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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Customs Questions
affecting Transport

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY
ON CUSTOMS QUESTIONS AFFECTING TRANSPORT
ON ITS NINETY-FIRST SESSION
(21-23 October 1998)**

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REPORT

ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party held its ninety-first session from 21 to 23 October 1998 under the chairmanship of Mrs. Y. Kasikçi (Turkey).
2. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria, Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey; Ukraine; United Kingdom. Representatives of the European Community (EC) were also present.
3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented : World Customs Organization (WCO); Committee of the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSZhD).
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Road Transport Union (IRU); International Touring Alliance (AIT) / International Automobile Federation (FIA).

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

5. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda prepared by the secretariat (TRANS/WP.30/181) with the addition of the following item: Agenda item 4 (c)
 - Problems in the application of the Convention in the Russian Federation.

ACTIVITIES OF ECE BODIES AND OTHER UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

Documentation: E/1998/38-E/ECE/1365.

6. The Working Party noted that the Commission, at its fifty-third session (21-23 April 1998), had underlined that the ECE had two core functions: the development and harmonization of legal instruments, norms and standards in ECE's areas of expertise and the production of statistics and analyses in those areas. The Commission had also endorsed common guidelines for prioritization of its programme of work (see para. 53 below).

ACTIVITIES OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

(a) World Customs Organization (WCO)

7. The Working Party noted that work on the revision of the Kyoto Convention was nearly completed and that it was expected that the revised Convention would be adopted in June 1999 (TRANS/WP.30/180, para. 11). The Istanbul Convention on temporary admission, for which all annexes had come into force, had at present 32 Contracting Parties.

(b) European Commission (EC)

8. The Working Party was informed that the New Computerized Transit System (NCTS), the full implementation of which in all Community, EFTA and Visegrad countries would still take several years, would be confined at the beginning to some countries and functions of transit procedures; TIR operations would be considered at a later stage. Work also progresses on legislative modifications, *inter alia* to reform in parallel the Common and Community transit procedures and on operational issues, such as a network of national transit coordinators responsible for the proper implementation of common rules, regular meetings of a Contact Group, bringing together industry and Customs representatives and the preparation of a handbook.

(c) European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)

Documentation: Informal document prepared by the ECMT.

9. The Working Party took note of a draft report prepared by the ECMT on the removal of obstacles at border crossings. Delegations were invited to study this draft and to transmit any comments directly to the ECMT secretariat.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE JOINT SESSION ON BORDER CROSSING PROBLEMS WITH THE WORKING PARTY ON ROAD TRANSPORT (SC.1)

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/181/Add.1; TRANS/WP.30/1998/9; TRANS/WP.30/1998/10; TRANS/WP.30/1998/12.

10. The Working Party endorsed the conclusions reached at the joint session of SC.1 and WP.30, namely that:

- ECE member countries should accept and implement all international conventions facilitating border crossing procedures;
- 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 of 1982 (“Harmonization Convention”);

- a new annex to the “Harmonization Convention” might be prepared identifying all issues important for efficient border crossing procedures;
- transparency in Customs and other relevant regulations and administrative practices should be ensured and mechanisms for an efficient information flow should be established;
- a reference guide on best practices in efficient organization of border crossing procedures might be prepared.

11. The Working Party was of the view that the joint session had provided a useful exchange of views and recommended to the Inland Transport Committee :

- to consider the convening of an ad hoc expert group comprising representatives of all relevant border control agencies and ministries, possibly during the first half of 1999;
- to invite the Administrative Committee of the “Harmonization Convention” to consider, at its forthcoming session (possibly in June 1999), the preparation of a new annex to the Convention, and
- to convene a second joint session of SC.1 and WP.30 in October 1999 to take stock of progress made in this field.

CUSTOMS CONVENTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT OF GOODS UNDER COVER OF TIR CARNETS (TIR CONVENTION, 1975)

(a) Status of the Convention

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/49, annex 1.

12. The Working Party noted that, with the coming into force of the Convention in Kyrgyzstan on 2 October 1998, the Convention had at present 63 Contracting Parties. It also noted that the earlier inclusion of Liechtenstein into the list of Contracting Parties to the Convention was erroneous and would be rectified by the Legal Office of the United Nations.

(b) Revision of the Convention

(i) Status of the revision process

Documentation: Depositary Notification - C.N.433.1997.TREATIES-1;
TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/47 and Corr.1 and Corr.2.

13. The Working Party was informed that on 17 November 1997 the Secretary-General of the United Nations had issued depositary notification C.N.433.1997.TREATIES-1 containing the amendment proposals adopted by the TIR Administrative Committee at its twenty-third session under phase I of the TIR revision process. Copies of this depositary notification in English, French and Russian may also be obtained from the ECE secretariat.

14. As the TIR Administrative Committee had decided that the amendment procedure in line with article 59 of the Convention should apply, all amendment proposals would come into force, if no objections were raised, 15 months following the date of communication of the proposed amendments by the Secretary-General of the United Nations through the above-mentioned depositary notification, i.e. on 17 February 1999.

15. As of 20 October 1998, the secretariat has not been informed of any objection to the above amendment proposals.

16. In this context, the Working Party noted that the secretariat has issued two corrigenda to the report of the TIR Administrative Committee at its twenty-third session containing in annex 2 the adopted amendment proposals (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/47/Corr.1 and Corr.2). These corrigenda, the content of which has not been reflected in the above Depositary Notification, rectify three typing errors in the adopted amendment proposals.

17. The secretariat would accordingly inform the Legal Office of the United Nations of the content of these corrigenda for the issuance of a corrigendum to depositary notification C.N.433.1997.TREATIES-1.

(ii) Implementation of phase I of the TIR revision process

- National procedures

18. The Working Party recalled that the TIR Administrative Committee, expecting that by 17 November 1998 no objection would have been raised to the amendment proposals adopted under phase I of the TIR revision process, had requested all competent authorities of Contracting Parties, national associations and the IRU to take, in a cooperative spirit, all necessary administrative and legal measures to ensure that the new provisions, particularly those contained in new annex 9, Part I and Part II of the revised Convention as contained in document TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/47, annex 2 would become applicable as of 17 February 1999 (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/49, paras. 16-17; TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/51, paras. 11-13).

19. None of the delegations reported any specific problems which countries and associations envisaged in the implementation of the above amendment proposals.

20. In this context, the Working Party noted that the TIR Administrative Committee had welcomed and endorsed the proposal of Turkey to host a session of the TIR Contact Group in Istanbul, to be convened from 2 to 4 December 1998, in order to discuss among Customs authorities, national associations and the transport industry all practical aspects related to the application of the new provisions of the Convention, in particular the provisions of the new annex 9 relating to the authorization of national associations and persons wishing to utilize TIR Carnets.

21. The Working Party stressed that representatives of competent authorities of all Contracting Parties utilizing the TIR procedure as well as representatives of all national associations as well as the IRU should participate at the Istanbul session of the TIR Contact Group.

22. A first convocation had been issued already by the ECE secretariat on 14 October 1998. More detailed information, including the provisional agenda, would be transmitted to all parties concerned by early November 1998.

- Implementation of new annex 9, Part I, paragraph 1 (f)(v) of the Convention

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/1998/17; TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/51;
TRANS/WP.30/1998/11; TRANS/WP.30/1998/7;
TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/49; TRANS/WP.30/180.

23. The Working Party recalled that, at its ninetieth session, it had prepared a comment on the application of the provisions of new annex 9, Part I, paragraph 1 (f)(v) of the Convention. Subsequently, this comment had been adopted by the TIR Administrative Committee (TRANS/WP.30/180, paras. 19-23; TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/49, paras. 18-21). The Working Party had also invited the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and its member associations to transmit the draft of the new global insurance contract, in line with the adopted comment and the provisions of the revised Convention, to the secretariat for consideration by the group of experts at its second session. The draft text of the new global insurance contract, as contained in document TRANS/WP.30/1998/7, was then considered at the second and third sessions of the group of experts (TRANS/WP.30/1998/11; TRANS/WP.30/1998/17).

24. In examining the draft global insurance contract, the group of experts realized that, in order not to jeopardize the acceptance of the global insurance contract by some Contracting Parties once the amended Convention had come into force, it would be necessary to amend the comment adopted earlier by the TIR Administrative Committee (TRANS/WP.30/1998/11, paras. 28-36). The TIR Administrative Committee, at its twenty-fifth session (26 June 1998), agreed with this proposal and approved an amendment to this comment (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/51, paras. 14-19).

25. The Working Party endorsed unanimously the views expressed by the group of experts that, irrespective of the provisions of annex 8, article 10 (b) and for a temporary period only (refer to TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/51, paras. 17 and 18), it was exceptionally permissible that a global insurance contract be concluded under the Convention between the international insurers and the IRU only, the latter acting on its own behalf, as well as on behalf of its member associations and third parties, in the case where national legislation in one of the Contracting Parties utilizing the TIR procedure prohibited the conclusion of an international insurance contract between a national association and an international insurer (refer to TRANS/WP.30/1998/17, paras. 6-9).

26. In such a situation, certified copies of the global insurance contract would need to be provided by the IRU to the national associations, together with a certificate of insurance issued by the international insurer indicating the name of the beneficiary of the insurance, i.e. the national association, and the maximum amount guaranteed per TIR Carnet for all TIR Carnets utilized in the respective country.

27. The Working Party also noted that some experts had reserved their position on some of the specific provisions of the draft global insurance contract as contained in document TRANS/WP.30/1998/7 (TRANS/WP.30/1998/17, para. 8).

(iii) Proposals for amendments to the Convention (phase II of the TIR revision process)

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/1998/5 and Corr.1; TRANS/WP.30/1998/11;
TRANS/WP.30/1998/17.

28. The Chairman of the group of experts informed the Working Party of the views and amendment proposals prepared by the group during its three sessions in 1998. He pointed out that, while no consensus had been arrived at on the role and functions of the international organization with regard to the effective functioning of an international guarantee system, amendment proposals had been prepared on harmonized termination and discharge operations, on recommended inquiry procedures as well as on alternative forms of evidence as proof for the termination of a TIR operation. Due to time constraints, no substantive progress had been made on the definition of the holder of TIR Carnets nor on the revision of the TIR Carnet and the computerization of the TIR procedure.

29. The Working Party endorsed the views expressed and the amendment proposals made by the group of experts as contained in the reports of its three meetings held in 1998 and recommended to the Inland Transport Committee to prolong the mandate of the group of experts to the year 1999 in order to conclude phase II of the TIR revision process and to start phase III focusing on a revision of the TIR Carnet and the computerization of the TIR procedure.

30. The Working Party also decided to review in detail, at its next session in February 1999, the amendment proposals already prepared by the group of experts on the basis of a consolidated document to be prepared by the secretariat.

(c) Application of the Convention

(i) Status of resolution No. 49

31. Resolution No. 49: "Short-term measures to ensure the security and the efficient functioning of the TIR transit system" adopted by the Working Party at its eighty-first session (TRANS/WP.30/162, annex 2) has been officially accepted so far by the following Contracting Parties to the Convention: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Bulgaria; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Ireland; Italy; Jordan; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Turkey; United Kingdom; European Community.

32. Other Contracting Parties to the Convention that have not yet informed the Executive Secretary of the ECE of their acceptance of resolution No. 49 were requested to do so as soon as possible.

33. Noting that most countries utilizing the TIR procedure had accepted in the meantime the resolution, the Working Party requested the secretariat to issue a questionnaire to Contracting Parties concerned, inquiring about the implementation of the resolution.

(ii) EDI control system for TIR Carnets - Implementation of the Recommendation adopted on 20 October 1995

34. The Working Party recalled that, at its eighty-ninth session, the representatives of the IRU had announced that, in due course, the IRU would make available on-line information on discharged TIR Carnets as well as on stolen or otherwise "invalid" TIR Carnets to interested Customs authorities by means of either (a) telephone lines using a PC and a modem; (b) the Internet or by (c) e-mail systems. These facilities would improve inquiry procedures by Customs authorities allowing them to obtain precise information about the place and the time of discharge of TIR Carnets (TRANS/WP.30/178, paras. 41-45).

35. As of 15 August 1998, access to the IRU database providing the above information is possible for registered users only.

36. The Working Party welcomed an on-line presentation of this information system (CUTEWIS) by the IRU during its present session and noted that the IRU and the secretariat would issue in due course a handbook on its utilization (English only).

(iii) Settlement of claims for payments

37. The Working Party was informed by the IRU on progress made in the current arbitration procedure, initiated by the IRU, to obtain payment for Customs claims presented to the previous insurers of the international guaranteeing chain which had denounced their contract with the IRU at the end of 1994 (TRANS/WP.30/180, para. 36; TRANS/WP.30/178, para. 47; TRANS/WP.30/174, para. 32; TRANS/WP.30/172, para. 17; TRANS/WP.30/168, paras. 28-35).

38. Noting that hardly any progress had been made by the arbitrators in the settlement of the more than 5,000 pending payment claims and expressing its surprise about the very infrequent meetings of the insurance experts dealing with each claim individually, the Working Party, representing the Customs authorities of the Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention, 1975, felt that more vigour seemed to be required by the parties concerned to settle these long outstanding Customs claims. These very lengthy procedures not only jeopardized the very existence of national guaranteeing associations for which a suspension period for the payment of these long outstanding Customs claims had been given, some of which expired before the end of this year, but also overshadowed the current negotiations on a revised and stable guarantee system under the TIR procedure.

(iv) Interpretation of article 8, paragraph 7

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/1998/2; TRANS/WP.30/1998/4.

39. Following a discussion on the interpretation of article 8 of the Convention, particularly paragraphs 1 and 7 at its eighty-ninth session (TRANS/WP.30/178, para. 51), the Working Party reviewed administrative practices in the lodging of Customs claims based on documentation provided by Turkey and on a legal interpretation of the provisions of the Convention in this respect prepared by the IRU (TRANS/WP.30/178, para.51).

40. It was noted that, in several countries, the procedures provided in article 8, paragraph 7 were interpreted in line with national legislation or court decisions on this matter. Most Customs authorities transmitted a registered letter to the holder of the TIR Carnet, irrespective of whether he was a national or a foreign person, informing him of the payment claim following the required notification of the national association in line with article 11 of the Convention. Other Customs authorities transmitted payment requests to the transport operator, as far as he was known, in the case of foreign operators, sometimes via diplomatic channels.

41. The Working Party agreed that article 8, paragraph 7 in conjunction with article 8, paragraph 1 and the therein enshrined concept of "joint and several liability" had to be understood in the sense that once the competent Customs authorities had proved, for instance by registered letter, that the contacted person, directly liable, was late in payment (some countries provide for a one month deadline in this respect), that he was unwilling to pay or that he was for any other reason (such as insolvency) unable to

settle the payment claim, then national guaranteeing associations became automatically responsible for the settlement of the payment claim and received a corresponding notice.

42. With a view to providing guidance on national practices in this respect, the secretariat was requested to prepare a draft comment on “recommended procedures” for consideration by the Working Party at its next session.

43. In this context, the Working Party recalled that, in most countries, the person directly liable, in the framework of the Convention, seemed to be the holder of the TIR Carnet; in some other countries the operator transporting or accompanying the sealed load compartment or container.

44. In accordance with European Community legislation, several Customs authorities also notified the TIR Carnet holder at the same time as they notified the national association in accordance with article 11 of the Convention. Such an obligation is, however, not stipulated in the Convention.

(v) Problems in the application of the TIR Convention in the Russian Federation

45. The representative of the European Community informed the Working Party about his concern as regards a number of measures planned or already enacted in the Russian Federation which seemed not to be in line with the provisions and the spirit of the TIR Convention or seemed to be at least out of balance and not necessarily addressing the real causes of the problems. He mentioned in particular the planned Decree No. 441 of the State Customs Committee directing the transport of three categories of goods to a limited number of border crossing points and providing for systematic inspection of these loads with the objective to combat “double-invoicing”. He also reported on Decree No. 742 establishing “grey” and “black” lists of transport operators that had infringed Russian national law or the provisions of the TIR Convention (grey list), or had been excluded from transport under the TIR regime. Finally he referred to an Act adopted by the State Duma on 2 July 1998 prohibiting cabotage transport in the Russian Federation which, together with Decree 02-17/19538 of the State Customs Committee, seemed to prevent foreign transport operators transporting containers or semi-trailers under the TIR regime by ship to Russian ports and from there onward by road to destinations in the Russian Federation.

46. The representatives of the Russian Federation pointed out that the above Decrees and State Acts were not in contradiction with the provisions and the spirit of the TIR Convention, but aimed at combating fraudulent activities under the TIR regime and had been drafted taking account of the decisions and opinions voiced earlier in the Working Party. They also stressed that these measures were linked to the inadequate functioning of the present international guarantee system and had to be maintained until the system had been improved. Furthermore, they stated that the regulation prohibiting cabotage transport in no way affected the provisions of the TIR Convention. In this context, it was stated that all transport operators, including foreign operators, were informed by the competent Customs authorities in the Russian Federation in case of non-discharged or conditionally discharged TIR Carnets. The Decrees of the State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation may also become applicable in

Belarus, forming a Customs Union with the Russian Federation, following the conclusion of appropriate agreements between the two countries.

47. Due to lack of time, the other agenda items relating to the application of the Convention could not be considered by the Working Party and had to be postponed for consideration at the next session.

CUSTOMS CONVENTIONS ON THE TEMPORARY IMPORTATION OF PRIVATE ROAD VEHICLES (1954) AND COMMERCIAL ROAD VEHICLES (1956)

Initiation of the amendment procedure for article 13, new paragraph 4 of the 1954 Convention

48. The Working Party was informed by the representative of Italy that the formal amendment procedures required to insert the newly approved paragraph 4 to article 13 into the 1954 Convention, as had been agreed upon at the eighty-fourth session of the Working Party in June 1986, had been initiated by Italy in transmitting the relevant amendment proposal to the Legal Office of the United Nations (TRANS/WP.30/178, para. 85; TRANS/WP.30/168, para. 72).

49. Due to lack of time, the other agenda items relating to the Conventions could not be considered and had to be postponed for consideration at the next session.

CUSTOMS CONVENTION CONCERNING SPARE PARTS USED FOR REPAIRING EUROPEAN WAGONS

50. Due to lack of time, this agenda item could not be considered and had to be postponed for consideration at the next session.

CONVENTION ON CUSTOMS TREATMENT OF POOL CONTAINERS USED IN INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT

51. Due to lack of time, this agenda item could not be considered and had to be postponed for consideration at the next session.

PREVENTION OF THE ABUSE OF CUSTOMS TRANSIT SYSTEMS BY SMUGGLERS

52. Due to lack of time, this agenda item could not be considered and had to be postponed for consideration at the next session.

PROGRAMME OF WORK

Documentation: Informal document No. 15 (secretariat); TRANS/WP.30/1998/181, annex.

53. The Working Party considered its programme of work for the years 1999 to 2003 on the basis of a proposal prepared by the secretariat in accordance with relevant decisions of the Inland Transport Committee and the Commission taken during their respective sessions in 1998 (see para. 6 above). The programme of work adopted by the Working Party is contained in the annex to this report.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Dates of next sessions

54. The Working Party decided to convene its next session from 22 to 26 February 1999, in conjunction with the twenty-sixth session of the TIR Administrative Committee (25 and 26 February 1999).

(b) Restriction on the distribution of documents

55. The Working Party decided that there shall be no restrictions with respect to the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session, except for the secretariat document on Customs sealing devices and for document TRANS/WP.30/1998/7 on the draft global insurance contract.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

56. The Working Party adopted the report on its ninety-first session on the basis of the draft prepared by the secretariat. Given the present resource restrictions with regard to translation facilities in the secretariat, parts of the report were not available for adoption in all ECE working languages.

Annex

DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 1999 TO 2003^{*/}

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.9: CUSTOMS QUESTIONS AFFECTING TRANSPORT

Harmonization and simplification of requirements for border crossing procedures concerning modes of inland transport Priority: 1

Description:

- (a) Preparation, review, implementation and, where appropriate, modification of international legal instruments.
- (b) Simplification of administrative formalities, documents and procedures.

Work to be undertaken: The Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport will pursue the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

- (a) [(b)] **Study of specific legal and other measures to combat fiscal fraud resulting from simplified Customs and other border crossing procedures, such as the TIR regime, including periodic review of the status of implementation of resolution No. 220 (prevention of the abuse of Customs transit systems by drug smugglers). Setting-up of mechanisms and administrative procedures for the regular exchange of information with other Governmental and non-governmental organizations to combat such fraud.**

(Note: Existing items (b), (i) and (k) have been merged)

Priority 2 (within overall priority 1)

Output expected in 2000

Preparation of adequate instruments and measures to improve international cooperation among Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention, 1975 and concerned national and international organizations to prevent fraud.

Activities towards implementation of the Recommendation adopted by the TIR Administrative Committee on 20 October 1995 on an international EDI control system for TIR Carnets.

^{*/} Text in **bold** characters indicates newly proposed text; text in square brackets ([...]) refers to text proposed for deletion.

Exchange of intelligence among Customs authorities of Contracting Parties to relevant ECE Conventions on border crossing facilitation on abuses with a view to identifying measures to combat such occurrences.

- (b) [(c)] Study of the possible extension of **relevant ECE conventions on border crossing facilitation** [TIR Convention] to other regions, particularly relating to legal and administrative aspects.

Priority 3 (within overall priority 1)

Output expected in 2000

Preparation of regional and/or national workshops, possibly in cooperation with ESCAP and ESCWA, on the implementation of relevant ECE Conventions on border crossing facilitation in Asia and the Middle East.

- (c) [(d)] Periodic review of **relevant ECE conventions on border crossing facilitation in order to ensure their coherence with other international or sub-regional treaties and** [existing Customs and facilitation conventions] to keep them in line with modern transport and border control requirements.

Priority 2 (within overall priority 1)

Output expected in 2000

Analysis of the application of the following ECE conventions on border crossing facilitation: TIR Convention 1975; Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles; Customs Convention concerning Spare Parts Used for Repairing EUROPE Wagons; and Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers Used in International Transport.

- (d) [(e)] Study to facilitate formalities for container pools in international transport and follow-up activities within the framework of the [new] Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers Used in International Transport.

Priority 2 (within overall priority 1)

Output expected in 2000

Preparation and negotiation of two model container pool agreements providing guidance to the transport industry and the Contracting Parties on the implementation of the provisions of the “Customs Container Pool Convention” covering international rail and international maritime transport.

- (e) [(g)] **Analysis of difficulties encountered relating to border crossing formalities with a view to devising administrative procedures eliminating such difficulties [and review of related activities of international organizations concerned]. The analysis will cover health, phytosanitary, veterinary and quality controls, application of standards, public safety controls, etc.), including the promotion of the implementation and extension of the scope of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods of 1982 (Harmonization Convention)**

(Note: Existing items (g) and (j) have been merged)

Priority 2 (within overall priority 1)

Output expected in 2000

Study of the possibilities to prepare and negotiate a new annex to the “Harmonization Convention” on road transport, including possibly an international lorry weight certificate, in close cooperation with the Working Party on Road Transport.

- (f) [(h)] **Study of Customs questions with a view to simplification of Customs formalities and documents in the field of transport, in particular taking account of the possibility of electronic data interchange solutions, including UN/EDIFACT messages.**

Priority 2 (within overall priority 1)

Output expected in 2000

Analysis of the impact on the TIR regime of the New Customs Transit System (NCTS) to be applied in the countries of the Common Transit System (European Community, EFTA and Visegrad countries) and coordination of work with the relevant bodies within the European Community on this subject.

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- (a) Revision of the TIR Convention, 1975 with a view to stabilizing the TIR Customs transit procedure.

Priority 1 (within overall priority 1)

Output expected in 1999

Completion of phase II of the TIR revision procedure and initiation of work on phase III, focusing on the revision of the TIR Carnet and on provisions for a modernized, possibly EDI- based Customs administration and control system.

- (b) [(f)] Study to facilitate railway transit traffic on the basis of the CIM and the SMGS Consignment Notes, including the preparation of a new Customs transit regime allowing the use of the CIM and the SMGS consignment notes as a Customs document.

Priority 2 (within overall priority 1)

Output expected in 1999 and 2000

Study on legal and administrative requirements for using the CIM and SMGS consignment notes as a Customs document (1999).

Preparation of a draft Customs transit convention covering international rail transport in all COTIF and SMGS member States (2000).
