

RESOLUTION No. 99/2 ON REMOVAL OF OBSTACLES AT BORDER CROSSINGS FOR INTERNATIONAL GOODS TRANSPORT

[CEMT/CM(99)3/FINAL]

The ECMT Council of Ministers of Transport, meeting in Warsaw on 19 and 20 May, 1999:

HAVING REGARD to:

- the Resolutions No. 50 of 1984 and No. 94/5 of 1994 on the removal of obstacles to international goods transport and to the follow-up reports [CEMT/CM(99)7 and 8/FINAL] on the implementation of these Resolutions;
- the relevant paragraphs of the Crete and Helsinki Declarations, in particular paragraph C.3 of the Crete Declaration, stating:

“The crossing of borders should be made progressively easier, until all unnecessary obstacles to transport have been removed”.

EMPHASISING:

- that more effort is still needed to reduce waiting times at frontiers by all modes and resultant additional costs and inconvenience;
- that continued long delays at border crossings can result in drivers and their lorries and trains becoming targets for criminals and would-be clandestines.

REAFFIRMING that measures to facilitate border controls need to be taken for rail and inland waterways transport as well as for road transport, but that the problems and solutions are different in each case.

BEARING IN MIND:

- the continuing rapid expansion of goods and passenger traffic between Western Europe and the emerging economies of Central and Eastern Europe and the resultant pressure on existing border crossings, particularly at the external frontier of the European Economic Area (EEA);
- the fundamental need to provide training for drivers which is geared to the requirements of international transport;
- the need for authorities to apply appropriate customs and immigration controls to prevent fraudulent cross-border activities and clandestine entry;
- the need for close co-operation between authorities and the business community, so that the needs and constraints of each side can be understood and dealt with efficiently.

TAKES NOTE:

- that significant progress has been achieved in abolishing frontier controls since the adoption of ECMT Resolution No. 94/5 through the completion of the EC Single Market and the establishment of the EEA;
- that substantial progress has been made by ECMT Member Countries in Central and Eastern Europe - both unilaterally and or in co-operation with neighbouring countries - in identifying and tackling border crossing difficulties;
- that the international funding framework now in place is sufficient to address the most important infrastructure constraints;
- that existing conventions governing international transport, including those developed by UN/ECE, already provide the framework within which to overcome present problems;
- that the rate of further progress will be dependent on the political will of the responsible Governments (*e.g. establishment of joint customs clearance procedures*);
- that despite efforts made since 1995, there are still many border crossings where delays remain the norm.

DECIDES to re-affirm the commitments made under the ECMT Resolution No. 94/5 on the removal of obstacles to international goods transport.

RECOMMENDS:**In regard to railways:**

- that railways take prompt action to reduce delays in international freight services as far as is cost effective and in accordance with internationally agreed targets under the UN/ECE agreement on international combined transport (AGTC, where 30 minutes is foreseen as the maximum border stop) and UN/ECE Resolution 248 on the border stopping time of shuttle trains (which sets a maximum limit of 60 minutes);
- that efforts should be made to transfer, as far as possible, non-railway procedures (such as customs formalities) to origin and destination stations instead of borders;
- that where customs inspections remain at borders these should be done jointly by the authorities of the two countries concerned;
- that Governments increase the management independence of railway companies in regard to their international operations in the broadest sense so that decisions related to improving border crossing operations (*e.g. rationalising marshalling operations, merging marshalling yards on either side of borders, purchasing multi-current locomotives, or dual gauge rolling stock, building track or transshipment stations, etc.*) can be made on a commercial basis in an international market environment;
- that in the case of Governments that continue to exercise control in the management of railway operations, they should seek to eliminate shunting and marshalling as far as possible at all points en route (not only at borders);

- that all Governments consider possible roles for co-ordinating railways and providing support to railways in developing adequate integrated information technology systems for transmitting data between networks.

In regard to road transport:

Competent authorities:

- that where delays have been identified, Member States should declare a target reduction of existing waiting and processing times, to start with a 50% reduction of average time within 1 - 2 years, with the overall objective of a target of no more than 1 hour within 5 years. Targets should also be set for reducing peak waiting times. These targets should be widely/publicly disseminated to customers;
- that Member Countries should strengthen their efforts to further harmonise and simplify the procedures for checking vehicles and goods, either by multilateral or bilateral agreements, at border points;
- that all Member States should work towards simplification of the categories of taxes, fees and duties charged at border crossings and ensure transparency in their application, so as to provide an integrated border service;
- that Member States should establish clear functional divisions and co-ordination between the operatives representing the various authorities at border crossings so as to avoid duplication of checks and procedures and should limit the authorities present at borders to those concerned with customs and border controls. In this regard the appointment of a border manager could be considered;
- that Member States should be aware of the risks and take appropriate steps to avoid illegal practices at borders.

Customs authorities:

- that Customs procedures be further streamlined, including through a simplification of the documentation package for transit freight, for the majority of vehicles passing through border posts;
- that ECMT Member States which share a border should co-operate at a bilateral level with the aim of establishing jointly run border crossings, joint customs clearance, or the operation of juxtaposed controls;
- that, where they do not do so already, Member States should adopt risk-analysis and selectivity techniques (RAS) in order to ensure effective targeting of vehicles for detailed checking.

In regard to combined transport:

- that, as far as combined transport operations are concerned, and in conformity with decisions already taken, especially in Copenhagen [CEMT/CM(98)15/FINAL], provisions are taken for carrying out, as far as possible, customs and border control operations (including veterinary and phytosanitary controls) at the points of loading and unloading. This would speed up combined transport operations, achieve shorter delivery times and make reliable combined transport schedules possible.

Generally:

Authorities responsible for funding:

- that international infrastructure investment should be linked to implementation of procedural reforms and waiting time targets;

Ministers of Transport:

- that Ministers of Transport of ECMT Member Countries exercise as much influence as possible, in co-operation with their relevant Ministerial colleagues, to take forward these recommendations as a matter of urgency, with a view to achieving the removal of all unnecessary obstacles to transport on priority corridors by the year 2005.

INSTRUCTS:

- the Committee of Deputies to monitor the implementation of this Resolution and to report to the Council by 2003;
- The ECMT Secretariat to disseminate this Resolution widely and in particular to all Authorities directly concerned.