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**Economic Commission for Europe****Inland Transport Committee****Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975****Seventy-fourth session**

Geneva, 9–11 February 2021

Item 4 (a) (i) of the provisional agenda

**Activities and administration of the TIR Executive Board****Activities of the TIR Executive Board****Report by the Chair of the TIR Executive Board****Report of the eighty-fourth session of the TIR Executive Board  
(TIRExB)****I. Attendance**

1. The TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) held its eighty-fourth session on 3 February 2020 in Geneva.
2. The following members of TIRExB were present: Mr. S. Amelyanovich (Russian Federation), Mr. M. Ayati (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. M. Ciampi (Italy), Ms. D. Dirlik Songur (Turkey), Mr. P. J. Laborie (European Commission), Mr. H. R. Mayer (Austria), Mr. S. Somka (Ukraine), Ms. E. Takova (Bulgaria) and Mr. F. Valiyev (Azerbaijan).
3. Mr. Y. Guenkov attended the session as observer, representing the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

**II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)***Documentation:* Informal document TIRExB/AGE/2020/84

4. TIRExB adopted the agenda of the session in Informal document TIRExB/AGE/2020/84, by noting that the Informal document No. 1 (2020) under agenda item 7 was not issued.

**III. Election of a Chair (agenda item 2)**

5. The Board recalled that, in accordance with its Rules of Procedure “a Chair shall be elected at the first meeting each year, who shall hold office until his/her successor is elected. He/she shall be eligible for re-election.” and re-elected Ms. D. Dirlik Songur (Turkey) to chair the Board’s meetings in 2020.



#### **IV. Adoption of the report of the eighty-third session of TIRExB (agenda item 3)**

*Documentation:* Informal document TIRExB/REP/2019/83draft

6. TIRExB adopted the report of its eighty-third session as in Informal document TIRExB/REP/2019/83draft.

#### **V. Audit report on the management of the TIR Trust Fund issued by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (agenda item 4)**

*Documentation:* Informal document No. 4 (2019)

7. The Board took note of following information by the secretariat about the progress in the implementation of the audit recommendations since its previous session, while noting that Recommendation Nos. 4, 8 and 9 were already implemented:

- Recommendation No. 1: The secretariat submitted the updated list of documentation to the TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) for consideration at its February 2020 session (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2020/8).
- Recommendation No. 2: The secretariat submitted draft Terms of Reference of TIR Focal Points to AC.2 for consideration at its February 2020 session (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2020/9).
- Recommendation No. 3: The secretariat submitted a document on appropriate procedures concerning evaluation of qualified organizations and the periodic assessment to AC.2 for consideration at its February 2020 session (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2020/11).
- Recommendation No. 5: The Executive Committee (EXCOM) did not support the proposal submitted by the responsible unit at the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) for the implementation of the Recommendation. Therefore, the deadline for the recommendation was extended till end of the year, which would allow ECE to draft a new proposal. The secretariat would provide updated information at the June 2020 session of the Board.
- Recommendation No. 6: ECE sent a letter to the Ethics Office on 20 December 2019, addressing the issue at stake and seeking its advice. The secretariat submitted a copy of the letter to AC.2 for its February 2020 session (see Informal document WP.30/AC.2 (2020) No. 3).
- Recommendation No. 7 (a): (see item X below<sup>1</sup>).
- Recommendation No. 7 (b): The secretariat submitted a document on developing an appropriate alternative financing arrangement to ensure the sustainability of TIR operations to AC.2 for consideration at its February 2020 session (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2020/10).
- Recommendation No. 10: The secretariat submitted the amended version of the action plan based on the comments received from the Board at its previous session to AC.2 for consideration at its February 2020 session (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2020/2).

8. Regarding the letter sent to the Ethics Office in line with Recommendation No. 6, Mr. P. J. Laborie (European Commission) pointed out that reference was made to a statement by the delegation of the European Union in the letter without giving the context of the statement. TIRExB underlined that while such reference is made, the statement should be

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<sup>1</sup> Discussions on Recommendation No. 7 (a) are reported under item X (agenda item 9).

given together with its context. The Board requested the secretariat to bear this methodological point in mind for future references.

## **VI. Application of specific provisions of the TIR Convention (agenda item 5)**

### **Consideration of amendment proposals**

#### **Proposals to introduce more flexibility in the guarantee system**

9. TIRExB reiterated its decision to commence considerations of the matter only subsequent to the deliberations of AC.2 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2019/13, para. 13).

## **VII. Computerization of the TIR procedure (agenda item 6)**

### **A. eTIR project and eTIR pilot projects**

10. The Board recalled the signing of a five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 6 October 2017 on the cooperation between ECE and IRU in the field of computerization of the TIR procedure and of the supporting Contribution Agreement towards enhancing full computerization of the TIR procedure. In this regard, it noted that within the eTIR pilot project between Azerbaijan and Iran (Islamic Republic of) only one transport had taken place since October 2019, mainly due to the fact that transit movements in bilateral trade operations between the two countries were subject to some further simplifications. Furthermore, the Board welcomed the efforts to include Georgia in this project and took note that a tripartite meeting was planned to take place on 26–27 February 2020 in Bilasuvar (Azerbaijan) to finalize an action plan on establishing an eTIR corridor between three countries. Moreover, the Board noted that the stakeholders of the eTIR project between Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey would meet on 4 February 2020 to discuss the way forward for the project.

11. The Board further took note that thirty-first session of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.1) would take place on 10–11 March 2020 in Geneva. It further noted that the meeting would focus on several amendment proposals to be possibly included in version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications.

12. The Board welcomed a presentation by the secretariat on recent developments regarding the eTIR international system. The Board noted that the secretariat had completed the implementation of all messages of the version 4.1 of the eTIR specifications and had developed a non-regression system to ensure the sufficient reliability of that software. Mr. F. Valiyev (Azerbaijan) asked to what extent it would be possible for contracting parties that were already participating in the eTIR pilot projects as per the MoU to start applying the procedure described in the eTIR specifications. The secretariat answered that there was no impediment in doing so and that following the principles of Annex 11 it was ready to accompany all contracting parties to perform this transition.

13. The Board also took note of the progress in other aspects of the computerization, namely clarification of several points in the eTIR specifications, review of the eTIR database and actions taken towards finding a new hosting location for the eTIR international system and the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB). Finally, the Board was also informed about the priorities of the secretariat for the following period, namely implementation of the changes to follow the latest version of the eTIR specifications and production of the documentation for the customs authorities to connect their information technology (IT) systems to the eTIR international system.

## **B. International TIR Data Bank**

14. The Board welcomed the status report by the secretariat on the ITDB. The Board took note of the information about the web service usage in previous two years and the status of data recordings in the ITDB, particularly following figures: 1,038 web application users, 33,944 authorized holders, 232 stamps and seals and 2,439 customs offices.

15. Further, the Board was informed about recent achievements such as the completion of security upgrades on the ITDB servers, emails sent to TIR Focal Points to share the ITDB data status, improvements to the ITDB Service Desk processes, progress in liaising with customs authorities regarding the Customs Offices Module and completion of the Holders Module improvements (i.e. management of user notifications using regions). Finally, the Board was informed about future releases and other activities planned for 2020, namely rolling out the improvements on the Holders Module (i.e. notifications using regions), addressing remaining discrepancies on data in the Customs Offices Module, supporting the launch of the eTIR international system prototype and starting the design of the Certificates of Approval Module.

## **VIII. Adaptation of the TIR procedure to modern business, logistics and transport requirements (agenda item 7)**

### **Implementation of the intermodal aspects of the TIR procedure**

16. The Board welcomed a presentation by the secretariat about ongoing work on the intermodal use of the TIR procedure. The Board noted that a new document had not been issued since the secretariat was working on a pilot project that could possibly be included in the final study. The Board underlined that such a project would require the consent of Contracting Parties concerned and urged the secretariat to establish necessary contacts before proceeding with the project. The Board requested to be informed once the pilot project was realized.

17. Mr. Y. Guenkov (IRU) informed the Board about a meeting between IRU and the International Maritime Organization held on 30 January 2020 in London (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). He mentioned that two organizations had discussed how to leverage each other's experience and expertise to further facilitate and secure containerized movements in the supply chain. He added that both organizations had recognized that a joint focused approach on organizing efficient logistics from the point of origin, in the ports and to the destination by streamlining the data and documentation flows could bring tremendous benefits to all actors across the supply chain. He also expressed their willingness to coordinate further actions with the TIR secretariat to that end.

18. The Board requested the secretariat to submit the final study at its June 2020 session taking into account the requests for revision made at its previous session (TIRExB/REP/2019/83final, para. 30).

## **IX. Settlement of disputes between contracting parties, associations, insurance companies and international organizations (agenda item 8)**

### **Draft new Explanatory Note to Article 6, paragraph 2 of the TIR Convention**

*Documentation:* Informal document No. 7 (2019)

19. TIRExB recalled that, at its previous session, it considered Informal document No. 7 (2019) that comprised a draft text for an early warning mechanism and guidelines and expressed its readiness to transmit the document to AC.2. Further, the Board recalled that

IRU had suggested amendments to the text during the session and that it requested the secretariat to distribute them to comment on at its next session.

20. Mr. Y. Guenkov (IRU) stated that the text in Informal document No. 7 (2019) could be further improved, especially based on the lessons drawn from the case with the Romanian association. TIRExB observed that suggestions by IRU mainly related to introducing following points in the text:

- National association's putting TIRExB and the international organization in copy of the correspondence with its competent authorities.
- A statement about the private nature of the relationship between the international organization and its member associations.

21. TIRExB pointed out the purpose of the early warning mechanism as to urge stakeholders inform each other as well as TIRExB well in advance of any change in circumstance that could run the risk of leading, potentially, to the termination of the relation between the international organization and a national association on the one hand, and the termination of the agreement between the customs authorities and the national association on the other hand. In this regard, it did not consider appropriate to remark on the nature of the relationship between the international organization and national associations in the text. Further, the Board underlined the need to respect also the privacy of the relationship between a competent authority and its national association. Finally, regarding the lessons referred to by IRU from past cases, TIRExB stressed that it had always provided its good office to all stakeholders for the settlement of disputes and that it would continue to consider any information provided by the stakeholders as per Annex 8 of the TIR Convention.

22. TIRExB concluded that the wording of the early warning mechanism in Informal document No. 7 (2019) was more appropriate to give place in the TIR Convention, thus requested the secretariat to submit it to AC.2 at its October 2020 session.

## **X. To provide support in the application and strengthening of the TIR Convention (agenda item 9)**

### **Study the reasons resulting in the decreasing number of the TIR Carnets used and make recommendations to improve the TIR system**

*Documentation:* Informal document Nos. 8 and 13 (2019) and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/3

23. TIRExB continued consideration of the survey conducted with the Board members and IRU for studying the reasons of the decreasing number of TIR Carnets used. The Board took note that AC.2, while considering the OIOS audit report at its seventy-first session in October 2019, had noted that Recommendation No. 7 (a) overlapped with the ongoing study by TIRExB conducted in line with its programme of work for 2019–2020. AC.2 agreed with a request from IRU on submitting the results of the TIRExB study first to the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/145, paras. 76–77). The Board also took note that the secretariat submitted document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/3 comprising a revised version of the study to WP.30 for consideration at its session on 4–7 February 2020.

24. TIRExB, while acknowledging the submission of the study to WP.30 by the secretariat further to a request by AC.2, emphasized that the Board was yet to have a final review of the study before submission to other TIR bodies. Reminding the decision at its previous session on the distribution of the revised study to the Board members for a final review (see TIRExB/REP/2019/83final, paras. 36–38), the Board requested the secretariat to pay further attention to conforming with the meeting reports in the future.

25. In consideration of the document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/3, the Board concluded that there was room for improvement even though the secretariat had reflected some of the comments done at its previous session. However, since the study was going to be considered at WP.30, the Board preferred not to revise the document further at that stage. Finally,

TIRExB requested the secretariat to clarify, while presenting the document at WP.30, that the Board did not have a final review of the study.

## **XI. Prices of TIR Carnets (agenda item 10)**

### **Analysis of the prices of TIR Carnets**

26. The Board noted that, until then, twenty-six associations had responded to the 2020 TIR Carnet prices survey launched on 26 December 2019 and requested the secretariat to send a reminder ten days before 1 March 2020 about the obligations related to Annex 9, Part I, para. 3 (vi) of the TIR Convention.

## **XII. Functioning of the TIR international guarantee system (agenda item 11)**

27. The Board took note that the survey on customs claims and the guarantee level for the period 2015–2018 had been launched on 2 December 2019 and that, until then, twenty customs administrations had replied. It also noted that various customs administrations had informed the secretariat that the deadline of 15 December 2019 would not allow them to gather all the required information and reply on time. Taking note of the above, the Board requested the secretariat to send a reminder asking customs administrations, which had not replied yet, to reply before 1 March 2020.

## **XIII. Problems reported by transport companies from the Republic of Moldova in Ukraine (agenda item 12)**

*Documentation:* Informal documents Nos. 37 (2014) and 8 (2015)

28. TIRExB noted that there was no new information on the agenda item.

## **XIV. Activities of the secretariat (agenda item 13)**

### **General activities of the secretariat**

29. TIRExB took note that a side event during the United Nations General Assembly in New York had been organized by the secretariat in cooperation with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States on the eTIR international system and the benefits that its application would bring to landlocked countries (5 and 6 December 2019, New York). Furthermore, the Board was informed that a high-level round table on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development along the trans-continental Eurasian Transport Corridors would be held together with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization during the eighty-second session of the Inland Transport Committee (27 February 2020, Geneva). Finally, the Board took note that the secretariat would initiate the events foreseen in the action plan subject to its approval by AC.2 at its February 2020 session.

## **XV. Other matters (agenda item 14)**

### **New measures introduced by the Republic of Belarus**

*Documentation:* Informal document Nos. 9 and 15 (2019) and Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 4

30. TIRExB noted that WP.30 at its 153<sup>rd</sup> session in October 2019, considering a letter from the Lithuanian National Road Carriers Association, had expressed its concern about the provision of the electronic advance cargo information service in Belarus on a paid basis and had requested the secretariat transmit its conclusions to Belarusian authorities (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/306, paras. 20–21). The Board further took note of the letter by Belarusian Customs as in Informal document WP.30 (2020) No. 4.

31. TIRExB noted that the issue was also at the agenda of WP.30 at its 154<sup>th</sup> session on 4–7 February 2020 (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/307, item 4(c)(iv)) where all the stakeholders, including Belarus, were represented. TIRExB decided revisiting the issue only in the case of a request by AC.2 for further examination.

## **XVI. Restriction in the distribution of documents (agenda item 15)**

32. TIRExB decided to keep documents issued in relation to the current session restricted.

## **XVII. Date and place of next session (agenda item 16)**

33. The Board decided to conduct its eighty-fifth session on 8 June 2020 in Geneva and requested the secretariat to make the appropriate arrangements.

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