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Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure

First session
Geneva, 27–29 January 2021
Item 5 of the provisional agenda
Work plan

Work plan

Note by the secretariat

I. Mandate

1. As stipulated in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2019/9 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2019/9/Corr.1, the Group of Experts on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (further referred to as the Group of Experts) was established and will function in accordance with the ECE Guidelines for teams of specialists approved by EXCOM on 31 March 2010 (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1). At its first session, the Group of Experts shall adopt a work plan, clearly defining its objectives and activities, including a time schedule for their implementation.

II. Objectives of work

2. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Group of Experts is expected to complete its work within two years (2020–2021) and to submit a full report of its accomplishments. During its mandate, the Group of Experts will focus its work on preparing a new version of the eTIR specifications, pending the formal establishment of Technical Implementation Body (TIB) upon the entry into force of Article 58 quater and Annex 11 of the TIR Convention. Based on the provisions of Annex 11 and the agreed eTIR concepts, the Group of Experts shall:

(a) prepare a new version of the technical specifications of the eTIR procedure, and amendments thereto, ensuring their alignment with the functional specifications of the eTIR procedure;

(b) prepare a new version of the functional specifications of the eTIR procedure, and amendments thereto, ensuring their alignment with the conceptual specifications of the eTIR procedure;

(c) prepare amendments to the conceptual specifications of the eTIR procedure, upon requests by the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30);

(d) follow and provide feedback on the development of the eTIR international system.

III. Work plan – Activities

3. The Group of Experts recognizing and recalling that:

(a) The eTIR international system constitutes the future of the TIR Convention, it is a prerequisite for the revitalization of the TIR system and its implementation – meaning its development and interconnection with national customs systems – it is an objective of high importance and it has to be properly and urgently delivered;

(b) The eTIR international system specifications are being divided in four parts (a) introduction, (b) concepts, (c) functional specifications, (d) technical specifications based on decisions of and so far:

(i) Version 4.1 has been prepared and adopted by WP.30 in 2015; Version 4.1. was submitted in three working languages; 4.1 version was divided in four chapters and the technical specifications were not completed;

(ii) Version 4.2. was prepared in 2017 and it was based on version 4.1. Version 4.2. exists as an integrated document in English but it was never translated in the two other ECE working languages. However, all those amendments were discussed during the sessions of the Ad Hoc informal GE.1, whose reports were adopted by WP in three working languages; Version 4.2. is divided in four segments. However the fourth part (the technical specifications) were not prepared;

(iii) Version 4.3 was initiated in 2017. Version 4.3. does not exist yet as an integrated document. All amendments to Version 4.2 that constitute the Version 4.3. were discussed during the sessions of the Ad Hoc informal GE.1 whose reports were adopted by WP.30 and exist in the three ECE working languages.

(c) In addition to the amendments that have been discussed in the framework of the Ad Hoc informal GE.1 sessions and included in the reports that were adopted by WP.30, the secretariat, while developing the system, identified and listed a series of corrections and improvements that have to be included in the specifications and they have to be discussed and adopted in order to ensure smooth operations of the eTIR international system; The TIR secretariat has already developed the eTIR international system based on what is already known of version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications and has already started the interconnection of the system with several national customs systems, following requests coming from contracting parties; Furthermore, the secretariat , while interconnecting eTIR with national customs systems, started preparing the relevant technical guides which will constitute the basis of the technical specifications of version 4.3;

(d) The eTIR specifications have to be fully aligned with the provisions of Annex 11, ensuring and guaranteeing that all five pillars of the TIR Convention are being served and, even in an electronic environment, mutual recognition and trust among the customs authorities will be warranted;

(e) The eTIR international system and its specifications are subject to changes and continuous improvements and in that sense, the Group of Experts understands that it has to deliver a version of the eTIR specifications that will be fully operational, will be aligned with the provisions of Annex 11 and will constitute the concrete basis on which the eTIR operations will start after Annex 11 will enter into force. Then, the version of the eTIR specifications that will come after version 4.3 and that will further improve the eTIR international system, will be initiated and discussed under the auspices of TIB.

4. Therefore, the Group of Experts agrees to undertake the following tasks and to accomplish the following activities that are fully aligned with its mandate and, most importantly, fully serve the strategic objective which is to have the eTIR international system operational when Annex 11 enters into force:

(a) Prepare an integrated document of eTIR specifications version 4.3 in the three ECE working languages that will be divided in the following four segments: (a) Introduction, (b) eTIR concepts, (c) eTIR functional specifications, and (d) eTIR technical specifications, for adoption by WP.30 at its June and/or October 2021 sessions:

(i) Version 4.3. specifications should include all amendments agreed during the sessions of the Ad Hoc informal GE.1. over the years of its existence (versions 4.1, 4.2 and amendments that constitute version 4.3.) as well as all amendments proposed by the secretariat identified while developing and implementing the system.

(b) Prepare, discuss and approve the technical specifications of version 4.3, ensuring that they are fully aligned with Annex 11 as well as the introduction, the eTIR concepts and the eTIR functional specifications;

(c) Discuss any other amendments proposals introduced and proposed by any contracting party or the private sector and decide if those amendments should be included in the current version 4.3 of the specifications or if they should constitute the basis of version 4.4. which will be discussed and approved by TIB to be established after Annex 11 has entered into force;

(d) Be informed and follow up on the interconnections of national customs systems with the eTIR international system and provide guidance, expertise and good practices whether needed or requested. If deemed appropriate or required, prepare amendments to the specifications based on input / experience received by customs authorities while interconnecting their national customs systems with the eTIR international system.

IV. Time Schedule

5. At its first session on 27-29 January 2021, the Group of Experts will review its time schedule of activities which is planned as follows:

Session	*Date*	*Activities*
First session	27–29 January 2021	Discussion and approval of: • Workplan • Introduction of eTIR specifications v4.3.; • Concepts of eTIR specifications v4.3.; • Part of functional specifications of eTIR specifications v4.3; • Amendments proposed by the secretariat while developing the system based on v4.3.
Second session	25–27 May 2021	Discussion and approval of: • Functional specifications of eTIR specifications v4.3.; • Technical specifications of eTIR specifications v4.3.; • Amendments proposed by the secretariat while developing the system based on v4.3.; • Amendments proposed by the contracting parties or the private sector (v4.3. / v4.4.).
Third session	13–15 September 2021	Finalization of eTIR specifications v4.3. ((a) introduction, (b) concepts, (c) functional specifications, (d) technical specifications) for submission to WP.30 session in October 2021 for final adoption.

V. Consideration and adoption

6. The Group of Experts may wish to consider and adopt its work plan.