Council of Ministers

DEVELOPMENT OF ECMT

FUTURE DIRECTION OF ECMT
REPORT AND DECLARATION

This document was examined under item 3.4 “Development of ECMT” of the Agenda for the Moscow Council of Ministers.

Ministers agreed the Conclusions of the Report and adopted the Declaration.
Introduction

Ministers in 2003 agreed a strategy for the future development of ECMT [CEMT/CM(2003)12/FINAL]. A number of decisions were taken including to broaden the scope of the work done by ECMT, to improve the relations with other organisations and to strengthen implementation and research. In particular, Ministers agreed to set up from 1 January 2004 a Joint Transport Research Centre with OECD.

At the same time, Ministers gave some additional mandates and asked that a report be made in Moscow "both on the evaluation of experience with the Joint OECD/ECMT Transport Research Centre and on the advice from the review of the case for further integration".

A progress report from the Joint OECD/ECMT Transport Research Centre is contained in document [CEMT/CM(2005)8].

The first part of this note responds to the Ministerial request to evaluate further integration of transport activities in the OECD family.

The second part of the note deals more generally with the future direction of ECMT. The Informal Group discussed this question and additional consultations between countries and at the Committee of Deputies has led to a proposal for a Declaration by Ministers.

1. Integration of Transport Activities in the OECD Family

To implement the mandates from the OECD Council and the ECMT Ministers, an Informal Group was set up. It was Chaired by Per Sanderud, Norway, and had representation from ECMT full and Associate Members. The Group examined different options for integration of OECD Maritime activity with ECMT activities. A detailed paper [CEMT/CS(2004)30] set out these options, as well as their costs and benefits.

The work was complicated by the fact that OECD was itself going through an exercise in priority setting and budget reorientation. At the end of this internal OECD process, in December 2004, the OECD Council decided to largely disengage from Maritime Transport activities. The Maritime Transport budget has been almost eliminated and therefore the basis for the integration discussion changed, since there were no longer resources to be integrated.

Within the OECD, the Maritime Transport Committee (MTC) is meeting in May to decide on its future and to examine whether new funding can be found to continue some of its activities. The OECD MTC network provides a unique source of knowledge and expertise on Maritime matters with a worldwide network of contacts that it would be regrettable to lose. Any decisions by ECMT and the Associates to work on Maritime/Surface issues would obviously need to find a way to build on MTC’s knowledge and to include the experts in such activities.
The discussion in the joint OECD/ECMT Review Group showed that the proposed Work Programme of the MTC contained some specific Maritime subjects which, though of direct interest to Maritime specialists, did not fully reflect the priorities in Transport Ministries or the ECMT.

On the other hand, there was strong support for the idea to explore the possibilities of taking up topics which had both Maritime and Surface aspects in line with the decisions Ministers took in 2003. Specifically, the Review Group identified the following issues of being of particular interest in this regard;

- How to balance the need for greater security along the entire transport chain with the need to keep trade and transport moving efficiently?
- To what extent and how, can Short Sea Shipping be developed to provide alternatives or complements to inland transport; also how can complementarity be increased between sea transport and inland waterway transport?
- What practical, administrative, technical and logistical steps are needed so that transport users can be provided with seamless services between land and sea modes?
- What pressures is the globalisation of economic activities causing on the transport system, both at sea and ashore, and how can they be dealt with?

For these issues, the Group recognised a need to combine the expertise of the Inland and Maritime communities and create synergies between them.

Most countries agreed that the subjects above have important policy implications that would merit discussion among Ministers. But these issues are global, not just European, and therefore there would be limited benefit in the ECMT taking them up alone. ECMT members declared that they would welcome discussion with the Associates on these topics and in examining ways of working together on them.

2. Future of ECMT

In the Review Group discussions, some countries raised again the idea to eventually develop ECMT into a more global body (for example, an International Conference of Ministers of Transport). This discussion is not necessarily linked to the Maritime one above and the creation or not of an ICMT could in theory be considered independently of the maritime issue. In this context, ICMT has not been defined explicitly but is understood, in the first instance, to comprise the OECD and ECMT members.

Of course there are questions to be answered on budget, on decision making, the existing acquis, the legal status and membership. Preliminary advice is that most of these problems are relatively easily solved, except the question of funding.
There is strong support to continue to strengthen the links with, and the involvement of Associate Countries. It was therefore agreed that it would be beneficial to request the Associates to engage in an open and informal dialogue on possible ways of further improving cooperation.

In further dialogue on this topic among Member Countries and at the Committee of Deputies, it was agreed that Ministers should be invited to give a strong new impetus to the discussions on the future direction for ECMT. There is a need for ECMT to become a more global platform in order to address important issues of a global nature in areas such as safety, sustainability and the role of transport as a key driving force for economic growth and a key item on the political agenda. These issues should be discussed with major players from other parts of the world on an equal footing. The reformed organisation ought to be flexible and politically responsive. In essence, it should serve as a pre-negotiation platform and think tank.

Ministers are therefore being invited to agree the conclusions set out below and adopt the following Declaration. The Declaration asks for proposals on an international Ministerial forum and a review of the supporting structures with the aim of strengthening its efficiency. These proposals shall be brought forward by the next session of the Council. A High Level Review Group would be set up to prepare these proposals. For efficiency reasons, the Review Group should consist of a small number of Country representatives from a range of Members and Associates. The Committee of Deputies would be regularly consulted and kept fully informed of the work in the High Level Group thereby permitting Ministers of all Member and Associate Countries to have full input into the development of proposals for submission to the 2006 Council.

**Conclusions**

Ministers of ECMT Countries at the Ministerial Session in Moscow on 24--25 May 2005:

- Noted the conclusions of the discussions on the integration of OECD Maritime activities with those of ECMT and the Maritime/Surface topics identified as being of importance for future transport policy making.

- Decided that they would like to invite the Associate Countries to explore with them how closer co-operation might be developed.

- Adopted the following Declaration, including its proposals for follow-up.
DECLARATION
OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS ON THE
FUTURE OF THE ECMT

Over the last 50 years, the ECMT has been an important forum for the exchange of opinions on medium and long-term transport policy directions in Europe. The large number of ECMT Member States shows the great importance attached to this organization.

In view of the doubling of the number of its Member States in the 1990s and completely different political circumstances, the ECMT faces once again, after more than 50 years, the challenge of finding an adequate organizational structure for itself.

First steps were taken in 2001 when Council established the ad-hoc working group “Future Direction of ECMT”. This working group made a valuable contribution since then, particularly the report and Declaration which were adopted at the Council of Ministers in Brussels in April 2003. Important new initiatives that have been made since then include ideas to incorporate additional modes of transport and non-European states as well as change the structure of the organisation.

Today we are faced in a very fundamental way with the challenge of placing the political and economic importance of transport and logistics at the centre of general policy making and we are faced with the challenge of adapting international conferences and meetings to the requirements of a modern media and public relations work.

Transport and logistics are on the one hand a central prerequisite for economic growth, and on the other hand they are an integral part of economic development itself. They account for a large part of the gross national product and for a considerable share of the entire working population.

In order to attribute to transport policy issues the position they deserve

- discussion in the ECMT must focus more on global political and economic aspects;
- public awareness of ECMT policy and research work must be increased;
- transport policy issues must be elaborated in a way which ensures that they are capable of gaining a strong influence on general policy;
- the organizational structure of the ECMT must be efficiently orientated towards these objectives in terms of use of financial resources and personnel.
This should be achieved by transforming the ECMT into an attractive and publicly recognized international Ministerial forum which increases the understanding of the importance of transport as an essential economic factor while at the same time preserving and promoting the body’s existing strengths in policy and research. The forum should deal with all modes of transport while taking into account the role of other bodies working in similar areas, and especially the UN relevant bodies. The Ministers will invite high-ranking social and economic representatives to attend this forum as additional speakers and discussion partners. From an early stage representatives of major non-European countries should be involved.

The existing working group structure will be reviewed with the expectation that the number of groups will be reduced in a reasonable way. The future agenda of the forum can to a large extent be supported by ad-hoc groups.

ECMT needs to become a more global platform in order to address important issues of a global nature in areas such as safety, sustainability and the role of transport as a key driving force for economic growth and a key item on the political agenda. The reformed organisation ought to be flexible and politically responsive. In essence, it should serve as a pre-negotiation platform and think tank.

Therefore, Ministers:

- **Agree to establish a High-Level Group of a limited but representative number of persons appointed by Ministers from Member and Associate Countries and the Secretary-General of the ECMT to prepare detailed proposals for the establishment of an international Ministerial forum and for structural reforms to ensure the effectiveness of the transformed body;**

- **Request the submission of these proposals for decision at the Council in Dublin in 2006.**