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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Administrative Committee for the
International Convention on the Harmonization
of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982
(Second session, 3 and 4 February 1994)

**REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE HARMONIZATION
OF FRONTIER CONTROLS OF GOODS, 1982
ON ITS SECOND SESSION**

1. The Administrative Committee held its second session at Geneva from 3 to 4 February 1994.
2. The following representatives of the Contracting Parties attended: Austria; Belgium; Czech Republic; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Italy; Netherlands; Portugal; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; United Kingdom; European Economic Community. Representatives of Latvia, Romania, Turkey and the United States of America as well as the Customs Cooperation Council (CCC) and the Central Office for International Railway Transport (OCTI) participated as observers under Annex 7, Article 2, Paragraph 1 of the Convention.
3. The Committee noted that the required quorum according to Annex 7, Article 6 of the Convention had been attained.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/3).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

5. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 5 of the Convention, the Committee elected Mr. M. Vivod (Slovenia) as Chairman and Mr. M. Hall (United Kingdom) as Vice-Chairman.

ATTENDANCE OF THE OBSERVERS

6. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 2, Paragraph 1 of the Convention, the Committee decided not to impose any restrictions on the attendance as observers of competent administrations of States and international organizations not Contracting Parties to the Convention.

STATUS OF THE CONVENTION

7. The Committee was informed that the following States and regional economic integration organizations were Contracting Parties to the Convention: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bosnia-Herzegovina; Cuba; Czech Republic; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Lesotho; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Portugal; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; South Africa; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; United Kingdom; Yugoslavia; European Economic Community.
8. Armenia would become a Contracting Party as of 8 March 1994.

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF THE CONVENTION

9. The Committee noted that no proposal for amendment of the Convention had been submitted for consideration by the Committee.

PROPOSALS OTHER THAN AMENDMENTS TO THE CONVENTION(a) Reduction of phytosanitary frontier controls in rail transport

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/133, paragraphs. 63-73; TRANS/WP.30/R.45; TRANS/WP.30/129, paragraphs 13-27; TRANS/WP.30/125, paragraphs 10-16; TRANS/WP.30/R.11.

10. The Committee noted that, following recommendations made at its first session in 1987 (TRANS/GE.30/AC.3/2, paras. 7-13), the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport has studied in detail phytosanitary problems encountered in the international transport of goods by rail. In cooperation with the International Union of Railways (UIC) and the European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO), major problems in this field could be solved; minor remaining difficulties are removed on a bilateral basis and in cooperation between the railways and the national authorities concerned.

11. The Committee welcomed the efforts made by the railways to facilitate border controls, but felt that efforts also had to be made in the other modes of transport covered by the Convention, including maritime and air transport.

12. The Committee decided that the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport should study these subjects further, including quality control measures, particularly the establishment of a new up-to-date reference list of goods still requiring phytosanitary control measures. Other measures, possibly leading to concrete amendments of the Convention in this field, should also be initiated.

(b) Facilitation of border crossings in international rail transport

Documentation: TRANS/SC.2/AC.1/4.

13. The Committee was informed of continuing activities of the UN/ECE Principal Working Party on Rail Transport to investigate the causes for border delays in international rail transport and to prepare measures to eliminate such occurrences.

14. In the light of the above activities of the Principal Working Party within the framework of the "FACILRAIL" project, jointly undertaken by OCTI and the UN/ECE, the Committee decided to invite the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport to study whether the existing provisions of the Convention would need to be better implemented and/or whether any modification of the provisions of the Convention would be required.

(c) Measures to facilitate the world-wide implementation of the Convention

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/R.1.

15. With a view to widening the geographical scope of the Convention and to fostering the implementation of its provisions, the Committee considered measures to make the Convention better known to interested parties concerned (publicity) and to make the provisions of the Convention more operational. The Committee felt that particular emphasis should be given to practical measures to implement the provisions of the Convention with regard to phytosanitary, veterinary and quality controls as well as to general environmental control measures. The wide expertise of the various Governmental and non-Governmental international organizations in these areas may need to be taken into account and used in preparing such measures.

16. The Committee was also of the view that the conclusions of the Ljubljana Symposium on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods organized by Slovenia (2-4 October 1992) should be taken into account in this respect.

17. In view of these considerations, the Committee considered a note transmitted by the Government of Slovenia containing the text of a draft resolution to be proposed for adoption by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/R.1).

18. The Committee was of the view that this draft provided a good basis which could be considered by the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport with a view to including concrete measures in order to implement the provisions of the Convention, e.g. in bilateral arrangements or agreements. The Commission of the ECE should also be made aware of these activities.

(d) Review of resolutions and other decisions adopted in the context of the Convention

Documentation: Resolution No. 230; TRANS/GE.30/R.212.

19. The Committee reviewed existing resolutions and other decisions adopted in the framework of the Convention, such as resolution No. 230 on "Technical Assistance Measures For the Implementation of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods" (adopted by the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee on 4 February 1983) and the "Declaration concerning the conduct of participants in international trade" (adopted by the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport).

20. The Committee reaffirmed the provisions and the objective of resolution No. 230 and decided to transmit the "Declaration Concerning the Conduct of Participants in International Trade" to the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport for examination with a view to updating its provisions, if necessary, and to upgrading it, possibly to a UN/ECE resolution.

(e) Preparation of a workshop on transport facilitation

21. The Committee was informed that the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport had felt that the Ljubljana Symposium (see paragraph 16) had taken a first step in addressing problems that still existed in the facilitation of international transport, particularly between Eastern and Western Europe and decided to determine on that basis possible topics for discussion at a UN/ECE workshop for countries in transition (TRANS/WP.30/147, para. 49).

22. The Committee supported these activities of the Working Party and felt that the major objectives of such a UN/ECE workshop should be (a) to take stock of existing difficulties in countries in transition in the field of transport facilitation and (b) to provide a forum for an exchange of information on and a framework for coordination of existing and planned assistance measures from Governments, the European Community and other international organisations in this field.

23. The Committee noted that the ECE was planning to organize up to two workshops or symposia on transit facilitation in 1994 and that a trust fund for assistance to countries in transition had been established by the UN/ECE secretariat.

24. The UN/ECE secretariat was requested to consult with interested countries and international organizations as well as eminent persons on possibilities of convening a workshop and to consider possibilities for the procurement of the necessary resources.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Date of the next session

25. The Committee decided that its next session should be convened in accordance with Annex 7, Article 4 of the Convention. If need be, the Committee could be convened following the conclusion of the above-mentioned workshops, in accordance with Annex 7, Article 4, Paragraph (iii).

(b) Restriction on the distribution of documents

26. The Committee decided that no restriction should be placed on the distribution of documents issued in connection with its present session.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

27. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 8 of the Convention, the Committee adopted the report on its second session.
