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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

167th session

Geneva, 9 and 11 (a.m.) October 2024

Item 1 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda

Annotated provisional agenda for the 167th session*, **

to be held in person at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Wednesday 9 October and continuing on Friday 11 (a.m.) October 2024, in Room XXVI.

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.
 - (c) Application of 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. All delegates are requested to register online, including those holding long-duration badges, at: <https://indico.un.org/event/1007264/> at the latest one week prior to the session. Delegates without a valid long-duration 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 ECE secretariat by phone +41 22 917 59 75 or email: maria.mostovets@un.org. 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.

- (i) Comments to the TIR Convention.
 - (ii) eTIR:
 - a. eTIR international system: interconnection projects.
 - b. International TIR Data Bank and other eTIR related information technology projects.
 - (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.
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.30/333

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 may wish to recall that the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its February 2023 session requested the secretariat, in close cooperation with the Committee's Bureau and relevant subsidiary bodies, to develop an ambitious strategy document for reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions on inland transport based on international United Nations legal instruments under the Committee's purview with priority actions for the ITC and all its relevant subsidiary bodies, supported by a strong action plan with milestones. The strategy document was considered and adopted at the eighty-sixth plenary session of ITC in 2024 (Informal document WP.30 (2024) No. 8).

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its previous session considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/6, which included the contribution to the ITC strategy on reducing Green House Gas (GHG) emissions based on the exchange of views and information provided, as well as the adopted ITC strategy document. The Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare a revised version of ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/6 following comments and proposals suggested including possible actions to be included in the ITC strategy action plan for its consideration at its next session. The Working Party may wish to consider ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/6/Rev.1 which includes all amendments and comments provided during its last session as well as possible actions, finalize and possibly adopt it.

The Working Party at its previous session also considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/1/Rev.1 which included comments received on the Working Party's draft strategy and action plan that is based on the new ToR and the discussions undertaken since the approval of the new ToR. The working party requested specific amendments to be included in the document (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/332, para. 13) and the secretariat to prepare a new revised version of the document for its consideration at the next session. The Working Party may wish to consider ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/1/Rev.2, which includes those proposed amendments for possible adoption.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/6/Rev.1; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/1/Rev.2; Informal document WP.30 (2024) No. 8

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, in accordance with its article 53, paragraph 2, the Convention entered into force for Iraq on 27 September 2023. With the accession of Iraq, the TIR Convention now has 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.¹

(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, including the status of the various interconnection projects and the efforts of the TIR secretariat to make the eTIR procedure operational to as many contracting parties as possible.

b. International TIR Data Bank and other eTIR related information technology projects

The Working Party will be informed about developments related to the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB) and other eTIR related 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.

The Working Party may wish to recall that at its previous session it had considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/3, which was prepared by the secretariat, that includes a consolidated and more concise version of the replies received from both the Customs Authorities and the National Associations on certificates of approval, with the aim to receive guidance from the Working Party on the possible next steps to be followed. The Working Party, taking into account a proposal made by the secretariat, requested the secretariat to

¹ www.unece.org/tir/

prepare a draft survey that would assist in determining the business processes of the countries during the life cycle of a certificate of approval, for its consideration at its next session. It also invited the delegation of Uzbekistan to present the online platform concerning the electronic certificates of approval to the Working Party, especially the parts that deal with the life cycle of the certificates. The Working Party may wish to consider document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/12, which includes the draft survey – questionnaire and provide guidance to the secretariat for the next steps.

Furthermore, the documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/9–ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/6 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/10–ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/7 on eTIR financing and on financing the TIRExB and the TIR Secretariat were prepared and listed under this agenda item of the previous session of the Working Party with only scope to serve the extraordinary eighty-third session of the TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) (5 June 2024). Since amendment proposals were requested to both documents during the extraordinary eighty-third session of AC.2 and since the documents included already a WP.30 symbol, the secretariat lists those documents again under this agenda item. However, it should be noted that both documents, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/9/Rev.1–ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/6/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/10/Rev.1–ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/7/Rev.1 will serve discussions on these matters that will take place under the AC.2 agenda (10 October 2024) unless the Working Party wishes otherwise.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/12; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/9/Rev.1–ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/6/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/10/Rev.1–ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/7/Rev.1

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.²

(b) Issues in the application of the Convention

The Working Party may wish to recall that at its previous session took note of information provided by the secretariat on the Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators (SITCIN) developed by the secretariat in the framework of a United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project with the support of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and the participation of Georgia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Paraguay and Serbia. The Working Party also took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/7 prepared by the secretariat for the Working Party to discuss and examine if these indicators could be used also for monitoring the implementation of the Harmonization Convention itself. The secretariat clarified that there is a set of 215 Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators to provide a self-assessment tool offering a universal set of measurable criteria enabling countries to monitor their degree of inland transport connectivity, both domestically and bilaterally/sub-regionally as well as in terms of soft and hard infrastructure. The document prepared includes only those that are relevant to border crossing facilitation, and they were inspired by the Harmonization Convention.

The Working Party may wish also to recall that during its last session deliberations took place on the future role of Harmonization Convention. There are some countries that have

² www.unece.org/tir.

outperformed the provisions of the Harmonization Convention with their regional integration efforts and therefore it would make sense to amend the Convention based on those contracting parties' good practices, case studies etc. On the other hand, there are other contracting parties that just initiated their integration efforts where the Convention could have a role to play. In that context, the secretariat suggested that the AC.3 might reconvene after many years and discuss possible measures to increase the value of the convention. Those measures could include, inter alia, the preparation of a Harmonization Convention handbook enriched with case studies, good practices, explanatory notes and comments, as well as the online SITCIN tool for the evaluation of border crossing points. The European Union noted that the indicators could lead to a measurement of the effects of the Harmonisation Convention but might bring additional administrative work for European Union member states. Furthermore, it added it was doubtful if all effects could be attributed to the Harmonisation Convention. Therefore, the Commission informed the Working Party that would do the necessary internal evaluations to see if part of the data requested in SITCIN indicators for the Harmonization Convention might be extracted from the TAXUD Customs Union performance report.

The Working Party decided that it needs more time in order to reflect on those proposals and take a decision. It requested the secretariat to include these proposals in the agenda for consideration at its next session.

The Working Party also considered Informal document WP.30 (2024) No. 9, which was submitted by IRU addressing several challenges on visa facilitation for professional drivers.

Delegates interested in the topic requested the secretariat to explore all possibilities that exist in the framework of ITC intergovernmental bodies or in the United Nations system where a task force could be established in order to discuss the topic in a systematic manner, inviting all different experts required. The secretariat responded that it will, initially, address the Chair of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), and the Chair of the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) to identify if they would be interested in including this topic in their agendas for discussion in the near future. If there is no such possibility, then the secretariat will explore other possibilities within the United Nations system. The secretariat will inform the Working Party on the latest developments on this topic.

Documentation

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/7; Informal document WP.30 (2024) No. 9

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 Belarus became the second contracting party to the Convention after Chad, having signed (23 September 2022) and ratified (21 August 2023) the Convention.³

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

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 one and forty

³ www.unece.org/tir

two contracting parties, respectively. More detailed information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the WP.30 website.⁴

(b) Issues in the application of the Conventions

The Working Party might wish to recall that at its last session was briefed about the latest developments 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 the conventions and, in particular, the development of an eCPD (Carnet de Passage en Douane) system. The first session of the ad hoc informal group of experts on digitalization of CPD took place on 14 December 2023 and the second session on 21 March 2024, online. The Working Party may wish to consider document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/11, which includes the report of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on digitalization of the Carnets de Passage en Douane on its second session.

The Group decided that, in order to be able to consider the best solution for amending the conventions, it should first consider the scope of the administration of the future system, the scope of the electronic CPDs including sustainability of its system and its financing, and also the tasks that should be fulfilled by the contracting parties. The Group also requested the secretariat to prepare such a document for its next session for consideration. Finally, the Group requested the secretariat to prepare a survey to be distributed, if possible, to all contracting parties to the temporary importation conventions for their input and feedback on their needs and requests concerning the digitalization of eCPDs. The secretariat will provide information about the latest developments on these documents and the sessions of the Group.

Furthermore, the Working Party may wish to recall that at its previous session was informed that the group of experts requested transforming the ad hoc informal group of experts on digitalization of CPDs to a formal group of experts and therefore considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/8 which included the draft terms of reference of such a formal group of experts on the digitalization of the carnet des passages. However, decision regarding the adoption of these terms of reference was postponed for the current session of the Working Party. The secretariat should revise the document considering including the possibility of having hybrid, meaning in person and online with parallel interpretation in the three official languages of UN ECE sessions and that the terms include digitalization efforts not only on the data that exists in the paper CPDs, but also on the procedures that are being described in the Conventions for the whole life cycle of the CPDs. The Working Party may wish to consider and adopt document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/8/Rev.1 that includes the revised terms of reference of the Group of Experts on the digitalization of the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956).

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

ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/11; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/8/Rev.1.

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.

The Working Party might wish to recall that at its previous session suggested some topics that could be addressed under this agenda item at its future sessions, such as the usage of electronic seals on international transports, as well as possible usage of the container security devices, and the use of artificial intelligence on risk analysis.

⁴ www.unece.org/tir

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.

9. Other business

(a) Dates of the next session

The ECE secretariat has made tentative arrangements to hold the 168th session on 4, 5 and 7 (a.m.) February 2025, 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 167th session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.
