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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

##### 155th session

Geneva, 9–12 June 2020

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

##### Adoption of the agenda

### Annotated provisional agenda for the 155th session\* \*\*

to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, 9 June 2020, and finishing Friday 12 June 2020 at 1 p.m., Room XI, Palais des Nations.

#### I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party:  
  
Alignment of the work of the Working Party with the Inland Transport Committee Strategy.
3. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975):
  - (a) Status of the Convention;
  - (b) Revision of the Convention:  
  
Amendment proposals to the Convention;

\* For reasons of economy, delegates are requested to bring copies of the documents mentioned in this provisional agenda to the meeting. There will be no official documentation available in the meeting room. Before the meeting, documents may be obtained directly from the ECE Sustainable Transport Division (email: [wp.30@un.org](mailto:wp.30@un.org)). Documents may also be downloaded from the ECE Border Crossing Facilitation website [www.unece.org/trans/bcf/welcome.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/bcf/welcome.html). During the meeting, documents may be obtained from the UNOG Documents Distribution Section (Room C.337, third floor, Palais des Nations). Delegates are requested to register online at: [www.unece.org/index.php?id=52903](http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=52903) c at the latest one week prior to the session. Prior to the session, delegates who do not hold a long-term access badge should obtain an identification badge at the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate (14, Avenue de la Paix). In case of difficulty, please contact by telephone the ECE secretariat (internal extension 75975). For a map of the Palais des Nations and other useful information, see [www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html](http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html).

\*\* The full text of the Conventions, as well as complete lists of contracting parties to the Conventions referred to in this agenda are available on the ECE website: [www.unece.org/trans/conventn/legalinst.html#customs](http://www.unece.org/trans/conventn/legalinst.html#customs).



- (c) Application of the Convention:
  - (i) eTIR:
    - a. eTIR pilot projects;
    - b. New developments in the eTIR international system;
    - c. Activities of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure;
    - d. Conversion of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure into a formal Group of Experts.
  - (ii) New developments in the application of the Convention;
  - (iii) TIR-related electronic data interchange systems;
  - (iv) Settlement of claims for payments;
  - (v) Other matters:
    - a. Issues in the application of the Convention in the Republic of Belarus;
    - b. Decline in the sale of TIR Carnets;
    - c. Other matters.
- 4. International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention):
  - (a) Status of the Convention;
  - (b) Issues in the application of the Convention.
- 5. Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-Luggage carried in International Traffic by Rail:
 

Status of the Convention.
- 6. Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956):
  - (a) Status of the Conventions;
  - (b) Issues in the application of the Conventions.
- 7. Introduction of new technologies in rail, road, road-based mobility, inland waterway, logistics and intermodal transport until 2030.
- 8. Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party:
  - (a) European Union;
  - (b) Economic Cooperation Organization;
  - (c) Eurasian Economic Union;
  - (d) World Customs Organization;
  - (e) Bureau International des Conteneurs.
- 9. Other business:
  - (a) List of decisions;
  - (b) Dates of the next sessions;
  - (c) Restriction on the distribution of documents.
- 10. Special event on eTIR related matters
- 11. Adoption of the report.

12. List of decisions taken at the 154th session of the Working Party.

## **II. Annotations**

### **1. Adoption of the agenda**

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item to be considered is the adoption of the agenda.

#### **Documentation**

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/309

### **2. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party**

#### **Alignment of the work of the Working Party with the Inland Transport Committee strategy**

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its 154th session (February 2020), it started considering document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1, summarizing the main scope of the seventeen legal instruments under the auspices of the Working Party, reviewing the final clauses and proposing, where required or deemed appropriate, amendments. The Working Party decided to go through each of the seventeen legal instruments, providing a first assessment. Regarding various of them ((j), (o) and, (p)), the secretariat was requested to make enquiries with other international organizations in order to obtain more information on their relevance. In conclusion, the Working Party invited delegations to make enquiries at the national level on the level of application of those legal instruments to which their country was contracting party and to share experiences at the next session, where the Working Party would continue its considerations of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1 (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paras. 8 and 9).

The Working Party is invited to continue considerations of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1, assisted by feedback from delegations. Information provided by consulted international organizations will be available as Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 7.

#### **Documentation**

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1, Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 7.

### **3. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975)**

#### **(a) Status of the Convention**

The Working Party will be informed about any changes in the status of the TIR Convention, 1975 and the number of contracting parties. In particular, the Working Party may wish to be informed that, further to the accession of Oman, the Convention now has seventy-six contracting parties, whereas, since the activation of the TIR system for the Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia, on 23 January 2020, TIR operations can be established with sixty-two countries.

In addition, the Working Party will be informed that, on 25 February 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his capacity of depositary, issued depositary notification C.N.71.2020.TREATIES-XI.A.16 (re-issued). In accordance with the provisions of article 59 (3) of the Convention, the proposed amendments shall come into force with respect to all parties to the Convention three months after the expiry of a period of twelve months following the date of the communication during which no objection to the proposed amendments has been communicated to the Secretary-General by a party. Annex 11 shall

come into force, in the absence of any objection to the proposal of amendments within the abovementioned twelve month period, except for those States which notify the depositary of their nonacceptance of Annex 11 between 25 February 2021 and 25 May 2021.

More detailed information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.<sup>1</sup>

**(b) Revision of the Convention**

*Amendment proposals to the Convention*

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its previous session, against the background of proposals adopted by the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975 (AC.2), at its seventy-first session (October 2019), to increase the number of loading and unloading places in Article 18 of the Convention from four to eight, the Working Party considered Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 1 and its Add. 1 by the International Road Transport Union (IRU), containing a proposal to accommodate up to eight customs offices in the TIR Carnet.

The Working Party noted the changes in boxes 2, 8, 12, 16 and 17, in order to accommodate the increase in the number of loading and unloading places from four to maximally eight. The Working Party took note of proposals to align boxes 2 and 16 by cross-referring to a, b, c until g. In addition, delegations felt that, due to the restructuring of the lay-out, boxes 8 and 17 had become too small to be of use. Reference was made to the United Nations Layout Key as a possible tool to assist in improving the layout. The delegation of IRU informed the Working Party that, in its experience, the limited space in boxes 16 and 17 did not constitute any problem in getting a well-readable seal as well as an easily identifiable stamp, despite their overlap. IRU was invited to review the design, taking account of the comments made and, if possible, provide a realistic example of the overlap between the seals and stamps in boxes 16 and 17. The Working Party decided to revert to the issue at the current session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paragraph 13).

Further to this request, the Working Party is invited to consider Informal document WP.30 (2020). No. 8 by IRU.

The Working Party may also wish to recall, that, at its previous session, it took note of Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 5 by IRU, providing a map and a list with the different guarantee levels (50,000 United States dollars, 60,000 euros and 100,000 euros) that currently apply. The Working Party mandated the secretariat to prepare, for consideration at the current session, a document providing a succinct overview of its past discussions of the issue of introducing more flexibility in the guarantee system. In this context, the delegation of the Russian Federation requested the secretariat to include in the document its proposals to introduce full guarantee coverage and to also refer to recommendation No. 3 from the audit report of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paragraph 14).

Further to this request, the secretariat prepared document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/4 for consideration by the Working Party.

**Documentation**

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/4, Informal document WP. 30 (2020) No. 1; Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 5 (re-issued); Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 8

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<sup>1</sup> [www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary\\_notification.html](http://www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html).

**(c) Application of the Convention***(i) eTIR*

## a. eTIR pilot projects

The Working Party will be informed about the latest developments in the eTIR pilot projects started under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of 6 October 2017 on the cooperation between ECE and IRU in the field of computerization of the TIR procedure.

## b. New developments in the eTIR international system

The Working Party will be informed about the latest developments in the eTIR international system, currently implemented following the latest validated version of the eTIR specifications (4.1a).

## c. Activities of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure

Under this agenda item, the Working Party will be asked to endorse the report of the thirty-first session of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.1), convened in Geneva on 10–11 March 2020 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/5). The Working Party may also wish to consider and approve the list of questions and answers (Q&A) on the application of various provisions of the TIR Convention for TIR transports carried out under the eTIR procedure, contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/6 and request the secretariat to post the approved Q &A on the eTIR website.

## d. Conversion of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure into a formal Group of Experts

The secretariat will inform WP.30 about the considerations of ITC regarding the request to prolong the mandate of GE.1 to the year 2020 together with the request to endorse the establishment of GE.1 as a formal Expert Group. In addition, the secretariat will brief the Working Party about the findings of the Executive Commission (EXCOM) of ECE to formally approve GE.1.

**Documentation**

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/5, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/6

*(ii) New developments in the application of the Convention*

The Working Party is invited to raise new developments in the application of the TIR Convention, if any.

*(iii) TIR-related electronic data interchange systems*

The Working Party will be informed by IRU about the latest statistical data on the performance of contracting parties in the control system for TIR Carnets — SafeTIR system.

*(iv) Settlement of claims for payments*

The Working Party may wish to be informed by customs authorities and IRU about the current situation on the settlement of claims for payments made by customs authorities against national guaranteeing associations.

*(v) Other matters*

## a. Issues in the application of the TIR Convention in the Republic of Belarus.

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its 154th session (February 2020), the secretariat informed the meeting that, on 22 November 2019, it had transmitted the concerned excerpt of the report of the Working Party at its 153rd session to the State Customs

Committee of the Republic of Belarus. In its letter of reply (contained in Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 4, Belarus customs had clarified the background of the requirement to submit electronic advance information to customs, through the unified platform on a paid basis. In this context, Belarus customs had notified IRU, in February 2018, that the IRU application TIR-EPD needed to be upgraded in order to pass through the unified platform. Belarus customs further informed the Working Party that, presently, preparations were underway in order to allow non-residents access to the unified platform. Finally, Belarus customs did not agree with the statement that charging for the submission of electronic advance information constitutes a violation of Article 46, as the submission of electronic advance information is not regulated by provisions of the TIR Convention.

In a first reaction, the representative of the national association of Lithuania confirmed that, since the previous session of the Working Party, nothing had changed. Despite various requests to meet with a delegation from Belarus customs, this had not yet happened. The representative of the national association of Germany mentioned the ongoing practice in Belarus has an important factor for the recent decline in the sale of TIR Carnets, and even having led to the bankruptcy of some TIR operators. The delegation of the European Union stated that, even if not against the wording of Article 46, it certainly was against the spirit of the TIR Convention for countries to ask fees for regular and obligatory customs services. It called upon the Belarus authorities to ensure that there are no additional costs for foreign users as this may be considered as discriminatory and not being in line with the principles of free transit enshrined in the World Trade Organization. The delegation of the Russian Federation warned the Working Party not to consider this issue in isolation, as an act by Belarus authorities against the TIR Convention, but as an issue of international transport at large. The delegation of Uzbekistan also noted that the introduction of fees contradicts the spirit of the Convention and could lead to non-transparent application of the Convention.

The Working Party requested the secretariat to transmit its findings to the Belarus authorities, while also inviting its Chair (or Vice-Chair) when reporting to ITC about recent developments in the field of border crossing facilitation, to bring this matter to the attention of the Committee (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paras. 26–28).

The secretariat will inform WP.30 about follow-up activities.

b. Decline in the sale of TIR Carnets

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may wish recall that, at its previous session (February 2020), it started considering a study on the reasons for the decline in the sale of TIR Carnets, contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/3. Various delegations, while expressing support for the efforts to conduct the study, also pointed at serious flaws. The Working Party requested the secretariat to distribute the study among TIR focal points of customs and associations, seeking their views, no later than by 30 March 2020. At the proposal of the secretariat, the results and the further progress of the study would then first be further assessed by the TIR Executive Board before bringing the study again to the table of WP.30, AC.2 or both (see also ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paras. 29–32).

The secretariat will inform WP.30 about follow-up activities, including, but not limited to, feedback received from TIR focal points of customs and associations or the further assessment by TIRExB.

c. Other matters

The Working Party may wish to consider any other issues or difficulties in the application of the TIR Convention faced by customs authorities, national associations, the international insurers or IRU.

**Documentation**

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/3

#### **4. International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls for Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention)**

##### **(a) Status of the Convention**

The Working Party will be informed about the status of the Convention.

Since the tenth session of the Committee in 2014, Turkmenistan acceded to the Convention in 2016, becoming the fifty-eighth contracting party to the Convention.

In addition, the Working Party will be informed that, on 27 February 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his capacity of depositary, issued depositary notification C.N.77.2020.TREATIES-XI.A.17, informing of the submission of a proposal to amend Annex 8, article 7 of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982, extending the interval between surveys among contracting parties on progress made to improve border crossing procedures in their countries from two to five years. In accordance with the provisions of article 22 of the Convention, the proposed amendments shall come into force with respect to all contracting parties to the Convention three months after the expiry of a period of twelve months following the date of the communication during which no objection to the proposed amendments has been communicated to the Secretary-General by a contracting party. This means that, if no objection is raised by 27 February 2021, the proposal shall come into force on 27 May 2021.

More detailed information on the status of the Convention as well as on various depositary notifications is available on the ECE website.<sup>1</sup>

##### **(b) Issues in the application of the Convention**

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may wish to note that the Administrative Committee for the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls for Goods, 1982 (AC.3) held its twelfth session on 5 February 2020 and that the report is contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/24.

Against this background, the Working Party may wish to note that, at that session, the Chair raised the issue of the various certificates and documents that could be produced under this Convention and advised the Committee to invite the Working Party to assess converting them into electronic files. As a first step, he encouraged the secretariat to liaise with the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), inviting it to deliver a presentation at one of the next sessions of the Working Party. The Committee agreed with this course of action (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/24, paragraph 11).

At the invitation of the secretariat, the Secretary of UN/CEFACT will deliver a presentation on its semantic work on dematerializing transport and logistics documentation, how this integrates into the wider supply chain, providing concrete, relevant examples of electronic messages used today based on UN/CEFACT standards.

The Working Party may wish to consider any other issues or difficulties in the application of the Harmonization Convention.

##### **Documentation**

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/24

#### **5. Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-Luggage carried in International Traffic by Rail**

##### **Status of the Convention**

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its 154th session (February 2020), the delegation of the Russian Federation informed the meeting that, at the national level, all required procedures in preparation of accession had been finalized and that accession was expected in the course of 2020 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paragraph 34). More detailed

information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.<sup>2</sup>

## **6. Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)**

### **(a) Status of the Conventions**

The Working Party will be informed about the status of the Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles.

### **(b) Issues in the application of the Conventions**

Delegations are invited to raise under this agenda item, any issue in the application of the Conventions, of interest to the Working Party.

## **7. Introduction of new technologies in rail, road, road-based mobility, inland waterway, logistics and intermodal transport until 2030**

As part of the contribution of the Working Party to the ITC Strategy until 2030, delegations are invited, under this standing agenda item, to raise technological developments that could be introduced or applied within the context of the legal instruments under the auspices of the Working Party.

## **8. Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party**

The Working Party will take note of activities by various regional economic commissions or Customs Unions as well as by other organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, and countries as far as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party.

### **(a) European Union**

The Working Party may wish to be informed about recent developments in the European Union related to the activities of the Working Party.

### **(b) Economic Cooperation Organization**

The Working Party may wish to be informed about relevant activities and ongoing projects carried out by the Economic Cooperation Organization.

### **(c) Eurasian Economic Union**

The Working Party may wish to be informed about further progress in relevant activities and projects carried out by Eurasian Economic Union (EEU).

### **(d) World Customs Organization**

The Working Party may wish to be informed about recent activities of the World Customs Organization as far as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party.

### **(e) Bureau International des Conteneurs**

The Working Party may wish to be informed about recent activities of the Bureau International des Conteneurs (BIC) as far as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party, possibly by means of a short presentation.

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<sup>2</sup> [www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary\\_notification.html](http://www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html).



## 9. Other business

### (a) List of decisions

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may wish to recall that, as requested at the 145th session, the secretariat includes a list of decisions as Annexes to the final reports of sessions. At its previous session, the Working Party requested the secretariat to continue this practice, thus keeping track of the status of decisions and include the practice as a separate agenda item for its future sessions. The secretariat agreed to this, adding that the list would also be attached to future draft agendas (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/290, para. 51), (see agenda item 11).

The Working Party is invited to review the list of decisions and provide guidance to the secretariat.

### (b) Dates of the next sessions

The Working Party may wish to decide on the dates of its next sessions. The secretariat has made arrangements for the 156th in the week of 12–16 October 2020 and the 157th session in the week of 8–12 February 2021.

### (c) Restriction on the distribution of documents

The Working Party should decide whether or not there shall be any restrictions on the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session.

## 10. Special event on eTIR related matters

### Thursday 11 June, from 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

As decided by the Working Party when reading the report on its 154th session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paragraph 50), the secretariat has reserved 11 June 2020 to conduct the first session of the Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (WP.30/GE.1). The provisional agenda for this event will be circulated separately as informal document (in English, French and Russian). Documentation for the session will be made available as official WP.30 documents or as informal documents.

#### Provisional documentation:

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/7, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/8, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/9, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/10, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/11

## 11. Adoption of the report

In accordance with established practice, the Working Party will adopt the report on its 155th session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat. Given the present translation resource restrictions, parts of the final report may not be available at the session for adoption in all working languages.

## 12. List of decisions taken at the 154th session of the Working Party

Reference in  
final report  
(para.)

Short description of decision

Actor

Deadline

3

Solicit candidates to become (Vice)-Chair as of 2021

Delegations

<i>Reference in final report (para.)</i>	<i>Short description of decision</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
8	(f) revert at next session, based on feedback from delegations		Agenda
	(j) revert at next session, based on feedback from delegations + secretariat to contact UIC and CIT	Secretariat	Agenda
	(k) revert at next session, based on feedback from delegations		Agenda
	(l) revert at next session, based on feedback from delegations		Agenda
	(m) revert at next session, based on feedback from delegations		Agenda
	(n) invite AC.3	Secretariat	Done
	(o) Secretariat to contact BIC and WCO	Secretariat	
	(p) Secretariat to contact SC.2 and WP.24	Secretariat	
13	Working Party requested IRU to review TIR Carnet lay out and submit example	IRU	a.s.a.p.
14	Prepare document on past discussions on flexibility in guarantee system	Secretariat	31 March 2020
18	Working Party endorsed the report of the thirtieth session of GE.1	Working Party	
20	Distribute list with questions on eTIR among focal points and open list for all contracting parties	secretariat	a.s.a.p. and ongoing
27+28	Transmit findings to Belarus authorities + report to ITC	Secretariat	a.s.a.p.
28	Report to ITC	Vice-Chair WP.30	ITC
32	Distribute study among focal points for their views	Secretariat	By 30 March 2020
38	Post eCPD presentation on TIR website	Secretariat	Done
44	Keep WP.30 informed	ECO	
	Prepare 155th session 9–12 June 2020		17 March 2020 – agenda 31 March 2020 – documents