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#### Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

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Item 9 (b) (i) of the provisional agenda

**Customs Convention on the International Transport of  
Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975):  
Revision of the Convention –  
Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process**

### **Report of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure on its twenty-first session**

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## **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" or "GE.1") held its twenty-first session on 25 and 26 September 2012 in Bratislava, at the kind invitation of the Slovak Customs administration. On behalf of the Financial Directorate of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Robert Nosian, Director Customs Section, delivered an introductory statement. With reference to the ninth session of GE.1, which took place in 2006, he welcomed participants once more to Bratislava. Considering the challenging issues on the agenda, he reconfirmed the importance attached by the Slovak Customs administration to the activities of GE.1, as well as expressing the general support by the Slovak authorities of the activities undertaken in the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in general and the eTIR Project in particular.

2. The session was attended by experts from Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Turkey. Experts representing the European Commission (EC) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) also attended the session.

## **II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)**

*Documentation:* Informal document GE.1 No. 8 (2012)

3. The Expert Group adopted its provisional agenda as contained in Informal document GE.1 No. 8 (2012) without further amendments.

## **III. New information and communication technology developments in the TIR system (agenda item 2)**

4. IRU presented their continuous efforts to further computerize the private aspects of the TIR procedure. More specifically, IRU presented the latest developments of their CUTE-Wise, TIRCUTEweb and AskTIRweb, Real Time SafeTIR (RTS) and TIR-EPD applications. To date, twenty six countries accept pre-declarations made through TIR-EPD and thirteen countries transmit termination data using RTS.

5. The Expert Group confirmed that its meetings constitute an important platform for experts to share information and best practices on developments and experiences regarding information and communication technology (ICT) usage in the framework of the TIR procedure and encouraged participants and interested Parties to inform the Expert Group about new developments at its future sessions.

## **IV. Reference model of the TIR procedure (agenda item 3)**

### **A. Contributions by the network of eTIR focal points**

*Documentation:* Informal document GE.1 No. 9 (2012)

6. The Expert Group took note of Informal document GE.1 No. 9 (2012) and welcomed the nomination of additional eTIR focal points by eight Contracting Parties,

bringing the total number of countries with at least an eTIR Focal Point to thirty.<sup>1</sup> It decided to consider, under agenda item 4, the comments provided on the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA).

7. The Expert Group invited eTIR focal points to become more proactive and provide inputs for GE.1 meetings at their own initiative. It also stressed the importance for those Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention that have not yet nominated an eTIR Focal point to do so in the near future. The expert from Denmark requested to be added to the list of eTIR Focal Points for her country.

## **B. International declaration mechanisms**

*Documentation:* Informal document GE.1 No. 10 (2012)

8. The Expert Group welcomed the new proposal to introduce international declaration mechanisms in the eTIR project, as presented in Informal document GE.1 No. 10 (2012). Recalling a key principle of the eTIR project, i.e. that the eTIR international systems avoids the multiplicity of direct Customs to Customs connections, the Expert Group requested removing the direct secure system to system connections between customs administrations from the Customs international declaration mechanisms option. Consequently, the secretariat was requested to revise Informal document GE.1 No. 10 (2012) and circulate it to eTIR Focal Points before introducing the changes into version 4 of the eTIR Reference Model.

9. Furthermore, the Expert Group noted that in their current efforts to computerize the national/regional management of TIR operations, various countries are requesting the electronic submission of TIR Carnet data. Unfortunately, and possibly due to lack of international coordination, the data requested by different countries are not the same, thus complicating the data submission by TIR Carnet holders and possibly endangering the future acceptance by all TIR Contracting Parties of standard declaration messages, i.e. the E9 message. Therefore, the Expert Group requested the secretariat to ask eTIR Focal Points to compare the data contained in message E9 with their national data requirements for the TIR procedure.

## **C. eTIR Reference Model, version 4.0**

10. The Expert Group took note that version 4.0 of the eTIR Reference Model could not be issued for the session. It took note of the intersession work undertaken by the secretariat and the World Customs Organization (WCO), in particular to include standard Customs to Customs (C2C) messages in the WCO transit data model so that all eTIR messages could be based on an international standard. The Expert Group welcomed these developments and noted that more work was still required to align eTIR C2C messages with the newly developed standard. It agreed that the newly aligned message would be included in version 4.0 of the eTIR Reference Model.

11. The Expert Group requested the secretariat to circulate version 4.0 of the eTIR Reference Model among eTIR Focal Points for review before submitting it to WP.30 for endorsement.

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<sup>1</sup> The list of eTIR focal points is on the eTIR web site: [www.unece.org/trans/bcf/eTIR/focals.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/bcf/eTIR/focals.html).

## **V. Financial implications of the introduction of the eTIR international system (agenda item 4)**

*Documentation:* Informal document GE.1 No. 12 (2012)

12. Further to an introductory presentation by the secretariat, the Expert Group considered Informal document No. 12 (2012), containing the final version of the CBA of the eTIR Project (CBA). The Expert Group took note that, apart from corrections following apparent mistakes in the calculations or due to lack of textual consistency, the CBA was final. The Expert Group agreed on the methodology used by the consultants, but felt that some costs, e.g. training and indirect benefits were missing from the calculations. At the request of IRU, any reference to IRU documents or presentations will be deleted, considering that they do not seem to have been used in the analysis and that neither IRU nor its affiliated associations had been contacted by the consultants in the course of their activities. Finally, the Expert Group was of the view that, contrary to the consultants' conclusions and recommendations, United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG) and United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC) solutions should be preferred to a privately managed Platform as a Service (PaaS). It also was of the view that having Customs data stored in a data centre, not subject to specific national legislation, seems preferable.

13. The Expert Group agreed with the proposal by the secretariat to prepare a revision of Informal document No. 12, containing all intrinsic corrections, as stipulated by the Expert Group, for circulation among the network of eTIR focal points. Furthermore, it requested the secretariat to prepare a new document for consideration at its next session, containing a summary of the consultants' CBA, in combination with an assessment by the secretariat of the limitations of the analysis, i.e. the missing costs and benefits, as well as recommendations. The Expert Group expressed its availability for consultations by the secretariat when drafting this document.

## **VI. Dematerialization of documents attached to the TIR Carnet (agenda item 5)**

*Documentation:* Informal document GE.1 No. 13 (2012)

14. The Expert Group considered Informal document GE.1 No. 13 (2012) presenting concrete amendments to the eTIR Reference Model to reference, link or send dematerialized attached documents.

15. Aware of the various options available to dematerialize attached documents, the Expert Group, at its last meeting, requested the secretariat to proposed to the Data Model Project Team of the World Customs Organization to amend the "attached documents" class of the WCO Data Model, so that it no longer just allows the attachment of image files but would also allow handling the other envisaged options. The Expert Group welcomed the inclusion of the new class "Binary File" (linked to the "Attached documents" class) in the WCO Data Model and its usage in eTIR messages as proposed by the secretariat in Informal document GE.1 No. 13 (2012). As a follow-up action, the Expert Group asked the secretariat to amend the eTIR Reference Model v.4.0 accordingly.

16. Finally, the Expert Group recommended the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB), within its mandate to coordinate and foster the exchange of intelligence and other information among competent authorities of Contracting Parties (Annex 8, Article 10 (c)), to study the possibility of establishing, at the TIR secretariat, an international database for the registration of certificates of approval, issued in compliance with Annexes 3 and 4 of the TIR Convention. Such a database would provide further facilitation for transport companies

and, once an eTIR system would be in place, allow replacing the attachment of scanned versions of certificates of approval to each and every declaration by a simple reference (identification number) to the certificate, which information would be securely centrally stored.

## **VII. Other business (agenda item 6)**

### **A. World Customs Organization activities**

17. The Expert Group was informed that the Data Model Project Team (DMPT) will be holding its next meeting from 15 to 19 October 2012 where it will extensively discuss, among other things, how to include C2C message in the version 3.3 of the WCO data model. It also noted that the Globally Networked Customs (GNC) activities were now falling under the responsibility of the Permanent Technical Committee (PTC).

### **B. Other activities of interest**

18. The secretariat informed the Expert Group that a project team, composed of representatives from each Regional Commission, had finally been selected for the recently launched United Nations Development Accounts (UNDA) project. The final version of the project document will soon be submitted for approval to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

### **C. Date and place of next session**

19. The Expert Group, not being in a position to agree on a specific date for its next session, requested the secretariat to propose tentative dates for its next session, possibly in March or April of 2013, and transmit them to the Group at the first opportunity.

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