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**International Convention on the Harmonization
of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention):
Survey on the application of Annex 8**

Outcome of the 2016 United Nations Economic Commission for Europe survey

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. On 20 May 2008, Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention came into force. According to Article 7 "Reporting mechanism" of the Annex, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) shall carry out, every second year, a survey among Contracting Parties on progress made to improve border crossing procedures in their countries.
2. The last survey was conducted in 2014 and its results were published in 2015 (document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/12).
3. In November 2016, the UNECE secretariat initiated the present biennial survey. The survey has been conducted by the questionnaire which was approved by the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) at its 122nd session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2009/8 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/244, para. 15). The current document contains the summary and the analysis of replies on the progress in implementing Annex 8 on road transport at the national level.

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II. Replies

4. The following 17 countries replied to the questionnaire: Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. Most of the replies were prepared by the national customs administrations. Some replies were prepared by the respective Ministries of Transport. It is also worth underlining that the countries that had responded to the previous survey(s), were requested to indicate only the changes since then.

III. Results of the survey

5. Statistics of the replies to specific questions is given below.

Question 1. *Please provide information regarding the official publication of Annex 8 in your country.*

	It has been published on _____ (date of publication)
	It is scheduled to be published on _____ (expected date of publication)
	It has neither been published nor scheduled to be published
	Other (please specify) _____

Twelve respondents indicated that they have already published Annex 8. One country indicated that it is scheduled to be published in 2017. Four countries replied that it has neither been published nor scheduled to be published, whereas two of these countries are Member States of the European Union (EU) which has already published Annex 8.

Question 2. *Has your country taken measures to facilitate the granting of visas for professional drivers in accordance with national best practice for all visa applicants, national immigration rules and/or international commitments?*

	Yes. Please briefly describe these measures: _____
	No. Please briefly explain the reason: _____

Eleven respondents indicated that they have taken measures to facilitate the granting of visas for professional drivers. Six countries replied that they have not taken any measures.

Countries, which are members of the Schengen Agreement, pointed out that they grant visas in line with this agreement.

Several countries commented that the visa facilitation process is conducted in the framework of bilateral agreements with third countries.

Some respondents indicated that the visa procedure is being carried out completely in the framework of the "reciprocity" principle.

One country stated that its Ministry of Transport receives the list and details of the professional drivers who will carry out international transport operations to various European countries from the international road transport associations and companies, and initiates the necessary formal visa procedures for these professional drivers. By doing so, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, multi-entry visas valid for 1 year, are granted to these professional drivers.

Question 3. *Does your country regularly exchange information with other Contracting Parties on best practices with regard to the facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers?*

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Any additional comments: _____

Fourteen respondents indicated that they regularly exchange information with other Contracting Parties. Three countries replied “No”.

Some countries commented that such exchange of information is carried out at bilateral consular meetings.

Some countries indicated that this exchange of information is done at meetings among Schengen countries.

Question 4. *How does your country regularly inform all parties involved in international transport operations:*

(a) *on border control requirements for international road transport operations in force?*

(b) *on border control requirements for international road transport operations planned?*

(c) *on the actual situation at borders?*

The respondents inform all parties involved in international transport operations on (a) to (c) by the following means:

- via websites;
- at bilateral and multilateral meetings between authorities, associations and private companies;
- by publishing official instructions;
- by publishing announcements at border crossings;
- by correspondence to competent authorities of foreign countries;
- through seminars, workshops and trainings.

Some countries indicated that planned regulations are subject to consultation procedures with other state authorities and trade associations concerned.

Question 5. *Which control procedures have been transferred to the places of departure and destination of the goods transported by road so as to alleviate congestion at the border crossing points?*

<input type="checkbox"/>	None;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medico-sanitary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Veterinary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phytosanitary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Controls of compliance with technical standards;

	Quality controls;
	Vehicle inspections;
	Weighing of vehicles;
	Other (please specify) _____

Any additional comments: _____

The numbers of respondents that have transferred the relevant controls to inland offices are given in the table below.

Medico-sanitary inspection	5
Veterinary inspection	5
Phyosanitary inspection	8
Controls of compliance with technical standards	8
Quality controls	4
Vehicle inspections	2
Weighing of vehicles	4
None	4

One country replied that it inspects the permits for trucks in the inland customs offices to make the journey faster as of 23 June 2014.

One country pointed out that controls are only being processed if legally prescribed and are aimed to be “one stop shop” when possible. Furthermore, phyosanitary inspections can be conducted at the place of destination if certain conditions are met in accordance with Council Directive 2000/29/EC (EU legislation).

One country indicated that, in exceptional circumstances, the competent authorities (veterinary, phyosanitary) may decide to carry out physical inspections inland. That country also pointed out that vehicle inspections are preferably carried out inland, to the extent possible.

One country indicated the use of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) status as a tool for alleviating congestion at border crossing points.

One country responded that it has not transferred any of the mentioned control procedures, apart from the control procedures related to the TIR regime.

Question 6. Which measures have been undertaken at the border crossing points in your country in order to give priority to urgent consignments, e.g. live animals and perishable goods?

	Waiting times for vehicles transporting such goods have been minimized;
	Required controls are carried out as quickly as possible;
	Refrigerating units of vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs are allowed to operate during the time of crossing the border;
	Cooperation with other Contracting Parties regarding sanitary inspections of such goods.

The numbers of respondents that have undertaken relevant measures are given in the table below.

Waiting times for vehicles transporting such goods have been minimized	13
Required controls are carried out as quickly as possible	15
Refrigerating units of vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs are allowed to operate during the time of crossing the border	12
Cooperation with other Contracting Parties regarding sanitary inspections of such goods	9

Question 7. *Is your country a Contracting Party to the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections (1997)?*

- Yes (go to question 9)
- No (go to question 8)

Four countries stated they are Contracting Parties to the 1997 Agreement, thirteen responded no.

Question 8. *Does your country accept the International Technical Inspection Certificate as provided for in the above Agreement (also reproduced in Appendix 1 to Annex 8)?*

- Yes
- No

Four countries accept the certificate, whereas nine do not.

Question 9. *Is your country a Contracting Party to the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (1970)?*

- Yes
- No

Sixteen countries are Contracting Parties to the 1970 Agreement, whereas one country is not.

Question 10. *Does your country accept the International Vehicle Weight Certificates (please refer to Appendix 2 to Annex 8) issued in other Contracting Parties?*

- Yes (go to questions 11, 12 and 13)
- No (go to question 14)

Any additional comments: _____

Five countries responded that they accept the International Vehicle Weight Certificate (IVWC), whereas twelve countries do not accept it.

One country commented that the acceptance of the certificate is not in line with its national law, and in case it gets a binding character, it will not adopt the Annex.

Question 11. *Has your country approved weighing stations which are authorized to issue the International Vehicle Weight Certificates?*

- Yes
- No

Any additional comments: _____

Only one country indicated the approval of weighing stations which are authorized to issue the IVWCs.

Question 12. *Has your country published a list of all weighing stations authorized to issue the International Vehicle Weight Certificates?*

- Yes
- No

Any additional comments: _____

Only one country, which responded to the previous question, indicated that it has published a list of weighing stations authorized to issue the IVWCs.

Question 13. *Has your country transmitted this list to UNECE?*

- Yes
- No

Any additional comments: _____

The same one country responded to this question positively, however UNECE has not received any list until now.

Question 14. *Which of the following infrastructure requirements for border crossing points open for international goods traffic does your country meet?*

- Facilities for joint controls with neighbour States (one-stop technology), 24 hours a day;
- Separation of traffic for different types of traffic on both sides of the border allowing to give preference to vehicles under cover of valid international Customs transit documents or carrying live animals or perishable foodstuffs;
- Off-lane control areas for random cargo and vehicle checks;
- Appropriate parking and terminal facilities;
- Proper hygiene, social and telecommunications facilities for drivers;
- Adequate facilities for forwarding agents, so that they can offer services to transport operators on a competitive basis.

The numbers of respondents that have met the relevant infrastructure requirements are given in the table below.

Facilities for joint controls with neighbour States (one-stop technology), 24-hour a day	11
Separation of traffic for different types of traffic on both sides of the border allowing to give preference to vehicles under cover of valid international Customs transit documents or carrying live animals or perishable foodstuffs	10
Off-lane control areas for random cargo and vehicle checks	12
Appropriate parking and terminal facilities	13
Proper hygiene, social and telecommunications facilities for drivers	9
Adequate facilities for forwarding agents, so that they can offer services to transport operators on a competitive basis	8

One country commented that, as a tool of separation of traffic, the TIR-EPD Green Lane System is used at one border gate and will be extended to a second one in the near future.

Some respondents indicated that there may be differences among different border crossing points in terms of the level of facilitation depending on the available infrastructure.

Three countries pointed out that, as EU Member States, they do not have external borders crossed by road.

IV. Preliminary conclusions from the survey

6. The analysis of the replies shows that the Contracting Parties have achieved progress in improving border crossing procedures in their countries under several topics. The progress is widespread, in particular concerning provisions such as: providing information to all parties involved in transport operations: creating priority to urgent consignments (perishable goods and live animals) and improving infrastructure at border crossing points.

7. With regard to specific parts of the survey, conclusions are as follows:

(a) Official publication of Annex 8: Whereas most respondents mentioned their publishing Annex 8, there are countries who stated that the Annex has neither been published nor scheduled to be published. In this regard, it should be pointed out, once more, that regardless of domestic approval/publication procedures, Annex 8 has become legally binding for all Contracting Parties as of 20 May 2008.

(b) Facilitation of visa procedures: Most respondents indicated that measures have been taken in their countries in order to facilitate the granting of visas for professional drivers. What is noticeable about these measures is that they are provided mostly on a basis of reciprocity. Furthermore, there is still a significant number of Contracting Parties that have not acted on this issue yet.

(c) Providing information to all parties: All the countries that responded, share information with parties involved in transport about border control requirements in force or planned and the actual situation at borders. They utilize several different instruments, including electronic means, to send information as soon as possible.

(d) Transfer of control procedures: The progress is rather limited on this topic. Particularly, the transfers of inspection and weighing of vehicles, and quality controls to the places of departure and destination are rarely realized.

(e) Priority for urgent consignments: All respondents indicated that they have taken measures to give priority to urgent consignments. However, among these measures, cooperation with other Contracting Parties regarding sanitary inspections seems to be the least applied.

(f) Technical inspection of vehicles: There is very limited application of the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections, 1997. Most of the respondents are neither Contracting Party to this agreement nor accepting the International Technical Inspection Certificate as provided for in the agreement (also reproduced in Appendix 1 to Annex 8).

(g) Carriage of perishable foodstuffs: Almost all respondents indicated that they are Contracting Party to the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage, 1970 (ATP).

(h) Use of IVWC: There are some respondents who state that they accept IVWCs issued in other Contracting Parties, however there is no progress in the Contracting Parties in authorizing weighing stations to issue certificates since the last survey.

(i) Infrastructure requirements: Most countries meet several of the infrastructure requirements, whereas the level of conformity is limited in the cases of separation of traffic and the availability of facilities for drivers and forwarding agents.

8. The conclusions from the analysis indicate that Contracting Parties are successfully implementing several provisions of Annex 8. However, there is also a need for further action on topics such as: use of IVWC; facilitation of visa procedures; transfer of control procedures from the border crossing points to places of departure and destination; accession to the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections (1997) and acceptance of the International Technical Inspection Certificate, etc.

9. The Working Party may wish to consider actions to stimulate further implementation of the provisions of the Harmonization Convention and of its Annexes.
