



PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement at the IRU General Assembly

by

Ms. Tatiana Molcean

United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary

of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Geneva, 7 June 2024

*Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Secretary General,*

It is my pleasure today to speak at this annual General Assembly of IRU.

For 76 years, we have maintained a strong partnership with IRU, making it quite possibly the longest-running public-private partnership in the history of the United Nations.

The establishment of IRU was driven by the need to assist a war-torn Europe in rebuilding its trade and commercial connections. This objective aligns closely with that of UNECE, which was created in 1947 by ECOSOC to promote reconstruction and economic integration across Europe.

Together, we uphold the UN global transit convention known as the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (for short, the TIR Convention).

The TIR Convention stands as a valuable public good, serving as the flagship international agreement that transforms borders into bridges. Its implementation greatly facilitates border crossings, thereby enhancing transportation and trade.

Throughout the years, both the private sector and customs authorities have benefited from the advantages that the TIR Convention brings to their professional lives. This includes streamlined operations, reduced waiting times, and optimized allocation of resources, while also combatting fraudulent activities.

The TIR system, with its balanced approach to security and facilitation, plays a significant role in contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Specifically, it supports Goal 8 (Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all); Goal 9 (Industry, innovation, and infrastructure); Goal 12 (Responsible consumption and production); Goal 13 (Climate action), and Goal 17 (Partnership for the goals).

The introduction of the electronic TIR procedure, known as eTIR, improves efficiency of transit and helps reduce CO₂ emissions. By eliminating the need for

physical TIR carnets and the associated logistics and paper production, not to mention the queueing and waiting times at borders, the eTIR significantly reduces trips and contributes to the reduction of carbon emissions.

And here, regarding eTIR, I would like to make an appeal to all of you.

Today, our TIR system finds itself at a crucial juncture where close cooperation between IRU, National Associations, UNECE, and Customs Authorities is more essential than ever.

The eTIR is not a cure-all or a magical solution to all the challenges faced by the system. However, it marks a crucial starting point for a new era of the TIR system, an era that should have commenced many years ago.

In this challenging moment, we must work together to make eTIR a functional reality, revitalizing and modernizing our TIR system. We rely on your close cooperation and operational expertise to make this objective a reality.

Our aim is to have operational eTIR corridors, if possible, this year. This requires the interconnection of customs systems with the eTIR international system hosted by us, as all other necessary systems have been in place for many years.

The assistance and persistence of the private sector are crucial in this endeavor, including in finding an adequate and balanced business model as we shift from paper to eTIR.

Secretary General,

Distinguished delegates,

UNECE, the TIR Secretariat, and I personally pledge to do everything possible to move in this direction. We need this UN public good to regain sustainability and be utilized by all UN Members. We require your strong commitment and support.

We are looking forward to our continued strong cooperation.