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OTHER BUSINESS

Detention of professional drivers accused of trafficking

Note by the secretariat

The Spanish authorities (Ministry of Development) have drawn the secretariat's attention to the difficult situation in which professional drivers transporting goods become involved in spite of themselves, when charged with trafficking of all kinds, particularly drug-trafficking. The Spanish authorities say that this trafficking, which is not easily detected by the driver, even when he is present at the time of loading, generally occurs in the transport of fruit and vegetables from Morocco. Since these goods are prepared for carriage on retractable pallets, it is impossible for a driver to know whether an illegal substance may have been inserted in the pallet.

While stressing that this is a difficult problem to solve since it depends on the country in which the transport of the drug is detected, the Spanish authorities nevertheless would like the Economic Commission for Europe to consider the problem with a view to finding international solutions enabling professional drivers to defend themselves.

The Spanish authorities therefore propose a series of measures for the profession which could be implemented with all possible safeguards. These are the following:

- Exemption of drivers from liability when a tamper-proof system of seals has been set up, with a control number for the sender, to be entered in the consignment note;
- Establishment of monitoring centres or customs flying squads to which the driver could apply for a free check to ascertain whether the load is within the law;
- The company's stamp with the VAT number certifying the consignment note. The invoices of the goods carried would be attached to this document.

The SC.1 Working Party is asked to consider the relevance of these proposals and the follow-up which could be given to them.
