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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and  
Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure

**REPORT OF THE INFORMAL AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON  
CONCEPTUAL AND TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF COMPUTERIZATION  
OF THE TIR PROCEDURE ON ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION  
(16-17 October 2008)**

<b>CONTENTS</b>		<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I.	ATTENDANCE .....	1-3	3
II.	ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1) .....	4	3
III.	REFERENCE MODEL OF THE TIR PROCEDURE (Agenda item 2) .....	5-12	3
	A. Pending issues .....	5-8	3
	B. Chapter 3 – Analysis .....	9-11	4
	C. Chapter 4 – Design .....	12	5
IV.	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF eTIR (Agenda item 3) .....	13	5
V.	OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 4) .....	14-16	5
	A. WCO transit data model .....	14	5
	B. Other activities of interest .....	15	5
	C. Date and place of next session .....	16	5
<b>Annex</b>			
	Reference Model of the TIR Procedure.....		6

## **I. ATTENDANCE**

1. The Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (further referred to as “the Expert Group”) held its fifteenth session on 16 - 17 October 2008 in Geneva.
2. The session was attended by experts from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia and Turkey. Experts from the European Community (EC) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) also attended.
3. Considering that all experts present could work in English, the Expert Group decided that no interpretation was required. In view of the recurring situation where interpretation, although provided at the specific request of WP.30, was not required at the session itself, the Expert Group decided it would organize its future meetings without interpretation until further request from WP.30. Agendas and reports will remain available in all official languages since they are also considered by WP.30.

## **II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2008/4

4. The Expert Group adopted its provisional agenda as contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2008/4, but decided to include Informal Document GE.1 No. 3 (2008) under item 3 and Informal Document GE.1 No. 4 (2008) under item 3(a) of the agenda.

## **III. REFERENCE MODEL OF THE TIR PROCEDURE (Agenda item 3)**

### **A. Pending issues**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8/Rev.1; Informal Document GE.1 No.4 (2008)

5. At the request of WP.30, the Expert Group discussed document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8/Rev.1 containing a revised description of the declaration mechanism as foreseen in the eTIR project and as described in Chapter 2 of the Reference Model. The Expert Group welcomed Informal Document GE.1 No.4 (2008), transmitted by the Czech Republic, which facilitated the methodical analysis of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8 Rev.1, thus providing some additional ideas on how the group could further clarify the description of the declaration mechanism. The answers to the questions and comments raised by the Czech Republic are contained in annex to this report at the request of the Expert Group.
6. The Expert Group, after providing ideas to the secretariat on how to further clarify the declaration mechanism, confirmed that the scope of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8 should not go beyond its intended purpose. It also stressed that the said document should be read in conjunction with the complete description of the business requirements as contained in

Chapter 2 and that further clarification on the overall functioning of the eTIR system would be provided in Chapter 3 of the Reference Model. Furthermore, it felt that questions of a legal nature, i.e. falling outside its mandate, would have to be considered directly by WP.30, once the description of the declaration mechanism had been clarified from a technical and conceptual perspective.

7. Regarding the necessity to ensure the identity of the sender of the electronic messages, the Expert Group considered that the mutual recognition of authentication mechanisms would be in line with the current spirit of the TIR Convention. It nevertheless envisaged technical alternatives that could be included in the eTIR project if the mutual recognition of the authentication would not be considered as a suitable solution from a legal point of view, e.g. the inclusion of an international TIR certification authority or, as a potential *ad interim* solution, the use of paper signatures.

8. The Expert Group took note that, as requested by WP.30, the secretariat would prepare a second revision of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8 for the Working Party's February 2009 session.

### **C. Chapter 3 – Analysis**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2007/13/Rev.2

9. The Expert Group welcomed the second revision of Chapter 3 of the Reference Model, contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2007/13/Rev.2. It also welcomed the fundamental contribution of the Dutch Customs in the preparation of this revision, in particular in providing the tools and the knowledge allowing to align the TIR data model with the WCO transit data model and the UNTDED, but also in elaborating a detailed “declaration” message and providing references to existing international code lists.

10. The Expert Group reviewed the revised code lists, the fall-back scenarios as well as the messages. The Expert Group took note that more code lists would still need to be defined and acknowledged the necessity for the secretariat to seek expert advice in this field. The Expert Group stressed that the decision to start a fall-back procedure should be a joint decision of holder and Customs authorities and that this decision should only be taken after some time has elapsed, which would allow in most cases for the problem to be solved. It underlined the necessity for Customs to monitor the use of the fall-back procedures in order to prevent any misuse. With regard to the messages, the Expert Group welcomed the alignment of the declaration data model with the WCO transit data model version 3, as well as the update of all messages containing information relative to the declaration.

11. The Expert Group mandated the secretariat to organize a drafting group whose task would be to finalize the draft of Chapter 3 (messages, fall-backs and code lists), taking into account the findings of the Expert Group. The final draft of Chapter 3 will be submitted for consideration at the next session.

**C. Chapter 4 – Design**

12. The Expert Group welcomed the idea of having first considerations on the contents of the Design chapter of the Reference Model at its next session. It mandated the secretariat to seek guidance from experts in the field for the preparation of the draft table of contents, taking into account the UMM as well as the specificities of the eTIR project.

**IV. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF eTIR (Agenda item 3)**

Documentation: Informal Document GE.1 No.3 (2008)

13. The Expert Group considered Informal Document GE.1 No.3 (2008) and took note of the detailed answers provided by Jordan, Netherlands, Serbia, Switzerland and Turkey. It stressed that, despite the limited number of answers received, each and every reply contains very useful information for future financial estimations. The Expert Group, while understanding those countries which felt they were not in a position to answer the questions laid out in the questionnaire, was very grateful to those that had taken the time and the resources to provide meaningful figures. It requested the secretariat to send a reminder to those countries which had not yet answered, and to study if it would be possible to translate the questionnaire in Russian and French.

**V. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 4)**

**A. WCO transit data model**

14. The Expert Group took note of the latest developments regarding the WCO data model and, in particular, the endorsement of the WCO model version 3 by the WCO council. It also welcomed the active participation of the secretariat in the meeting held at WCO headquarters in Brussels from 30 September to 2 October 2008 aimed at finalizing the transit part of the WCO data model.

**B. Other activities of interest**

15. The European Commission informed the Expert Group that the NCTS-TIR project would start on 1 January 2009. As of that date, TIR holders arriving at EU borders will have to provide the information contained in the TIR Carnet in an electronic form.

**C. Date and place of next session**

16. The Expert Group asked the secretariat to propose tentative date(s) for the next session as soon as Chapter 3 had been revised by the drafting group.

**Annex****REFERENCE MODEL OF THE TIR PROCEDURE<sup>1/</sup>**

Before addressing the specific questions and comments raised in GE.1 Informal document No. 4 (2008) by the Czech Republic, the Expert Group stressed that the sole purpose of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8 and Rev.1 had been to clarify the *declaration submission mechanism as described in Chapter 2 of the eTIR Reference Model*. The Expert Group had not been mandated by the WP.30 to assess other possible scenarios.

Question 1: eTIR maintains the principle that a TIR transport consists of a set of transport operations. See Annex 1 of the eTIR Reference Model, Requirement 10. A footnote will be added to the second revision of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8.

Question 2: All information, either sent by the holder or forwarded by Customs authorities through the eTIR international system, should be considered as advance cargo information. Upon arrival of the holder, goods and vehicle (container) at a Customs office of departure or entry en route, such data will be used by the holder to lodge the Customs declaration. Document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8/Rev.1 will be revised in order to clearly reflect this distinction.

Question 3: The treatment of the electronic Customs declaration in the case of multiple loading or unloading falls outside the scope of the document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8/Rev.1, but is explained in Chapter 2.3.2.4. of the eTIR Reference Model.

Question 4: See Question 3

Question 5: See Question 2

Question 6: The notion of ‘Office of guarantee’ is not used in the eTIR Project. The purpose of the acceptance of the guarantee is to ensure that the guarantee cannot be used more than once.

Question 7: The status of the holder refers to his status as contained in the International TIR Data Base (ITDB). A clarifying footnote will be added to the second revision of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8.

Question 8: See Question 2

Question 9: See Question 2

Question 10: The advance cargo information will be used by the holder to lodge the Customs declaration upon arrival at the Customs office of entry en route. The absence of any international standard on electronic signatures accounts for the fact that the eTIR Project does not propose the inclusion of this type of authentication into the advance cargo information message. However, as in the case of controls and certification of vehicles under the paper-based TIR system, the eTIR system

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<sup>1/</sup> The Annex provides answers to specific comments and questions to document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2008/8/Rev.1 as raised by the Czech Republic and contained in Informal document GE.1 No. 4 (2008), which can be found at the following address;

[http://www.unece.org/trans/bcf/adhoc/conc\\_tech/documents/ECE-TRANS-WP30-GE1-2008-inf04e.pdf](http://www.unece.org/trans/bcf/adhoc/conc_tech/documents/ECE-TRANS-WP30-GE1-2008-inf04e.pdf).

should also be based on mutual recognition with regard to the authentication mechanisms. Appropriate amendments to the convention should be made to ensure a legal basis for such recognition (see also Question 22).

Question 11: See Question 2

Question 12: In case of multiple loading, the holder will send a separate set of advance cargo information to each Customs office of departure. When lodging his declaration at the subsequent Customs offices of entry, the holder will as usual make reference to its guarantee which is the link between both advance cargo information messages.

Question 13: In case of multiple loading, the procedure for the acceptance of a Customs declaration is the same for each Customs office of departure. However, any consecutive office of departure will use the advance cargo information sent by the holder in combination with the advance cargo information (declaration information and other TIR transport information, e.g on seals) received from the first Customs office of departure through the eTIR international system. Both are combined in the declaration lodged by the holder when he presents himself with the additional goods and the sealed vehicle or container loaded with the goods from the first loading place. After acceptance of the declaration, Customs will update the advance cargo information in the eTIR international system with the information on all goods and the new seals information (use case 2.3.2.4.).

Question 14: In case of multiple loading, each advance cargo information message will obtain its own unique reference number. However, the various messages will be linked by a reference to a single guarantee.

Question 15: See Question 13.

Question 16: See Question 13.

Question 17: See Question 13.

Question 18: See Question 1.

Question 19: See Question 10.

Question 20: See Question 2.

Question 21: See Question 10.

Question 22: Mutual recognition of authentication mechanisms is the key to avoiding that the holder (or his representative) will have to sign the Customs declaration for each separate TIR operation, until an internationally recognized electronic signature standard becomes available. As an alternative solution, the eTIR Project could be amended with the deliverable that Contracting Parties would appoint a certification authority, which would provide each individual holder with an electronic signature. Possibly, the ITDB could also be used for that purpose.

Question 23: A “key” is added to facilitate verification by the holder of the integrity of the advance cargo information.

Question 24: See Question 23.

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