



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
RESTRICTED

Informal document No. 21(2001)
12 October 2001

ENGLISH ONLY

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Customs Questions

affecting Transport

(23-26 October 2001

agenda item 7 (b) (ii))

BACKGROUND AND ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION BY THE EXPERT GROUP

Final results of questionnaire

Note by the secretariat

A. BACKGROUND

1. In preparation for the second meeting of the expert group, the secretariat has prepared a questionnaire, aimed at both Customs and trade, to gather in-depth information on the requirements of computerization of Customs transit procedures at the national level as well as on technologies used to capture and disseminate data (TRANS/WP.30/2001/5, paragraph 83).
2. The questionnaire has been sent to the Customs TIR focal points of all Contracting Parties and to a small selection of transport operators. The deadline for returning the questionnaire to the secretariat was 1 June 2001. A first summary of the results was presented during the second meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Computerization of the TIR procedure (TRANS/WP.30/2001/13, paras. 10-12; informal document No. 12 (2001)).
3. The Expert Group welcomed the preparation of the questionnaire and requested the secretariat to prepare a document containing a full analysis of all received data and providing information on the countries concerned so that the results of the questionnaire would not just give statistical information on the number of countries involved, but would also reflect the geographical coverage. A table, summarizing the answers, given by each individual country, is added as Annex to this document.

B. RESPONSES

3. Up to date, 35 Contracting Parties have sent the secretariat their response to the questionnaire, including the European Community, which, on behalf of its Member States, has sent a co-ordinated response to question 25. Generally speaking, it should be noted that all responding Contracting Parties have answered the questions as comprehensive and as elaborate as possible. Therefore, the secretariat has obtained a vast amount of information, which will keep their value throughout the whole of Phase III of the revision process. On the other hand, not always all questions were answered, or sometimes more than one answer could be given, so that the grand total does not necessarily add up to 35.

C. ANSWERS TO THE VARIOUS QUESTIONS

Question 1: Is it possible in your country to lodge a TIR declaration by electronic means (in addition to the paper based TIR Carnet)?

Yes: 15 countries; No: 18 countries. Switzerland has indicated the electronic lodgement is possible technically, but not in practice, because of the small number of Customs offices equipped for TIR operations. Cyprus is preparing the electronic lodgement.

Conclusion: Already a considerable number of countries offers trade the option to lodge a TIR declaration by electronic means (in addition to the obligatory submission of its paper version). Looking at the large number of countries that already dispose of various types of computerized Customs procedures (see also question 14), it is foreseeable that the number of countries accepting electronically lodged declarations will increase rapidly in the coming years.

Question 2: Do you key-in data from the TIR Carnets you receive in your national computer system?

Yes: 21 countries; No: 12 countries. France mentions that it only keys-in data for the SafeTIR system.

Conclusion: A majority of countries does already key-in data from the paper TIR Carnet for use in their national computer system. It goes without saying that, in doing so, there is a lot of duplication of information, knowing that there is no exchange of information between the various Customs administrations involved. Additionally, it is clear that every time information is keyed-in, typing errors might be made.

Question 3: What data do you key in?

TIR Carnet number: 16 countries; Name of holder: 9 countries; Goods manifest: 11 countries; Voucher No. 1/2: 10 countries; counterfoil 1/2: 6 countries. Among the other data mentioned the most frequent ones concern data on the offices and countries of departure and destination and data regarding the discharge (in particular partial/full unloading and number of packages).

Conclusion: The answers to this question make clear that a considerable amount of countries copy a lot of information from the TIR Carnet for the benefit of their national, computerized system. A large amount of work and resources could be saved, if these data would only have to be keyed-in once, instead of separately in each individual country.

Question 4: On what level is the thus obtained data used?

Locally, at the specific Customs office concerned: 11 countries; Centrally, at a regional or national level: 17 countries; At all levels: 1 country (Bulgaria).

Conclusion: Although there is no clear tendency, a majority of countries uses the obtained data at national level.

Question 5: What kind of system do you use for the electronic transmission of data?

Restricted internal system: 18 countries; Internet: 4 countries; Other: 2 country.

Conclusion: Most countries have established a restricted, internal system at the national level which deals with the transmission of captured data.

Question 6: Do you use the electronically captured data from vouchers 1 and 2 to establish discharge?

Yes: 16 countries; No: 6 countries.

Conclusion: A majority of countries already uses electronically captured data as a means to establish national discharge. Most of them are Central- and East-European countries. Within the European Community only Austria, Sweden and United Kingdom report using electronically captured data to establish national discharge.

Question 7: If yes, do you still use the original copies of vouchers 1 and 2 to establish discharge?

Yes: 13 countries; No 3 countries.

Conclusion: Most countries that use electronically captured data to establish discharge use these data in addition to the original copies of vouchers 1 and 2. Only the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Yugoslavia report not using the original vouchers any more to establish discharge.

Question 8: If yes, is the computerized discharge performed by:

Office of departure/entry: 6 countries; Office of destination/exit: 8 countries; Centralized office: 8 countries; Other: 0.

Conclusion: There is no pre-dominant answer to this question.

Question 9: Do you make use of the bar-code in the TIR Carnet?

Yes: 2 countries; No: 22 countries.

Conclusion: Only Bulgaria and Slovenia indicate that they use the bar-code in the TIR Carnet. Thus, however useful it may be to the national associations and the IRU, its use to Customs authorities is extremely limited.

Question 10: Do you keep the Customs ledger in which all TIR Carnets are inscribed in an electronic format?

Yes: 18 countries; No: 15 countries.

Conclusion: A majority of countries assembles the data on all registered TIR Carnets in an electronic format.

Question 11: Do you dispose of a central database in which all data concerning TIR transports is stored?

Yes: 20 countries; No: 13 countries.

Conclusion: A growing number of countries dispose of central databases where all data concerning TIR transports is stored.

Question 12: Are the TIR approved Customs offices in your country equipped to handle computerized Customs procedures?

All: 19 countries; Majority: 10 countries; Some: 3 countries; None: 1.

Conclusion: Azerbaijan is the only country that reports not to dispose of a single TIR approved Customs office that can deal with computerized Customs procedures.

Question 13: If yes, what is the level of computerization?

Stand alone computers: 2 countries; Local network: 8 countries; National network: 29 countries.

Conclusion: The answer to this question confirms the conclusion to question 12. In fact, most countries have developed some type of an own network, which functions at a national level. Romania, Macedonia, Estonia and Iran report that their national network is designed on the basis ASYCUDA++.

Question 14: Which Customs procedures have been computerized in your country?

Import: 30 countries; Export: 27 countries; Transit: 29 countries (still in an experimental phase in the UK and the Netherlands); Other: mainly concerning Customs regimes with in economic impact such as warehousing and in- and outward processing.

Conclusion: The answers to this question clearly indicate that in most countries the import/export and transit procedures have already been computerized. In addition, five countries (Romania, Hungary, Cyprus, Bulgaria and Czech Republic) mention the computerization of the Customs regimes with an economic impact. From this information it can be deduced that the next logical step towards full computerization should be the computerization of the TIR procedure.

Question 15: Do the TIR approved Customs offices in your country have access to the internet?

All: 11 countries; Majority: 7 countries; Few: 8 countries; None: 7 countries.

Conclusion: Although not all countries have yet given all their Customs offices access to the internet, it can reasonably be expected that the number of internet-linked Customs offices will increase considerably in the coming years. The countries that have not made any provision for internet access to their Customs offices are: Azerbaijan, France, Greece, Russian Federation, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Turkey.

Question 16: What kind of system do you use to transmit data from one Customs office to

another?

Diskette: 3 countries; CD-rom: 1 country; Smart-card: 0; EDI: 18 countries; Other: 15 countries, mostly mentioning intranet, e-mail or WAN (Wide Area Network).

Conclusion: Most countries do either use EDI, their intranet or e-mail to transmit data.

Question 17: *If you use EDI, what is the frequency of transmission?*

On-line: 13 countries; Off-line: 7 countries.

Conclusion: Already half of the countries have established on-line transmission of data. From the countries with off-line transmission, most report transmission times of between one day and one week. Only Iran reports transmitting data at a monthly rate only.

Question 18: *Do you use electronically captured data as a basis for risk assessment?*

Yes: 23 countries; No: 9 countries.

Conclusion: As a large majority of countries is interested in using the data on TIR operations for their risk assessment, the importance of electronic databases will increase.

Question 19: *Does your national legislation accept electronically lodged declarations?*

Yes: 27 countries; No: 5 countries.

Conclusion: Although not yet all countries accept electronically lodged TIR declarations (in addition to the paper declaration), the vast majority of countries already accepts other types of electronic declarations.

Question 20: *Does your national legislation accept electronic signatures?*

Yes: 13 countries; No: 19 countries. However, 5 countries (Luxembourg, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia and the UK) indicate that a change in legislation is under preparation.

Conclusion: Within in the near future, most countries will dispose of national legislation enabling the use of electronic signatures.

Question 21: *Is there any legal impediment in your country preventing the transmission*

of data between trader and Customs authorities?

Yes: 7 countries; No: 23 countries.

Conclusion: Most countries report that the electronic transmission of data between trader and Customs authorities does not meet with any legal impediment.

Question 22: If yes, please state the nature of the impediment or the state of the current or pending legislation.

Conclusion: The most frequent answer given is the fact that legislation governing the protection of personal data impedes the transmission. Bulgaria, Cyprus and Greece report that their current legislation is under review in order to solve this problem.

Question 23: How many Customs offices in your country are approved for TIR operations?

See Annex to this document, Question 23.

Conclusion: Because of the many missing data it is not possible to give an approximative figure of the total number of Customs offices dealing with TIR.

Question 24: How many TIR Carnets are processed (issue, transit and termination)

Conclusion: The number of TIR Carnets issued in the EU is going down, except in Austria, Greece, and Italy, which is understandably in the light of their geographic position at the external border of the EU. Less and less TIR Carnets have been issued in the EFTA and V4-countries (apart from the Czech Republic), because of the progressive use of the Common Transit System. Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania and Turkey record considerable growth.

The main transit countries in TIR are: Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania.

The main countries for the termination of TIR operations (with growing figures) are: Austria, Germany, Greece, Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania and Turkey. Hungary and Poland are still among the leading transit countries, but the number of TIR Carnets terminated in those countries has decreased considerably over the last 3 years.

Question 25: Do you think it likely that in the coming years the number of TIR Carnets used in your country will increase/decrease/stabilize at current level?

Increase: 11 countries; Decrease: 13; Stabilize 2 (Cyprus and Russian Federation).

All countries indicating an increase in the use of TIR Carnets think this will be due to a general increase in trade. All EU, EFTA and Visegrad countries, foresee a decrease as a consequence of the enlargement of the EU and of the progressive use of the common transit system.

Conclusion: As a consequence of the growth of world trade the use of the TIR Carnet will increase in the coming years. Its importance, however, will shift more and more out of Western Europa towards the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (and beyond).

Remarks:

Only 7 countries have made additional remarks on the computerization of the TIR procedure, 4 of which (Cyprus, Poland, Romania and Azerbaijan) used the opportunity to elaborate on the ongoing computerization programme in their countries. Denmark proposes that, apart from the basic data, a number of additional data should be available in a computerized TIR environment, such as:

- Information on the vehicle, including:
 - o identification of the registration number of the vehicle;
 - o identification of the Carnet holder;
 - o identification of the goods manifest;
- Information on the validity of the TIR Carnet and possible exclusion (temporarily or permanently) of the holder cf. Article 38;
- Possibility of making remarks, specially concerning irregularities and sensitive goods;
- An inquiry procedure concerning the non-discharge of the operation;
- Possibility of communication between the various Customs offices for following a TIR operation if suspicion of fraud;

- Possibility of discharge of partial delivery;
- Registration of the counterfoil information on discharge;
- An electronic link to the Customs office of entry in order to ensure correct discharge.

Uzbekistan points to the fact that the insertion of data is only useful as long as can be assured that these data are correct. The Russian Federation proposes the use of bar-codes in order to get a reliable and speedy means of data capture at Customs border offices.

D. RESPONSES FROM TRADE

4. The secretariat has sent a questionnaire, dedicated to trade, to a selected number of transport companies active in the field of TIR transport. Only a limited number of companies have returned the duly filled in questionnaire. This limited number is too small to draw any significant conclusions. However, some interesting information can be retrieved.

5. All responding companies report that they fill in the TIR Carnet by typewriter. One company mentions that it has developed its own IT-system. No indication is given how the information in the IT system is transferred to the paper TIR Carnet. None of the companies uses the bar code for its own administration.

6. Several companies report that they would like to be able to lodge TIR Carnets electronically, because they feel this lead to considerable time-gain all through the TIR procedure. In exchange, companies would like to receive from Customs information on the status of the operation at the various borders, en route and at destination, including information regarding the discharge of the TIR procedure.

E. CONCLUSION

7. On the basis of the considerable number of reactions to the questionnaire from Customs' side and the reactions from transport companies it has become clear that, at a national level, the computerization of Customs procedures in general is well under way, as well at the level of Customs authorities as at the transport level.

8. Regarding TIR, the situation is more complicated, because the Convention as yet requires the use of the paper TIR Carnet. However, the large number of countries that already nowadays key-in many data elements from the TIR Carnet in their national system clearly show that there is at least a need for a more common approach to establish a correct and non-recurrent system of data capture, as a first step to computerization of the TIR procedure.

Annex
To Informal Document 21, 2001

Country	1. Is it possible in your country to lodge a TIR declaration by electronic means?		2. Do you key-in data from the TIR Carnets you receive in your national computer system?		3. What data do you key in?						4. On what level are the thus obtained data used?			5. What kind of system do you use for the electronic transmission of data?		
	Yes	No	Yes	No	TIR Carnet number	Name of holder	Goods manifest	Voucher N° 1 / 2	Counterfoil N° 1 / 2	Other	Locally	Centrally	Other	Restricted	Internet	Other
Austria		X	X		X					X	X	X		X		
Belgium		X		X												
Luxembourg		X		X												
Denmark		X		X												
France	X			X												
Germany		X		X												
Greece	X		X		X	X				X	X			X		
Italy		X	X					X		X		X		X		
Netherlands		X		X												
Spain		X		X												
Sweden	X		X							X	X			X		
United Kingdom		X	X		X			X		X		X			X	
Norway		X		X												
Switzerland	X			X												
Czech Republic	X		X		X	X	X				X	X		X	X	
Hungary		X	X		X		X	X	X			X		X		
Poland		X		X												
Slovakia	X		X		X						X			X		
Azerbaijan	X			X												
Bulgaria	X		X							X		X		X		
Croatia		X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	
Cyprus		X		X												
Estonia		X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X		X
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	X		X		X	X	X			X		X		X		
Israel																
Latvia	X		X		X	X	X	X	X		X				X	
Romania	X		X		X		X				X	X		X		
Russian Federation	X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Slovenia		X	X		X		X				X	X				X
Syrian Arab Republic																
F.Y.R. of Macedonia	X		X		X	X	X	X	X			X				X
Turkey	X		X		X	X	X	X				X		X		
Ukraine	X		X		X					X		X		X		
Uzbekistan		X	X		X						X	X		X		
Yugoslavia		X	X					X	X			X		X		

Country	6. Do you use the electronically captured data from vouchers 1 and 2 to establish discharge?		7. If yes, do you still use the original copies of vouchers 1 and 2 to establish discharge?		8. If yes, is the computerized discharge performed by:				9. Do you make use of the bar-code in the TIR Carnet?		10. Do you keep the Customs ledger in which all TIR Carnets are inscribed in an electronic format?		11. Do you dispose of a central database in which all data concerning TIR transports are stored?	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Office of departure/entry	Office of destination/exit	Centralized office	Other	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Austria	X		X			X				X	X		X	
Belgium												X		X
Luxembourg												X		X
Denmark												X		X
France												X		X
Germany												X		X
Greece		X								X	X		X	
Italy		X								X	X		X	
Netherlands											X			X
Spain										X	X			X
Sweden	X		X		X					X	X			X
United Kingdom	X		X				X			X		X	X	
Norway												X		X
Switzerland												X		X
Czech Republic	X			X	X	X				X	X		X	
Hungary	X		X		X					X	X		X	
Poland		X								X		X		X
Slovakia	X			X	X					X	X		X	
Azerbaijan												X		X
Bulgaria		X							X		X		X	
Croatia	X		X			X				X		X	X	X
Cyprus										X		X		
Estonia	X		X			X				X	X		X	
Iran	X		X			X	X			X	X		X	
Israel														
Latvia	X		X				X			X	X		X	
Romania		X								X		X	X	
Russian	X		X		X	X	X			X	X		X	
Slovenia	X		X		X				X		X		X	
Syrian Arab														
F.Y.R. of	X		X			X				X	X		X	
Turkey	X		X			X		X		X		X	X	
Ukraine		X								X	X		X	
Uzbekistan	X		X			X				X		X	X	
Yugoslavia	X			X		X				X	X		X	

Country	12. Are the TIR approved Customs offices in your country, equipped to handle computerized customs procedures?				13. If yes, what is the level of computerization?			14. Which Customs procedures have been computerized in your country?				15. Do the TIR approved Customs offices in your country have access to the Internet?			
	All	Majority	Some	None	Stand alone computers	Local network	National network	Import	Export	Transit	Other	All	Majority	Few	None
Austria	X						X	X	X	X		X			
Belgium		X					X	X	X	X			X		
Luxembourg	X						X	X	X	X		X			
Denmark	X						X	X	X	X		X			
France	X						X	X	X	X					X
Germany		X				X	X	X		X			X		
Greece			X				X	X	X	X	X				X
Italy	X						X	X	X	X		X			
Netherlands	X					X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Spain	X						X	X	X	X	X			X	
Sweden	X						X	X	X	X		X			
United Kingdom			X			X		X	X	X				X	
Norway	X						X	X	X	X				X	
Switzerland		X					X	X	X	X	X	X			
Czech Republic	X						X	X	X	X	X	X			
Hungary	X						X	X		X	X		X		
Poland		X				X	X						X		
Slovakia	X				X	X		X	X	X			X		
Azerbaijan				X				X	X	X					X
Bulgaria	X						X			X	X			X	
Croatia		X					X	X	X		X	X			
Cyprus	X					X	X	X			X	X			
Estonia	X						X	X	X	X	X	X			
Iran (Islamic Republic of)			X			X	X		X	X				X	
Israel															
Latvia		X					X	X	X	X			X		
Romania		X					X	X	X	X	X			X	
Russian Federation	X						X	X	X	X					X
Slovenia	X						X	X	X	X		X			
Syrian Arab Republic															
F.Y.R. of Macedonia		X					X	X	X	X			X		
Turkey		X					X	X	X	X	X				X
Ukraine	X					X	X	X							X
Uzbekistan		X			X			X	X	X					X
Yugoslavia	X						X	X	X	X				X	

Country	16. What kind of system do you use to transmit data from one Customs office to another?					17. If you use EDI, what is the frequency of transmission?		18. Do you use electronically captured data as basis for risk assessment?		19. Does your national legislation accept electronically lodged declarations?		20. Does your national legislation accept electronic signatures?		21. Is there any legal impediment in your country preventing the transmission of data between trader and	
	Diskette	Cd-rom	Smart-card	EDI	Other	Online	Offline	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Austria				X		X		X		X		X			X
Belgium					X	X		X		X		X			X
Luxembourg				X		X			X	X			X		X
Denmark				X				X		X		X			X
France					X			X		X		X			X
Germany				X		X	X	X		X		X			X
Greece				X		X		X			X		X	X	
Italy					X				X	X		X			X
Netherlands				X		X		X		X			X		X
Spain					X			X		X		X		X	
Sweden				X		X		X		X		X			X
United Kingdom					X				X	X			X		X
Norway				X		X		X		X		X			X
Switzerland					X			X		X			X		X
Czech Republic					X			X		X		X			X
Hungary					X			X		X			X		X
Poland					X			X		X			X		X
Slovakia	X			X			X		X	X			X		
Azerbaijan					X								X		X
Bulgaria				X			X	X		X		X		X	
Croatia					X				X	X			X		X
Cyprus	X	X			X				X		X		X	X	
Estonia				X		X		X		X		X		X	
Iran (Islamic Republic of)				X			X	X							
Israel															
Latvia	X			X		X		X		X			X		X
Romania					X			X		X			X		X
Russian Federation				X			X	X					X	X	
Slovenia				X	X	X		X		X		X			X
Syrian Arab Republic															
F.Y.R. of Macedonia					X			X		X		X			X
Turkey					X	X		X		X			X		X
Ukraine				X			X		X	X			X		
Uzbekistan				X			X		X		X		X	X	
Yugoslavia				X		X					X		X		X

Country	23. How many Customs offices in your country are approved for TIR operations?	25. Do you think it likely that in the coming years the number of TIR Carnets used in your country will:		
		Increase	Decrease	Stabilize
Austria	-		X	
Belgium	56			
Luxembourg	7		X	
Denmark	8		X	
France	254		X	
Germany	470		X	
Greece	167		X	
Italy	178			
Netherlands	+/- 40		X	
Spain	165			
Sweden	-			
United Kingdom	-		X	
Norway	-		X	
Switzerland	84		X	
Czech Republic	91		X	
Hungary	91	X		
Poland			X	
Slovakia	160		X	
Azerbaijan	13	X		
Bulgaria	115		X	
Croatia	-	X		
Cyprus	4			X
Estonia	50			
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	-			
Israel	-			
Latvia	-	X		
Romania	100	X		
Russian Federation	120			X
Slovenia	63			
Syrian Arab Republic				
F.Y.R. of Macedonia	35	X		
Turkey	35	X		
Ukraine	52			
Uzbekistan	15	X		
Yugoslavia	-	X		