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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport

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

Ninth session

Bratislava (Slovakia), 7 and 8 March 2006

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE NINTH SESSION

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 ninth session on 7 and 8 March 2006 in Bratislava (Slovakia) at the kind invitation of the Customs Directorate of the Slovak Republic. The session was opened by Ms. Martina Šimova, Deputy Director General of the Customs Directorate.

2. The session was attended by experts from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom and the European Community (EC). Experts from the International Road Transport Union (IRU) were also present.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/1.

3. The Expert Group adopted the provisional agenda, prepared by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/1).

III. FOLLOW-UP TO THE ONE-HUNDRED-AND-TWELFTH SESSION OF THE WP.30

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/Informal document No. 3;
ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/Informal document No. 3/Corr.1;
ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/Informal document No. 3/Corr.2.

4. The Expert Group took note of the instruction by the Working Party. It agreed to concentrate on technical and conceptual issues and revert to WP.30 when political, legal or financial issues are raised.

IV. ACTIVITIES OF THE INFORMAL AD HOC EXPERT GROUP

A. Results of the eTIR questionnaire

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/2.

5. The Expert Group took note of the final results of the questionnaire. It was of the view that the additional reply from the Russian Federation had not brought any significant change to the preliminary results discussed at previous sessions and used in Chapter 1.1.7 and 1.1.8 of the Reference Model (See ExG/COMP/2005/9, para. 11 and TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2005/5, para. 6) which thus remained valid. The Expert Group also felt that it was no longer necessary to continue updating the results of the questionnaire and, therefore, decided to remove this item from its agenda and only revert to the final results of the questionnaire contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/2 if circumstances would so require.

B. Reference Model of the TIR Procedure

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2005/32-TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2005/18.

6. The Expert Group took note of version 1.5a of the Reference Model, which is now available in all UNECE official languages and which will be considered by the Working Party at its June 2006 session. The experts did not report having noticed any discrepancy between the language versions.

Annexes

Documentation: ExG/COMP/2002/10.

Decision: 110¹

7. The Expert Group took note of the outcome of a meeting between the UNTDED/ISO7372 secretary and the UNECE secretariat, which had taken place on 6 February 2006 in Geneva. It welcomed the proposal to include the data elements as they stand in annex 1 of document ExG/COMP/2002/10 as a new annex to the Reference Model without aligning them further to the UNTDED. It agreed to revert to this list of data elements together with the UNTDED secretariat when preparing the standard messages to be used in the eTIR system.

C. Future projects for the Reference Model of the TIR Procedure

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2005/2/Rev.1; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/3; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/4; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2006/1; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/Informal document No. 1; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/Informal document No. 2; ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2006/Informal document No. 3.

Decisions: 111-115

8. The Expert Group welcomed the presentations from the secretariat on documents TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2005/2/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/3. After a thorough review of the documents by all experts present, the experts from Customs administrations felt that the substantive issues covered by the two documents may be added to the Reference Model as an introduction to Chapter 2, as agreed in the past by the Expert Group and documented in the Reference Model in Chapter 0.2.3. The experts from the IRU raised questions to parts of the documents, in particular in relation to the following issues:

- ensuring continued service of the eTIR international system,
- the usefulness of the first step in the step-by-step approach as presented by the secretariat in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/3,
- ensuring an efficient and cost-effective procedure for the submission of the declaration by the holder,
- clarification of the use of the term “digital signature” in contrast to other verification methods and
- providing the international guarantee chain with automated notifications of all steps of a TIR transport.

¹ The open issues and those solved in the course of the session as well as the decisions related to these issues or taken by the Expert Group during the session are contained in annex 1 (issues) and annex 2 (decisions) to this report.

9. The last issue was taken care of by amending document TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2005/2/Rev.1. With regard to the second question, the experts from Customs administrations and the European Commission confirmed that they consider that the first step of the project is not just very useful but should even be regarded as the corner stone of the whole eTIR project. In relation to the remaining issues, the Expert Group requested the secretariat to take them into account and address them, where appropriate, in its future considerations.

10. The Expert Group also welcomed an extensive presentation from the IRU providing technical details on its achievements, so far, in the field of computerization of the TIR system as well as a possible alternative proposal, which had originally been submitted to WP.30 as Informal document No. 3 (2006). The Customs administrations present were of the view that the main differences between the proposal presented by the IRU and the proposal contained in document TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2005/2/Rev.1 were related to the establishment of an international, centralized database and the organization of the guarantee management system. According to document TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2005/2/Rev 1 and in line with what has been stated by the TIR Contracting Parties on several occasions, these components of the computerized system need to be developed under the complete supervision by Customs. The IRU expressed its willingness to adjust its proposal to include a centralized component where Customs authorities could store, independently from the Cutewise system, all information concerning TIR transports in a system managed internationally by Customs authorities. Bearing this in mind, the representatives from Customs authorities were of the view that the proposal of the IRU would be similar to the one contained in the documents submitted by the secretariat. Therefore, the Customs authorities present did not see conceptual differences between the two approaches. The Expert Group welcomed the part of the IRU presentation which focussed on the ongoing project, within the NCTS/TIR pilot, to assist the holder in providing the Customs authorities with information required for the establishment of the TIR declaration. The Group felt that, within the framework of the eTIR project, the pilot project would be a very valuable contribution by the IRU and its associations.

11. As a consequence, the Experts from Customs administrations agreed that the work of the Expert Group should continue on the basis of the proposal prepared by the secretariat in collaboration with the European Commission. They proposed to combine document TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2005/2/Rev.1 with document TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/3 and present this as the high level description of the eTIR project, to be included in the Reference Model at the next session of WP.30 for endorsement.

12. The Expert Group also felt it was necessary to revert to WP.30 on issues that were not considered to be of a technical nature such as the interpretation of the quote of the External Evaluation Report, the potential additional costs that would be induced by the introduction of national declaration mechanisms for foreign transport operators and the legal responsibilities linked to the management of the eTIR international system. They requested the Chairperson to particularly refer to these issues when reporting to WP.30 at its forthcoming session. Finally, the Customs authorities present stressed that, from a technical perspective, the computerization project should be designed in a way which would allow the inclusion of additional features, in

particular in relation to supply chain security, which the authorities present expected to become indispensable elements in all transit systems in the future.

E. OTHER BUSINESS

13. The Expert Group took note that the secretariat will participate in the WCO DMPT meeting organized in Brussels on 6-7 June 2006 to ensure that TIR requirements are taken into account in the development of the third version of WCO data model and in particular in the transit sub-model.

F. DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION

14. The Expert Group tentatively decided to hold its next session in Geneva in conjunction with the September session of the Working Party, possibly with interpretation.

Annex 1 – Open and discussed issues

No.	Subject	Description	Date	Source	Related decision(s)	Solved
41	Chapter 2	Following WP.30 decision regarding the step-by-step approach for the development of the project, ExG underlines the necessity to elaborate a detailed description of the final product in order to be able to split the work into various steps	1-2 March 04	ExG (Geneva)	78, 94, 100, 108, 109, 111, 60	
63	Annexes	Add an Annex as described in document ExG/COMP/2005/5 point 4	17 January 05	IRU	98, 106, 110	
64	2. E-Business Requirements	Proposal: alternative Chapter 2, E-Business Requirements of the Reference Model (document ExG/COMP/2005/7)	17 January 05	IRU	105	
65	Intro to Chapter 2	The ExG wonders what is the best option to provide advance cargo information (push or pull information?)	14-15 November 05	ExG (Geneva)	107	
66	Intro to Chapter 2	Is it necessary to have digital signatures as data elements?	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	115	
67	Intro to Chapter 2	The Guarantor would benefit from continuous updates on the information on the TIR Transport	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	114	
68	Intro to Chapter 2	An efficient and cost-effective procedure for the submission of the declaration is necessary	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	112, 113	

Annex 2 – Decisions

Decision No.	Issue No.	Description	Date	Source	Version²
110	63	ExG decided to include the data elements contained in ExG/COMP/2002/10 as an Annex to the Reference Model without further aligning them to the UNTDED	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	1.6
111	41	ExG requested the secretariat to combine documents TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2005/2/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/3 and present them to WP.30	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	
112	68	ExG decided that the electronic declarations should only be sent to Customs offices of departure	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	
113	68	ExG decided to seek guidance from WP.30 on how an operator could submit a declaration in a country other than his own without having to deal with intermediaries	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	
114	67	ExG decided to update chapter 2.2.4 to take this issue into account	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	
115	66	ExG decided to remove the digital signature from the messages between Customs authorities but decided to postpone the discussion on their necessity in the declaration	7-8 March 06	ExG (Bratislava)	

² This column indicated in which version the results of the decision will be included for the first time.