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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

158th session

Geneva, 12 and 15 October 2021

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the 158th session^{*,**}

to be held virtually and in-person at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Tuesday 12 October 2021 and finishing around 5.30 p.m. and reconvening on Friday 15 October 2021 at 10 a.m., Room TPS 1, subject to confirmation

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:

* 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.

Delegates are requested to register online at: uncdb.unece.org/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=cS9Qfi 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 <https://indico.un.org/event/35327/> 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.

- Amendment proposals to the Convention.
- (c) Application of the Convention:
 - (i) Comments to the TIR Convention;
 - (ii) eTIR:
 - a. eTIR international system: interconnection projects;
 - b. Activities of the Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure;
 - (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.
 - 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 Containers et du Transport Intermodal.
 - 9. Other business:
 - (a) Dates of the next sessions;
 - (b) Restriction on the distribution of documents;
 - (c) List of decisions.
 - 10. 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.30/315

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 its ongoing discussions of the topic, which were initiated at its 154th session (February 2020) (Please refer to ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paras. 6–9, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/310, paras. 3 and 4, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/312, paras. 5–8 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, paras. 4–10) on the basis of documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/8.

The Working Party may further wish to recall the following statements made at its 157th session (June 2021):

(a) Customs Convention concerning Spare Parts Used for Repairing EUROPE Wagons, 1958.

With regard to this Convention, the European Commission informed the Working Party that various member States (Austria, Belgium, Germany, France Italy and Netherlands) had expressed an intention (in the long term) to withdraw from this Convention, whereas some others considered it obsolete, without being able to provide a final position. The Working Party took note of the denunciation of this Convention by Luxembourg. Also, Denmark was in the process of denouncing the Convention (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, para. 5).

(b) Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers Used in International Transport, 1994.

With regard to this Convention, the European Commission informed the Working Party that it had started internal consultations, which were still ongoing (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, para. 6).

In the context of its discussions, the working Party took note of the Istanbul Convention on Temporary Importation, of 26 June 1990. This Convention contains a set of Annexes, some of which contain so-called rescinding provisions, meaning that, upon their entry into force, they terminate and replace other legal instruments in the field of temporary importation or some provisions thereof (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, para. 8).

In general, the Working Party established that, although there seemed limited interest of delegations in this exercise, it had nevertheless led to some important insights and that, therefore, it seemed appropriate to continue the exercise at its next session. The secretariat requested delegations to further pursue their assessment of the future relevance of the legal instruments under the aegis of the Working Party and report back any development at the next session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, para. 10).

The Working Party is invited to continue its deliberations.

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may also wish to take note that, on 14 June 2021, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, has issued the following depositary notifications: (i) C.N.170.2021.TREATIES-XI.A.15, informing that, on 14 June 2021, Turkmenistan has deposited its instruments of accession to the

Customs Convention on Containers, 1982. In accordance with its Article 19, paragraph 2, the Convention will enter into force for Turkmenistan on 14 December 2021. With the accession of Turkmenistan, the Container Convention will have forty-one contracting parties; (ii) C.N.171.2021.TREATIES-XI.A.18, informing that, on 14 June 2021, Turkmenistan has deposited its instruments of accession to the Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers Used in International Transport, 1994. In accordance with its Article 16, paragraph 2, The Convention will enter into force for Turkmenistan on 14 December 2021. With the accession of Turkmenistan, the Pool Container Convention will have fifteen contracting parties.

Documentation

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

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, since the entry into force of the accession of Egypt on 16 June 2021, the Convention has seventy-seven contracting parties which can cast a vote, since the activation of the system for Qatar, TIR operations can now be established with sixty-five countries.

The Working Party may wish to recall that 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, of 4 November 2020, 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 2021; (ii) C.N.158.2021.TREATIES-XI.16, of 3 June 2021, communicating that certain errors in the English, French and Russian texts of Annex 11 as contained in Annex I to the report of the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975, at its seventy-second session held in Geneva on 5 and 6 February 2020 (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/147) and circulated in depositary notification C.N.71.2020.TREATIES-XI.A.16 of 25 February 2020 (reissued on 26 February 2020) had been brought to his attention. Objections to these corrections should be communicated to the Secretary-General no later than by 1 September 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

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its 157th session (June 2021), it considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/2 containing in Annex I the current text of the comment to Article 18 “Possibilities of increasing the total number of loading and unloading places to more than four in exceptional cases”, in Annex II, a proposal for a new comment to Article 18 “Possibilities of increasing the total number of loading and unloading places to more than eight in exceptional cases”, in Annex III a generic proposal “Possibilities of

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

increasing the total number of loading and unloading points”. Annex IV of the said document states, for information purposes, the text of the comment “Possibility of using two TIR Carnets for a single TIR transport” which could remain, while deleting the comment to Article 18 altogether. The Working Party discussed the various options and established that there seemed to be a slight favour for the proposal in Annex II, (amended wording of the comment). The delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) as well as some other delegations stated that they could also see some merit in the proposal for a generic comment, as contained in Annex III of the said document. Delegations were requested to, once more, review both options. The Working Party decided to revert to the issue at its next session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, paras 19 and 20).

The Working Party is invited to resume its deliberations of the issue.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/2

(ii) eTIR

a. eTIR international system: interconnection projects

The Working Party will be informed about the latest developments in the eTIR international system, based on the draft version 4.3 version of the eTIR specifications. The Working Party will also be informed about the fact that all eighteen technical guides are now available on the eTIR documentation portal.²

The Working Party may also wish to recall 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. At its 157th session (June 2021), it was informed that, so far, the following countries had indicated an interest in such interconnection project, either in the form of a request for additional information or the willingness to start a connection project: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. It also took note that the following seven countries had already started an interconnection project: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey and Uzbekistan (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, para. 22).

The Working Party will be informed about additional countries that may have expressed an interest to interconnect their customs systems with the eTIR international system, progress made with eTIR interconnections projects as well as other related activities, such as the NCTS-eTIR Proof of Concept.

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

The Working Party may wish to be informed about the outcome of the third session of WP.30/GE.1 which took place on 13–15 September 2021, contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/6.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/6

(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.

² See <https://wiki.unece.org/display/ED/Technical+Guides>

(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**

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.

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, only Turkmenistan has acceded to the Convention, in 2016, becoming the fifty-eighth contracting party to the Convention.

More detailed information on the status of the Convention as well as on various depositary notifications is available on the ECE website.³

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

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may wish to recall that ITC, at its eighty-third session, adopted, inter alia, a decision in which it “entrusted the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) and WP.30 to include on the agenda of the meetings the issue of monitoring the implementation of Annex 9 “Facilitation of border crossing procedures for international rail freight traffic” to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (ITC Informal document No. 8/Rev.5 (2021), decision No. 57). In an effort to respond to this request, the Secretaries of SC.2 and WP.30 prepared a survey for circulation among participants of both working parties, as well as, possibly, TIR customs focal points. At its previous session (June 2021), the Working Party took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/4, in combination with Informal document WP.30 (2021) No. 6 by the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) with some additional proposals for questions to add to the draft survey. Due to a lack of time, the Working Party decided to revert to the issue at its next session, inviting delegations to carefully consider the accuracy and efficiency of the questions raised (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, paras. 36 and 37).

The Working Party is invited to express itself on the questions and the intended addressees as well as to provide the secretariat with instructions about the distribution of the survey and deadlines for reply.

Under this agenda item, the Working Party might wish to recall that, at its previous session, due to a lack of time, it did not consider another decision of ITC, taken at that same session, in which it “encouraged interested countries to accede to the United Nations Conventions in the field of border crossing facilitation, to foster digital information exchange, and promptly implement the provisions of Annex 11 to the TIR Convention, launching the eTIR system, and urged all contracting parties to comply with the provisions of the Harmonization Convention, 1982 for the sake of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic (ITC Informal document No. 8/Rev. 5 (2021), decision No. 58).” The Working Party decided to revert to this issue at its next session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, para. 38).

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

The Working Party is invited to express itself about the recommendation and, if possible, provide guidance to the secretariat how to proceed with the matter.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/4; Informal document WP.30 (2021) No. 6

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 156th session (February 2021), the delegation of the Russian Federation informed the meeting that, at the national level, all required procedures in preparation of signing the Convention had been completed and that a Government decree to that extent had been issued. Steps were currently being undertaken at the level of the Ministry of Transport in order to facilitate signing the Convention in New York. The delegation requested the Chair to repeat the call on interested countries to sign the Convention at the forthcoming session of ITC (23–26 February 2021) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/312, para. 32).⁴

The Working Party will be informed about the latest developments in this issue, if any.

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

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its 157th session (June 2021), it considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/5, containing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECE and the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme / Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (AIT/FIA) on the revitalization and digitalization of relevant United Nations inland transport conventions. On the understanding that no financial implications were involved on either side, the Working Party endorsed the MoU and invited parties to engage in its implementation. The Working Party mandated the secretariat to submit the MoU to the Executive Commission (EXCOM) of ECE for information. The Working Party requested parties to regularly report on progress made. The delegation of the European Commission encouraged stakeholders to draw from the recent experiences in the dematerialization of the ATA⁵ Carnet and to inform the World Customs Organization about this initiative. It also expressed a word of caution with regard to any Information Technology (IT) development which could lead to new IT developments in customs administrations (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, paras. 41 and 42).

The Working Party will be informed of any development with the MoU.

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

⁴ www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html.

⁵ ATA stands for "Admission Temporaire / Temporary Admission"

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.

In particular, the secretariat invites delegations wishing to report on its efforts to contribute to the digitalization of the TIR Convention, to do so under this agenda item (see also ECE/TRANS/WP.30/312, para. 15).

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 Containers et du Transport Intermodal

The Working Party may wish to be informed about recent activities of the Bureau International des Containers et du Transport Intermodal (BIC) as far as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party.

9. Other business

(a) Dates of the next sessions

The ECE secretariat has made tentative arrangements to hold the 159th session on 8, 9 and 11 (a.m.) February 2022 and the 160th session on 8–10 June 2022, 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 Working Party is invited to review the list of decisions taken at its 157th session and provide guidance to the secretariat.

| <i>Reference in final report (para.)</i> | <i>Short description of decision</i> | <i>Actor</i> | <i>Deadline</i> |
|--|--|--------------|-----------------------|
| 10 | 10. The Working Party established that, although there seemed limited interest of delegations in this exercise, it had nevertheless led to important insights and that, therefore, it seemed appropriate to continue this exercise at its next session. The secretariat requested delegations to further pursue their assessment of the future relevance of the legal instruments under the aegis of the Working Party and report back any development at the next session. | Delegations | Agenda |
| 20 | 20. The Working Party discussed the various options and established that, for now, there seemed to be a slight favour for the proposal in Annex II, (amended wording of the comment). The delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) as well as some other delegations stated that they could also see some merit in the proposal for a generic comment, as contained in Annex III of the said document. Delegations were requested to, once more, review both options. The Working Party decided to revert to the issue at its next session. | Delegations | Agenda |
| 26 | 26. Under this agenda item, the Working Party considered and approved 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.30/2021/6 and requested the secretariat to include them in the Q&A section of the eTIR website. | Secretariat | a.s.a.p. |
| 33 | 33. The Working Party considered and approved the final study, contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/3/Rev.1, subject to the deletion of paragraph 6 of the said document. With this deletion, the Working Party, at the request of AC.2, established that OIOS recommendation No. 7a should be considered implemented and closed. | Secretariat | a.s.a.p. |
| 37–38 | 37. The Working Party took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/4, in combination with Informal document WP.30 (2021) No. 6 by the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD) with some additional proposals for questions to add to the draft survey. Due to a lack of time, the Working Party decided to revert to the issue at its next session, inviting delegations to carefully consider the accuracy and efficiency of the questions raised. 38. Due to a lack of time, the Working Party did not consider another decision of ITC, taken at that same session, in which it “encouraged interested countries to accede to the United Nations Conventions in the field of border crossing facilitation, to foster digital information exchange, and promptly implement the provisions of Annex 11 to the TIR Convention, launching the eTIR system, and urged all contracting parties to comply with the provisions of the Harmonization Convention, 1982 for the sake of addressing the COVID-19 pandemic (ITC Informal document No. 8/Rev. 5 (2021), decision No. 58).” The Working Party decided to revert to this issue at its next session. | Secretariat | Agenda + document (?) |
| 42 | 42. The Working Party considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2021/5, containing the MoU [between ECE and AIT/FIA]. On the understanding that no financial implications were involved on either side, the Working Party endorsed the MoU and invited parties to engage in its implementation. The Working Party mandated the secretariat to submit the MoU to the Executive Commission (EXCOM) of ECE for information. The Working Party requested parties to regularly report on progress made. The delegation | Secretariat | a.s.a.p. |

| <i>Reference in final report (para.)</i> | <i>Short description of decision</i> | <i>Actor</i> | <i>Deadline</i> |
|--|--|--------------|--|
| | of the European Commission encouraged stakeholders to draw from the recent experiences in the dematerialization of the ATA ⁶ Carnet and to inform the World Customs Organization about this initiative. It also expressed a word of caution with regard to any Information Technology (IT) development which could lead to new IT developments in customs administrations. | | |
| 45–46 | <p>45. The Working Party decided to hold its 158th session on 12, 13 and 15 (a.m.) October 2021 and the 159th session on 8, 9 and 11 (a.m.) February 2022, subject to potential adjustments due to the ongoing COVID pandemic and the United Nations liquidity crisis.</p> <p>46. Against this background, the delegation of the European Union noted that the reduced time allotted to the meetings of WP.30 had led to the situation where the Working Party was no longer in a position to carefully consider agenda items, leading to the situation where various agenda items could not be discussed due to a lack of time. It called upon the competent services at UNOG to ensure that more time was allotted to future sessions of the Working Party in order to allow for a reasonable conduct of business.</p> | Secretariat | |
| | Prepare 158th session 12, 13 and 15–10 (a.m.) October 2021 | Secretariat | 19 July 2021 – agenda 3 August 2021 – documents |

10. Adoption of the report

In accordance with established practice, the Working Party will adopt the report on its 158th session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.

⁶ ATA stands for “Admission Temporaire / Temporary Admission”