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Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure

Second session

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Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda

eTIR conceptual, functional and technical documentation version 4.3:

eTIR concepts

eTIR declaration mechanism

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction - Mandate

The Inland Transport Committee during its eighty-second session (23–28 February 2020) approved (ECE/TRANS/294, para. 84¹) the establishment of the Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (WP.30/GE.1) and endorsed its ToR² (ECE/TRANS/WP30/2019/9 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2019/9/Corr.1) pending approval by UNECE Executive Committee (EXCOM). EXCOM during its Remote informal meeting of members of the Executive Committee (20 May 2020) approved the establishment of the Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (WP.30/GE.1) until 2022, based on the terms of reference included in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2019/9 and Corr.1, as contained in document ECE/TRANS/294 (ECE/EX/2020/L.2, para. 5(b)).³

The terms of reference of the Group stipulate that the Group should focus its work on preparing a new version of the eTIR specifications, pending the formal establishment of TIB. More specifically the Group should (a) prepare a new version of the technical specifications

¹ Decision of the Inland Transport Committee para. 84 / ECE/TRANS/294
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2020/itc/ECE-TRANS-294e.pdf

² Terms of reference of the newly established Group approved by the Inland Transport Committee and the Executive Committee (EXCOM) of UNECE
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/bcf/wp30/documents/2019/ECE-TRANS-WP30-2019-09e.pdf
and corrigendum www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/bcf/wp30/documents/2019/ECE-TRANS-WP30-2019-09c1e.pdf

³ Decision of EXCOM, ECE/EX/2020/L.2 / para. 5(b)
www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/commission/EXCOM/Agenda/2020/Remote_informal_mtg_20_05_2020/Item_4_ECE_EX_2020_L.2_ITC_Sub_bodies_E.pdf



of the eTIR procedure, and amendments thereto, ensuring their alignment with the functional specifications of the eTIR procedure; (b) prepare a new version of the functional specifications of the eTIR procedure, and amendments thereto, ensuring their alignment with the conceptual specifications of the eTIR procedure; (c) prepare amendments to the conceptual specifications of the eTIR procedure, upon requests by WP.30.

This document presents the eTIR declaration mechanism.

II. Annex I - eTIR declaration mechanism

Following the provisions of Article 6 of Annex 11 to the TIR Convention, Chapter 1.2.4.2 stipulates that “the holder submits the advance TIR data or advance amendment data by electronic means to the customs office of departure, making reference to a guarantee issued by a guarantee chain, using authentication mechanisms. The advance TIR data and the advance amendment data shall be submitted prior to the presentation of the goods at the customs office of departure. Alternatively, the holder can make use of declaration mechanisms provided by the eTIR international system, the customs system of his/her country of residence (if available) or third-party solutions provided by the private sector (including by the guarantee chains). National customs systems and authorized international private sector declaration systems can use the declaration web service of the eTIR international system to forward the declaration to the country of departure. Customs authorities shall, if the results of the controls are satisfactory, validate and accept the declaration and transmit the declaration data to the eTIR international system. The eTIR international system forwards this information to the following customs authorities involved in the transport.”

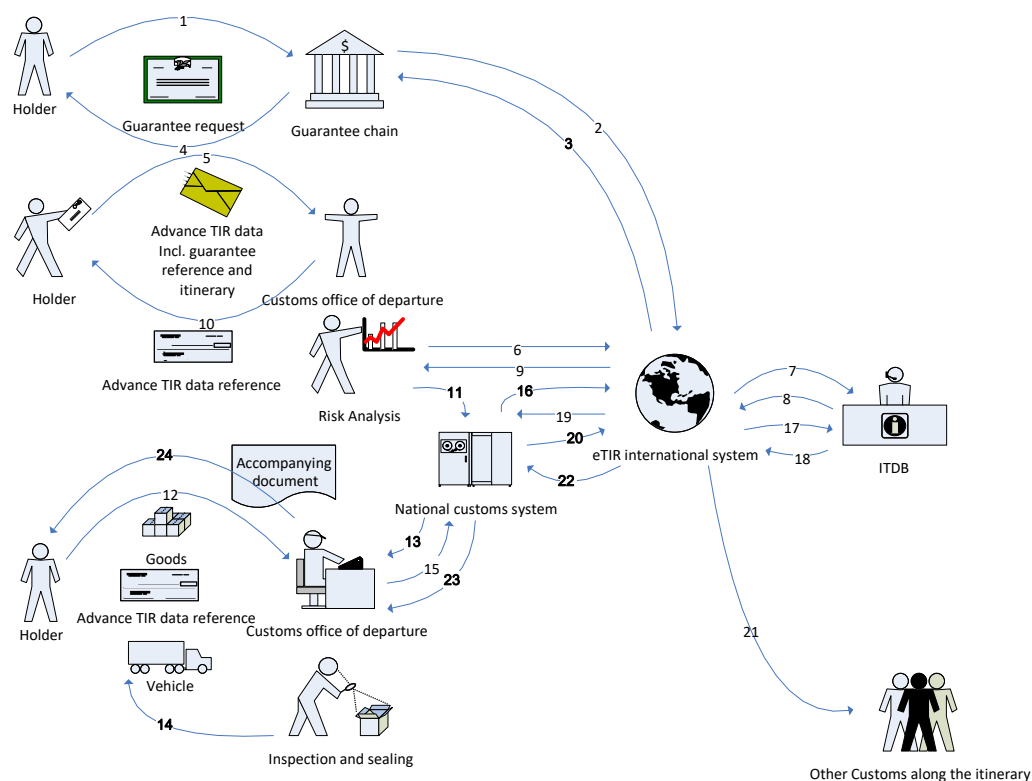
The declaration mechanism envisages that the holder sends his/her advance TIR data and advance amendment data only to the customs administration where the customs office of departure of the TIR transport is located. The customs office of departure uses this information when the holder, or his or her representative, lodges his/her customs declaration by presenting to the customs office of departure the goods, the vehicle and the reference to the guarantee which he/she has obtained from the guarantee chain and which was included in the advance TIR data or advance amendment data. The customs office of departure, after having accepted the customs declaration, registers the declaration data as well as other TIR transport information (e.g. the information on seals) in the eTIR international system. The eTIR international system forwards the declaration data to all customs authorities declared by the holder as part of his/her itinerary.

The fact that the holder is obliged to provide customs with advance TIR data and advance amendment data does not relieve him/her from his/her responsibility to lodge his/her declaration by presenting himself/herself at the customs office of departure, together with the goods, the vehicle and the reference to the guarantee, in line with Article 21 of the TIR Convention. It is then the responsibility of customs to accept the declaration.

I.1. The eTIR declaration at the first customs office of departure

Figure I.1 describes all steps related to the declaration submission process at the first customs office of departure. Steps are numbered and described in the text following the figure.

Figure I.1
Declaration at the first customs office of departure



1. The holder requests a guarantee from the guarantee chain;
2. The guarantee chain accepts the request and registers the guarantee with the eTIR international system;
3. The eTIR international system acknowledges registration of the guarantee;
4. The guarantee chain provides the holder with a unique reference to the guarantee;
5. The holder sends the advance TIR data to the central customs system in the country of departure, using a national declaration mechanism of the country of departure (if he has the required credentials), the declaration mechanism of his/her country of residence (if available for declarations made in other countries), the web service made available in the eTIR international system or an approved declaration mechanism provided by the private sector;
6. As part of their risk analysis, customs authorities check the validity of the guarantee in the eTIR international system;
7. The eTIR international system queries the ITDB to check that the holder is authorized;
8. The ITDB provides information on the holder to the eTIR international system;
9. The eTIR international system provides the information on holder and guarantee to customs;
10. Customs confirm the reception and the validity of the advance TIR data to the holder and provide him/her with a unique reference (if applicable);
11. Customs store the advance TIR data in their internal system, possibly together with the results of their risk assessment;
12. The holder presents the vehicle, the goods and the reference to the guarantee (or the reference provided by customs) to the customs office of departure to lodge the declaration;

13. The customs office of departure retrieves from the national customs system the advance TIR data which will become the declaration data. ;
14. In line with the results of risk assessment, customs make the required controls of the vehicle and goods against the declaration data and seals the vehicle if the controls are satisfactory;
15. The results of the checks and the seals numbers are stored in the customs system;
16. The customs office of departure (national customs system) informs the eTIR international system that it accepts the guarantee;
17. The eTIR international system queries the ITDB on the status⁴ of the holder to whom the guarantee has been issued;
18. The ITDB returns the status of the holder to the eTIR international system;
19. The eTIR international system confirms the acceptance of the guarantee to the national customs system;
20. After having accepted the declaration, the national customs system forwards the declaration data to the eTIR international system by means of the “Record declaration data” message;⁵
21. The eTIR international system provides all customs administrations involved in the TIR transport with the declaration data and the relevant TIR transport data. This information, exchanged in a customs secure environment, will serve as the declaration data for the subsequent customs authorities;
22. The eTIR international system confirms the reception of the information;
23. The customs officer sees the results on his/her screen and generates/prints the accompanying document;
24. The customs officer hands out the paper accompanying document to the holder if it was printed. Otherwise the national system sends the generated accompanying document to the holder by electronic means.

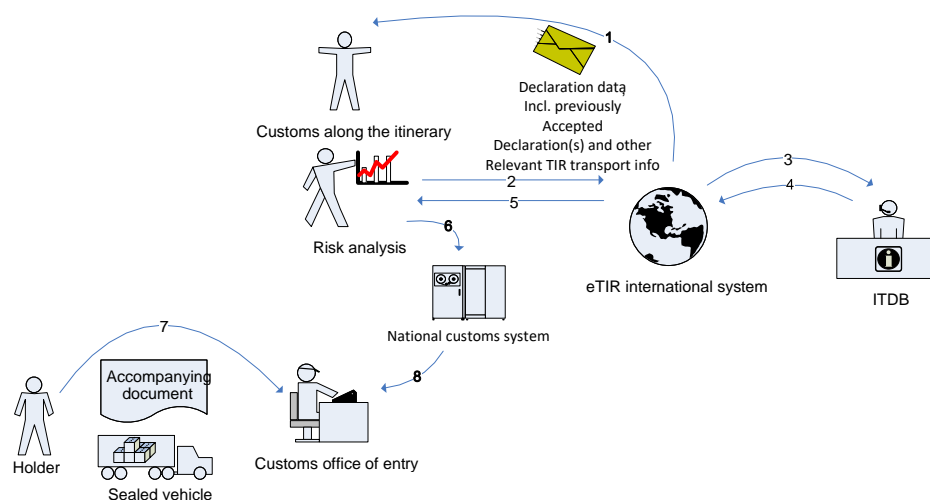
I.2. The eTIR declaration at the customs office of entry

Figure I.2 describes all steps related to the declaration submission process at the customs office of entry. Steps are numbered and described in the text following the figure.

⁴ The status of the holder refers to his/her status as contained in the ITDB, i.e. authorized, withdrawn, or end of activity, as well as information regarding exclusions (art. 38)

⁵ Customs perform other activities in line with national or international requirements, such as sending a “Start TIR operation” message. However, as this is not part of the declaration submission mechanism but rather follows the acceptance of the declaration by Customs, it is not further described in this document.

Figure I.2
Declaration at the customs office of entry



1. Customs authorities along the itinerary receive the declaration data from the eTIR international system, indicating that a holder is performing a TIR transport which will enter their territory (see step 21 of the customs office of departure);
2. As part of their risk analysis, customs authorities check the validity of the guarantee with the eTIR international system;
3. The eTIR international system queries the ITDB to check that the holder is authorized;
4. The ITDB provides information on the holder to the eTIR international system;
5. The eTIR international system provides the information on holder and guarantee to customs;
6. Customs store the declaration data in their national customs system, possibly together with the results of their risk assessment;
7. The holder presents the sealed vehicle (containing the goods) together with the accompanying document and the guarantee reference at the customs office of entry en route;
8. The customs office of entry en route retrieves the declaration data from the national customs system.⁶

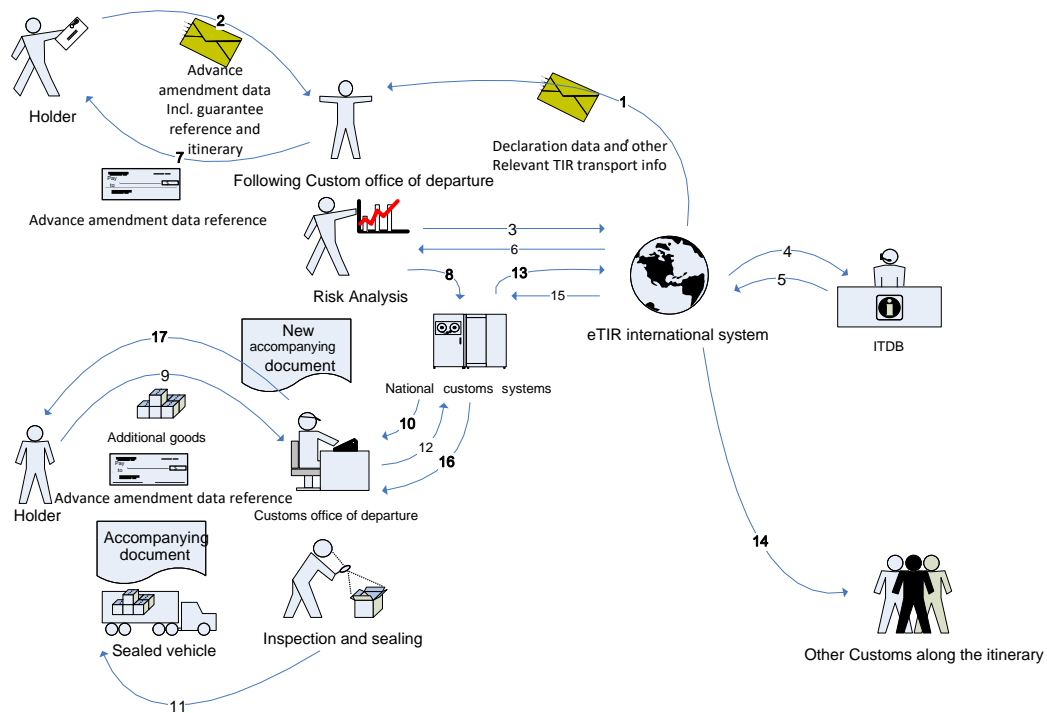
In case the geographical distance between the customs office of departure and the following customs office of entry en route is too close to meet national deadlines regarding the submission of advance information, customs authorities at the customs office of entry en route should accept the declaration data forwarded through the eTIR international system. In a computerized environment, even short time lags are sufficient to perform automatic risk assessment and should allow for adequate channelling of the holder upon his/her arrival at the border.

I.3. The eTIR declaration at the following customs offices of departure

Figure I.3 describes all steps related to of the declaration submission process at a customs office of departure, other than the first customs office of departure, in case of multiple loading places. Steps are numbered and described in the text following the figure.

⁶ After accepting the declaration, Customs perform other activities in line with national or international requirements, such as sending a “Start TIR operation” message. However, as this is not part of the declaration submission mechanism but rather follows the acceptance of the declaration by Customs, it is not further described in this annex.

Figure I.3

Declaration at the following customs offices of departure

1. The eTIR international system sends the declaration data to the customs authorities along the itinerary (see step 21 at the first customs office of departure and step 14 below);
2. The holder, or his/her representative, sends the advance amendment data to the central customs system in the country of departure, using a national declaration mechanism of the country of departure (if he/she has the required credentials), the declaration mechanism of his/her country of residence (if available for declarations made in other countries), the web service made available in the eTIR international system or an approved declaration mechanism provided by the private sector;
3. As part of their risk analysis, customs authorities check the validity of the guarantee with the eTIR international system;
4. The eTIR international system queries the ITDB to check that the holder is authorized;
5. The ITDB provides information on the holder to the eTIR international system;
6. The eTIR international system provides the information on holder and guarantee to customs;
7. Customs confirm the reception and the validity of the advance amendment data to the holder and provide him/her with a unique reference (if applicable);
8. Customs store the advance amendment data in their internal system, possibly together with the results of their risk assessment;
9. The holder presents the sealed vehicle (containing goods loaded at previous loading points), together with the accompanying document. Moreover, he/she presents the additional goods to be loaded, together with the reference to the guarantee (or the unique reference provided by customs) to the customs office of departure to lodge the declaration;
10. The customs office of departure retrieves from the national customs system the declaration data and the advance amendment data which will compose the complete declaration data;
11. Customs remove the seals, in line with the results of the risk assessment, make the required controls of the vehicle and goods against the declaration data. If the controls are satisfactory, and after the additional goods are loaded, they seal the vehicle;

12. The results of the checks and the seals numbers are stored in the customs system;
13. After having accepted the declaration, the national customs system forwards the declaration data to the eTIR international system by means of the “Record declaration data” message;⁷
14. The eTIR international system provides all subsequent customs administrations involved in the TIR transport with the declaration data. This information, exchanged in a customs secure environment, will serve as declaration data for the subsequent customs authorities;
15. The eTIR international system confirms the reception of the information;
16. The customs officer sees the results on his/her screen and prints/generates the accompanying document;
17. The customs officer hands out the paper accompanying document to the holder if it was printed. Otherwise the national customs system sends the generated accompanying document to the holder by electronic means.

In case the geographical distance between the customs office of departure and the previous customs office of departure is too close to meet national deadlines for the submission of advance information, customs authorities at the customs office of departure should accept the declaration data forwarded through the eTIR international system. In a computerized environment, even short time lags are sufficient to perform automatic risk assessment and should allow for adequate channelling of the holder upon his/her arrival at the border.

I.4. Remarks

I.4.1. Submission of the declaration in foreign countries

The declaration submission procedure described above is designed to facilitate the sending of advance TIR data or advance amendment data by the holder to customs administrations in countries other than the holder’s country of residence. The responsibility to provide adequate submission procedures lies at the national level and is a matter between the holder and the customs authorities. However, further to defining a standard set of elements to be contained in the advance TIR data and advance amendment data messages, the eTIR international system will also provide a declaration web service that will be made available to authorized holders, third party service providers and customs.

There is a general agreement that the requirement of a national electronic declaration system does not pose a problem in the relationship between the holder and customs authorities of the country in which he/she is established or resident. However, there seems to be a potential problem with regard to how the holder can establish secure electronic communications with customs authorities in other countries where the beginning of the TIR transport could take place, without having to call upon the paid services of a customs broker or any other third party. In order to achieve this, customs administrations will have to ensure not only that their national declaration submission system is accessible by all holders (in particular when considering authentication requirements), but also that it is available in, at least, one of the three official languages of the TIR Convention (English, French or Russian). A generalized use of standard codes will also further simplify this issue. In order to provide holders with additional options to submit their declaration to customs, a declaration web service is also available in the eTIR international system and made available to authorized holders, customs systems and authorized third party declaration mechanisms. This web service allows to forward advance TIR data and advance amendment data to the customs system of the country of departure. Furthermore, customs administrations may wish to extend the scope of their national declaration mechanism to allow their national holders to send advance TIR data and

⁷ Customs perform other activities in line with national or international requirements, such as sending a “Start TIR operation” message. However, as this is not part of the declaration submission mechanism but rather follows the acceptance of the declaration by Customs, it is not further described in this annex.

advance amendment data to other customs systems when the TIR transport starts abroad (making use of the eTIR international system declaration web service). Finally, third party solutions may also be used to transmit the advance TIR data and advance amendment data directly to customs or via the eTIR international system declaration web service.

I.4.2. Comparison with the current paper environment

The declaration mechanism only differs slightly from the current paper-based procedure. The declaration continues to be formally lodged by the holder at the time he/she presents himself/herself at the customs office of departure or entry en route, together with the vehicle and the goods. However, the eTIR system introduces, as new requirement, that customs should receive data before the physical presentation of the vehicle and goods at the customs office of departure or entry en route. The purpose of this is to allow customs to perform certain checks (including the validity of the guarantee) and to determine the risk profile of the TIR transport prior to its arrival at the customs office concerned. In addition, the eTIR system is designed in such a way that the holder only needs to submit advance TIR data (and possibly advance amendment data) once, thus avoiding the multiple submission to various national customs systems. The customs office of departure, by registering all relevant TIR transport information in the eTIR international system, ensures that the data required for lodging the declaration, as well as other TIR transport information (e.g. seals), are provided to all subsequent countries involved in the TIR transport prior to the arrival of the vehicle so that all customs administrations involved can perform their risk assessment in advance. As it is the case today, the holder remains responsible for the presentation at each customs office of the vehicle, load and guarantee reference in accordance with the principles set out in Article 21 of the TIR Convention. The change in the procedure regards only the submission of the information required to lodge the declaration, which is done by means of the TIR Carnet in the TIR procedure and which is done electronically by means of the mechanisms described above for the eTIR procedure.
