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Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975
(Thirty-fifth session, 25-26 September 2003,
agenda item 3 (a) (i))

ACTIVITIES AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE TIR EXECUTIVE BOARD (TIRExB)

Activities of the TIRExB

Report by the Chairman of the TIRExB

Report of the TIRExB at its fifteenth session

* * *

GE.03-31781

REPORT OF THE FIFTEENTH SESSION
OF THE TIR EXECUTIVE BOARD (TIRExB)
(17, 18 and 21 October 2002)

ATTENDANCE

1. The TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) held its fifteenth session on 17, 18 and 21 October 2002 in Geneva.

2. The following members of the TIRExB were present: Mr. M. Amelio (Italy); Mr. G.-H. Bauer (Switzerland); Mr. R. Ehmcke (Germany); Mrs. Y. Kasikçi (Turkey); Mr. J. Marques (European Community); Mrs. H. Metaxa-Mariatou (Greece); Mr. M. Olszewski (Poland); Mrs. N. Rybkina (Russian Federation). Mr. D. Kulevski (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) was excused.

3. The TIR Secretary attended the session in accordance with Annex 8, Article 9, paragraph 1 of the Convention.

4. The International Road Transport Union (IRU) attended the session as observer in accordance with Annex 8, Article 11, paragraph 5 of the Convention and was represented by Mr. J. Groenendijk, Head, TIR Policy and Customs Border Crossing Facilitation.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The TIRExB adopted the agenda of the session as prepared by the TIR Secretary (TIRExB/AGE/2002/15).

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE TIRExB

Documentation: TIRExB/REP/2002/14 and Rev.1.

6. The TIRExB adopted the report of its fourteenth session as prepared by the TIR Secretary (TIRExB/REP/2002/14), subject to the following modifications:

Paragraph 12

Modify the second sentence to read as follows:

"IRU warned for the possible negative implications the (mis)use of the concept of authorized consignee might have on the TIR procedure, its security and on the guarantee system and asked that a further study on the concept would also take account of the repercussions of the use of the concept for the SafeTIR system."

7. The revised text of the report of the fourteenth session of the Board is contained in document TIRExB/REP/2002/14/Rev.1.

CONCEPT OF AUTHORIZED CONSIGNEE IN THE TIR CONVENTION

Documentation: Informal document No. 24 (2002).

8. The TIRExB welcomed Informal document No. 24 (2002) prepared by the TIR Secretary which had consolidated all papers produced by the TIRExB on the issue. Having introduced some changes into the document, in particular with regard to the basic approach by the TIRExB on the issue and the use of the term "authorized consignee" as explained in Informal document No. 1 (2002), the Board decided not to continue further deliberations on the subject and to submit Informal document No. 24 (2002) to the UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) for consideration.

9. The majority of the TIRExB expressed the view that the Authorized Consignee should not be permitted to sign and stamp the TIR Carnet. In this regard the TIRExB supported the option described under point (a) of paragraph 23 of Informal document No. 24 (2002). The IRU recalled its earlier reservations (see, for example, TIRExB/REP/2002/14/Rev.1, para.12) concerning the concept of authorised consignee in the TIR Convention and informed the TIRExB that this issue had been studied in detail by the IRU's Commission on Customs Matters which was of the view that it would be too premature to introduce such a facilitation within the TIR system.

PREPARATION OF AN EXAMPLE OF A TIR CARNET DULY FILLED-IN

Documentation: Informal document No. 14 (2002); Informal document No. 25 (2001).

10. On the basis of Informal document No. 14 (2002), the TIRExB held an in-depth discussion on the following issues which should first be resolved before an example of a TIR Carnet duly filled-in could be prepared:

(i) the filling-in of box 26 of voucher No. 2 and item 3 on the counterfoil No. 2 of the TIR Carnet which incorporated the newly adopted definitions of "termination of a TIR operation" and "discharge of a TIR operation";

(ii) different procedures for the use of additional vouchers No. 1 and No. 2 in case of several Customs offices of departure or destination.

11. With regard to item (i) above, the Board endorsed the following comment to Annex 1 to the Convention which could be transformed into an Explanatory Note at a later stage:

"Filling-in of box 26 of voucher No. 2 and item 3 on the counterfoil No. 2 of the TIR Carnet It is recommended that only Customs offices of destination and not Customs offices of exit (en route) fill in the above-mentioned boxes upon unloading."

12. Concerning item (ii), the TIRExB agreed that the option providing for the consecutive use of a couple of vouchers No. 1 and No. 2 between two adjacent Customs offices, whatever their status (departure, destination or en route), would be the best practical solution to ensure uninterrupted Customs control over each leg of a TIR transport. The Board also noted that in this option some Customs offices of departure and/or destination would play a double role, i.e. as an office of departure (or destination) and as an office en route. To address this issue, the TIRExB requested the TIR Secretary to draft a new Explanatory Note for consideration at the next session of the Board.

13. The TIRExB also discussed a recommended practical procedure of cooperation among Customs authorities in order to obtain, within a short time, a faultless model of a TIR Carnet duly filled-in (Informal document No. 25 (2001)). The Board felt that, as a first step, a model should entirely be simulated using sample copies of Customs stamps available in the International Register on Customs Sealing Devices and in TIR Carnets returned to the IRU. To this end, the TIRExB requested the TIR secretariat to prepare, in cooperation with the IRU, a draft model for the next session of the Board.

MONITORING OF THE PRICE OF TIR CARNETS

Documentation: Informal document No. 25 (2002).

14. The TIRExB was officially informed by the IRU of an 25-30 % increase of the issuing price of TIR Carnets as of 29 May 2002 (Informal document No. 25 (2002)). In addition, the representative of the IRU pointed out that the price of TIR Carnets had not been changed since 1995. Due to such factors as inflation (3 % per year) and a 28 % drop in the rate of exchange of US dollar, the IRU's General Assembly had taken the decision to increase the price of TIR Carnets. The

representative of the IRU was not in a position to comment whether or not the increase of the price of TIR Carnets was linked to a rise in insurance premiums.

15. The TIRExB took note of Informal document No. 25 (2002) and the above oral explanations and underlined that such information should be transmitted to the Board well in advance to allow for a proper implementation by the TIRExB of the task "to monitor the price of TIR Carnets" (Article 10 (h) of Annex 8 to the Convention).

EXAMPLE PROCEDURE FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES AND THE NATIONAL GUARANTEEING ASSOCIATION

Documentation: Informal document No. 19 and Rev.1 (2002).

16. The TIRExB took note of Informal document No.19/Rev.1 (2002), amended by the TIR Secretary following a preliminary discussion at the previous session of the Board. It was pointed out that some of the descriptions and interpretations of the legal basis in this document could lead to misinterpretations and did not fit the context of the document. This held particularly true for paragraph 9 of the document describing the submission of claims for payment in accordance with Article 11, paragraph 3 of the Convention. As a consequence, the TIR Secretary was requested to prepare, in cooperation with the IRU, a new document on the subject, limited, as it was envisaged originally, to the procedural aspects of effective communication between Customs authorities and national guaranteeing associations.

17. In this context, the TIRExB noted with concern that, apparently, Informal Document No. 19 (2002) and Rev.1 bearing the mention “Restricted” had been made available outside the circle of members and the observer of the TIRExB and had caused considerable concern among participants in the international TIR guarantee chain. The IRU was of the view that the said document had effectively appeared to modify the principle established over the past 50 years, particularly in respect of the application of the Articles 11, paragraphs 1 to 3 of the TIR Convention. The Board reiterated that its informal documents are restricted discussion documents, drawn up in accordance with the decisions of the TIRExB serving as basis for internal discussions within the TIRExB only. It was also stressed that these documents do not constitute any official views or interpretations of the text of the TIR Convention, neither by the TIRExB nor by the TIR Secretary who is responsible for the preparation of all internal documentation of the TIRExB.

INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF LOADING AND UNLOADING PLACES

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2001/19 and Rev.1, TRANS/WP.30/2002/17, TRANS/WP.30/2002/20.

18. The TIRExB recalled that the WP.30 should focus on finding a solution for an increase in the number of loading/unloading places in the long term (TRANS/WP.30/202, para. 39), and that this could be achieved by amending Article 18 and Annex 1 of the Convention. However, the TIRExB noted that, before amending Article 18 of the Convention, the issue on how to fill-in the TIR Carnet under these circumstances would first need to be resolved. In the meantime, the task of finding a practical solution in the short term should remain with the TIRExB as entrusted by the TIR Administrative Committee.

19. Against this background, the TIRExB reviewed document TRANS/WP.30/2001/19 and Rev.1 prepared by the secretariat, containing the following alternative solutions to increase the number of Customs offices of departure and destination in the TIR procedure on the basis of the current text of the TIR Convention:

(i) a consecutive use of two TIR Carnets for one transport operation in accordance with the comment to Article 28 "Possibility of using two TIR Carnets for a single transport operation" (2002 TIR Handbook, page 66);

(ii) a parallel use of several TIR Carnets, each for a single load compartment or container, in line with Article 17, paragraph 1 of the TIR Convention.

20. The TIRExB felt that option (i) might be a more practical solution. However, it implies certain restrictions stemming from other provisions of the TIR Convention, for instance, each TIR Carnet would have to use separate TIR transport operations across at least one border, in order to fulfil the conditions laid down in Articles 1(a) and 2 of the Convention. It was also mentioned that further restrictions might be imposed by bilateral and multilateral transport agreements. Eventually, the Board came to the conclusion that both options could be used by transport operators and requested the TIR Secretary to draft a comment addressing all peculiarities of the two options such as the conditions for application, the existence of the TIR guarantee, the filling-in of TIR Carnets, etc.

MONITORING OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE TIR GUARANTEE SYSTEM

Customs claim statistics

Documentation: Informal document No. 26 (2002).

21. The TIRExB took note of the provisional results of the survey on Customs claims conducted by the TIR Secretary, covering the period from 1999 to 2001 (Informal document No. 20 (2002)). The secretariat had received replies from 70 % of the Contracting Parties which utilized the TIR procedure in 1999-2001. For that period, some 700 claims with a total amount of US$ 11 million had been honoured by the TIR guarantee chain while over 2,300 claims with a total amount of US$ 57 million remained pending. Compared to the number of TIR Carnets issued during the three year period, the average claim rate was 0.04 % (one claim per 2,500 TIR Carnets used), and an average claim amounted to US$ 22,000. The results also demonstrated that there was a drastic increase (more than 100 %) in the number and amount of claims in 2001. Given a 1-2 year delay between the date of an infringement and the date of the eventual claim, that rise could be attributed to infringements committed in 1999-2000.

22. The TIRExB felt the above figures might reflect a dangerous trend of increasing Customs fraud. The Board decided to wait for the final results of the survey on a country-by-country basis to see whether some measures with a view to improving the situation would be necessary.

Settlement of Customs claims in the Republic of Belarus

Documentation: TIRExB/AGE/2002/15.

23. The TIRExB was informed that the Customs authorities of Belarus had lodged with the national guaranteeing association BAIRC 440 claims for payment with a total amount of more than US$ 3,000,000. Most claims stemmed from infringements committed by Lithuanian transport operators. The Customs authorities, on the basis of decisions by the Byelorussian Arbitration Court which had ruled in favour of the Customs, had already withdrawn a part of the above sum from the BAIRC banking account. However, it was alleged that until now BAIRC had so far obtained no reimbursement from the TIR guarantee chain. The association was concerned that it might go bankrupt and, as a result, the application of the TIR Convention in Belarus would be disrupted. The IRU informed the Board that, once possibilities of appeal against court decisions in Belarus will had been exhausted, the international TIR guarantee chain would reimburse those sums.

24. The TIRExB reiterated its position that direct settlement of Customs claims should take place at the national level and, thus, was beyond the competence of the Board. Nevertheless, the TIRExB

preliminary analyzed the underlying reasons for such a worrying situation and pointed out the following circumstances which might contribute to it:

- improper implementation of controlled access to the TIR procedure in Lithuania;
- inefficient application of the SafeTIR system and its reconciliation procedure in Belarus;
- insufficient application of measures against the person(s) directly liable, in line with Article 8, paragraph 7 of the TIR Convention.

25. Notwithstanding the factors mentioned in para. 24 above, the TIRExB stressed that the task of the TIR guarantee chain is to settle Customs claims which cannot be collected from the persons directly liable. The IRU reiterated that it is the duty of the Competent Authorities, in line with Article 8 § 7 of the TIR Convention, to do its utmost to notify and to collect those sums directly from the liable persons. In case of failure by those person to settle the taxes and duties, Customs authorities should be prepared to use the provisions of Article 38 in order to exclude the TIR holder(s) from the TIR system where appropriate and in accordance with national legislation. In this context, the IRU informed the Board that, as soon as possibilities of appeal against court decisions in Belarus had been exhausted, the international TIR guarantee chain would reimburse to BAIRC. The TIRExB continued its deliberations on the issue under agenda item "National control measures introduced in the Republic of Belarus against Lithuanian transport operators" (see paras. 29-34 below).

NATIONAL CONTROL MEASURES

Customs escorts

26. The TIRExB took note that the results of a survey of transport industry with regard to Customs escorts were being processed by the IRU and would be presented at the next session of the Board.

Order No. 1132 of 28.11.2001 by the State Customs Committee (SCC) of the Russian Federation

Documentation: Informal document No. 12 (2002), TIRExB/AGE/2002/15.

27. The TIRExB recalled its earlier conclusion that the above Order was not in line with Articles 4 and 28 of the TIR Convention (TIRExB/REP/2002/14, para. 29). The TIR Secretary had brought this decision to the attention of SCC. In response to that, SCC informed the TIRExB that the opinion of the Board was taken into consideration. At the same time, SCC pointed out that:

- the above Order does not touch upon the application of the TIR Convention and, thus, cannot be in contradiction to its provisions;

- a provisional Customs declaration (foreseen by the Order) complies with international Customs law, in particular, the revised Kyoto Convention.

28. The TIRExB regretted that SCC had failed to accept the decision taken by the Board in line with its mandate. It was pointed out that this issue would need to be addressed by the TIR Administrative Committee.

National control measures introduced in the Republic of Belarus against Lithuanian transport operators

Documentation: Informal document No. 33 (2002), TIRExB/AGE/2002/15.

29. The TIRExB recalled that, at the previous session, the Board was of the view that Article 23 of the TIR Convention did not allow for the application of Customs escorts against all transport operators of a certain nationality, irrespective of infringements committed by these transport operators. However, such measures, when applied against infringers only, were considered as being fully in line with the provisions of the TIR Convention (TIRExB/REP/2002/14, para. 29). This opinion was fully shared by WP.30 at its June 2002 session (TRANS/WP.30/202, para. 68).

30. Following the previous session, the TIR Secretary had invited the State Customs Committee (SCC) of Belarus to review the application of Customs escorts. In reply to this request, the Byelorussian Customs authorities pointed out that they were forced to implement escorts as bilateral agreements regarding deadlines for payment had not been met by the Lithuanian side. At the same time, SCC of Belarus was considering the opportunity to differentiate between Lithuanian carriers when applying Customs escorts. Furthermore, SCC of Belarus requested the TIRExB to assist in settling the Customs debts of Lithuanian transport operators (TIRExB/AGE/2002/15).

31. Meanwhile, the Customs Department of Lithuania had informed the TIRExB that, if the Byelorussian Customs authorities would continue the current practice of Customs escorts, similar reciprocal measures might become applicable against all Byelorussian carriers in Lithuania. In addition, the Ministry of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania requested the TIRExB and the TIR Administrative Committee to assist in arranging negotiations with the Byelorussian side with the purpose to solve the problem as soon as possible (Informal document No. 33 (2002)).

32. After an in-depth discussion, the TIRExB came to the conclusion that lack of information did

not allow the Board to make a clear-cut decision on the matter. In particular, the TIRExB identified the following issues which would first need to be clarified:

- whether or not measures taken by the Customs authorities and national guaranteeing association of Lithuania in order to enforce the proper implementation of Annex 9, part II of the Convention had led to tangible results;

- procedures applicable in the Customs Union between the Russian Federation and Republic of Belarus with regard to TIR operations;

- whether or not the Byelorussian authorities had applied Article 38 and other sanctions against persons directly liable such as holders of TIR Carnets, etc.

33. The TIRExB agreed, according to Article 10 (e) of Annex 8 to the TIR Convention, to offer its good offices for settlement of the dispute between Lithuania and Belarus. As a first step, the Board invited both parties to provide more information on the issue. The TIRExB also proposed that, in order not to escalate the conflict, the parties refrain from retaliatory measures and strictly apply the provisions of the TIR Convention: Lithuania should tighten its procedures for access to the TIR regime and Belarus should stop escorts against all Lithuanian transport operators. At the same time, the Board emphasized that the international guarantee chain should cover all legitimate requests for payment.

34. The TIRExB also touched the general issue of combating Customs fraud and stressed the importance of preventive measures on the basis of risk assessment and exchange of intelligence among all law-enforcement agencies in Contracting Parties. To this end, the TIR Secretary was requested to contact relevant international organizations (WCO, OLAF, etc.) with a view to obtaining information on modern fraud patterns.

Special tax for Customs formalities in Romania

Documentation: Informal document No. 27 (2002).

35. The TIRExB noted that the Romanian Customs authorities, by virtue of a Government decision, collected from some transport operators utilizing the TIR procedure the amount of EURO 23 for the processing of TIR Carnets at Customs offices of entry (en route) into Romania. The Romanian Customs had indicated that this tax for Customs formalities was a reciprocal measure with regard to countries which levied similar taxes on Romanian vehicles (Informal document No. 27 (2002)).

36. The Board was of the view that this measure did not comply with the provisions of

Article 46, paragraph 1 of the TIR Convention which stipulates that "no charge shall be made for Customs attendance in connection with the Customs operations mentioned in this Convention, save where it is provided on days or at times or places other than those normally appointed for such operations". The TIRExB also felt that there was misunderstanding from the Romanian side concerning fees collected from Romanian transport operators in other countries. Most likely, those sums, if any, represented road fees rather than taxes for Customs formalities.

37. The TIR Secretary was mandated to bring this decision to the attention of the Romanian authorities and to request them to review the above measures.

Recent instructions by the State Customs Committee (SCC) of the Russian Federation

Documentation: Informal document No. 28 (2002).

38. On the basis of Informal document No. 28 (2002) and further clarifications provided, the TIRExB considered national control measures introduced in September 2002 in the Russian Federation (Order by SCC No. 744 of 15 July 2002) with a view to combating so-called false transit operations. In the future, this Order might supersede earlier measures aimed at stricter control over Customs transit which were discussed by the Board at its twelfth session (10 and 11 January 2002) (TIRExB/REP/2002/12/Rev.1, paras. 22-26).

39. The Order concerned goods in transit which enter the Russian territory in the North-West, Central and South regions of the Russian Federation and leave the Russian territory across the borders with Georgia and Azerbaijan. Those goods are to be presented, for purposes of documentary control, at an intermediate Customs terminal located in the Rostov region at the only motorway headed for Georgia and Azerbaijan. At the Rostov terminal, Customs officials will check the condition of the load compartment and Customs seals. Following that, they will sign and stamp the back of voucher No. 2. Normally, such regular checks should not take more than 3 hours. However, if Customs seals are not found intact or there are other evidences of a Customs infringement, Customs may proceed with full physical inspection of the goods. The Customs office of exit (en route) should check the signature and stamp put at the Rostov terminal. If they are missing, the Customs office of exit (en route) should remove Customs seals, open packages and thoroughly examine the goods.

40. The TIRExB recalled that, in line with Article 20 of the Convention, the Customs authorities may prescribe a route to be followed by the transport operator. Therefore, the Board came to the conclusion that the Order in question was in line with the provisions of the TIR Convention.

FRAUDULENT ACCEPTANCE OF A TIR CARNET AT THE CUSTOMS OFFICE OF DEPARTURE

Documentation: Informal document No. 9 (2002), Informal document No. 22 (2002).

41. Taking into account Informal document No. 22 (2002), the TIRExB continued its deliberations on the validity of the TIR guarantee in case the acceptance of a valid TIR Carnet at the Customs office of departure was falsified by using fake Customs stamps. It was pointed out that one of the five pillars of the TIR regime, namely mutual recognition of Customs control measures, was violated in this situation as the Customs office of departure had not been in a position to take necessary measures stipulated in Article 19 of the Convention. Such malpractice touched the essence of the TIR procedure and should therefore be eradicated with all means available to Customs.

42. The Board noted that, in the underlying situation, all documents as well as Customs seals had been falsified. Thus, the Customs office of exit (en route) of the first country should have revealed the falsification and should have detained the goods together with the vehicle. As this was not done, it may be presumed that the said office had not performed its duties properly.

43. The TIRExB stressed that all controls carried out in the country of departure (and not only at the office of departure) played a crucial role for countries en route and countries of destination. To combat fraudulent activities, such as the false acceptance of a TIR Carnet at the Customs office of departure, the Board decided to inform Contracting Parties of the existence of such malpractices and to remind them of their obligations in accordance with the provisions of the TIR Convention by means of a new comment to the TIR Convention to be drafted by the TIR Secretary.

NEW LAYOUT OF THE TIR CARNET

Documentation: Informal document No. 29 (2002).

44. The TIRExB was informed that the IRU had been forced to modify the layout of the TIR Carnet introduced in the autumn of 2001, the so-called “blue” TIR Carnet. The reason for this change was that the grey-blue thermochromic ink used on the “blue” TIR Carnets had proved to vanish under high temperatures, for instance when being exposed to sun in a truck cockpit, thus creating difficulties for drivers and Customs authorities to establish the proper validity of a TIR Carnet (Informal document No. 29 (2002)). Therefore, the IRU had proposed to replace both the grey-blue thermochromic ink and normal blue ink on the cover page and in box 3 of all internal pages of the TIR Carnet with black and red ink. This latest modified version of the TIR Carnet (the “black” TIR Carnet) would be printed as of the end of October 2002.

45. The TIRExB was of the view that the proposed changes did not affect the relevant provisions of the TIR Convention and recognized the need to introduce this new TIR Carnet as soon as possible. However, the Board regretted that it had again been necessary to modify the lay-out of the TIR Carnet and pointed out that the introduction of this new TIR Carnet at rather short notice would require considerable efforts by Customs authorities to inform all Customs posts and officers authorized to deal with TIR operations.

46. The TIRExB noted with concern that, upon introduction of the new "black" TIR Carnet, Customs authorities would have to control three different types of TIR Carnets. In order to facilitate such checks, the TIR Secretary was requested, in co-operation with the IRU, to prepare and distribute throughout all Contracting Parties a summary table containing a detailed description of all layouts of the TIR Carnet in use.

BUDGET PROPOSAL AND COST PLAN FOR THE TIRExB AND THE TIR SECRETARIAT FOR THE YEAR 2003

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2002/4; TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2002/5.

47. The Board took note of the financial report prepared by the TIR Secretary covering the period from 1 January 2002 to 30 June 2002 (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2002/4) and endorsed the proposal by the TIR Secretary to allot US$ 5,000 to the budget line “Training” to cover possible IT training costs. The TIRExB also endorsed the budget proposal and the cost plan for its operation in the year 2003 as prepared by the TIR Secretary (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2002/5). Both documents were transmitted to the TIR Administrative Committee at its October 2002 session for adoption.

REVIEW OF PRIORITY ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION AND RESOLUTION BY THE TIRExB

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2002/30.

48. The IRU informed the Board that it seemed appropriate to review and clarify functions and responsibilities of the TIRExB, TIR secretariat and IRU, taking into account the four-year experience by the Board, new challenges to the TIR system as well as new Article 6.2 bis of the TIR Convention which had came into effect in May 2002. With a view to defining the competences of these actors, the IRU submitted to the WP.30 and the TIR Administrative Committee document TRANS/WP.30/2002/30 containing proposals on guidance to be given in this respect by the said Committee.

49. In general, the Board felt that the functions of the TIRExB were clearly defined in the TIR Convention, and positive developments had been achieved by the activities of the Board and its TIR secretariat since its establishment 1999, in particular with regard to cooperation with Contracting Parties in the application of the Convention. Nonetheless, the TIRExB declared its readiness to constructively contribute to discussions on this issue within the WP.30 and the TIR Administrative Committee.

ACTIVITIES OF THE TIR SECRETARIAT

Use of the International TIR Databank (ITDB)

50. The TIRExB took note of the current operation of the ITDB and of progress made in providing on-line access to authorized Customs representatives.

Implementation of SafeTIR system

Documentation: Informal document No. 34 (2002).

51. The Board was informed on progress made since June 2002 within the joint TIR secretariat/IRU SafeTIR Taskforce. In particular, the Taskforce had sent a letter of information to a number of countries, which had indicated that they either did not yet have access to the Cutewise system for various reasons or which had indicated experiencing problems in using it (for instance, the existence of so-called fire-walls). The Taskforce urged the authorities of the countries involved to contact the IRU to address the matter. The Taskforce had also decided to analyze specific SafeTIR data (at the regional and local level, to be provided by the IRU), convinced that a more targeted approach would be beneficial to its task of achieving real improvement in the functioning of the system. Both the TIR secretariat and the IRU reiterated the importance they attached to the work of the Taskforce as well as to the SafeTIR system itself which is the only tool available for the associations and the IRU to continuously verify if the TIR holders are fulfilling the minimum conditions and requirements by such persons as laid down in Annex 9, Part II of the TIR Convention and thus to increase the trust in the system..

Web page on Customs offices approved for TIR operations

Documentation: Informal document No. 31 (2002).

52. The Board took note that, following a request of the TIR Administrative Committee, the TIR secretariat had established a draft web page on approved Customs offices for accomplishing TIR operations in some countries utilizing the TIR procedure.

Regional TIR seminars

53. The TIRExB was informed of the outcome of a Seminar on the TIR procedure, organized by the United Nations, in cooperation with the TIRExB, in Kunming (China) on 23-25 September 2002. The objective of the Seminar had been to inform the countries of the Mekong sub-region (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) about the legal and procedural requirements to apply the TIR procedure in these countries.

54. The Board also welcomed the organization of a Regional TIR Seminar for the Baltic States (Riga, 3 and 4 October 2002) bringing together Customs authorities and national associations of the three Baltic States to consider pragmatic measures to improve the application of the TIR procedure. The Seminar focused attention on possibilities to better control access to the TIR procedure and reliability of authorized transport operators as well as on better Customs control measures at Customs office of departure, en route and of destination.

Review of activities of the TIR secretariat

Documentation: Informal document No. 32 (2002), Informal document No. 34 (2002).

55. The TIRExB took note of Informal document No. 32 (2002) containing some communications on the application of the TIR procedure transmitted by the TIR secretariat in June-October 2002.

56. The TIRExB decided to revert to the activities of the TIR secretariat once the functions of the TIRExB, TIR secretariat and the IRU had been clarified by the WP.30 and the TIR Administrative Committee (see paras. 48 and 49 above).

OTHER MATTERS

Documentation: Informal document No. 30 (2002).

57. The TIRExB took note of Informal document No. 30 (2002) submitted by the Customs authorities of Yugoslavia and decided to consider it at the next session of the Board.

DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION

58. The TIRExB decided to hold its sixteenth session on 3 February 2003 in Geneva in conjunction with the one-hundred-and-third session of the WP.30.
