

Work progress of the OSJD Commission on Transport Policy and Development Strategy in 2023

In 2023, the OSJD Commission on Transport Policy and Development Strategy continued its work on the formation of a uniform railway transport policy of the OSJD member countries with regard to the implementation of comprehensive measures aimed at the improvement of traffic and development of the OSJD transport corridors, facilitation of border crossing in international passenger and freight railway traffic, as well as at increasing the competitiveness of railways in order to attract additional volumes of international traffic and to increase the share of railway traffic in the transport market. More detailed information on the progress of work is presented in the article provided by the working staff of the OSJD Commission on Transport Policy and Development Strategy.

The results of work of the OSJD Commission on Transport Policy and Development Strategy for 2023 and the tasks for the next period were considered in the course of the annual meeting of the Commission held in the OSJD Committee (Warsaw) from 7 till 10 November 2023.

As part of its agenda, the meeting considered the following issues:

- proposals on updating the OSJD Comprehensive Plans for Improving Transportation and Development of OSJD Railway Transport Corridors up to 2030 Nos. 1-13 in accordance with OSJD Leaflet O+R 302;
- progress of work on updating the Technical and Operational Certificates of OSJD railway transport corridors Nos. 1-13 in accordance with OSJD Leaflet O+R 303;
- continuation on the exchange of information on activities to implement the provisions of the Memorandums of Cooperation in the field of technical, operational and commercial development of the OSJD railway transport corridors Nos. 1-13;
- the establishment of the Working Group (Coordination Body) for managing OSJD railway transport corridor No. 1;
- positions of the OSJD member countries concerning the preparation of proposals on amendments and additions to

the provisions of the standard Memorandums of Cooperation in the field of technical, operational and commercial development of OSJD railway transport corridors Nos. 1-13;

- proposals of the OSJD member countries on the accession of new lines to the OSJD railway transport corridors;
- progress in updating the Map of OSJD Corridors as of 2009 in terms of adding the new connected lines to OSJD corridors Nos. 1-13 to the Map;
- proposals of the Parties to the “Agreement on organisational and operational aspects of combined transportation in the Europe-Asia traffic” for updating the Agreement and amending Annexes I, II, III and IV to the Agreement;
- analysis of the causes of delays of passenger trains and idle time of freight wagons at bor-



In the hall of the annual meeting of the OSJD Commission on Transport Policy and Development Strategy (07-10.11.2023, OSJD Committee)

- der (transfer) stations in 2022 and development of measures aimed at facilitating border crossing;
- preparation for the publication of an information Guideline on the topic “Improving the efficiency of border (transfer) stations in international railway traffic in the Eurasian space” in Chinese, Russian and English in 2023;
- progress in implementing the provisions of the Declaration adopted at the VIII International Interagency Meeting “Practice in border crossing by rail” (22-23.09.2015, Gdańsk, Republic of Poland);
- progress in the practical implementation of Annex 9 “Facilitation of border crossing procedures in international traffic by rail” to the International Convention on the Harmonisation of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982;
- the process of examining the directions of strategic development of railway transport and reforms in railway transport of the OSJD member countries involving the publication of information on the OSJD Website;
- progress in development and preparation for publication of the “OSJD Bulletin of Statisti-

- cal Data on Railway Transport” for 2022;
- process of formation of the main performance indicators of OSJD railway transport corridors Nos. 1-13 for 2022;
- the results of work on the maintenance and replenishment of the OSJD STEI ADB funds, as well as on the formation and use of information resources of the STEI Centres;
- the results of work on the development and maintenance of the page of STEI centres of the OSJD member countries on the OSJD Website in accordance with OSJD Leaflet O+R 905/4;
- updating of the electronic version of the address directory of STEI Centres;
- the course of updating of OSJD Leaflet O 905/1 “Methodological guidelines for working in the field of transport-related scientific, technical and economic information exchange”;
- issues of ecology and environmental protection on railway transport;
- draft Work Plan of the OSJD Commission on Transport Policy and Development Strategy for 2024 and draft Work Programme of the OSJD Commission for 2025 and subsequent years;



Participants in the annual meeting of the OSJD Commission on Transport Policy and Development Strategy (07-10.11.2023, OSJD Committee)

- draft Report on the results of work of the OSJD Commission on Transport Policy and Development Strategy for 2023 and draft decision of the LI session of the OSJD Ministerial Conference.

At the 50th anniversary session of the Ministerial Conference of the Organisation for Co-Operation between Railways (13-16 June 2023, Busan, Republic of Korea) the Comprehensive Plans for Improving the Transportation and Developing OSJD Railway Transport Corridors (RTC) Nos. 1-13 up to 2030 were approved and it was noted that these documents should be updated by supplementing the information from those countries – participants of the corridor which had not provided such information earlier, as well as taking into account the changes in the names of stations and accession of new lines to the OSJD RTC.

Within the framework of the subject ***“Development and implementation of comprehensive measures to improve the railway traffic and develop the OSJD railway transport corridors”*** a decision was made to start monitoring the implementation of the measures planned in the Comprehensive Plans for Improving Traffic and Developing OSJD Railway Transport Corridors Nos. 1-13 up to 2030, for the years 2021-2023 in accordance with the approved form.

The working staff of the Commission prepared updated Technical and Operational Certificates of OSJD railway transport corridors Nos. 1-13 (TOC) on the basis of the materials submitted by the OSJD member countries.

The interest was expressed in continuing the exchange of information on the activities to implement the provisions of the Memoranda of Cooperation in the field of technical, operational and commercial development of OSJD railway transport corridors Nos. 1-13.

Within the framework of the 50th session of the OSJD Ministerial Conference the Memoranda of Cooperation in the field of technical, operational and commercial development of OSJD railway transport corridors Nos. 1, 2 and

10 were re-signed in connection with the accession of the new lines to them.

The consultative meetings of the countries participating in OSJD railway transport corridor No. 1 are being actively continued, with the following issues being the main objectives:

- detection of bottlenecks and development of appropriate solutions to eliminate them along the corridor;
- improvement of interaction between the countries participants of the corridor and their railway companies for more efficient operation, including digitalisation of traffic along the corridor.

Within the framework of the meeting the possibility to establish the Working Group (Coordination Body) on the management of OSJD railway transport corridor No. 1 of OSJD railway transport corridor No. 1 member country was considered.

The delegation of the Russian Federation made a presentation on the subject ***“Development of a coordination mechanism for managing OSJD RTC No. 1”***, in which it highlighted the background of the work carried out within OSJD in the field of OSJD corridors Nos. 1-13 management since 2013, the international experience in establishment of coordination mechanisms, stressed the potential for the development of OSJD corridor No. 1 in terms of traffic volumes growth, interstate and interregional cooperation. The presentation also included some proposals related to the composition and functions of the Working Group.

When considering the question on the possibility of establishing a Working Group (Coordination Body) for managing OSJD Railway Transport Corridor No. 1, the countries participating in OSJD railway transport corridor No. 1 did not come to consensus on the expediency of its establishment.

The new railway section Birobidzhan I – Mikhailo-Semyonovskaya (Leninsk II) – Tongjiang-North was added to OSJD RTC No. 1.

It is important to note that the railway section Birobidzhan I – Mikhailo-Semyonovskaya (Len-

insk II) – Tongjiang-North is also included in Annex I to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network (TARN).

The procedure of connection of the new line Tbilisi – Marabda – Akhalkalaki – Kartsakhi – Canbaz – Kars as a branch line ‘k’ of OSJD RTC No. 5 was also finalised.

In this regard the Memoranda of Cooperation in the field of technical, operational and commercial development of OSJD railway transport corridors Nos. 1 and 5 will be prepared and sent for their re-signing, as well as the TOC and CP of these corridors will be updated.

The working staff of the Commission provided the updated Map of OSJD railway transport corridors as of 2009 in terms of adding new connected lines to OSJD corridors Nos. 1-13 on the Map.

In this connection it was agreed to remove the date (2009) from the Map and to draw all the lines and branches in a unified format, and furthermore it was proposed to update the Map every 2 years taking into account the new lines to be connected to OSJD RTC Nos. 1-13.

The OSJD Committee as the depositary of the “Agreement on Organisational and Operational Aspects of Europe-Asia Combined Transportation” informed that on 21 June 2023 the Republic of Korea acceded to this Agreement and from 5 August 2023, in accordance with Article 11 of the Agreement, the railway lines and terminals of the Republic of Korea were included in Annexes I and II of the “Agreement on Organisational and Operational Aspects of Europe-Asia Combined Transportation”.

Within the subject **“Development of measures aimed at facilitating border crossing in international railway traffic in the Eurasian space”**, the Commission’s working staff provided generalised analytical information on the



Expert meeting on the subject “Development of measures aimed at facilitating border crossings during international railway traffic in the Eurasian space” (24-27.04.2023, OSJD Committee)

analysis of the causes of delays of passenger trains and idling stops of freight wagons at border (transfer) stations for 2022 according to the approved form in the form of tables (templates):

1) *International passenger traffic:*

- “Report on the fulfilment of passenger train schedules at border stations”;
- “Report on the fulfilment of the schedule of all passenger trains at border stations”.

The participants in the annual meeting of the Commission renamed the titles and included the numbering of the Tables:

- “Report on the fulfilment of passenger train schedules at border stations” into “Table 1. Report on the fulfilment of passenger train schedules at border stations”;
- “Report on the fulfilment of the schedule of all passenger trains at border stations” into “Table 2. Report on the fulfilment of the schedule of all passenger trains at border stations”;

2) *International freight traffic:*

- “Table 3. Report on the number of delays (uncouplings) of freight wagons at border (transfer) stations”.

In this regard, the summarised analytical information of the analysis on the causes of delays of passenger trains and idle freight wagons at border (transfer) stations for 2022 compared to 2021 was taken into account by the participants of the final meeting.

On the basis of the information provided by the OSJD member countries, it was stated that after the COVID-19 pandemic, a step-by-step restoration of the international passenger train service in the international passenger traffic was in progress.

According to the information of the OSJD member countries, in international freight traffic the number and reasons for delays (uncoupling) of freight wagons at the border/transfer stations are in most cases indicated due to:

- commercial reasons;
- technical reasons;
- non-acceptance of wagons because of exceeding the daily norm of acceptance of wagons by the neighbouring party, absence of customs declarations, accompanying documents for wagon dispatches, technical malfunctions of wagons, absence of the freight owner's brand, incorrect filling in of the consignment note, delay of freight wagons on the basis of the decision of the state authorities (customs, border, veterinary and phytosanitary control authorities);
- obstruction of traffic due to customs/border control;
- other reasons.

Bilateral investigations of passenger and freight train delays are periodically conducted with neighbouring railways, information is exchanged and the causes of delays are analysed.

In order to ensure uninterrupted transport communication, to reduce delays of passenger trains and idle time of freight wagons at the border crossings, the Chinese party proposed to establish a unified platform through which operational information would be exchanged on the issues of functioning and operation of railway border crossings/transfer stations of the OSJD member countries.

The Chinese party made a presentation on the aims and objectives of the proposed platform and pre-

sented a draft Table for the exchange of relevant information on the functioning of border crossings.

The Ukrainian party proposed to supplement the draft Table with information on the existing electronic data exchange in the scope of consignment note, train transfer list, wagon list, accompanying documents.

The delegation of Ukraine informed that the existing mechanism to significantly reduce wagon downtime at border stations was the introduction of paperless technology. An alternative to this could be the quality exchange of data in the scope of the consignment note. In this regard, the delegation of Ukraine addressed the participants of the meeting with a request to intensify the work on introduction of the electronic consignment note. At the first stage, it would be advisable to organise information exchange of data in the scope of the consignment note to ensure timeliness and reliability of the transferred information.

A summary was made of the information from the OSJD member countries on the work on the practical implementation of Annex 9 "Facilitation of border crossing procedures in international traffic by rail" to the International Convention on the Harmonisation of Frontier Controls of Goods as of 1982. Based on the reported data from each railway administration for border (transfer) stations, the following can be stated:



Meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the issue of OSJD railway transport statistics (14-15.03.2023, OSJD Committee)



Participants in the expert meeting on the OSJD railway transport statistics (20-22.09.2023, OSJD Committee)

- the OSJD member countries take measures aimed at strengthening the technical equipment of the railway border stations (availability of equipment, devices, information systems and means of communication to exchange preliminary information, etc.) and improvement of their infrastructure: fulfilment of these measures will make it possible to bring the throughput and carrying capacity of the stations and their adjacent sections in line with the traffic volumes;
- bilateral investigations of passenger and goods train delays are periodically carried out between neighbouring railway administrations (railway administrations exchange information and analyse the causes of train delays, including those caused by railway staff);
- customs control is carried out on the basis of the principle of selectivity, based on the risk analysis and management system: if the goods in (on) the unit of rolling stock are properly closed and sealed, and the necessary information is provided, customs control for transit goods is usually carried out in a simplified form;
- the use of Annex 9 helped to improve the efficiency of border crossings and reduced the downtime of freight wagons.

The delegation of Ukraine informed that Ukraine had become the thirty-sixth country to

accede to the Convention on the Common Transit Procedure. To date, all necessary measures had been completed to ensure the transport of goods under the general transit procedure. The practical application of this procedure makes it possible to significantly reduce the downtime of freight trains at border crossing points.

In this regard, the Delegation of Ukraine requested the member countries of the Convention on the Common Transit Procedure to inform

railway transport customers about the possibility of using this customs procedure when transporting goods in the direction of Ukraine.

Within the framework of the subject **“Directions for the strategic development of railway transport of the OSJD member countries”** presentations and information were given on the directions for the strategic development and ongoing reforms of railway transport in the countries, in particular, on the infrastructural projects on the development of the railway network, further development of passenger traffic and improvement of the quality of services provided for passengers, ongoing reforms on liberalisation of railway transport and transportation process. The presentation of the OSJD Committee was also made on the strategic objectives of the Organisation itself, the activities carried out to increase the attractiveness of railway transportation, to increase the railway component in multimodal transportation, to increase the share of railway transport in the transport market, using the advantage inherent in railway transport, namely, environmental friendliness and the role played by the digitalisation of railway transportation of passengers and freight in the further development of railway transport in the future.

The participants noted the importance of further work on the development of the OSJD railway transport corridors carried out within the framework of OSJD on this subject taking into

account the strategic goals of the OSJD member countries.

Within the subject ***“Issues of railway transport statistics”*** the working staff of the Commission summarised the materials “Main Statistical Data on Railway Transport” for 2022 on the basis of the data submitted by the OSJD member countries. The generalised statistical data for 2022 were agreed for compilation and publication in the “Bulletin of OSJD Statistical Data on Railway Transport” for 2022. On this basis, at the annual meeting the operational performance indicators for each of the OSJD transport corridors Nos. 1-13 were agreed upon and it was decided to publish them in the “Bulletin of OSJD Statistical Data on Railway Transport” for 2022 in the form of tables and diagrams.

Within the framework of the subject ***“Interaction in the field of scientific, technical and economic information (STEI) based on the modern information technologies”***, the STEI Centres of the OSJD member countries continued their work in 2023 on the formation and development of national databases on scientific, technical and economic information, the totality of which constitutes the distributed international automatic data bank – OSJD ADB.

The total volume of the international distributed data bank of scientific, technical and economic information of the OSJD member countries which submitted data, as of 30.12.2022 was 2,825,496 documents; the total volume of the documents issued from the OSJD ADB was 4,601,229 documents.

The results obtained show that the work carried out by the STEI centres with regard to the development and availability of electronic resources was in demand and that the interest of users in the information resources of the STEI centres of the OSJD member countries was maintained.

An analysis of the activities of the technical libraries of the OSJD member countries was made on the basis of the data received from the countries, the results of which showed that:

- the number of national technical libraries was 307 units (–1.6 % of the 2021 level). The

decrease in the indicator was due to a decrease in the number of libraries in Russian Railways OJSC;

- the overall library collection totalled 10,223,860 record units (+0.3 % of the 2021 level, –2.2 % of the 2020 level);
- the number of digitised documents was 4,987,645 units (+0.4 % compared to 2021);
- the number of traditional readers was 661,229 people (–9 % to the level of 2021). It can be assumed that the decrease in the number of traditional readers is due to the transition of users to electronic library and information services. This assumption is supported by the data on the increase in the number of registered users in the automated library and information systems functioning in the technical libraries of 9 OSJD member countries (Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan, People’s Republic of China, Republic of Latvia, Republic of Mongolia, Republic of Poland, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic and Ukraine);
- the number of registered users of electronic resources amounted to 235,652 (+1 % compared to the level of 2021).

Comparing the data of 2022 with the data of the previous years, it can be concluded that, in general, there is a positive dynamics in the activity of technical libraries. The leading duty holder from the Russian Federation presented to the participants the updated Address Directory, which is available on the page of STEI centres of the OSJD Website.

At the annual meeting of the Commission the draft OSJD Leaflet O 905/1 “Methodological guide for work in the field of exchange of scientific, technical and economic information on transport” and its annexes were agreed upon for further approval in accordance with the established procedure.

Within the framework of the subject ***“Ecology and environmental protection on railway transport”*** it was decided to update OSJD Leaflets Nos. R 001-007 and to include in the draft Work Plan of the Commission a meeting of experts on the subject “Ecology and environment on railway transport”. ■