Council of Ministers

PROGRAMME OF WORK

ECMT Programme of Work

This document will be examined under item 4 "Points for approval: Programme of Work" of the draft Agenda for the Ljubljana Council of Ministers.

Ministers are invited to adopt the Programme of Work.
1. TIMEFRAME

Every three years, the Council of Ministers sets a triennial programme of work for the ECMT. The previous programme of work, covering the period 2000/2002, was adopted by the Council of Minister at its meeting in Prague in May 2000. A new programme should normally have been drawn up for 2003/2005. However, at the Prague meeting the Council of Ministers, aware of the radical changes affecting the transport sector in the recent past or likely to do so in the foreseeable future, decided to launch in-depth discussions on the future direction of ECMT and address the identity of the Conference as its 50th anniversary approached.

Since these discussions on the future direction of the ECMT were still under way, it was deemed advisable to await the outcome of the exercise before drawing up a detailed programme of work for a further period of three years. Now that the exercise has been brought to a close with the Council’s decisions in Bucharest (2002) and Brussels (2003) setting guidelines for future ECMT work, it is time to draw up a new programme of work for 2004/2006, to be formally adopted by the Council of Ministers at its meeting in Ljubljana in May 2004.

2. BROAD POLICY DIRECTIONS


At the Bucharest meeting in 2002, the Council of Ministers, on the basis of an interim report to the Review Group, made a number of recommendations concerning the scope of ECMT work, its geographical coverage, the organisation of Ministerial Councils, the status of its legal instruments, and co-operation with other international bodies.

The review exercise came to an end when the Council of Ministers met in Brussels. The Council took two major decisions creating an entirely new setting in which to draw up the new programme of work. The Council of Ministers:

− adopted a Declaration laying down guidelines for future ECMT work;
− approved the creation of a joint ECMT-OECD Transport Research Centre.

These two decisions constitute a frame of reference for the 2004/2006 programme of work; consequently the new programme will, unlike previous versions, contain very little broad policy development and will instead be confined to the main points set out in the documents adopted in Brussels. This means that the role of the ECMT will not be subject to further discussion and the content of the work programme will focus on identifying issues to be addressed and defining appropriate structures in which to carry out the relevant work.
a) Guidelines for future ECMT work

In their Declaration on the Future Direction of ECMT, the Ministers agreed that in a world undergoing increasingly rapid, deep-seated change and growing globalisation, characterised by a widening interconnection of activities and modes and means of travel, the ECMT had to continue to adapt to new needs and, above all, to future developments and aspirations.

Consequently, and in line with the Recommendations in the Report on the Future Direction of ECMT: from Visions to Decisions [CEMT/CM(2003)13/Final] presented at the session in Brussels, the Ministers decided that:

− ECMT deliberations should continue to focus on land-based transport, but with an enlarged perspective. It had to further intensify its integrated approach to the transport system by extending the scope of its work to the development and promotion of intermodality, the study of the interrelations between the different modes of land-based transport (including its interconnections with air and maritime transport) and the analysis of issues facilitating integrated decision-making processes.

− The ECMT also had to address the key issues of safety, the environment, energy and social and fiscal aspects, the challenges posed by the financing of transport and charging for infrastructure use, the impact of new business practices on the logistics chain, changes in the nature of crime and, within the limits of its competence, the issues raised by terrorism. The internal organisation of the ECMT and its relations with the outside world had to be adapted so that it could also effectively address these issues, which were of a global nature.

− The ECMT had to focus even more than in the past on ensuring that approved policies were implemented effectively and that the measures adopted were enforced in practice. To this end, the Ministers asked that the necessary steps be taken as soon as possible.

The Ministers of Transport recalled that one of the ECMT’s initial objectives was to co-ordinate and promote the work of other international organisations involved with European transport. Fully aware of the recent changes at the European level and the future changes that would inevitably emerge, the Ministers wished to reaffirm this role. To achieve this objective, the ECMT had to reinforce its role as a promoter of ideas and organiser of forums to discuss and study transport policy issues of common interest at the international level.

In this perspective, the Ministers emphasised that:

− ECMT had to continue to be an active intermediary between the Member States of the European Union and outside countries, considering that this was a basic condition for promoting harmonious and integrated development on a Pan-European level. In addition, the ECMT also had to develop closer relations with other regional organisations in which Transport Ministers participated.

− As a general and key priority, they considered that the ECMT had to forge closer ties with the European Union and, especially, the European Commission.

− They believed that the ECMT’s activities had to be better co-ordinated with those of UNECE, with the ECMT concentrating primarily on its policy role and the UNECE mainly on its legal and regulatory missions and tasks.
They welcomed the highly positive co-operation and synergies that had developed between the OECD (previously OEEC) and the ECMT over the past 50 years. They affirmed their intention to continue this co-operation in the future.

In addition, they considered that the ECMT should strengthen its relations with its Associate Members and invited the Ministers of Transport of the Associate countries to work with them to give full effect to the measures proposed in the Declaration.

b) Creation of a Joint ECMT-OECD Transport Research Centre

At the end of their Declaration in Brussels, the Ministers:

Approved the creation of a joint ECMT-OECD Transport Research Centre in which members of the two organisations would have full and equal rights. The purpose of this Centre, which was to be established by the beginning of 2004 if possible, would be to merge the ECMT’s research activities and the OECD’s Road Transport Research Programme and provide a much wider international forum devoted to research and related discussions on surface transport with a new intermodal perspective. Ministers expected this to produce synergies and economies of scale within the existing budgetary contributions of ECMT and OECD Member countries. Reports and other products of the Research Centre’s activities would be submitted to the Transport Ministers of ECMT and Associate Countries in an enlarged Council of the ECMT. The work and operation of the Centre would be reviewed regularly to optimise its effectiveness.

 Asked that new discussions be initiated with both the Associate countries and the OECD to determine whether it might not be timely, at some later date, to envisage closer forms of integration with regard to transport activities.

Decided that, at the Ministerial meeting to be held in spring 2005, reports would be submitted to them both on the evaluation of experience with the Joint Research Centre and on the results of the review of the case for further integration.

Noted that, in law, setting up a Joint Transport Research Centre with the OECD did not require any modification of the ECMT Protocol. However, they agreed to examine whether the Protocol might need to be revised in the light of the decisions they would have to take in 2005.

The decision in principle taken by the Council of Ministers was confirmed by the Resolution adopted by the OECD Council on 26 June 2003, agreeing to the establishment of a joint OECD/ECMT Transport Research Centre. This specified, for instance, that the Centre’s mandate would be to promote economic development and contribute to structural improvements of OECD and ECMT economies, through co-operative transport research programmes addressing all modes of inland transport and their intermodal linkages in a wider economic, social, environmental and institutional context. A programme of work was to be established for the Centre, reflecting the interests of both ECMT and OECD Member countries and based on the draft programme of work for the period 2004/2006 of the OECD RTR Steering Committee and the draft programme of the ECMT Economic Research Committee.

The establishment of this Joint Research Centre on 1st January 2004, has repercussions for the new programme of work of the ECMT.

Owing to the specific mix of countries participating in the work of the new Centre, its work programme, which was formally adopted by the Joint Transport Research Committee, is set out in a separate document to facilitate its adoption by the enlarged Committee of Deputies/Council of Ministers.
The section traditionally given over to economic research by the ECMT is of course incorporated into that specific document, since this work now comes under the mandate of the joint Research Centre. The Centre’s document sets out the strategic directions for the research work programme and describes the projects and other activities of the Centre in detail.

3. PRIORITIES

The priorities as set by the Ministers in Brussels revolve around two main ideas:

− Integration;
− Sustainability.

Integration covers all activities related to the process of transition, including adoption of the principles of a market economy, structural and institutional changes, formulation of suitable transport policies and their effective implementation, convergence towards common legal standards and regulatory consistency.

Sustainability is relevant to the ECMT’s role as a forum for discussion, and to its research activities. In particular, it should lead to the introduction of new policies and practices that will enable the transport sector to experience a more sustainable mode of development; measures to be implemented for that purpose involve pricing, environmental matters and security as much as governance proper.

The two core themes adopted by the Ministers are to constitute the general frame of reference for the activities of the Conference’s working groups. They would suggest that the ECMT’s next three-year Programme of Work ought to have a highly strategic content emphasising a number of cross-cutting topics representing the major challenges ahead. Specifically, the priorities identified in accordance with the general guidelines laid down by the Council in Brussels are as follows:

− Consequences of European Union enlargement;
− Implementation of a pan-European transport market;
− Climate change;
− Population ageing;
− Safety and security;
− Quality of service in transport;
− The transport sector’s contribution to economic competitiveness;
− Transport pricing.

In addition to these priorities, Ministers also stressed the need to pay special attention to effective implementation of policies agreed to on the international level, and of ECMT Resolutions in particular.

Lastly, Ministers also insisted that ties with other intergovernmental organisations be strengthened.

4. WORKING METHODS

There was unanimous consensus that the originality of the ECMT’s working methods and its approaches to issues needed to be preserved. The ECMT had to remain above all a forum for deliberation characterised by great structural flexibility and a fair balance between discussion and decision-making, insofar as it was not systematically necessary to reach a common position on all subjects, e.g., in the form of a Resolution.

Nevertheless, the Ministers’ request that priority be given in the years ahead to cross-cutting strategic topics cannot help but have repercussions for the Conference’s working methods, which until now have
reflected an intensely vertical structure. In order to meet the Ministers’ expectations, the ECMT should, *inter alia*:

- Broaden the scope of activity of its working groups, which should no longer confine their actions to consolidating existing work through regular updating of previous Resolutions, but rather develop more comprehensive approaches incorporating cross-cutting topics highlighted by the Ministers. For instance, the agendas of the working groups could regularly include items related to integration and sustainable development.

- Arrange for better co-operation between the ECMT’s various working groups. This would entail holding joint meetings to examine certain cross-cutting issues, expanding co-operation with the new Joint Research Centre, regular meetings between group chairmen to discuss matters of common interest, and allowing each working group to call upon other groups as needed to move forward on matters requiring a multifaceted approach.

- Energise the working groups:
  - By encouraging greater participation by Associate countries, so the sharing of information and experience can be more fruitful.
  - By strengthening co-operation with other intergovernmental organisations, in line with the principles set forth in the exchange of letters at the time of the Ministerial session in Brussels. To this end, co-operative activities could be initiated, along with certain structural changes (bringing working groups of different organisations closer together, e.g. through back-to-back or joint meetings). In any event, the chairmen of groups working in similar fields in the various international bodies would do well to consult regularly so as to avoid duplication of effort and create synergies. In addition, the agendas of ECMT bodies should systematically include an item for news of activities being carried out elsewhere in the same field.

In order to monitor enforcement of Resolutions and policy implementation, as the Ministers requested, the ECMT’s working methods will also have to evolve. The conventional use of surveys, in the form of questionnaires asking for information on measures taken to implement a Resolution, has its limits; the information compiled is in fact far too general to make an accurate judgement about the actual scope of the measures taken. Such general surveys should therefore be supplemented by more extensive and specific follow-up studies dealing either with extremely circumscribed topics or with a country or group of countries, such as peer reviews.

On the whole, the peer reviews that have been conducted to date have been deemed extremely useful by the countries audited, and by those directly involved as reviewers. This is unquestionably an approach that should be pursued, and even extended. It is an extremely valuable tool for highlighting best practices and assessing the effectiveness of measures taken. Nevertheless, in order to reap the maximum benefits and capitalise as much as possible on the results obtained, the working groups concerned should be more involved in follow-up activities than they have been in the past.

Lastly, changes in working methods should also lead to the introduction of a systematic procedure for assessing how groups work. Such a process has already been explicitly planned for the Joint ECMT/OECD Transport Research Centre, insofar as the Council of Ministers had requested, when the Centre was set up, that it be able to review the results obtained in 2005, and especially the synergies and economies of scale generated by bringing OECD and ECMT research activities closer together. The chairmen of the ECMT working groups also agreed to conduct such assessments regularly, looking not only at the groups’ outputs, but at their outcomes as well. This exercise could be the starting point for an assessment by the Committee
of Deputies of the activities of the Conference’s various working groups. Each time that new mandates require approval by the Committee of Deputies, the groups concerned should report to the Committee on how they have fulfilled their objectives, as well as on necessary changes and improvements.

5. WORKING STRUCTURES

Once priorities and working methods have been determined, they should be translated into specifics for each group, on the understanding that the activities developed through these entities could be either essentially modal (railways, road transport, inland navigation, etc.) or horizontal (integration, environment, access and inclusion, safety and terrorism, and so on).

At present, working bodies (Groups, Task Forces and Steering Committees) are active in the following areas:

− Integration;
− Environment;
− Fiscal and financial issues;
− Intermodality and logistics;
− Urban travel;
− Access and inclusion;
− Combating crime and terrorism;
− Road transport;
− Road safety;
− Railways;
− Statistics and market monitoring.

Other working groups are currently inactive after having made important contributions in the following areas:

− Inland waterways;
− New technologies;
− Trends in traffic and infrastructure investment.

Each of these bodies has prepared a list of objectives for the new Programme of Work and made proposals concerning the most appropriate structures for attaining them, stressing inter alia the co-operation to be established with the Conference’s other working groups.

These proposals, which are spelt out in the Annex to this document, may be summarised as follows:

1. Integration: Activities related to this subject constitute one of the ECMT’s top priorities. The Group on Integration would be replaced by a Task Force whose working methods would be more flexible. Special emphasis would be placed on CIS and Balkan countries. Initially, the Task Force would concentrate on problems related to the removal of obstacles at border crossings.

2. Environment: The Working Group would be maintained and pursue its co-operation with the OECD Environment Directorate, including through regular joint meetings. The top priority issue would be carbon dioxide emissions.

3. Fiscal and Financial Aspects: The Group on Fiscal and Financial Aspects would be maintained, working in close co-operation with the Joint Transport Research Centre, with special emphasis on efficient transport pricing.
4. **Road Transport**: The Group on Road Transport would be maintained. Its work would focus first on reforming the multilateral quota and on harmonising social conditions based on the definition of an appropriate institutional framework for the road transport market at the wider European level.

5. **Rail Transport**: The Group on Railways would be maintained, and its co-operation with UNECE’s Working Party on Rail Transport stepped up, in particular by holding back-to-back meetings. Priority would be given to work on railway reform, and to implementation of the Resolution on the Development of European Railways in particular, with special emphasis on issues involving user charges for infrastructure.

6. **Inland Waterways**: It would not appear advisable to re-activate the Group on Inland Waterways, whose most recent work dates back to 1989. Activities have been planned to follow up on the Rotterdam Conference, but they should be carried out by the Secretariat directly in tandem with the other international organisations involved. In addition, it is expected that the Group on Transport and the Environment will conduct research on the environmental impacts of inland waterways.

7. **Intermodal and Logistics**: This group, whose name was changed to reflect the more comprehensive nature of its objectives, should work in close co-operation with UNECE’s Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (by holding back-to-back meetings). Its work would henceforth be centred on the transport chain, whereas the CEECs and CIS countries should be more closely integrated into the discussion on intermodality and the market for intermodal transport.

8. **Urban Travel**: The Sustainable Urban Travel Steering Group would be maintained. It would continue to focus its work on the implementation of integrated urban transport policies, looking first at how the conclusions of the 2001 ECMT Council of Ministers are applied in various contexts. This work should culminate in the preparation of a guide for effective implementation of these policies.

9. **Road Safety**: The Group on Road Safety would be maintained, along with the sub-group for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Following up on implementation of measures to attain the goal of a 50% reduction in road fatalities would be the top priority for the Group, which should also supervise peer reviews. Special emphasis will be put on problems of the CIS and Balkan countries.

10. **Access and Inclusion**: The Working Group would be maintained, focusing on mobility issues for disabled persons and the elderly. It would also work for systematic consideration of access and inclusion issues at the policymaking level, and to that end it would establish close co-operation with other ECMT Working Groups.

11. **Combating Crime**: The Steering Group would be maintained, but its activities would be split in two, distinguishing between crime-related activities and those relating to terrorism, with Task Forces being set up to deal with particular matters. Work would continue to centre on the transport chain as a whole and its weaknesses in terms of vulnerability. They would also focus on the balance to be struck in transport between enhanced security and efficiency.

12. **New Technologies**: It would not seem advisable to re-activate the Group on New Technologies, which has been dormant since 1998. The Secretariat should continue to maintain a watch in this area. Some specific new technology applications would be monitored more closely by the relevant
groups: Group on Road Safety (application of new technologies in the realm of road safety); Group on Fiscal and Financial Aspects (automated user fee collection systems); Steering Group on Combating Crime in Transport (automated identification technologies); and the Joint Transport Research Centre.

13. **Statistics and Market Monitoring:** The Group of Statisticians would be maintained and would continue to work closely with Eurostat and UNECE through the Intersecretariat Group. With regard to data collection, special emphasis would be put on statistics concerning investment, road accidents and short-term economic indicators, and on improving the Common Questionnaire. A further goal would be closer co-operation with Associate countries.

14. **Trends in traffic and infrastructure investment:** The latest activities of this Group date back to 2001. The Group might reconvene in order to follow up on the Council of Ministers’ discussions on revision of pan-European corridors. It might also help exploit the Survey on Investment in Transport Infrastructure conducted under the auspices of the Group of Statisticians. Lastly, if the Committee of Deputies deems it necessary, the Group may look in due course at how EU enlargement might affect traffic.

The review of the previous proposals for 2004-06 should factor in two elements that may prompt adjustments to the Programme of Work:

- Resources being limited, Groups involved directly in preparations for upcoming Ministerial sessions are invited to be more active than other Groups, which are not required to produce outputs within such a short time frame.

- Detailed ECMT Programmes of Work have always been flexible and more extensive than expected. Very often, new topics are added while programmes are in progress, in response to Decisions of the Council or a special request from the chair, or because of other policy requirements.

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**Ministers are asked to:**

- **CONFIRM the general guidelines of the programme as drawn up at the ministerial meeting in Brussels, and the ensuing priorities;**

- **AGREE the principles governing ECMT working methods;**

- **ADOPT the ECMT programme of work for the period 2004-2006 and the resulting activities for the various working bodies of the Conference.**