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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

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

Ninth session

Bratislava (Slovakia), 7-8 March 2006,
agenda item 3 (c)

ACTIVITIES OF THE INFORMAL AD HOC EXPERT GROUP

Future Projects for the Reference Model of the TIR Procedure

Note by the secretariat

A. BACKGROUND

1. At its one-hundred-and-twelfth session, the Working Party, inter alia, considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/Informal document No. 3 by the IRU. The Working Party requested the IRU to provide the Expert Group with more technical details of its proposals, thus enabling it to make progress in its technical analysis of the eTIR system and undertake a technical evaluation of the IRU proposal (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/224, draft)

2. In view of the request by the IRU to give an oral presentation outlining more technical details of its proposals under item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda for the forthcoming session of the Expert Group, the secretariat prepared underlying document, providing the Expert Group

with various considerations with regard to the above document by the IRU, with the aim to facilitating its discussion. This document should be read and understood in parallel to document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.1/2006/Informal document No. 1, prepared by the secretariat. The general remarks contained in that document also apply to this document. This document only focuses on the technical aspect of the IRU proposals.

B. CONSIDERATIONS BY THE SECRETARIAT

Paragraph 8

3. In paragraph 8 of its document, the IRU enumerates a number of objectives which should be pursued, without indicating their source. This is puzzling, because the IRU considers that some of the objectives will be achieved ‘tomorrow’. This is difficult to follow, in particular in view of the fact that the IRU, at various places, has warned that the establishment of an eTIR system could not be achieved overnight, adding that it might even happen that some (in particular new) countries may not be able or willing to link up to a computerized system at all. In addition, the way in which the objectives are formulated does not coincide with the IRU’s opinion that, according to the external evaluation report, the continued success of the TIR system depends “on the gradual (step-by-step) substitution of the paper based system with a computerized system”.

Paragraph 9

4. The IRU indicates in paragraph 9 of its document that the Convention “should only be changed to refer to the use of new technologies in general, leaving the existing text of the Convention as it stands, with only minor technical modifications as a consequence of the new approach”. It would be interesting to hear from the IRU at this early stage in the project how they want to ensure this. It is the opinion of the secretariat, that the word ‘minor’ should not be read and used in isolation as an absolute term, but should be judged in proportion to the finalized eTIR system. In any case, it does not justify maintaining a status-quo of the present situation.

Paragraph 10

5. (a) It would be interesting to hear how the IRU imagines the web-service to be secure without introducing any means of ensuring origin or validation of data. According to the IRU the pre-declaration is sent to the central point of Customs in a given country. It does not describe how this information gets to the Customs office of departure, nor does it describe by what means the Customs office of departure sends the departure data. It seems that the fact that it becomes accessible in CUTE-wise is sufficient to turn a pre-TIR declaration into a TIR declaration for Customs purposes. It is not clear how this is achieved.

- (c) The IRU does not explain how the Customs Office of departure should retrieve the pre-TIR declaration data. As stated under (a), it is difficult to visualize how the pre-TIR declaration turns into a TIR declaration, just by sending it to the CUTE-Wise system.
- (e) The IRU does not describe either how the data from the national Customs system are sent to the Customs office of entry. In case the IRU refers to the data contained in the pre TIR-declaration, this data may have been updated since then or the countries of transit may have been changed. The IRU does not provide explanations what happens in such cases.

Paragraph 11

6. It would have been more clarifying if the IRU, when pointing at the clearly expressed wish for the public supervision of the eTIR system, would have elaborated where and to what extent its proposal meets this requirement (or where problems are envisaged) instead of only putting the question to the Customs authorities.

Paragraph 12

7. The IRU's proposal does not contain any information with regard to its feasibility, timeliness or costs which would enable to judge its statement that it would be suited to achieve the computerization of the TIR system much earlier than the eTIR project would.

8. Finally, the IRU stresses the fact that parts of the TIR procedure are already partly computerized. It should, however, be borne in mind when discussing this aspect of the IRU proposal, that, as stated by the Chairperson of the Expert Group at the February 2006 WP.30 session, this concerns the computerization of the parts of the paper-based TIR system, which should not be confused with the electronic version of the TIR procedure, as mentioned in the Expert Group's Terms of Reference. In addition, the computerization projects by the IRU, so far, seem to have mainly been developed as a risk management tool for national associations, instead of having been designed to meet Customs requirements.

C. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

9. Having reviewed the above considerations together with further technical details provided by the IRU, the Expert Group may be in a position to provide the Working Party with technical advise on the proposals submitted by the IRU.
