agreed on some changes to TOR and asked the secretariat to introduce them.

43. The Bureau recommended to the Committee to approve the establishment of the proposed ad hoc Group of Experts as per modified TOR and the organization of the international conference proposed by WP.5 and to thank the Greek Government for its offer to host the conference.

IX. CONSIDERATION OF ITEMS OF THE AGENDA FOR THE SEVENTIETH SESSION OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

44. At its June meeting, the Bureau agreed with a new structure of the ITC sessions dividing them in three parts – policy-oriented, technical and reporting and asked the secretariat to proceed with the organization of the 70th session of the Committee along these lines. These include holding of a Meeting of Ministers of Euro-Asian region at its first part, focusing the discussions on issues that need consideration and require decisions by the Committee at its second part and adoption of a list of main decisions at its third part, while all items of informative character and formal approval would be considered as a whole on the basis of the annotations circulated by the secretariat.

45. The Bureau considered the Provisional Agenda (ECE/TRANS/199) and the annotations to the Agenda of the 70th session of the ITC (ECE/TRANS/199/Add.1), and had a discussion on items of the agenda that need consideration and require decisions.

46. The Bureau agreed on several changes to the Agenda and the annotations and asked the secretariat to introduce them (to be issued as ECE/TRANS/199/Rev.1).

47. The Bureau agreed with the proposal of Mr. Franco that WP.24 consider and analyze the new challenges posed by logistics chains for the coordination and management of land transport.

48. The Bureau also asked the secretariat to prepare an explanatory note on the new structure of the 70th session of the Committee that would facilitate the delegations attending the session.

X. IMPORTANT PERSONNEL AND STAFFING ISSUES IN THE TRANSPORT DIVISION

49. The Bureau was informed about the main staffing issues in the Transport Division.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Cooperation with OSCE

50. The Bureau was informed by the secretariat on the progress of the cooperation of the UNECE Transport Division with OSCE.

B. Election of Officers for the Committee's sessions in 2009 and 2010 and members of the Bureau for the years 2008 and 2009

51. The Bureau exchanged views on the forthcoming elections of Officers for the Committee's sessions in 2009 and 2010 as well as forthcoming elections of members for the Bureau for 2008 and 2009.

52. The Bureau asked the Director of the Transport Division to send a letter to the heads of delegations to the ITC informing them on the forthcoming elections and related procedures.

C. Date of the next meeting

53. The Bureau noted that its next meeting would be held on 18 February 2008 to discuss the preparation of the 70th session of the Committee.

D. Meeting of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee with the Executive Committee

54. The Bureau noted that the next meeting of the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee with the Executive Committee is tentatively scheduled to be held in the afternoon of 22 February 2008.
