

### Transport



## TIR Executive Board takes note of last minute decision by the Russian Customs to extend the use of TIR Carnets until 30 November 2014

The TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) held its 59th session on 30 June and 1 July 2014, just hours before the announced termination of the guarantee agreement between the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation (FCS) and the national TIR guarantor (ASMAP).

The restrictions placed by FCS on the use of TIR Carnets on the territory of the Russian Federation have been a point of grave concern for all TIR Contracting Parties and intergovernmental bodies for the past year. The Board held its meeting in anticipation of information on what lies ahead for the application of the TIR Convention in the Russian Federation, until late in the afternoon of 30 June, when news reached the Board that the existing guarantee agreement has been prolonged until 30 November 2014.

While the Board took note of the decision by FCS, it reiterated, with regret, that FCS continues to implement measures that contradict the provisions of the TIR Convention and that have grave consequences for international transport and trade as a whole.

TIRExB appealed to the government of the Russian Federation to restore the proper functioning of the TIR system on the whole territory of the Russian Federation, by lifting all current restrictions without further delay.

Since September 2013, the Russian Federation has unilaterally decided to no longer accept TIR carnets as sufficient customs duty guarantee. Consequently, transport operators hauling goods into Russia must obtain a new Russian guarantee to secure customs clearance. Based on a sample of actual costs from transport operators and after deducting savings for TIR carnets where relevant, it is estimated (Economic costs of the non-application of the TIR system by the Russian Federation, Copenhagen Economics, 28 March 2014) that the new measures introduced in the Russian Federation create an additional cost of up to USD 2.2 billion per year for the Russian economy. As a result of the new system, import into Russia by road is getting more expensive. Comparing with the value of goods transported, the direct cost associated with the new system is equivalent to an additional tariff of 0.6 per cent to 1.4 per cent for road transport entering into Russia. Ultimately, these costs will be passed on to the Russian economy and the new system will result in higher prices for Russian consumers.

In addition to direct costs, the new system also entails significant indirect costs. The uncertainty inherent in the system has led to an increased administrative burden of as much as 25 per cent. Furthermore, since the national guarantee, in contrast to the TIR system, does not provide any actual guarantee for the transport operators, there is an increased financial risk for the operators who risk economic losses or even bankruptcy. □

For further information, please visit:  
<http://www.unece.org/tir/welcome.html>

### Innovation



## Experts weigh the policy options for innovation to drive sustainable development in Central Asia

Increasing the capacity to innovate, including through the successful adaptation of foreign technology, supports increased living standards and contributes to addressing environmental and social challenges. Thus, in Central Asia with its high levels of education, harnessing knowledge to drive sustainable development will be the key to successfully supporting human development and poverty eradication through implementation of the UN post-2015 development agenda and Rio+20 outcomes.

With competition that is increasingly global in nature, knowledge-based development is moving up on the policy agenda everywhere. Countries who participate in the United Nations Special Programme for Central Asia (SPECA) are moving away from resource-led to efficiency-led models of economic development and so they see knowledge-based development as being of particular relevance to their policy environment. To discuss these issues, a high-level meeting was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Development of Turkmenistan on 11 June in Ashgabat on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development, bringing together policymakers from the region and international experts. Items on the agenda included policy options to strengthen linkages between education, research and industry to improve innovation performance, and to build the innovation infrastructure. Experts also participated on the following day in the official opening of a Science Park in the capital.

Experts noted the central importance of innovation for sustainable development and the development of a green economy in SPECA countries. Virginia Cram-Martos, Director of UNECE's Economic Cooperation, Trade, and Land Management Division, highlighted the

potential value of UNECE Innovation Performance Reviews for providing concrete policy recommendations for SPECA countries on how to achieve these objectives. Country delegations expressed their eagerness to prioritize the implementation of these Reviews for Central Asian countries. Azerbaijan also encouraged other SPECA countries to actively participate in the Eurasian Connectivity Alliance as a means of supporting knowledge-based development.

The occasion for this high-level meeting was provided by the sixth session of the Project Working Group on Knowledge-based Development, under the auspices of the ESCAP/UNECE Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA). The promotion of innovation and knowledge-based development is a policy priority for countries in both regions, making cooperation in this area between the two UN regional commissions all the more important. □

For more information on SPECA, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/speca>

For more information on UNECE Innovation Performance Reviews, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/innovationperformancereviews.html>

For more information on Green Technologies, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/greentech.climateadaptation.html>  
<http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=35090&L=0>

## Population



## Countries participating in the Generations and Gender Programme (GGP) meet in Budapest to discuss the future of the programme

The Council of Partners, the body of countries implementing the Generations and Gender Survey, gathered for its 11th meeting on 25 June, ahead of the European Population Conference (EPC2014), which took place at Budapest's Corvinus University. The regular Council of Partners meeting is an occasion for countries to exchange about planned activities and challenges at country-level. Sweden has recently finished its first round of data collection and will shortly make the data available internationally. Austria is about to submit its second wave data set which has already been presented at the national level for international online access. Poland and Norway raised funds and are preparing for a new round of data collection. Much of the discussion was also directed towards future developments of the programme as a whole. Several submissions of proposals are currently under preparation.

News were presented regarding the GGP online data analysis tool. The system, managed with the help of NESSTAR software, enables to search, browse and visualize GGP data and metadata online, without having to submit a full application. For example, users can easily visualise variable distributions and perform basic data analysis (e.g. tabulations and regressions). Recently, new data for Poland and the Czech Republic were added for the first wave of data collection, bringing the number of countries with available first wave data to 17. Data sets were also added for Hungary, Australia and Lithuania for their second rounds of data collection, bringing the number of countries with available second wave data to 8. The system now also allows comparing variables across countries as well as merging data from first and second rounds for each country.

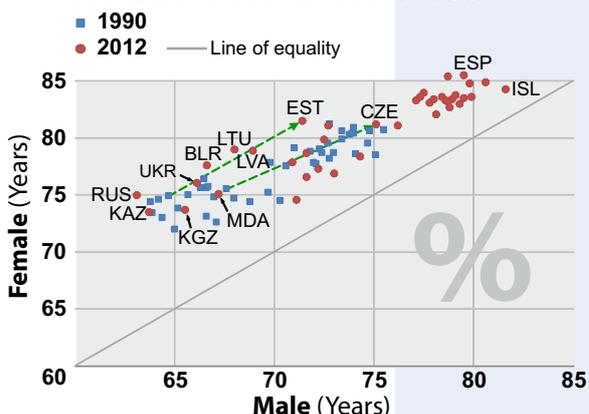
The online data analysis tool is available at: <http://www.ggp-i.org/online-data-analysis.html>

The GGP is a unique data source covering family and demographic issues. Accordingly, many papers on those topics that were presented at the European Population Conference in Budapest were based on GGP data. Access to full data sets can be obtained free of charge upon application through this website: [www.ggp-i.org](http://www.ggp-i.org). Data applications are administered by the UNECE Population Unit. □

More information, including presentations and the meeting report, will be available shortly at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34549>.

## Facts and Figures

### Life Expectancy at birth Scatter chart for males versus females



## Increasing life expectancy

In the last two decades, life expectancy has continued to increase in UNECE countries. The chart shows life expectancy for males against females in 40 UNECE countries in 1990 and 2012. The highest life expectancy in 2012 for females was 85.5 years in Spain, and 81.6 years for males in Iceland.

Females still live longer than males, as can be seen from the distance between the data points and the line of equality marked in the chart. However, males have caught up slightly: The median average increase for males was an extra 5.1 years, compared to 3.9 for females. Nevertheless, there remain six countries where the difference between female and male life expectancy is more than ten years.

Whilst there has been a general trend of increasing life expectancy, the differences between countries have become larger, with some Eastern European and Central Asian countries lagging behind. Since 1990, the largest increase in female life expectancy was an extra 6.6 years in Estonia, and for males an extra 7.5 years in the Czech Republic, marked by green arrows in the chart. □

Source: UNECE Statistical Database. The latest data for Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania and Russian Federation is from 2010.

*Not an official record - For information only*

