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Informal Document No.10 (2003)

3 July 2003

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## **Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI)**

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### **REGIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT COMMITTEE (RRTC)**

#### **Group of Experts on Combined Transport**

### **REPORT OF THE FIRST SESSION**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

1. The first session of the Group of Experts established under the auspices of the SECI Regional Road Transport Committee (RRTC) was held at the invitation of the Government of Hungary in Budapest on 30 June and 1 July 2003
2. The session was chaired by Mr. Janos Verboczky (Hungary).
3. The session was attended by representatives of the following SECI participating States: Bulgaria; Greece; Hungary; Romania; Slovenia and Turkey. The session was also attended by representatives of the SECI Office in Vienna, the UNECE TER Project Office and by representatives of railways and combined transport operators (MAV, GYSEV, CFR MAFA, HUNGAROCOMBI) and the Hungarian Institute for Transport Sciences (KTI). The UNECE provided secretariat services. The list of participants is attached to this report.

#### **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

Documentation: Provisional agenda – Informal Document No.10 (2003).

4. The Group of Experts adopted the provisional agenda prepared by Hungary and the UNECE secretariat.

## **ROLE OF COMBINED TRANSPORT IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICIES IN THE SECI REGION**

5. On the basis of written reports made available during the meeting, the Group of Experts was informed and had an exchange of views on the role SECI participating States attribute to combined transport as part of their national and international transport policies.

## **PROMOTION OF COMBINED TRANSPORT IN THE SECI REGION**

6. The Group of Experts was informed and had an exchange of views on Governmental strategies and policies to promote combined transport services in the region with a view to relieving pressure from the major road transport corridors in the region. Information was also provided by the UNECE on the activities undertaken in the fields of intermodal and combined transport within the European Community, the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

7. The Group of Experts recalled in this context that the SECI Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of International Road Transport of Goods in the SECI Region stipulates in Article 3, paragraph 5 the following: “The Parties shall introduce and promote efficient and adequate combined transport services to ensure additional and complementary capacities in international road transport on certain sections of major international transport corridors in the SECI region.”

## **COMBINED TRANSPORT IN A COMPETITIVE MARKET ENVIRONMENT**

8. The Group of Experts was informed by representatives of rail and combined transport operators of their views on efficient combined transport services operating in a very competitive market environment. In this context, the Group of Experts took note of the status of the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) and its infrastructure and services parameters published in the so-called UNECE “Yellow Book” series.

## **ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

9. The Group of Experts considered ways and means to promote efficient and adequate combined transport services in the SECI region so as to ensure additional and complementary capacities in international road transport on certain sections of major international transport corridors – in line with the relevant provisions of the SECI MoU.

10. The Group of Expert noted that the SECI region offered considerable potential for efficient combined transport operations in transit to and from the European Union markets (South-East European direction) and to and from Eastern Europe and Central Asia (East-West direction) using both rail and inland water transport for the long-haul. In order to make use of these potential advantages and to attract cargo along these corridors, a key role lied in the good performance and competitive prices offered by railway companies and terminal operators. International combined transport services are only as good as its weakest link and, thus, all involved, combined transport operators, railway companies and terminal operators would need to contribute to service and price standards that were competitive with pure road transport along these corridors.

11. Involved Governments and the private sector had to work closely together to achieve these goals. While the private sector had to ensure efficient operations, Governments had to provide solid and predictable framework conditions, including efficient border crossing procedures, based on fair competition among modes and actors and inline with international and European regulations and legislation in this field.

12. With a view to enhancing existing cooperative arrangements among Governments based on bilateral agreements and with railways and combined transport operators along the important transport corridors in and through the SECI region, the Group of Experts considered:

(a) that SECI countries might wish to continue to conclude among themselves bilateral agreements on the facilitation of combined transport services based on generally acceptable conditions;

(b) to promote the use of partnership agreements among all actors in international combined and intermodal transport (combined transport operators, railway companies, inland water transport operators, terminal operators, border control agencies, shippers, etc.);

(c) that UNECE, in cooperation with ECMT, might wish to prepare "Model" framework agreements/action plans (taking as examples the Brenner action plan adopted by Italy, Austria and Germany and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) concluded between Italy, Switzerland, Germany and the Netherlands on the North-South transport corridor) as well as international "Model" partnership agreements among the parties involved in the organization of international combined transport services;

(d) to cooperate more closely with the other SECI expert groups on "Danube Transport" and on the "Reduction of Border Stopping Times of Shuttle Trains" with a view to pooling expertise towards the promotion of intermodal and combined transport, including Ro-Ro transport;

(e) to convene in due course another meeting of experts with a view to arriving at concrete cooperative arrangements among Governments and the parties involved in the organization of international combined transport services.

#### **DECLARATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMBINED TRANSPORT IN THE SECI REGION**

13. As a first step and as a basis for further work, the Group of Experts adopted the attached Declaration on the Development of Combined Transport in the SECI Region stressing that inter-governmental cooperation and coordination of transport policies is indispensable in order to allow for the development of efficient and competitive combined transport services in the region.

#### **HOST COUNTRY**

14. The Group of Experts expressed its appreciation to the Government of Hungary, in particular the Ministry of Economy and Transport, for the professional organization of the meeting and for the hospitality extended to all participants.

**Annex 1**

SOUTHEAST EUROPEAN COOPERATIVE INITIATIVE  
(SECI)  
Regional Road Transport Committee (RRTC)

**DECLARATION  
ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMBINED TRANSPORT <sup>1/</sup>  
IN THE SECI REGION <sup>2/</sup>**

adopted by the Group of Experts on Combined Transport  
(Budapest, 1 July 2003)

The representatives of the SECI participating States, having met in Budapest on 30 June and 1 July 2003,

**Welcoming** the existing co-operation among SECI participating States as well as their intention to support the development of economic and commercial relations with special regard to regional aspects,

**Bearing in mind** the importance of the activities and objectives of the European Union, particularly with regard to the White Paper on European Transport Policy for 2010,

**Emphasizing** the need for implementation of the relevant Trans-European Transport Network projects, especially the Pan-European Transport Corridors,

**Underlining** the importance to promote efficient railway and combined transport in and between SECI participating States,

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<sup>1/</sup> Combined transport is defined as, intermodal transport where the major part of the European journey is by rail, inland waterway or sea and any initial and/or final legs carried out by road are as short as possible (UNECE/ECMT/EC Terminology on Combined Transport).

<sup>2/</sup> SECI participating States: Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Croatia; Greece; Hungary; Republic of Moldova; Romania; Slovenia; Serbia and Montenegro; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey.

**Reaffirming** the belief that efficient and adequate combined transport services must be introduced and promoted to ensure additional and complementary capacities in international road transport on certain sections of major international transport corridors in the SECI region,<sup>3/</sup>

**Emphasizing** also the concept of the so-called „railways without borders”,

**Have agreed on the following measures:**

1. **Expand** co-operation among SECI participating States with a view to contributing to the development and harmonization of national transport policies in respect of European integration as well as of the wider pan-European context;
2. **Develop** the rail sections of the Pan-European Transport Corridors as defined at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Pan-European Transport Conference and make efforts to obtain financial contributions from the European Union for the realization of these railway projects;
3. **Support** all activities that are aimed at improving the integration of the railways of countries in the SECI region into the European network of railways;
4. **Consider** the improvement of railway transport and the promotion of its competitiveness as an important issue in their relationship in accordance with the recommendations of the White Paper on European Transport Policy for 2010;
5. **Support** an increased use of environment friendly transport modes, such as railways, inland water transport and combined transport services;
6. To this effect, **implement fully** and update, if necessary, the provisions of the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) as a coordinated pan-European plan for the development of combined transport services and infrastructures, in as much as they are Contracting Parties to the Agreement <sup>4/</sup> and encourage those countries in the region that have not yet done so to consider accession to the AGTC as soon as possible;

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<sup>3/</sup> Article 3 (5) of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Facilitation of International Road Transport of Goods in the SECI Region, signed by Ministers of Transport of SECI participating States (Athens, 28 April 1999).

<sup>4/</sup> On 1 July 2003 the following countries were Contracting Parties to the AGTC Agreement administered by the UNECE: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; France; Georgia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia, Switzerland; Turkey.

7. **Continue efforts** to further facilitate border crossing procedures of combined transport trains;
8. **Undertake further work** on concrete measures towards promotion of combined transport in the region, such as the establishment of partnership models and best practices and minimum infrastructure and operational standards for efficient combined transport terminals;
9. **Continue work** within the sub-regional SECI Group of Experts on Combined Transport with a view to harnessing the necessary expertise to allow for the rapid development and implementation of the above measures and to cooperate within UNECE especially with the TER Office (TER PCO) regarding the short- medium- and long term infrastructure investment plan (Master Plan) of TER;
10. **Call upon** national railway companies
  - to further enhance close cooperation among railways in the SECI region with a view to creating better conditions for regional and international rail and combined transport services,
  - to take further steps to improve the quality of railway services and co-operation, particularly in the fields of tariffs, time-tables and marketing,
  - to enhance co-operation within international railway organizations;
11. **Call upon** combined transport experts in Ministries of Transport, railway companies and the private sector to continue their efforts to develop efficient and adequate combined transport services in and with countries in the SECI region on the basis of this Declaration.

**Annex 2****List of participants**

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