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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

163rd session

Geneva, 8 and 9 (a.m.) June 2023

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the 163rd session*,**

to be held in person at the Palais des Nations, Geneva. on Thursday 8 June 2023 (10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3 p.m.–6 p.m.) and continuing on Friday 9 June 2023, immediately after the eightieth session of the TIR Administrative Committee, and finishing at 1 p.m, Room VII.

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:

Amendment proposals to 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 (including those holding long-duration badge) are requested to register online at: <https://indico.un.org/event/1002173/> 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.

- (c) Application of the Convention:
 - (i) Comments to the TIR Convention;
 - (ii) eTIR:
 - a. eTIR international system: interconnection projects;
 - b. International TIR Data Bank.
 - (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) World Customs Organization.
- 9. Other business:
 - (a) Dates of the next session;
 - (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.30/325

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 might wish to recall that, at its previous session (February 2023), it considered the proposals in annex III of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2023/1, containing suggestions for alignment of the WP.30 Terms of Reference (ToR) with the revised ToR of ITC.

The Director of the Sustainable Transport Division introduced the topic by clarifying the global dimension of the seventeen legal instruments that are under the auspices of the Working Party. By rebranding its name, the Working Party would have an opportunity to exceed its regional dimension, that could scare off countries from outside the region.

In a first reaction, various delegations expressed their concern about dropping 'customs' from the name of the Working Party. This could, potentially, lead to a shift to more generic transport matters, at the detriment of the customs-related expertise of the delegates attending sessions of WP.30. It was also felt that such change might disregard the coordinating role of customs in matters such as, but not limited to, immigration (visa) or the performance of various controls on behalf of other border agencies. Keeping the name of WP.30 as it stands today would not limit the possibility to work on extending and modernizing the concerned legal instruments, for example by focusing more on Information Technology.

Wrapping up this first round of discussions, the Working Party concluded that it was not yet in a position to take any decision on the revised ToR. However, the first discussions on the matter had shown that there was large support that customs should stay at the core of the activities of WP.30 and that this should remain properly reflected in its name. The Working Party further decided to only revert to the proposed strategy and action plan (as proposed in ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2023/2) once agreement on the ToR had been reached (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/324, paras. 6–9).

The Working Party may also wish to take note of various decisions by ITC at its eighty-fifth session (February 2023) in relation to the above topic, namely:

- “5. In line with the decisions at its sessions since the adoption of the ITC Strategy, the Committee **welcomed with satisfaction** the progress achieved during 2022 by the Committee and its Working Parties in implementing the ITC Strategy until 2030, **invited them** to continue implementing the next steps and **decided** to include a follow-up step under Task 4.3¹ as follows: Operationalize ITC ToR and Rules of Procedure (RoP) and achieve necessary alignments to ITC ToR/RoP by its subsidiary bodies. The Committee further **invited** the secretariat, in collaboration with the Bureau, to continue monitoring the implementation of the Strategy and report at its

¹ 4.3: Adjust ITC rules of procedures (see ECE/TRANS/2023/3)

next annual meeting on progress made, and when suitable, propose adjustments to the next steps.

6. **Took note** of the update on the status of the alignment of the RoPs of its subsidiary bodies, in line with its decision at its eighty-second session, **expressed its satisfaction** about the progress made; **thanked** those Working Parties that had completed their assessment and reported back to the Committee; expressed **its appreciation** to SC.2, SC.3, WP.15/AC.2 and WP.24 for their swift actions on this front, **encouraged all Working Parties to review and align** their ToRs to those of the Committee, as appropriate and **requested** those Working Parties that did not have the opportunity to do so yet, to inform the Committee at latest at its eighty-sixth plenary session in 2024 about the status of their alignment;
7. **Noted with interest** the analysis contained in ECE/TRANS/2023/4 and **invited** its Working Parties to take into consideration the “Draft Recommendations for Harmonized Elements in the Terms of Reference of ITC Working Parties”, as contained in Annex II of ECE/TRANS/2023/4, in their continued alignment efforts, when and as appropriate (ITC Informal document No. 6/Rev.5, decisions 5–7).

Further to these decisions of ITC, WP.30 is invited to continue its considerations of the topic. To facilitate discussions, the Working Party may wish to consider document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2023/1/Rev.1, by the secretariat and containing amended proposals to revise the ToR of the Working Party.

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may wish to note that, on 17 March 2023, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, has issued depositary notification C.N.76.2023.TREATIES-XI.A.12, informing that, on 17 March 2023, Switzerland has denounced the Customs Convention concerning Spare Parts Used for Repairing EUROP Wagons, of 15 January 1958. The denunciation shall take effect for Spare Parts Used for Repairing EUROP Wagons will have five remaining contracting parties: Switzerland on 17 September 2023. With this action, the Customs Convention concerning 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.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2023/1/Rev.1; ECE/TRANS/2023/3; ECE/TRANS/2023/4;
ITC Informal document No. 6/Rev.5

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 note that, on 27 March 2023, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, has issued the following depositary notification: C.N.92.2023.TREATIES-XI.A.16, informing that, on 27 March 2023, Iraq has deposited its instruments of accession to the TIR Convention, 1975. In accordance with its Article 53, paragraph 2, the Convention will enter into force for Iraq on 27 September 2023. With the accession of Iraq, the TIR Convention will have seventy-eight contracting parties. Since the activation of the system for Qatar, TIR operations can be established with sixty-five countries. Detailed information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.²

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

(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**

There are, at present, no comments to provisions of the Convention, submitted for consideration by the Working Party.

(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 version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications. The Working Party will also be informed about the status of the various interconnection projects.

b. International TIR Data Bank

The Working Party will be informed about developments related to the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB) and other information technology projects managed by the TIR secretariat, as far as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party.

(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.

(iv) TIR-related electronic data interchange systems

The Working Party will be informed by the International Road Transport Union (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.

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may wish to recall that the secretariat, in close collaboration with the delegation of the European Union and IRU, prepared a draft survey, contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2023/3. The survey was sent on 14 March 2023 to customs TIR focal points with 31 May 2023 as deadline for reply. The Working Party will be briefed about the (tentative) outcome of the survey, if any (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/324, para.20).

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2023/3

4. International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of 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, at its previous session (February 2023), it mandated the secretariat to circulate the 5-year survey on the application of Annex 8 of the Convention among the regular delegates from governments (and, in the absence thereof, TIR focal points) as addressees in April 2023 with 1 July 2023 as deadline for reply (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/324/para. 26).

Finally, the Working Party may wish to recall under this agenda item that, at its previous session (February 2023), it was informed that the ECE secretariat, in collaboration with the Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), was preparing “A practical guide to cross-border facilitation”, which would be available, in English, by mid-2023. The focus of this publication, which builds on the earlier joint OSCE-ECE Handbook of best practices at border crossings (published in 2012), is 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. The Working Party took note that the ITC would be requested to mandate the secretariat to prepare this publication as an official United Nations publication in the three ECE working languages, and to explore ways to do this by 2024, if possible. The secretariat informed the Working Party that a draft of the publication would be shared with delegations, with a request for comments or additional input (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/324, para. 28).

The secretariat has prepared Informal documents WP.30 (2023) 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, containing the first four chapters and an annex of this publication, for comments or additional input by the Working Party. As the Informal documents are in Word-format, delegates are invited to insert their comments/additions directly into the text and submit their amended versions to the secretariat (roel.janssens@un.org).

Documentation

Informal documents WP.30 (2023) No. 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8.

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 being undertaken at the level of the Ministry of Transport in order to facilitate signing the Convention in New York (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/312, para. 32). The Working Party further may wish to recall that, on 26 September 2019, Chad had become signatory to the Convention.⁴

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

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

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

Under this agenda item, the Working Party may also wish to note that ITC, at its eighty-fifth session (February 2023) “requested the secretariat to hold consultations with the Committee of the Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSJD), as well as the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), with a view to initiating the preparation of an action plan on the facilitation of border crossing by rail transport in both freight and passenger traffic” (Decision No. 72, ITC Informal document No. 6/Rev.5).

Documentation

ITC Informal document No. 6/Rev.5

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 that the status and the number of contracting parties to the Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles has not changed and that the Conventions have eighty and twenty-six contracting parties, respectively. More detailed information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.⁵

(b) Issues in the application of the Conventions

Under this agenda item, the Working Party will be briefed about any latest development in the context of 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 and, in particular, the development of an eCPD (Carnet de Passage en Douane) system, if any.

Against this background, the Working Party may wish to recall that, at its previous session (October 2022), it was informed that the team had started preparing the concepts of the future system, which would be submitted for consideration by the Working Party at one of its future sessions (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/322, para. 30).

The Working Party may also wish to note that ITC, at its eighty-fifth session (February 2023) “Invited the secretariat and the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) to accelerate work on the digitalization of Carnet de Passages en Douane (CPDs) ensuring its application as soon as possible” (Decision 71, ITC Informal document No.6/Rev.5).

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

Documentation

ITC Informal document No. 6/Rev.5

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).

⁵ www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html.

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) 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.

9. Other business

(a) Dates of the next session

The ECE secretariat has made tentative arrangements to hold the 164th session on 10 (10 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3 p.m.–6 p.m.) and 13 (p.m.) October 2023, subject to potential adjustments due to the ongoing 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 list of adopted decisions will be attached to the final report.

10. Adoption of the report

In accordance with established practice, the Working Party will adopt the report on its 163rd session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.
