



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/6
7 July 1999

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Administrative Committee for the
International Convention on the Harmonization
of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982
(Third session, 21 and 24 June 1999)

**REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE HARMONIZATION
OF FRONTIER CONTROLS OF GOODS, 1982
ON ITS THIRD SESSION**

ATTENDANCE

1. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 4 of the Convention, the Administrative Committee held its third session at Geneva on 21 and 24 June 1999.
2. The following representatives of the Contracting Parties attended: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Lithuania; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; United Kingdom; European Community (EC).
3. The following representatives of ECE member countries were represented as observers in accordance with Annex 7, Article 2 of the Convention: Iran (Islamic Republic of); Latvia; Romania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Ukraine.

4. The following representatives of international organizations were represented as observers in accordance with Annex 7, Article 2 of the Convention: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD); International Road Transport Union (IRU); Transfrigoroute (International).

5. The Administrative Committee noted that the required quorum according to Annex 7, Article 6 of the Convention had been attained.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/5.

6. The Administrative Committee adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the UN/ECE secretariat (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/5).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

7. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 5 of the Convention, the Administrative Committee elected Mr. J. Herzog (Austria) as Chairman and Mr. G.-H. Bauer (Switzerland) as Vice-Chairman.

ATTENDANCE OF OBSERVERS

8. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 2 of the Convention, the Administrative Committee decided not to impose any restrictions on the attendance as observers of competent administrations of States and international organizations not Contracting Parties to the Convention.

STATUS OF THE CONVENTION

Documentation: UN web site (www.un.org/Depts/Treaty/).

9. The Administrative Committee was informed that, at present, the Convention had 37 Contracting Parties, including the European Community. As of 2 September 1999, Georgia will also become a Contracting Party to the Convention.

10. A list of Contracting Parties to the Convention is contained in the annex to this report.

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF THE CONVENTION

11. Contracting Parties to the Convention as well as competent international organizations had been invited by the Executive Secretary of the UN/ECE to submit proposals for amendment of the Convention. The Administrative Committee considered the following proposals submitted:

(a) Insertion of a new annex to the Convention on facilitation of the passage of ATP vehicles carrying perishable goods (ATP Agreement)

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/5, annex 2; ECE/TRANS/128.

12. The Administrative Committee considered a draft annex to the Convention that had been endorsed by the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee at its sixty-first session (8-11 February 1999) (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/5, annex 2). The Inland Transport Committee had requested the Administrative Committee to give favourable consideration to this draft annex on facilitation of the passage of ATP vehicles carrying perishable goods (ECE/TRANS/128, para. 110).

13. The representative of Transfrigoroute (International) that had originally prepared the new annex for consideration by the UN/ECE Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs (WP.11) pointed out that the facilitation measures proposed in the draft aimed at a reduction in waiting times at border crossings for vehicles transporting perishable cargoes under the provisions of the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP). The ATP Agreement had been in force since 1970 and had at present 29 Contracting Parties. It aimed at improving the conditions of preservation of the quality of perishable foodstuffs during their carriage, particularly in international trade.

14. The Administrative Committee welcomed in principle this amendment proposal addressing an important problem in international road transport. It felt that, subject to a number of modifications ensuring, in particular, that the terminology used in the new annex was in line with the definitions in article 1 of the Convention, the provisions of the proposed new annex should be reviewed in detail at the forthcoming session of the Administrative Committee together with other amendment proposals on efficient border crossing procedures (see paragraph 19).

(b) Preparation of a new annex to the Convention on efficient border crossing procedures
Documentation: Informal document No.1 (IRU); ECE/TRANS/128; TRANS/WP.30/182;
TRANS/WP.30/181/Add.1; TRANS/WP.30/1998/9; TRANS/WP.30/1998/10;
TRANS/WP.30/1998/12.

15. The Administrative Committee was informed of a joint meeting of the UN/ECE Working Parties on Road Transport (SC.1) and on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) which had been held on 21 October 1998. The joint meeting had recommended that

- S ECE member countries should accept and implement all international conventions facilitating border crossing procedures;
- S analyses should be carried out to determine the rate of implementation of these conventions, in particular the TIR Convention, 1975 and the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 ("Harmonization Convention");
- S a new annex to the "Harmonization Convention" might be prepared identifying all issues important for efficient border crossing procedures;
- S transparency in Customs and other relevant regulations and administrative practices should be ensured and mechanisms for an efficient information flow should be established;
- S a reference guide on best practices in efficient organization of border crossing procedures might be prepared (TRANS/WP.30/182, paras. 10 and 11).

16. Following this joint meeting, the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee, at its sixty-first session (8-11 February 1999), had invited the Administrative Committee to consider the preparation of a new annex to the Convention on the facilitation of border-crossing procedures, taking into account, *inter alia*, the work carried out in the context of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) (ECE/TRANS/128, para. 52).

17. On the basis of proposals prepared by the IRU in accordance with the above mandate (Informal document No.1), the Administrative Committee considered a new draft annex to the Convention which contained provisions relating to the issuance of visas to professional drivers, exchange of information on border crossing procedures, preparation and acceptance of weight and vehicle inspection certificates, minimum requirements for border crossing points and regular status reports on border crossing facilities.

18. The Administrative Committee welcomed the proposals made by the IRU which were in line with the main objective of the Convention: the reduction of requirements for completing formalities as well as the number and duration of controls at border crossing points.

19. The Administrative Committee invited the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) to study these proposals in detail, to complement them with the required technical and administrative provisions allowing for their efficient implementation in the framework of the Convention and to transmit tangible and comprehensive amendment proposals for consideration to the forthcoming session of the Administrative Committee (refer to paragraph 14).

PROPOSALS OTHER THAN AMENDMENTS TO THE CONVENTION

(a) Facilitation of border crossings in international rail transport

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/128; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/4.

20. Following the considerations of the Administrative Committee at its second session in 1994 on the facilitation of border crossing procedures in rail transport (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/4, paras. 13 and 14), the UN/ECE Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) had continued its activities in this field on the basis of the so-called "FACILRAIL" project whose final report was issued in 1994. In particular, the Working Party on Rail Transport had monitored the following issues:

- S average time spent by passenger and goods trains at main border crossings;
- S progress made (in minutes) subsequent to the implementation of measures taken by Governments (e.g. for Customs, police, sanitary and phytosanitary controls) and railways (technical controls) for passenger and freight trains to reduce the delays during border crossings;
- S bilateral and multilateral contacts that have taken place between Governments and railways of neighbouring countries in order to improve border crossings procedures.

21. The Administrative Committee was briefly informed about the progress achieved and the problems still encountered and took note of the adoption of a resolution by the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee on the reduction of border stopping times of shuttle trains in international traffic (maximum of 60 minutes, i.e. 30 minutes on each side of the border) (ECE/TRANS/128, paras. 71-73).

(b) Measures to facilitate the world-wide implementation of the Convention

Documentation: Informal document (SECI Memorandum of Understanding); TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/4; ECE/TRANS/53.

22. The Administrative Committee was informed about activities of the UN/ECE secretariat in facilitating the world-wide implementation of the Convention in line with resolution No. 230 adopted by the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee on 4 February 1983 on "Technical assistance measures for the implementation of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods" (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/4, paras. 15-20; ECE/TRANS/53, annex 1).

23. In particular the Administrative Committee was informed about a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that had been prepared and signed by ten Ministers of Transport of the States participating in the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). This MoU on the facilitation of international road transport of goods stipulated inter alia that all Parties to the MoU should accede to the "Harmonization" Convention.

24. The Administrative Committee also noted that the UN/ECE secretariat, in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN/ESCAP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), had organized a number of workshops in the Asian region on advantages and requirements of accession to United Nations Transport Facilitation Conventions, including the "Harmonization" Convention.

25. In this context the Administrative Committee was also informed that the Marrakech Agreement establishing the World Trade Organisation contained provisions on sanitary and phytosanitary control procedures which were not in line with the relevant annexes of the Convention. This issue would need to be addressed in due course by the Administrative Committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Date of next session

26. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 4, sub-paragraph (ii) of the Convention, the Administrative Committee decided to convene its next session in 2000, in conjunction with one of the sessions of the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), at a date to be determined by the UN/ECE secretariat.

(b) Restriction on the distribution of documents

27. The Administrative Committee decided that there should be no restriction with respect to the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

28. In accordance with annex 7, Article 8 of the Convention, the Administrative Committee adopted the report of its third session on the basis of a draft prepared by the UN/ECE secretariat.

Annex
Contracting Parties
to the
International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods
(21 October 1982)
Situation as of 24 June 1999

Armenia	Lithuania
Austria	Luxembourg
Belarus	Netherlands
Belgium	Norway
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Poland
Bulgaria	Portugal
Croatia	Russian Federation
Cuba	Slovakia
Czech Republic	Slovenia
Denmark	South Africa
Estonia	Spain
Finland	Sweden
France	Switzerland
Georgia (as of 02.09.1999)	United Kingdom
Germany	Uzbekistan
Greece	Yugoslavia
Hungary	
Ireland	European Community
Italy	
Kyrgyzstan	
Lesotho	
