

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE



Forum on Sustainable Transport Connectivity between Europe and Asia in the framework of WP.24



- ITC decision of the 81st session (Geneva, 19-22 February 2019)

ITC requested the ECE secretariat to seek cooperation from ESCAP to explore together with the ITC Bureau possibilities to co-organize consultations in Geneva in the most cost-effective manner between ECE and ESCAP member States and open to all ECE and ESCAP member States on sustainable transport connectivity and ask the secretariat, in cooperation with the ITC Bureau, to present the results to the 82nd session of the ITC and formulate proposals for future cooperation

ITC Bureau mandate

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- ITC Bureau decision (Geneva, 4 June 2019)

ITC Bureau requested the secretariat to organize an event in the framework of the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24)

** The organization of the event (Forum) required postponing of WP.24 agreed workshop to 2020 as accepted by WP.24 Chair and Vice-Chair and reduction of approved deliverables of the 2018-19 work programme (given the event was a special request)*

Programme and invitation

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- Programme's topics linked to the focus of WP.24 – intermodal transport and logistics
- Programme's topics linked to the ITC Strategy until 2030 – three dimensions of sustainable connectivity – economic (infrastructure connectivity, operational connectivity), social (safety, security) and environmental
- Programme prepared jointly between ECE and ESCAP secretariats and accepted by the WP.24 Chair and Vice-chair
- Joint ECE-ESCAP secretariats nominal invitations to ECE and ESCAP member States sent in September 2019

Participation

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The Forum on 30 October 2019 was attended by 52 participants from:

- ECE member States: Austria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland,
- Joint member States: Georgia, Russian Federation, Turkey
- ESCAP member States: China, India and Mongolia
- Others: Permanent Delegation of the European Union, Eurasian Economic Commissions, International Road Transport Union, European Railways ISAC, ICHCA International, International Union for Road/Rail Combined Transport (UIRR), Hupac Intermodal SA, Freight Village RU, UNECE and UNESCA secretariats

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- Exchange of information between representatives of the participating member States on efforts undertaken to create conditions for improving intermodal transport and logistics in international inland transport supporting the Euro-Asian connectivity (*infrastructure, operational, safety, security and environmental and health concerns*)
- These exchanges opened with information on the variety of legal instruments established under the auspices of the United Nations to support sustainable transport connectivity (*infrastructure agreements, transport facilitation conventions and conventions addressing transport safety and environmental and health concerns*)

Wrap-up from the discussion (1/4)

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- United Nations **transport legal instruments** offer the necessary **basis for countries to improve sustainable transport connectivity**; this **requires accession to and implementation** of these instruments
- When it comes to GHG emissions and other pollution transport is part of the problem and must therefore be part of the solution. A number of cooperation in the area of decarbonization and other sustainable transport policies exists within the framework of United Nations but also within bilateral and region-to-region cooperation and their usage should be encouraged

Wrap-up from the discussion (2/4)

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- **Various infrastructure projects** crucial to improving Euro-Asian freight transport **were in development**, among them: improvement to various railway lines, expansion and construction of intermodal terminals and port facilities, as well as ferry connections across Black and Caspian Seas
- **Infrastructure bottlenecks exist** among others in the context of infrastructure failure due to extraordinary conditions and need to be addressed by infrastructure adaptation to changing conditions and/or construction of alternative paths

Wrap-up from the discussion (3/4)

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- **Digitalization** of transport documents, **innovation** in railways and increasing **railway competitiveness** vis-à-vis other transport modes remain **top challenges**
- Digitalization of certificates for phytosanitary and veterinary inspection is considered important, while there is an existing cooperation within the framework of trade facilitation under UN/CEFACT that could be further explored
- **Unified Railway Law can be instrumental in improving rail competitiveness**, laws such as on contract for carriage of goods by rail between Europe and Asia or seamless crossing of borders by rolling stock were referred to

Wrap-up from the discussion (4/4)

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- **Incentive schemes** to promote intermodal transport and/or support measures for combined transport are also seen **instrumental to improving rail competitiveness** vis-à-vis road transport;
- **Transport security is important to sustainable transport connectivity;** international cooperation is required to enhancing transport security and cybersecurity; European Rail Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ER-ISAC) which offers an inclusive cybersecurity platform for coordinated preventative action by rail infrastructure managers and railway undertakings in Europe is an example of such cooperation

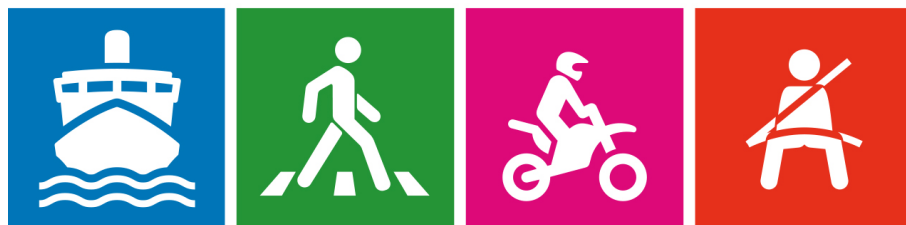
Recommendations

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- Future steps should consider:
 - Ongoing reform of the United Nations
 - Work on the operationalization of Euro-Asian Transport Corridors as mandated by ITC to WP.5
- Information should be shared with:
 - Next (2020) sessions of WP.5 (Sep. 2020), SC.1 (Oct. 2020), SC.2 (Nov. 2019)
 - ITC Bureau (Nov. 2019)
 - 82nd session of ITC (Feb. 2020)



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Thank you!