



Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Eighty-fifth session**

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Item 7 (o) of the provisional agenda

Strategic Questions of a Horizontal and Cross-Sectoral Policy or Regulatory Nature: Strengthening Border Crossing Facilitation (TIR Convention, eTIR project, Harmonization Convention and Other Cross-Border and Customs Transit Facilitation Measures)**Strengthening border crossing facilitation (TIR Convention, eTIR project, Harmonization Convention and other customs transit facilitation measures)****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

This document summarizes the activities in 2022 of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975 (AC.2), the Technical Implementation Body (TIB) (for contracting parties bound by Annex 11 of the TIR Convention), the Administrative Committee for the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (AC.3) and the ECE/TIR secretariat in the area of border crossing.

The Committee will be informed about the main outcome of the 159th, 160th and 161st sessions of WP.30 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/318, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/320 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/322) and will be invited to **take note** of the activities of AC.2 in the year 2022, including, but not limited to amendments adopted (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/157 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/159).

In particular (but not limited to), the Committee will be informed about:

- (a) The latest developments of the eTIR international system and the ongoing eTIR interconnection projects, leading up to the first eTIR transport (see also ECE/TRANS/2023/29);
- (b) The outcome of the first (January 2022) and second (August–September 2022) sessions of the Technical Implementation Body (TIB) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/4);
- (c) The latest developments in the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB), making the electronic submission of data to ITDB mandatory, in launching the eTIR (web) portal for holders, as well as in the new mobile applications dedicated to TIR Carnet holders and customs officers;



- (d) A series of workshops organized in order to promote accession to the TIR Convention in other regions, especially in Africa, as well as to inform and encourage customs authorities about interconnecting their national customs systems with the eTIR international system;
- (e) The twelfth revised version of the TIR Handbook;
- (f) The latest developments in the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls for Goods, 1982;
- (g) The preparation of a practical guide to cross border facilitation (in collaboration with OSCE);
- (h) The latest developments in the Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-luggage Carried in International Traffic by Rail;
- (i) The activities undertaken in 2022 by ECE and the International Touring Alliance / International Automobile Federation (AIT/FIA) within the framework of a memorandum of understanding on the revitalization and digitalization of relevant United Nations inland transport conventions and, in particular the development of an eCPD (Carnet de Passage en Douane) system;
- (j) The follow -up actions taken by WP.30 in 2022 in aligning its work with the ITC Strategy.

I. Background and Mandate

1. This document has been prepared in accordance with the 2022 Programme of Work of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) (ECE/TRANS/316, paragraph 33 and ECE/TRANS/2022/8, programme activity 4 (1): Customs Questions affecting Transport). It reports on the progress made in 2022 by the contracting parties, the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975 (AC.2), the Technical Implementation Body (TIB) (for contracting parties bound by Annex 11 of the TIR Convention), the Administrative Committee for the Harmonization Convention, 1982 (AC.3) and the ECE/TIR secretariat in the area of border crossing facilitation, including among others:

- Activities and developments of the TIR Convention and the functioning of the TIR system.
- Progress made in the eTIR project.
- Developments in the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention).
- Developments in the Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-luggage Carried in International Traffic by Rail.
- Developments in the 1954 Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles and the 1956 Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles.
- Requests from ITC to align the activities of WP.30 with the ITC Strategy until 2030.

II. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets, 1975 (TIR Convention)

A. Amendment Proposals to the Convention

2. Since 16 June 2021, the TIR Convention, 1975 entered into force for Egypt. The convention has 77 contracting parties. The TIR system has 65 active TIR countries.

3. In 2022, the following amendments entered into force for all contracting parties to the Convention:
 - On 4 February 2022: various proposals to amend the body and annexes of the TIR Convention, 1975, including those that make the electronic submission of data to the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB) obligatory;
 - On 25 June 2022: a proposal to amend Article 18 and Annexes 1 and 6 of the TIR Convention entered into force. With this, the number of places of loading and unloading per TIR Carnet increased from four to, maximally, eight. The layout of the TIR Carnet, version 1 and version 2, has been adjusted accordingly.¹
4. More information on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.²

B. International TIR Data Bank and Electronic Tools of the TIR secretariat

5. On 4 February 2022, the electronic submission of data to ITDB became obligatory with respect to all parties to the Convention.
6. At its seventy-eighth session (October 2022), AC.2 was informed about developments related to ITDB and other information technology projects managed by the TIR secretariat. AC.2 took note of the current status of data recordings in ITDB and, in particular, of the following figures: 1,161 web application users, 30,599 authorized holders recorded, 271 stamps and seals recorded, 2,783 customs offices recorded and of the web service usage for the past years. AC.2 also took note of the latest improvements of ITDB, in particular the deployment in production of the holder status change email notification in ITDB (as of 2 August 2022), the start of the user acceptance testing of the eTIR portal (in September 2022), as well as the progress in the development of the two eTIR mobile apps, intended for holder staff and customs officers (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/159, paragraph 21).

C. National and Regional TIR Workshops and Seminars

7. At its seventy-seventh session (February 2022), AC.2 took note that the secretariat (remotely) took part in: (a) the annual technology event of the World Customs Organization (WCO) in Brussels (20 and 21 November 2021) and (b) a seminar in Amman, organized by the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) on the temporary importation of private (1954) and commercial (1956) conventions as well as other United Nations legal instruments in the field of temporary importation (24 November 2021) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/157, paragraph 14). At its seventy-eighth session (October 2022) the secretariat informed AC.2 that it had participated in a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) webinar on the "Future of Transit in Mongolia: Challenges and Opportunities" (25 May 2022) and that it had organized, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, a training workshop in Casablanca, Morocco (28 and 29 June 2022). Transport/trade and customs experts from several sub-Saharan countries participated in the workshop. ESCWA and ECA were present at the workshop where they presented the current status of border crossings in their regions. On 23 September 2022, the secretariat presented the benefits of the TIR Convention and, in particular, eTIR to a delegation of the Cross Border Road Transport Agency (CBRTA) of South Africa. The secretariat further informed AC.2 about upcoming events, such as an online TIRExB seminar on the intermodal aspects of the TIR procedure (17 October 2022), a workshop in Djibouti to promote accession to the TIR and CMR³ Conventions for African countries (tentative date: 7 and 8 December 2022) and a workshop in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) dedicated to the development of an eTIR corridor Kazakhstan–Uzbekistan–

¹ See C.N.81.2022.TREATIES-XI.A.16 of 1 April 2022.

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

³ Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road.

Turkmenistan–Islamic Republic of Iran–Pakistan (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2022/159, paragraphs 22 and 23).

D. eTIR

(i). eTIR International System: Interconnection Projects

8. At its seventy-seventh session (February 2022), AC.2 took note of the latest developments and the ongoing eTIR interconnection projects, such as those of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Pakistan, Tunisia, Türkiye and Uzbekistan. AC.2 also noted the next priorities and related tasks of the secretariat, especially the preparation of conformance tests (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/157, paragraph 28). At its seventy-eighth session (October 2022), AC.2 took note that, on 7 October 2022, the secretariat had organized a workshop on the conformance tests with countries ready to start implementing eTIR without further delay (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Pakistan, Türkiye and Uzbekistan) as well as with IRU (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/159, paragraph 39). For more detailed information on eTIR, please refer to document ECE/TRANS/2023/29.

(ii). Technical Implementation Body

9. The first session of the TIB took place from 18 to 21 January 2022. TIB elected Mr. P. Arsic (Serbia) as Chair for its sessions in 2022. During the session, TIB adopted version 4.3 of the eTIR technical specifications, as contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/5-ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2022/14, and confirmed their alignment with version 4.3 of the eTIR concepts (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2022/12-ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/3) and the eTIR functional (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/4-ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2022/13) specifications including some amendments thereto, contained in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/6 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/7, pending their adoption by AC.2. TIB also adopted its Rules of Procedure (RoP). At its seventy-eighth session (February 2022), AC.2, in line with annex 11, article 5, adopted the eTIR concepts and the eTIR functional specifications, including the amendments adopted by TIB at its first session. This provides a complete legal and technical basis for those countries that are willing to implement the eTIR procedure, while noting that the ongoing work will allow all other contracting parties to annex 11 to bring forward their requirements for consideration by TIB and AC.2 in version 4.4 of the eTIR specifications (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/157, paragraphs 29–33).

10. The second session of TIB took place from 30 August to 2 September 2022. TIB discussed possible amendment proposals for version 4.4 of the eTIR specifications, inter alia, the data related to a prescribed national itinerary and a notification mechanism in case of a forced change in the itinerary, the submission by holders of text fields in more than one language, the distribution of eTIR code lists and a notification mechanism when the transport will not reach a country. With regard to the conduct of the second session, the Chair raised concerns about the fact that TIB did not attain the required quorum (of 19 contracting parties bound by annex 11), forcing it to apply the silence procedure, as outlined in provisions 26 and 27 of its ToR. The silence procedure was initiated on 7 September 2022 and finished on 19 October 2022, after which the final report was issued (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/4). He stressed the crucial importance for contracting parties, bound by annex 11 of the TIR Convention, to ensure due representation at each session, in order to take part in the roll-call and actively contribute to the future of the TIR system. Finally, he solicited candidates to act as Vice-Chair for the remainder of 2022. Recognizing her expertise with eTIR, AC.2 welcomed the candidacy of Ms. L. Jacobs (Belgium) and recalled that the election would formally take place at the December 2022 session of TIB (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/159, paragraphs 39 and 40). The third session of TIB took place on 19 and 20 December 2022.

E. Prolongation of the Authorization of the International Road Transport Union for the Years 2023–2025

11. At its seventy-seventh session (February 2022), AC.2 formally decided to prolong the authorization of IRU for printing and distributing TIR Carnets and the organizing and functioning of the guarantee system for a period of three years (2023–2025) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/157, paragraph 35).

12. At its seventy-eighth session (October 2022), AC.2 mandated ECE and IRU⁴ to proceed with signing the new agreement at the earliest convenience, but, in any case, well before 15 November 2022, on the understanding that annex I would contain exactly the same figures as for the budget of TIRExB and the TIR secretariat for the year 2023, contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2022/15 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/159, paragraph 46).

F. Twelfth Revised Version of the TIR Handbook

13. The twelfth revised version of the TIR Handbook, to be issued in 2023, is under preparation. TIRExB is in the process of drafting a set of new examples of best practice (to Explanatory Note 0.49 and comment thereto on the use of authorized consignor and consignee and to a comment to article 1 (o) on the use of subcontractors) to add to the already existing set of examples. On top of a PDF version, the secretariat intends to produce a more interactive, online version.

III. International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention)

A. Status of the Convention

14. The Committee may wish to note that, in 2022, no new accessions to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 ("Harmonization Convention") took place. Thus, since the entry into force of the Convention for Turkmenistan, on 27 February 2017, the number of contracting parties to the Harmonization Convention stands at 58.

B. Issues in the Application of the Convention

15. At its 161st session (October 2022), WP.30 reviewed document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2009/8, containing a survey on the application of annex 8 of the Harmonization Convention. WP.30 mandated the secretariat to circulate the survey in the spring of 2023, with the regular delegates from governments (and, in the absence thereof, TIR focal points) as addressees. WP.30 also recalled the survey on the application of annex 9 of the Harmonization Convention (contained in Informal document SC.2 No. 3 (2021)), conducted by the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) at the request of ITC, with a deadline of 31 March 2022. WP.30 took note of document ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2022/10 by the secretariat of SC.2 and containing the responses to the survey. WP.30 decided to consider the document at its spring 2023 session, based on the findings of SC.2 at its seventy-sixth session (November 2022) (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/322, paragraphs 26 and 27).

⁴ International Road Transport Union.

C. Preparation of a Practical Guide to Cross Border Facilitation (in Collaboration with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe)

16. The ECE secretariat, in collaboration with the Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), is preparing “A practical guide to cross-border facilitation”. To some extent, this publication will build further on the earlier joint OSCE-ECE Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossing (published in 2012). The focus will be on transport facilitation in inland transport and it presents a good opportunity to promote some of the United Nations transport and border crossing facilitation tools, including TIR/eTIR, CMR/eCMR, etc. It is expected that the work will be finalized by mid-2023.

IV. Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-luggage Carried in International Traffic by Rail, of 22 February 2019

17. The Committee may wish to note that no further information was made available in the course of 2022 on any action related to accession to this Convention. At present, only Chad has signed the Convention, on 26 September 2019.

V. Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)

A. Status of the Conventions

18. The Committee may wish to note that, in 2022, the status of the Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles had not changed, and that the Conventions currently have, 80 and 26 contracting parties, respectively.

B. Issues in the Application of the Conventions

19. At its 161st session (October 2022), WP.30 was briefed about the latest development in the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between ECE and the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme / Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (AIT/FIA) on revitalising and digitalizing relevant United Nations inland transport conventions and, in particular, the development of an eCPD (Carnet de Passage en Douane) system. The team had started preparing the concepts of the future system and would submit a document for consideration by WP.30 at one of its future sessions (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/322, paragraph 30).

20. Under this agenda item, ITC may wish to note that, on 9 June 2022, ECE and FIA jointly organized a high-level workshop, dedicated to the functioning of the 1954 and 1956 temporary importation Conventions and their digitalization. More than 140 participants from 53 countries, various intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations attended the workshop. In addition, on 5 and 6 July 2022, the secretariat participated in a FIA eConference “A Global Voice – Empower Sustainable growth”, delivering, inter alia, a presentation on the United Nations legal instruments in the era of digitalization (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/322, paragraph 31).

VI. Requests from the Inland Transport Committee

Alignment of the Work of the Working Party with the Inland Transport Committee Strategy

21. At its 161st session (October 2022), WP.30 recalled that, at its previous session (June 2022), it had taken note that ITC, at its seventy-fifth session (February 2022), had welcomed the progress achieved during 2021 by its Working Parties in implementing the ITC Strategy until 2030. In the context of this activity, WP.30 noted that the secretariat had transmitted the findings from its 158th (October 2021) and 159th (February 2022) sessions to ITC, stating that WP.30 considered its contribution to this exercise finalized (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/320, paragraph 9).

22. At that session, WP.30 also recalled the new Terms of Reference (ToR) of ITC (E/RES/2022/L.4) (see ECE/TRANS/316) and, in particular, that ITC now adopts the so-called hybrid approach for membership, meaning that non-ECE member States can participate as full members in segments of ITC sessions that deal with legal instruments to which they are contracting parties and remain in a consultative capacity in other parts (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/320, paragraph 10). WP.30 requested the secretariat to prepare, for consideration at its February 2023 session, a document comparing the new ITC ToR with the existing ToR of WP.30, in order to assess whether any adjustment seemed appropriate (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/322, paragraph 6).

23. Furthermore, ITC may wish to recall that, in 2021, Denmark and Luxembourg had denounced the Customs Convention Concerning Spare Parts used for Repairing EUROPE Wagons, of 15 January 1958. On 11 March 2022, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, issued depositary notification C.N.76.2022.TREATIES-XI.A.12, informing that, on 11 March 2022, France had denounced this Convention. The denunciation took effect for France on 11 September 2022. At the seventy-eighth session (October 2022), the delegate of Switzerland informed WP.30 that his country had started proceedings towards denouncing the Convention. As the procedure could be concluded at the level of the Federal Council, it was expected that the result could be announced at the spring 2023 session. With this action, this Convention would have five remaining contracting parties: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Netherlands. In accordance with its article 8, the Convention will cease to have effect if, for any period of twelve consecutive months after its entry into force, the number of contracting parties is less than three (French authentic text). The secretariat informed WP.30 that the pool established by this Convention had been relinquished in 2002 (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/322, paragraph 5).

VII. Considerations by the Committee

24. The Committee may wish to take note of and support the above activities of contracting parties, WP.30, AC.2, AC.3 and the TIR secretariats in the year 2022.