HARMONIZATION OF CONDITIONS OF DIFFERENT RAIL TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

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Structure of presentation

- Introduction
- Four UN legal instruments administered by UNECE
- Trans-European Railway (TER) project
- Transport, Health and Environment
Introduction

- Uneven rail transport performance across the UNECE region (56 countries in Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and North America)
- Large productivity gap between the US and other UNECE countries with rail systems
- WHY?
  - Incomplete market reforms
  - Lack of legal and technical interoperability
  - Cumbersome border-crossing procedures
  - Capacity bottlenecks
  - Suboptimal infrastructure access charges
Introduction, cont’d

- Border-crossings obstacles
  - Lengthy administrative procedures (customs, border police, other authorities)
  - Lengthy railway operations (change of locomotive, change of crew, technical inspection, brake checks, etc)
  - Incompatible track and loading gauges
  - Incompatible power, signalling and control systems
Four UN legal instruments

- Infrastructure and quality of service
  - International rail transport: AGC Agreement
  - Intermodal transport: AGTC Agreement

- Border-crossing facilitation
  - Freight: Harmonization Convention
  - Passenger traffic: Convention to facilitate the crossing of frontiers for railway passengers
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC)
European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC)

«Railroad iron is a magician’s rod, in its power to evoke the sleeping energies of land and water.»
Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882)
European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (1985) – AGC
http://www.unece.org/trans/main/sc2/sc2_AGC_text.html

27 Contracting Parties

Infrastructure parameters of AGC lines include
- number of tracks; minimum distance between tracks
- vehicle loading gauges; authorized mass per axle
- maximum gradient; minimum platform & siding lengths
- level crossings (target = 0)
- nominal minimum speeds
  - A = 160 km/h (existing lines)
  - B1 = 300 km/h (new lines for passenger traffic only)
  - B2 = 250 km/h (new lines for passenger and goods traffic)
UN legal instruments, cont’d

- European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (1991) - AGTC
- 32 Contracting Parties
- AGTC lines, infrastructure parameters for freight traffic, ports, terminals, minimum service standards
UN legal instruments, cont’d

- AGTC: if possible, no stops *en route for* combined transport trains
- If unavoidable, very short stops only (up to 30 minutes)
- Shift work to inland where trains have to stop for technical and/or admin. reasons
- Stop only once (if at all) at joint border stations
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<th>AGC Agreement (27 countries)</th>
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The graph below presents existing standards for a single parameter on your chosen railway or combined transport line. Details of the AGC/AGTC targets and additional information can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlinked parameter name.

**Railway Line:** C-E 70

**Parameter:** Operating speed (km/h)
UN legal instruments, cont’d

- Provides a framework for efficient border controls
- 54 Contracting Parties, incl. the EC
- 8 Annexes to HC in force
UN legal instruments, cont’d

- New Annex 9 on rail border crossing to be adopted in 2010
- Ratification process ≈ 1-2 years
- Text drafted by the OSJD and OTIF, amended after consultations at UNECE

UN legal instruments, cont’d

- Annex 9 to expedite the crossing of borders for rail freight by
  - standardizing formalities, documents and procedures
  - performing joint controls at border stations on the basis of bilateral agreements
- Facilitation of visas for train crews; 7-24 service; reciprocal recognition of technical controls; only risk-based inspections of transit goods; compliance with time limits for technical operations; advance information to customs; systematic collection of data on delays at border
UN legal instruments, cont’d

- International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage Carried by Rail (1952)
- 10 Contracting Parties, incl. Albania
- Police & customs controls of passengers & baggage while train in motion
- If on-board controls not feasible, a designated border station for police & customs procedures (time limit = 40 minutes per train)
- No inspection of transit checked baggage
Harmonization of the different rail transport systems

Joint report to the UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) on co-operation between OTIF and OSJD

Cooperation between OTIF and OSJD is based on the document entitled “Common Position”, signed in 2002 in order to update the two law systems, increase the volume of traffic, develop the transport corridors, facilitate border crossing procedures and technically equip rolling stock. To this effect OTIF and OSJD annually agree upon joint plans of action. With regard to the facilitation of border crossing, the work covered the alignment with the European Community’s requirements and the elimination of frontiers in 1993.
Two legal regimes
One (CIM-SMGS) consignment note
CIM-SMGS consignment note

- Based on the UN Layout Key for trade documents
- Used on routes between the EU (CZE, DEU, POL, ROU, SVK) and Eastern Europe (BLR, RUS, UKR)
- Saves 16 hours per train, €40 per wagon
- Recognized as
  - Customs document
  - Letter of credit
Benefits of cooperation

Effects of the 2006 agreement between Bulgaria and Serbia on railway border control procedures
Time in minutes (Dimitrovgrad, Serbia - Dragoman, Bulgaria)
Trans-European Railways (TER) project

- 17 member countries, 7 observers
- UNECE – the executing agency
- Project office in Bratislava
- Financed by member contributions
TER project, cont’d

Objectives
- Coherent and efficient rail and combined transport system in TER region
- Improved efficiency and quality of service
- Better environmental outcomes

Outputs
- Master Plan (identification of backbone network, investment priorities, inventory of border-crossing problems and recommended solutions)
- Capacity building activities
UNECE - Trans European Railway (TER)

TER Member and Observer Countries

**MEMBER**
1. Austria  
2. Armenia  
3. Bosnia and Herzegovina  
4. Bulgaria  
5. Croatia  
6. Czech Republic  
7. Georgia  
8. Greece  
9. Hungary  
10. Italy  
11. Lithuania  
12. Poland  
13. Romania  
14. Russian Federation  
15. Slovak Republic  
16. Slovenia  
17. Turkey

**OBSERVER**
1. Belarus  
2. FYROM  
3. Moldova  
4. Ukraine  
5. Serbia  
6. Montenegro

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**Country Legend**
- Yellow: TER Member
- Light Yellow: TER Observer
- Gray: Other
TER network
Transport, Health and Environment

- Pan-European Programme (THE PEP)
- UNECE – WHO partnership
- Highlights
  - Clearing House
  - Institutions for policy integration
  - Sustainable urban transport
  - The toolbox
Further information

- UNECE Working Party on Rail Transport

- UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics

- UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

- Trans-European Railways (TER) project

- Transport, Health and Environment (THE PEP)