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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Working Party on Road Transport

##### Group of Experts on the Operationalization of eCMR

###### Fourth session

Geneva, 25-27 January 2023

## Report of the fourth session of Group of Experts on the Operationalization of the Additional Protocol

### I. Attendance

1. The Group of Experts on operationalization of eCMR (GE.22) held its fourth session on 25 to 27 January 2023 Chaired by Mr. Elyor Khakimov, Uzbekistan.
2. Representatives of the following ECE member States participated: Germany, Moldova Republic of, Sweden, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.
3. The following intergovernmental organization attended: Organization of Turkic States. Non-governmental organizations included Azerbaijan International Road Carriers Association (ABADA), the Association of the International Automobile Carriers of the Republic of Tajikistan (ABBAT), Association of Bulgarian Enterprises in International Transport and Roads (AEBTRI), International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), International Road Transport Union (IRU) and Turkmen Association of International Road Carriers (THADA). The Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of UNECE also attended.

### II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

4. The Group of Experts adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.22/7).

### III. Report of the third session (agenda item 2)

5. The Group of Experts noted the report of its third session which was approved on 28 November 2022 (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.22/4). It included the list of decisions which was adopted by the Group on 11 November 2022.

## **IV. Programme of work (agenda item 3)**

### **A. Article 5 of the Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road concerning the Electronic Consignment Note (Additional Protocol)**

6. The Group of Experts discussed ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.22/2023/1, provided comments and requested the secretariat to either update it or to prepare a new document using it for the next session by taking into account the discussions of the Group at this session.

7. To assist the secretariat, IRU, FIATA, and other interested participants were encouraged to provide specific input to the document, including suggested new or amended text on the proposed concepts and processes.

8. These concepts and processes when agreed will form the basis of the high-level architecture of the future eCMR system as well as the functional specifications. If the group is to complete its work within its current two-year mandate/timeframe, these concepts and processes should be discussed and agreed at the next session.

### **B. Customs practices concerning the use of consignment notes**

9. The secretariat tabled Informal document No. 1/Rev.1 on the results of the survey concerning the use of consignment notes by customs authorities. A presentation was also made on the twenty-four responses that were received. Most of the respondents were customs authorities, with the remainder being other government agencies or the private sector.

10. The Group of Experts noted the extensive use of paper consignment notes by Customs authorities in particular in the Central Asian region and in non-European Union countries. Where used, paper consignment notes are stamped or marked. The common reasons for using paper consignment notes are to obtain shipment information, to prevent fraud by document substitution and for tracking the passage of goods through customs authorities. Presently, most of the respondents do not use electronic consignment notes.

11. At its previous session, the Group of Experts had discussed ECE/TRANS/SC.1/GE.22/2022/3/Rev.1 on the uses of paper consignment notes by customs authorities in different regions. The Group agreed to keep populating the document with information provided by customs and other public authorities, including the information on cabotage provided by the Danish police at its third session.

### **C. Good practices from other digitalization initiatives**

12. The Group of Experts received, and expressed its appreciation for, the presentations received from Türkiye on their e-permits and Ukraine on their e-TTN pilot project respectively.

13. Türkiye partnered with Uzbekistan in its e-permits project in which an application for an e-permit by a transport operator is made either online (for Uzbek operators) or through the e-governmental portal (for Turkish operators). Data is processed by the relevant Ministry of Transport and sent simultaneously to the other Ministry of Transport. When the e-permit is provided at the borders, the relevant customs authority confirms the permit through its Ministry of Transport. Türkiye plans to extend the project to Ukraine and is presently in discussions with Ukrainian authorities.

14. Ukraine introduced its electronic waybill (e-TTN) pilot project including the components of the system, the lifecycle, participants, legislation supporting e-TTN, and the range of potential scenarios. The future plans of Ukraine are to gradually transition to using e-TTNs by rejecting paper forms, joining the project with the implementation of the eCMR Additional Protocol within its Eastern Partnership countries, and for e-TTN to become a basis for the digitalization of Ukraine's domestic multimodal transportation.

15. The Group requested the secretariat to invite if possible experts to present on the following digitalization initiatives at the next session: eCIM and Certex.

## **V. Other business (agenda item 4)**

16. The secretariat informed the Group that there were two new accessions to the eCMR Additional Protocol since the last session: Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan.

17. The secretariat also informed the Group that Iran (the Islamic Republic of) had tabled Informal document No. 2 which contained comments in relation to the discussion of the Group of Experts at this session for their consideration.

18. The Group of Experts welcomed the suggestion by the secretariat to share written comments received from previous participants to the Group who are unable to attend in person on the website.

19. THADA suggested that a workshop or meeting be organized this year to discuss how to digitalize current practices using CMR paper consignment notes. Invitees could include industry/the private sector, government officers, lawyers and information technology (IT) experts. The intention would be for participants to be better informed to provide input to the discussions and documents of the Group of Experts, and for a list of recommendations to be prepared as part of the workshop/meeting and provided to the Group of Experts. Ukraine expressed support for this suggestion.

20. There was no other business.

## **VI. Adoption of list of decisions (agenda item 5)**

21. The Group of Experts adopted a list of decisions for the session (per paragraphs 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 15, 18 and 19).

## **VII. Date of next session (agenda item 6)**

22. The next session of the Group of the Experts is scheduled to take place on 3 to 5 April 2023. The deadline for the submission of formal documents is 24 February 2023.

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