

**RESOLUTION No. 91/9 ON THE DIMENSIONS OF LOADING UNITS
(CONTAINERS AND SWAP BODIES) IN THE COMBINED
TRANSPORT SECTOR**

[CEMT/CM(91)24]

The Council of Ministers of ECMT, meeting in Paris on 21st November 1991,

NOTING:

- Worldwide developments with respect to the dimensions of loading units including a trend towards larger dimensions in the United States and on some maritime routes;
- Reviews in hand in various international organisations with a view to the international harmonization of loading unit dimensions.

CONSIDERING THAT:

- It is necessary, for the reasons already stated on many occasions, to promote combined transport internationally and step up its competitiveness and efficiency;
- Given the worldwide developments it is essential: on the one hand, to take account of the characteristics specific to the European transport sector as regards both infrastructure loading gauges and the dimensions of transport equipment for the three inland transport modes (rail, road and inland waterways), especially those of road vehicles, and on the other hand, to ensure the safety of transport operations.

HAVING ESTABLISHED that there are two principal types of road freight vehicle in international transport (road trains and articulated vehicles) and both are found in differing proportions in all Member countries and the inland navigation has an important role to play in land transport market in some areas.

REAFFIRMING:

- Its desire, as expressed since its meetings in May and November 1989, to achieve the fullest possible harmonization of loading units so as to facilitate international combined transport.
- Its resolve to adopt on a clear position consistent with the needs of European inland transport which is to be used for reference for subsequent investigations, especially those relating to the development of transport operations, including between Eastern and Western Europe, before any further far-reaching decisions are taken.

RECOMMENDS that, for reference purposes, the following dimensions:

-- Containers

- . length: 7.45 metres;
- . width: 2.50 metres;
- . height: 2.59 metres;

-- Swap bodies

- . length: 7.45 metres;
- . width: 2.50 metres;
- . height: 2.67 metres;

corresponding to the present characteristics, constraints and requirements of the three land based transport modes in Europe (in particular infrastructure loading gauges, which are fixed assets of long duration, and the dimensions of transport equipment which are used in the European area) be taken as a basis, especially within the framework of future negotiations for the standardization of the dimensions of loading units, which should include maritime transport as a whole (short distances and intercontinental).

-- On the understanding that:

- . A height of 3.90 metres shall be acceptable only exceptionally when adapted transport equipment is used, which is compatible with existing gauges.

- . Lengths exceeding 7.45 metres remain acceptable when appropriate road transport vehicles are used, although the maximum lengths set by the EEC for international transport must not be exceeded.

- . Refrigerated loading units may have the same internal volume as the other loading units, although their external width may in no case exceed 2.60 metres since the effect of new technology should be to reduce wall thickness.

- . Dimensions of sea containers could, depending on the results of studies being at present carried out in other international bodies, be smaller because of the constraints of infrastructure and equipment particularly relevant to maritime transport (ships and existing port handling equipment).

REQUESTS the Committee of Deputies to pursue its work:

-- First, with a view to submitting to a future session of the Council of Ministers a further draft Resolution concerning containers of over 13.60 meters in length, problems of interface between maritime and land transport, and the loading of pallets.

-- Secondly, by initiating studies of any implications of the use of loading units more than 2.50 metres wide, especially on the questions relating to railway tunnel gauges and those concerning rail/road transfer;

and, in doing so, to take due account of any findings of the studies carried out in the context of other international fora.

DECIDES to co-operate with the United Nations Organisation, more particularly with the Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), in carrying out studies, including economic, social and environmental impact analyses, so that a consensus on the future dimensions of loading units (containers and swap bodies) can be reached immediately after the seminar organised by the UN/ECE in 1992.

INSTRUCTS the Secretary-General of ECMT to ensure that this Resolution is communicated to all those concerned with combined transport.