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## **Economic Commission for Europe**

Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975

### **Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport**

#### **Technical Implementation Body**

##### **Sixth session**

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Item 5 (b) (ii) of the provisional agenda

##### **eTIR conceptual, functional and technical documentation Version 4.4**

## **New amendment proposals**

### **Note by the secretariat**

#### **I. Introduction and mandate**

1. This document presents potential amendments to be included in the eTIR specifications, version 4.4, identified during the development of the eTIR international system, the eTIR National Application and conformance tests.

#### **II. Possible amendment proposals**

##### **A. Loading and unloading places**

2. Following recommendations of the World Customs Organization (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards, a number of optional data elements have been included in eTIR messages to cover standard safety and security data requirements countries could have for goods under transit. The data elements “LoadingLocation” and “DeliveryDestination” were added for that purpose at Consignment and ConsignmentItem levels respectively.

3. While these data elements are optional, during the conformance tests, various questions were raised regarding their usage and differences, in particular:

- Why LoadingLocation is provided at Consignment level and DeliveryDestination is provided at ConsignmentItem level?

- Why DeliveryDestination contains a mandatory Address and LoadingLocation does not contain an Address class?
4. In the WCO data model other related data elements are also available but not listed in the transit requirements of the WCO SAFE Framework of Standards. In particular, at Consignment level the UnloadingLocation class is available and at ConsignmentItem level there is the GoodsConsignedPlace class. All those data elements potentially allow for the provision of an address.
5. TIB has recently agreed with a proposal to include the Consignee and Consignor classes at both Consignment and ConsignmentItem level. Similarly, in version 4.4, the relevant eTIR message could include the following data element related to where goods are loaded and unloaded:
- **Consignment**
    - LoadingLocation
      - Address
    - UnloadingLocation
      - Address
    - **ConsignmentItem**
      - GoodsConsignedPlace
        - Address
      - DeliveryDestination
        - Address
6. Moreover, for the sake of clarity the eTIR names of GoodsConsignedPlace and DeliveryDestination, could be aligned with the terminology used at Consignment level, i.e. LoadingLocation and UnloadingLocation. Furthermore, for the sake of consistency, all Address classes could be made optional.
7. Finally, similarly to Consignee and Consignor, those for location classes could be made dependent and a Rule added to explain that they shall be provided at Consignment level when they are identical for all consignment items and at ConsignmentItem level when they differ.
8. At its fifth session, TIB decided to continue at its next session the discussions on the proposal to harmonize information related to loading and unloading places, on the basis of information to be provided by delegates on their safety and security requirement, possibly also including future requirement, such as those of NCTS Phase 6.

## **B. Sequence number of TIR operations**

9. In version 4.3 of the eTIR specification, in each message allowing the exchange of information related to TIR operations, the “sequence number” of the TIR operation is a required data element, which, together with the Guarantee reference, currently allows to uniquely identify each TIR operation<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The TIR operation class also contains the “Registration number” attribute, which must be unique within the country issuing it. However, there are no rules in the eTIR specifications which would ensure the unicity of this number internationally. Consequently, at this stage, it cannot be used as identifier of the TIR operation.

10. The sequence number of each TIR operation has to be calculated by customs on the basis of the declared itinerary and, possibly, taking into account relevant changes in the itinerary accepted under the fallback procedure.
11. As long as no changes to the itinerary are accepted under the fallback procedure, the calculation of the sequence number of a TIR operation is rather straightforward and can be implemented in customs ICT systems and the eTIR international system alike. However, as soon as a change in the itinerary affecting the number of TIR operations of a TIR transport is accepted under the fallback procedure, none of the ICT systems is able to calculate the correct sequence number of a TIR operation before the change of itinerary is adequately registered in the relevant systems, and, therefore, customs officers, on the basis of the information available on the accompanying document, are required to manually amend the sequence number calculated by their systems.
12. Consequently, the accuracy of the data element that currently allows for the identification of a TIR operation is dependent on the vigilance of customs officers. Furthermore, if a customs officer in one country indicates an incorrect sequence number a correct message from another customs administration would be refused if indicating the same sequence number.
13. In the light of the above, TIB might wish to consider if the eTIR system could benefit from removing the TIR operation “sequence number” from all eTIR messages.
14. TIR operations could still be ordered using the TIR operation start date and time and the “Registration number” of the TIR operation will still allow to link the Start, Termination and Discharge information sent by customs administration.
15. Such deletion will however require that ICT systems compare TIR operation information with the declared itinerary to spot that the data about a TIR operation happened under the fallback procedure is missing and that this data will arrive at a later stage when the technical issue is resolved.
16. Alternatively, a rule forbidding changes, addition or removal of loading and unloading places under the fallback procedure could also resolve the issue.
17. Finally, taking into consideration that the “Registration number” of the TIR operation is generated nationally and its unicity is therefore not ensured internationally, TIB might wish to consider if the TIR system could benefit from the addition of a rule requiring to prefix the registration code with the country code. This would provide a unique international identifier for TIR operations.

### **C. Declaration acceptance date and time**

18. In version 4.3 of the eTIR specification, the Record declaration data message (I7), as well as all other messages allowing to exchange declaration data, only contains one date attribute: the IssueDateTime, which description and usage clearly states that it is the date at which the messages E9 or E11 were issued. This date represents in part the functional equivalent of box 14 in the TIR Carnet, which contains the place and date at which the holder declares that information in boxes 1 to 12 are correct and complete.
19. In the TIR Carnet, the first customs office of departure needs to stamp (including date) and sign in box 17 on all vouchers (certifying the acceptance of the declaration) as well as box 23 on the first voucher (certifying the start of the first TIR operation). While, in practice, these two actions are generally done almost simultaneously, they are functionally different.
20. While the metadata of all eTIR messages contains a technical date and time at which the message is sent, this date can differ from the functional date and time of the events or actions reported by means of those messages. Consequently, at the moment, the actual time

and date of acceptance of the declaration is not part of the information exchanged by customs administrations by mean of eTIR messages. The starting date of the TIR operation following the acceptance of the declaration can however be used as a good approximation for the date of acceptance.

21. However, in the WCO data model, the Declaration class also contains an AcceptanceDateTime attribute, which is dedicated to record the acceptance date of the declaration by customs. TIB might wish to consider if this attribute should be added to all messages allowing the exchange of declaration data (i.e. E6, I6, I7 and I15).

#### **D. Unicity of customs office code**

22. Version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications relies on the global uniqueness of customs office identifiers, e.g. when checking a customs office in the ITDB by means of the I19 messages, the only parameter used to retrieve information about a customs office is the customs office identifier. However, currently, each customs administration is responsible for generating identifiers for its customs offices, thus ensuring the unicity of customs office identifiers only at national level. This problem does not apply to countries, such as the member States of the European Union, who have prefixed the customs office identifiers with a two-digits country code.

23. TIB might wish to consider and discuss the issue as well as possible solutions, inter alia, the following two solution identified by the secretariat:

- Defining (within the TIR Convention or the eTIR specifications) and applying an internationally standard format for TIR customs office identifications which would ensure the global unicity of TIR customs office identifiers, e.g. by prefixing nationally defined identifiers with the ISO 3166-1-alpha-2 country code.
- Amending eTIR messages to include a country code attribute, which will refer to the country in which the customs office is located, together with each customs office identifier, in order to create an internationally unique identifier by combining the national customs office identifier and the country code.

#### **E. Optional attachments to operations**

24. One of the concrete amendment proposals currently discussed by TIB envisages the possibility to attach files related to the results of controls undertaken at the start or termination of TIR operations (see Chapter D of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2024/2).

25. In the framework of the development of the eTIR National Application, the secretariat felt that generalizing the possibility to attach files to the messages reporting the start (I9), termination (I11), discharge (I13) and refusal to start (I17) could allow customs to exchange additional information. While the required data structures are currently not available in the WCO data model, data modifications requests (DMR) could be submitted to the relevant bodies of the WCO.

26. The addition of an optional “AttachedDocument” class under the “TIR operation” class could allow sharing photos or scanned documents, e.g. in cases of fallback, incidents or accidents. It remains to be assessed if those documents would also be shared with the private sector when returning the I6 messages.

27. Would TIB see a value in the above proposal, it might also wish to consider whether the inclusion of attachment document in the TIR operation should be limited to agreed and documented cases or if their usage should be at the discretion of customs officers.

## **F. Refusal to start a TIR operation**

28. In case a country decides not to allow a TIR transport to enter the territory of their country, the best practices with regard to the use of TIR Carnets (Chapter 7.2 of the TIR Handbook) states that Customs authorities of the Customs office of entry en route are strongly recommended to apply the following procedure:

- (a) Fill-in, stamp and tear off Voucher No.1 and 2, certifying the start and termination of the TIR operation for their country;
- (b) Indicate in Box “For official use” of all remaining Vouchers No. 1/2, the precise reason for the decision to refuse entry to the TIR transport. A reference to the decision leading to the refusal should be indicated as well as to the provisions of national or international law on which this decision is based;
- (c) Indicate in Box 5 of the concerned counterfoils No. 1 and 2 “Access refused”.
- (d) Upon return at the Customs office of exit en route, Customs authorities should endorse the changes made to Box 6 (Country/countries of destination) in the remaining Vouchers No. 1/2 and proceed to open the TIR Carnet for a TIR operation in the territory of their country.

29. In version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications, points (a) to (c) are replaced by sending a refusal to start message (I17) and point (d) by a request to amend the itinerary (E11) followed by the registration of the amended declaration date (I7).

30. While using a pair of vouchers of the TIR Carnet reduces the number of TIR operations which can be covered by the TIR Carnet, in eTIR, a simple rule could be added to ensure that an operation which did not happen because of a refusal to start does not affect the number of operations which are covered by an eGuarantee.

31. TIB might wish to consider, if the addition of such a rule could make the eTIR procedure more attractive for transport companies, while not affecting the security of the TIR system for customs administration.

## **III. Considerations by TIB**

32. TIB might wish to consider the above issues and, possibly, instruct the secretariat to present more concrete proposals at one of its next sessions.