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Inland Transport Committee

**Working Party on Customs Questions affecting
Transport**
**Group of Experts on Conceptual and
Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure**
Third session

Geneva, 13–15 (a.m.) September 2021

**Report of the Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical
Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure on its third
session**

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I. Attendance

1. The Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (further referred to as “the Group of Experts”) held its third and last session (in hybrid format) from 13 to 15 (a.m.) September 2021. Considering that no interpretation could be made available in the afternoons of 13 and 14 September 2021, the Group of Experts agreed to dedicate that time to agenda items which do not require decisions.
2. The session was attended by experts from Belarus, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Netherlands, Pakistan, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan. Experts from the European Commission and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) also attended.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/5

3. The Group of Experts adopted the provisional agenda, as contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/5. It further noted that two additional informal documents had been prepared by the secretariat and added them to the list of documents for consideration at the session. Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 13 (2021), available in the three ECE working languages, contained the latest consolidated version 4.3 of the eTIR concepts, including the amendments the Group of Experts had agreed with at its second session. Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 14 (2021), available in English only, contained the latest consolidated version 4.3 of the eTIR functional specifications, including the amendments the Group of Experts had agreed with at its second sessions, and replaced Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 8 (2021) announced in the agenda.
4. The Group of Expert regretted that not all documents were available in all ECE working languages, but noted that advance copies of the Russian version of documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/30/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/31/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/32/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/33/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/34/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/40 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/41 had, on an exceptional basis, been sent by email to Russian speaking delegations that had registered for the session.

III. Report of the second session of the Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (agenda item 2)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/4

5. The Group of Experts endorsed the report of its second session, which took place on 25–28 May 2021, as contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/4.

IV. eTIR international system (agenda item 3)

A. Progress report on the development of the eTIR international system

6. The Group of Experts welcomed a presentation by the secretariat on the developments of the eTIR international system since the second session of the Group of Experts, in particular that the secretariat was working on upgrading the eTIR international system and the eTIR data model to include the changes brought by version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications. The secretariat also presented notable improvements to the reliability of the source code of the eTIR international system and informed the meeting that it had completed writing the

eTIR technical specifications. The secretariat further reported achievements in the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB) and the completion of all technical guides describing the eTIR messages. Finally, the secretariat underlined its ongoing work to support customs authorities that had started their interconnection projects and presented its next area of focus on the conformance tests, which would include an additional guide.

B. Progress report on the connection of national customs systems to the eTIR international system

7. The Group of Experts noted that ten countries had started an eTIR interconnection project, i.e. Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were at the project initiation stage, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Uzbekistan at the design stage and Azerbaijan, Georgia, Pakistan, Tunisia and Turkey at the implementation stage.

8. The Group of Experts welcomed a presentations from Pakistan and Uzbekistan about their eTIR interconnections projects and encouraged administrations taking part in such projects to share their experience during sessions of intergovernmental bodies such as the Technical Implementation Body (TIB) which will be convened as of 2022.

C. NCTS-eTIR Proof of Concept

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/40 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/41

9. The Group of Experts welcomed a presentation by the European Commission of the eTIR-NCTS¹ Proof of Concept (PoC) contained in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/40 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/41. The Group of Experts took note that, while differences have been identified between the NCTS and eTIR requirements, the PoC seems to demonstrate that with minor adjustments of both systems, NCTS could serve as the gateway for eTIR for the European Union member states and provide a cost effective solution to allow connecting all European Union member states to the eTIR international system.

V. eTIR conceptual, functional and technical documentation version 4.3 (agenda item 4)

A. Introduction

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/9, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/10/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/11, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/12, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/13 and Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 11 (2021)

10. The Group of Experts took note of version 4.3 of the Introduction document, as contained in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/9, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/10/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/11, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/12 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/13. It also welcomed the consolidated versions of the introduction, in the three ECE working languages, contained in Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 11 (2021).

11. With reference to document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/9, page 20, point 7, the Group of Experts recalled a decision of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure at its twenty-seventh session regarding conformance testing. It confirmed that, while conformance test procedures, test cases and scenarios should be devised as a separate document (i.e. not included in the eTIR specifications) after the technical specifications would be finalized, the framework for conformance tests included in the technical specifications provide the necessary guidance for

¹ New Computerized Transit System

contracting parties to agree on how, from a high level perspective, conformance tests will be carried out.

12. Furthermore, the Group of Experts, acknowledging that the introduction document contains historical information about the eTIR project which will be continuously updated, agreed that the analysis of the TIR procedure, conducted at the start of the project, will not need to be amended to take into account amendments to the TIR Convention adopted after the analysis was finalized. However, it was of the view that the last paragraph of section b. of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/10/Rev.1, should be amended to reflect its historical nature and that, based on the text of Annex 11, a new chapter should be introduced to explain the complementary roles of TIB and of the contracting parties bound by Annex 11 in the framework of the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975 (AC.2) in managing the eTIR specifications.

13. With those two changes and the inclusion of the decisions taken at the session, the Group of Experts agreed with version 4.3 of the Introduction to the eTIR specifications.

B. eTIR concepts

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/14/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/15/Rev.1, Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 2 (2021) and Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 13 (2021).

14. The Group of Experts took note that version 4.3 of the eTIR concepts document was contained in documents: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/14/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/15/Rev.1. It also welcomed the consolidated version prepared by the secretariat, as contained in Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 13 (2021), which replaces Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 2 (2021) announced in the agenda and which contains all amendments agreed by the Group of Experts at its second session, i.e. the introduction of the suspension of a TIR transport, e.g. for intermodal transports, and a change in the cardinality of the packaging.

15. The Group of Experts considered a potential issue brought forward by an expert from the European Commission on the use of the fallback procedure, i.e. the accompanying document, in case the customs system of the country of departure, while functioning correctly, could not exchange messages with the eTIR international system, either because of issues in the communications channel or the eTIR international system being unavailable. After an in-depth discussion, the Group of Experts agreed that, to prevent inconveniences for the transport sector, such as having to always carry an empty paper TIR Carnet, and considering that the transport company would not be responsible for such technical problems, not to change the eTIR concepts and that countries along the itinerary should allow the TIR transport to enter their territory and process the accompanying document.

16. Finally, the Group of Experts requested the secretariat to replace the remaining references to eTIR web services in the Annex of the eTIR concepts (eTIR declaration mechanisms - ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/15/Rev.1) with the terminology “eTIR declaration mechanisms”.

17. With that change, the Group of Expert agreed with version 4.3 of the eTIR concepts.

C. eTIR functional specifications

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/22, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/23, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/24, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/25, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/26, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/27/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/28, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/29/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/16/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/17/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/18/Rev.1 and Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 14 (2021)

18. The Group of Experts considered version 4.3 of the eTIR functional specifications, contained in documents: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/22, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/23, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/24, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/25, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/26, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/27/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/28, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/29/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/16/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/17/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/18/Rev.1 as well as the consolidated version prepared by the secretariat, as contained in Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 14 (2021), which replaces Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 8 (2021) announced in the agenda and which contains all the amendments agreed by the Group of Expert at its second session. It noted that, in view of the fact that various documents had not been translated on time for the meeting, the secretariat could only prepare Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 14 (2021) in English.

19. The Group of Experts agreed with version 4.3 of the eTIR functional specifications.

D. eTIR technical specifications

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/30/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/31/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/32/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/33/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/34/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/42, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/43, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/44, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/45, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/46, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/47, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/48, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/49 and Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 12 (2021)

20. The Group of Experts considered version 4.3 of the eTIR technical specifications, contained in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/30/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/31/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/32/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/33/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/34/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/42, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/43, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/44, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/45, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/46, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/47, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/48 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/49, as well as the consolidated version contained in Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 12 (2021). It noted that, in view of the fact that various documents had not been translated on time for the meeting, Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 12 (2021) could only be prepared in English. The Group of Experts however noted that Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 9 (2021), which was prepared for the second session of the Group of Experts, was now available in all ECE working languages.

21. The secretariat started by presenting the updated table of contents of the technical specifications, which indicates where the contents of the various documents fit into the consolidated version contained in Informal document WP.30/GE.1 No. 12 (2021). The secretariat then presented in detail the new parts that had been finalized for this last session of the Group of Experts, i.e. part four on the communication between eTIR stakeholders and the eTIR international system, part five on the technical fallback mechanisms and some new annexes. The Group of Experts congratulated the secretariat for the work done, particularly for being able to complete the technical specifications on time.

22. The Group of Experts agreed with version 4.3 of the eTIR technical specifications.

E. Amendments

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/50 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/51

23. The Group of Experts took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/50, which contains the Decision of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission of December 11, 2013 No. 254 (as amended on May 29, 2018) "On the structures and formats

of electronic copies of customs documents", and regretted that the English and French versions of the document were not available.

24. An expert from the Russian Federation introduced the document and stressed the need to align the structures and content of eTIR messages to those used in the Eurasian Customs Union (EACU), e.g. by including the value of the goods and to ensure the legal significance of the messages exchanged via the eTIR international system. He also stressed that text fields in the eTIR messages could only be provided by the transport operator in one language, making it complicated for the countries of the EACU to have a description of the goods in Russian for transports entering their customs territory. The Group of Experts reiterated the suggestion to carry out a detailed analysis, similar to the NCTS-eTIR PoC, aimed at identifying the differences in the requirements of the EACU and those contained in the eTIR specifications, in order to formulate concrete proposals, targeted at bridging identified gaps, which would be considered by TIB while preparing version 4.4 of the eTIR specifications.

25. The Group of Experts also considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2021/51 which contains proposed amendments to the eTIR specifications. It noted that all the proposed amendments, except the first two ("Itinerary" and "Certificate of approval for containers"), had already been integrated in the documents composing the eTIR specifications issued for the session, and took the following decisions:

1. Itinerary

26. Recalling its discussion on the matter at its second session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/4, para. 19), the Group of Experts considered a proposal to change the itinerary from the level of countries to the level of customs offices, to ensure that countries in which the advance data is processed by a specific customs office, e.g. Turkey, would be in a position to send the advance data to the relevant customs office. Several experts expressed concerns with the proposal and suggested that more flexibility should be envisaged. The Group of Experts discussed various options to introduce such flexibility. A first option would be to keep the itinerary at the level of countries and include an optional attribute to indicate customs offices. Such option would require that transport operators would know for which countries they have to provide such information and run the risk of facing penalties if they do not provide the required information. Alternatively, the customs office attribute could be made dependant and a condition added to ensure that for certain countries the attribute would have to be provided. This would require all countries and the eTIR international system to validate advance data against this condition. Finally, a last option would be to introduce flexibility by making the provision of the intended itinerary mandatory at the beginning of the transport but not oblige transport operators to amend this information in case they need to change border crossing, i.e. due to the traffic conditions or if the customs authorities would have forced them to use an exit border point other than the one they had indicated in the intended itinerary.

27. After extensive discussions, the Group of Experts was not in a position to agree on any of those options and requested the secretariat to bring the issue to the first session of TIB.

2. Certificate of approval for containers

28. The Group of Experts agreed with the proposed changes and requested the secretariat to include them in version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications.

3. Minor corrections

29. The Group of Experts agreed with the proposed minor corrections.

4. Add a Sequence number in the Subcontractor class

30. The Group of Experts took note of the withdrawal of the proposal.

5. Notification to customs in case of changes to the Seals

31. The Group of Experts agreed with the proposed amendment.

6. Add new codes in code list 16 “Message function” (UN/EDIFACT 1225)

32. The Group of Experts took note that codes T1, T3, T4 and T5 had already been added to code list 16. The Group of Experts agreed with the proposal of the secretariat to issue a Data Maintenance Request (DMR) to UN/CEFACT to rename code 69 and to add codes T2, T6, T7 and T8.

7. Improve the pseudo code of condition C001

33. The Group of Experts agreed with the proposed amendment.

8. Add a new code list 28 “Controlling agency” (UN/EDIFACT 0051)

34. The Group of Experts agreed with the proposed amendments.

9. Add a new code list 31 “Custom office role”

35. The Group of Experts agreed with the proposed amendment.

10. Cardinality of the classes in the E11 message

36. The Group of Experts took note that the “Amendment” class of the E11 message should also remain required as detailed in the 5th row of table 1. With this change, the Group of Experts agreed with the proposed amendments.

11. Updated list of error codes

37. The Group of Experts agreed with the updated list of error codes.

12. Updated list of rules and conditions

38. The Group of Experts agreed with the updated list of rules and conditions (including the change of condition C005 agreed under V.E.2).

VI. Other business (agenda item 5)

39. The secretariat recalled the discussion that took place at the previous session regarding the cardinality of the national itinerary which can be imposed by customs at offices of departure or entry (en route) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/4, para. 17). It informed the Group of Experts that, further to a survey among TIR focal points, it appears that, while the “national itinerary” is often used to indicate the customs office of destination or exit (en route), it can also be provided in other ways, such as at the level of countries in a customs union or indicating specific routes. Considering that providing additional flexibility with regard to the national itinerary would be complicated at this stage, the Group of Experts agreed to leave it unchanged in version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications and suggested that TIB could consider this issue while devising version 4.4.

VII. Adoption of the report and follow up actions (agenda item 6)

40. The Group of Experts took note that the report of the session will be submitted to the 159th session of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) and that the Chair would orally report on the results of the three sessions at the October session of WP.30 (158th session). The Group further noted that version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications, as agreed by the Group of Expert, will be transmitted to the TIB at its first session, scheduled on 18–21 January 2022, and to the 77th session of AC.2 (February 2022).

41. The Group of Experts expressed satisfaction with the completion of its challenging mandate and took the opportunity of its last session to express gratitude to all the work that has been carried out in the past, in particular the invaluable contributions of Mr. Hans Greven from the Netherlands, who could not take part in the last meeting but had greatly contributed to the elaboration of various versions of the eTIR specifications, including the last one.