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Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport****156th session**

Geneva, 9 and 11 February 2021

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda**Annotated provisional agenda for the 156th session^{*,**}**

to be held virtually and in-person at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Tuesday 9 February 2021 (morning only) and reconvening on Thursday 11 February 2021 (around 3 p.m.), Room TPS 1, subject to confirmation.

I. Provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda.
2. Election of officers.
3. 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.
4. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975):
 - (a) Status of 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). Documents may also be downloaded from the ECE Border Crossing Facilitation website 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: uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=qDsLts at the latest one week prior to the session. All in-person attending delegates (including those holding long-duration badge), should register through INDICO badge system indico.un.org/event/35227/ and 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.

** 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.



- (b) Revision of the Convention:
Amendment proposals to the Convention.
- (c) Application of the Convention:
 - (i) Comments to the TIR Convention;
 - (ii) eTIR:
 - a. eTIR pilot projects;
 - b. New developments in the eTIR international system;
 - c. eTIR interconnection projects;
 - d. Activities of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure into a formal Group of Experts.
 - (iii) New developments in the application of the Convention;
 - (iv) TIR-related electronic data interchange systems;
 - (v) Settlement of claims for payments;
 - (vi) Other matters:
 - a. Decline in the sale of TIR Carnets;
 - b. Other matters.
- 5. 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.
- 6. Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-Luggage carried in International Traffic by Rail:
Status of the Convention.
- 7. 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.
- 8. Introduction of new technologies in rail, road, road-based mobility, inland waterway, logistics and intermodal transport until 2030.
- 9. 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.
- 10. Other business:
 - (a) Dates of the next sessions;
 - (b) Restriction on the distribution of documents;
 - (c) List of decisions.
- 11. Adoption of the report.

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.30/311

2. Election of officers

In accordance with the Commission's rules and procedures and established practice, the Working Party (WP.30) should elect a Chair and, possibly, a Vice-Chair for its sessions in 2021. Contracting parties are strongly encouraged to nominate candidates for either post in order to facilitate the election process.

3. 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 (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paras. 8 and 9).

At its previous session (October 2020), the Working Party took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2020/8 and comments by the European Commission on behalf of the member States of the European Union and decided to continue discussions at its current session, requesting delegations to pursue their national consultations about the status and relevance of the 17 legal instruments under the auspices of the Working Party (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/310, para. 4).

As a first assessment, the Working Party may wish to confirm that, within the context of the current exercise (consider amending legal instruments with geographical or procedural barriers), there is no need to further discuss the following legal instruments, as enumerated in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1:

- (a) Convention concerning Customs Facilities for Touring, 1954;
- (b) Additional Protocol to the Convention concerning Customs Facilities for Touring, 1954;
- (d) TIR Convention, 1959
- (h) International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage, carried by Rail, 1952;
- (i) International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Goods, carried by Rail, 1952;
- (j) Customs Convention concerning Spare Parts Used for Repairing EUROPE Wagons, 1958;
- (o) Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers Used in International Transport, 1994;

(p) Convention on International Customs Transit Procedures for the Carriage of Goods by Rail under Cover of SMGS Consignment Notes, 2006 (not yet entered into force);

(q) Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-Luggage carried in International Traffic by Rail, 2019 (not yet entered into force).

Considering that the following legal instruments are under constant review by either the Working Party, the Administrative Committee of the TIR Convention (AC.2) or the Administrative Committee for the Harmonization Convention (AC.3):

(c) Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, 1954;

(e) TIR Convention, 1975;

(g) Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles, 1956;

(n) Harmonization Convention, 1982.

the Working Party may then wish to confirm that its future work on this topic be limited to:

(f) Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation for Private Use of Aircraft and Pleasure Boats, 1956;

(k) Customs Convention on Containers, 1956;

(l) Customs Convention on Containers, 1972;

(m) European Convention on Customs Treatment of Pallets Used in International Transport, 1960.

The Working Party is invited to continue considerations of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1 in combination with document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/8 and feedback from delegations.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/8

4. 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 the Convention has seventy-six contracting parties, whereas TIR operations can be established with sixty-four countries.

The Committee may wish to be informed that, on 4 November 2020, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, issued the following depositary notifications: (i) C.N.513.2020.TREATIES-XI.A.16, informing of the submission of various proposals to amend the body and annexes of the TIR Convention, 1975, including those that make the electronic submission of data to ITDB obligatory. In accordance with the provisions of Article 59 (3) of the Convention, the amendments shall enter into force on 4 February 2022, unless an objection has been communicated to the Secretary-General not later than by 4 November 2020; (ii) C.N.514.2020.TREATIES-XI.A.16, informing of the submission of a proposal to amend Annex 6 of the TIR Convention, 1975 with a new Explanatory Note 0.49, granting operators greater facilities. In accordance with the provisions of article 60 (1) of the Convention, the Administrative Committee decided, at its seventy-third session (11 October 2020) that the amendment shall enter into force on 1 June 2021. Therefore, the Secretary-General should be notified of objections to the proposed amendment no later than by 1 March 2021. In the absence of a sufficient number of objections by 1 March 2021, the

proposed amendments shall enter into force on 1 June 2021. More detailed information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.¹

(b) Revision of the Convention

Amendment proposals to the Convention

There are at present no amendment proposals to the Convention submitted for consideration by the Working Party.

(c) Application of the Convention

(i) Comments to the TIR Convention

Although not legally binding for contracting parties of the TIR Convention, comments are important for the interpretation and harmonized application of the Convention, as they reflect the opinion of the Working Party and, ultimately, of the TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2), as indicated in connection with each comment.

Therefore, the Working Party is invited to recall, under this agenda item, that, further to the adoption of various amendment proposals to the provisions of the Convention, there are certain (new or updated) comments that need to be adopted by the Working Party and, consequently, endorsed by the Committee. These concern: (i) comments to Article 18; (ii) comment to Annex 6, Explanatory Note 0.8.3; (iii) comment to Annex 6, Explanatory Note 0.49 and (iv) comment to Annex 9, Part II “Model Authorization Form (MAF)”. The Working Party is invited to consider and, possibly, adopt the comments contained in Annex I of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/1. In Annex II, the secretariat lists separately the comment “Possibilities of increasing the total number of loading and unloading places to more than four in exceptional cases” to Article 18, as it may require more in-depth considerations by the Working Party before its transmittal to AC.2 for endorsement.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/1

(ii) 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, based on the latest published version of the eTIR specifications (4.2a) and all approved amendments to the eTIR conceptual, functional and technical documentation - v.4.2a (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/7).

c. eTIR interconnection projects

The Working Party may wish to take note that, further to the adoption of Annex 11 by the TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) at its February 2020 session, the Executive Secretary of ECE, Ms. Olga Algayerova, invited contracting parties to start projects to interconnect their national customs systems with the eTIR international system. The Working Party will be informed about these projects and their progress.

¹ www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html.

d. *Activities 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 Working Party may wish to recall that, at its previous session, it noted that, further to its request and approval by ITC, EXCOM had agreed, on 20 May 2020, to the conversion of GE.1 into the formal “Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure” (WP.30/GE.1). However, due to a financial liquidity crisis at the United Nations and the ongoing COVID19 pandemic, the secretariat could not obtain slots in 2020 to organize sessions of WP.30/GE.1 with interpretation in the three ECE working languages. Consequently, and in order to make progress on the preparation of the crucially needed version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications, the secretariat, after consultation with TIR and eTIR focal points, decided to organize a preparatory information meeting (in English only) of WP.30/GE.1 on 3 and 4 November 2020. For 2021, sessions of WP.30/GE.1 are planned for 27–29 January 2021, 25–27 May 2021 and 13–15 September 2021 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/310, para. 17).

The secretariat will brief the Working Party about the outcome of the preparatory information meeting of WP.30/GE.1 on 3 and 4 November 2020 and about the status of organizing meetings of WP.30/GE.1 in 2021.

(iii) 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.

(iv) 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.

(v) 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.

(vi) Other matters

a. *Decline in the sale of TIR Carnets*

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may wish to recall that, at its February 2020 session, 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. The Working Party requested the secretariat to distribute the study among TIR focal points of customs and associations, seeking their views. In view of the fact that, most likely due to the ongoing pandemic, only few focal points had provided any feedback, the Working Party requested the secretariat to send a reminder to TIR focal points from customs and associations, seeking their views on the study on the reasons for the decline in the sale of TIR Carnets, with 31 October 2020 as final deadline (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/310, paras. 23–24).

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.

b. *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

5. 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 may wish to recall 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.²

(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, para. 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

6. 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

² www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html.

expected in the course of 2020 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, para. 34). More detailed information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.³

7. 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

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its previous session, it took note of the intention of ECE and the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme / Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (AIT/FIA) to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding on the revitalization and digitalization of relevant United Nations inland transport conventions and mandated the secretariat to continue these efforts (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/310, para. 31).

The secretariat will inform the Working Party about the latest developments in this field.

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

8. 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.

9. 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).

³ www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html.

(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.

10. Other business

(a) Dates of the next sessions

The ECE secretariat has made tentative arrangements to hold the 157th session of the Working Party in the week of 7–11 June 2021 and the 158th session in the week of 11–15 October 2021, subject to potential adjustments due to the ongoing COVID pandemic and the United Nations liquidity crisis.

(b) 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.

(c) List of decisions

The secretariat will prepare a list of draft decisions that will be circulated among delegations prior to the session. The list of adopted decisions will be attached to the final report.

11. Adoption of the report

In accordance with established practice, the Working Party will adopt the report on its 156th session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat. In view of the current situation, the Working Party is invited to instruct the secretariat to issue the adopted decisions, preceded by a succinct summary of the discussions, as official report of its 156th session. The report shall be circulated among registered participants for final adoption.
