

TIR EXECUTIVE BOARD (TIRExB)

COMMISSION DE CONTROLE TIR (TIRExB)

ИСПОЛНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ СОВЕТ МДП (ИСМДП)

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Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975

TIR Executive Board (TIRExB)

Ninety seventh session

Geneva, 5 June 2023

Report of the ninety-seventh session of the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB)

I. Attendance

1. The TIR Executive Board (TIRExB, also referred to hereafter as the Board) held its ninety-seventh session on 5 June 2023 in Geneva.
2. The following members of TIRExB were present: Mr. M. Ciampi (Italy), Mr. E. Khakimov (Uzbekistan), Mr. P. J. Laborie (European Commission), Mr. H. R. Mayer (Austria), Mr. A. Şenmanav (Türkiye) and Ms. C. Zuidgeest (Netherlands).
3. Ms. A. Taliberti attended the session as observer, representing the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: Informal document TIRExB/AGE/2023/97

4. TIRExB adopted the agenda of the session in Informal document TIRExB/AGE/2023/97.

III. Adoption of the report of the ninety-sixth session of TIRExB (agenda item 2)

Documentation: Informal document TIRExB/REP/2023/96 draft

5. TIRExB adopted the report of its ninety-sixth session, including the proposed amendments, as contained in Informal document TIRExB/REP/2023/96 draft. It further requested the secretariat to indicate that the possibility to connect virtually to the ninety-sixth session was exceptional and requested the secretariat to submit the final report to the TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) for endorsement.

IV. Programme of work 2023–2024 (agenda item 3)

Documentation: Informal document No. 6/Rev.1 (2023)

6. TIRExB considered the revised draft programme of work for the biennium 2023–2024 contained in Informal document No. 6/Rev.1 (2023) and agreed with the changes

proposed in the revision. Various members highlighted that the programme of work is rather heavy and requires extensive contributions by the secretariat.

7. In view of the upcoming election for the two empty positions of members of the Board, TIRExB decided to postpone the final adoption of its programme of work to its next session, with the idea to provide an opportunity to new members to provide their inputs. The Board mandated the secretariat to circulate a second revision of the programme of work to all members after the election with a deadline to provide any comments set at 17 July 2023. Would any of the eventual provided comments require discussion, the Board requested the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to organize an informal meeting, aimed at resolving any issue and submit the programme of work to the eighty-first session of AC.2 for endorsement.

V. Promotion of the geographical expansion of the TIR system (agenda item 4)

Documentation: Informal document No. 8 (2023)

8. TIRExB considered the draft structure, content and introduction of the roadmap on the geographical expansion of the TIR system in new regions, as contained in Informal document No. 8 (2023).

9. While some, including IRU, expressed concerns that the proposed structure might, potentially, lead to a very lengthy document, others, including the secretariat, stated that some of the proposed chapters could be rather short as they could mainly be composed of references to earlier studies made on those topics. The Board also expressed concerns that the proposed structure could go beyond a roadmap and could instead be considered as a strategy paper. The secretariat clarified that, while the focus and conclusion of the document will be a proper roadmap, the chapters will support and provide the required information to justify the selection of a roadmap.

10. In order to provide a better picture of the current situation of international/regional transit in the world, Mr. A. Şenmanav (Türkiye) suggested to also include a chapter to present the regional transit systems currently in operation.

11. The Board mandated the secretariat to prepare a revised document for its next session, including references to relevant studies (e.g., WCO Transit Handbook and Guidelines).

VI. Adaptation of the TIR procedure to modern business, logistics and transport requirements (agenda item 5)

Documentation: Informal document No. 25/Rev.1 (2022)

12. TIRExB recalled that, at its previous session, it had considered the draft guidelines for the use of the TIR and eTIR procedures for intermodal transport and had requested members to provide their comments on the draft guidelines to the secretariat after the session and before 30 April 2023.

13. The Board took note that the secretariat had received comments but had not been in a position to prepare the planned revision. It requested the secretariat to prepare a revision on the basis of the comments received and, in order to gain time, circulate it for comments well before the next session.

VII. Computerization of the TIR procedure (agenda item 6)

A. Interconnection of national customs systems with the eTIR international system

14. Secretariat provided the latest information regarding the interconnection of national customs systems with the eTIR international system. The secretariat stressed the importance to have Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Iran starting the interconnection during 2023. Such a development would pave the way for having the middle corridor transformed to an eTIR corridor but also for India and China to start the interconnection next year. The organization of TIRExB friends of the chair meeting in Samarkand will contribute to the achievement of this objective.

B. International TIR Data Bank

15. The Board welcomed the status report on the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB) delivered by the secretariat. The Board was informed about the current status of data recordings and usage figures in ITDB (1,170 web application users, 29,663 authorized TIR Carnet holders, 276 customs stamps and seals records and 2,851 customs offices operational for TIR procedures). It was further informed about the recent ITDB related achievements: in particular of the ITDB workshops with Pakistan and India customs authorities, of ITDB customs office data import support for Georgia and Pakistan and of the focus on the eTIR National Application project implementation.

C. Financing of the eTIR international system

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/4, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/2, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/4, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/6, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/8 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/10.

16. The Board took note of past considerations on the topic by the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) and the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR procedure (GE.1) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/4) and by the Group of Experts on the Legal Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.2) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/2, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/4, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/6, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/8 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/10). It requested the secretariat to prepare, for its next session, a summary of all those considerations as well as the considerations by AC.2 that led to Annex 11, Article 11, paragraph 3 and its explanatory note.

17. The Board further mandated the secretariat to prepare, for its next session, a list of possible alternative financing options as well as a tentative budget.

VIII. Support training activities on the application of the TIR Convention (agenda item 7)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/TIR/6/Rev.11.

18. The Board recalled that the eleventh revised edition of the TIR Handbook had been published in 2018 and is contained in ECE/TRANS/TIR/6/Rev.11. It further noted that the twelfth revised edition will contain all the amendments to the Convention which have entered into force since as well as approved comments and examples of good practice which will be approved by AC.2. The members did not have any additional suggestions related to the preparation of the twelfth revised edition of the TIR Handbook. The Board requested the secretariat to prepare drafts of the twelfth revised edition of the TIR Handbook in the six official languages of the United Nations for one of its next sessions.

19. Furthermore, the Board stressed that, while the paper and PDF versions of the TIR Handbook are useful, an online and more interactive version of the TIR Handbook could be very useful. Taking into account the available resources and ongoing activities, it requested the secretariat to consider the feasibility of such project in the medium-term.

IX. Supervision of the centralized printing and distribution of the TIR Carnets, including the monitoring of the price of TIR Carnets (agenda 8)

Documentation: Informal document No. 7/Rev.1 (2023)

20. The Board took note that, due to the impossibility to access the data stored in the online survey tool used to collect data on the price of TIR Carnets, the secretariat had not been in a position to send out reminders to the associations which had not responded and had, therefore, not been in a position to prepare Informal document No. 7/Rev.1 (2023). It noted that this would be done as soon as the secretariat will regain access to the data stored on the online survey tool.

X. Management of the TIR budget (agenda 9)

Documentation: Informal document No. 9 (2023)

21. The Board considered Informal document No. 9 (2023), containing a draft of a new Explanatory Note to the TIR Convention aimed at formalizing the decision taken by AC.2 at its twenty-eighth session, which authorized TIRExB to decide, upon proposal by the TIR Secretary, to reallocate funds between budget lines within the approved budget of TIRExB and the TIR secretariat.

22. The secretariat explained that reallocating funds between budget lines within a given budget is standard practice and was usually required to ensure the effective functioning of projects and programmes. It further stated that such practice is completely in line with the financial rules and regulations for extrabudgetary funds and projects of the United Nations.

23. While supporting the Explanatory Note in principle, the Board was of the view that AC.2 should not only endorse any reallocation of the funds during the approval of the final accounts but should also be informed at the first opportunity of such modifications. It requested the secretariat to prepare a revision of the document to reflect that.

24. The Board further noted that, on behalf of the private sector, IRU stated that it was not in favour of introducing such Explanatory Note in the TIR Convention as it could lead to less unspent funds at the end of the year. IRU stated that, since the unspent funds of a given year are deducted from the amount to be transferred by IRU to prefinance the subsequent year's budget, less unspent funds will lead to a higher amount per TIR Carnet the year after. The Board invited IRU to submit a document clarifying its arguments for the next session.

XI. Settlement of disputes between contracting parties, associations, insurance companies and international (agenda item 10)

Regular checks on TIR transports at certain border crossing points

Documentation: Informal documents Nos. 18 (2022) and 22 (2022)

25. The Board recalled that, at previous sessions, it considered Informal documents Nos. 18 (2022) and 22 (2022), transmitted by IRU, presenting regular checks of TIR transports at certain border crossing points and, respectively, additional evidence about those checks.

26. The secretariat informed the Board that it had overlooked to contact the customs administration of Azerbaijan to raise its awareness of this issue and ask for inputs but that it would do so urgently.

27. IRU informed the Board that it had conducted a survey, the results will be transmitted for the next session of the Board. It pointed out that the results of the survey conclude that the regular checks at border points, as well as other issues, undermine the benefits of the TIR system, in particular at border crossing points with Azerbaijan. IRU requested the Board to urgently take actions aimed at resolving this issue.

28. IRU also invited the members of the Board to take part in a visit of the Gürbulak-Bazargan border crossing point planned for 7 August 2023.

XI. Miscellaneous (agenda item 10)

A. Activities of the secretariat

(a) Follow-up actions to previous decisions by TIRExB.

29. TIRExB took note that no follow-up actions were pending.

(b) Organization of TIR related events.

30. TIRExB welcomed the organization of a Friends of the Chair meeting in Samarkand (Uzbekistan) on 21-22 June 2023, aimed at promoting the use of the eTIR procedure along the middle corridor and encouraging countries along the corridor to interconnect their customs systems to the eTIR international system. The Board noted that, in addition to a number of members of the Board, the representatives from the following countries would have their participation financed: Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

(c) Status report of consultancies.

31. The Board took note that:

- A consultant is working on the development of the eTIR national application, planned to be finalized by the end of July 2023.
- Another consultant had almost completed the work on the eTIR data model in GEFEG.FX and that the revised tables contained in the eTIR functional and technical specifications would soon be available in all the ECE working languages.
- The consultant who will be preparing the publication of the guidelines for the use of the TIR and eTIR procedures for intermodal transport will be hired once the Board agrees on a revised version, probably towards the end of summer 2023.

- The consultant who will work on legal issues and the financing of the TIR secretariat will be hired in the second part of 2023.

B. Other matters

32. No issues were raised under this agenda item.

C. Restriction in the distribution of documents

33. TIRExB decided to keep documents issued in relation to the current session restricted.

D. Date and place of next session

34. The Board took note that the ninety-eighth session of the Board is scheduled to take place on 9 October 2023.
