



# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General  
26 March 2014

Original: English

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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

##### 137th session

Geneva, 10–13 June 2014

Item 4 (b) (i) of the provisional agenda

##### **Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975):**

##### **Revision of the Convention –**

##### **Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process**

### UNECE-IRU eTIR vision and pilot

#### Note by the secretariat and the International Road Transport Union (IRU)

## I. Background

1. At its seventy-sixth session, the Inland Transport Committee urged Contracting Parties to accelerate efforts to complete and launch the eTIR project (ECE/TRANS/240). On this basis and considering that the work on the conceptual and technical aspects of the computerization of the TIR procedure is nearing completion, the secretariat met with representatives of IRU to discuss possible ways to speed up the launching of the eTIR project by means of a pilot as well as outlining a common long term vision.

2. The Working Party may wish to consider the joint proposal by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) secretariat and IRU on a possible strategy to advance the introduction of the eTIR system by means of launching a paper-less pilot project, while keeping in mind a common long term eTIR vision. The proposal is presented below.

## II. Pilot project

### A. Objective

3. As investments have already been made by both customs administrations and the private sector in the framework of the computerization of the TIR procedure, the objective

of this pilot project is to allow a rapid and minimum cost launch of a paper-less TIR procedure between two pilot countries.

## **B. Main concepts of the pilot project**

4. The pilot project builds on the existing investments and constitutes a first step towards implementing the fully fledged eTIR system, as designed by Contracting Parties and described in the eTIR Reference Model. To accelerate its implementation within a limited geographical area and timeframe, the pilot project will not encompass all eTIR concepts.

5. The pilot project will involve two Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention that have already computerized the management of TIR operations at the national level and that are, ideally, already connected to the Real-Time SafeTIR (RTS) and TIR-EPD (electronic pre-declaration) systems of IRU. The IRU central databases, used by the RTS and TIR-EPD systems, will function as repositories for customs-to-customs (C2C) information exchange related to TIR operations and the data will be replicated in a minimized eTIR international system, hosted by UNECE. The minimized system would only be used for audit purposes and ensure full consistency, integrity and reliability of the data available in the IRU systems.

6. Upon issue of an electronic guarantee, the guarantee data will be recorded in the eTIR international system, as foreseen in the eTIR project. However, at this stage, the eTIR international system will not be available 24/7 in order to minimize the costs of the pilot. Pilot countries will have two options to verify the validity of the guarantee, against the eTIR international system or against the IRU database which will be operational at all times.

7. Furthermore, pilot countries will receive, by means of the TIR-EPD system, differentiated declarations in line with their national requirements, in particular when it comes to safety and security data. The declaration checked by customs in the country of departure will be stored in the IRU system and made available to customs in the country of destination. This is a conceptual difference from the currently envisaged eTIR principles, which stipulate that the declaration is sent by the transporter only to the country of departure and the accepted declaration is then forwarded by customs through the eTIR international system to all countries en route and of destination.

8. As foreseen in eTIR, the pilot countries will send messages to IRU at the start and termination of each TIR operation. This information will be available to the pilot countries and replicated in the eTIR international systems to ensure integrity. Pilot countries will be able to check the data stored in the eTIR international system for audit purposes or in cases of doubt concerning the data made available by IRU.

## **C. Benefits of the pilot project**

9. The main benefits of this pilot project would be:
- To demonstrate that the TIR procedure can function without the paper TIR Carnet within a short timeframe;
  - To allow dealing with the current specificities of national and regional customs' Information Technology (IT) systems (e.g. NCTS);
  - To use the IRU and customs infrastructure and connections already developed (TIR-EPD and Real-Time SafeTIR);

- To have pre-declarations include country specific requirements, including safety and security requirements;
- To already implement and test some standard eTIR messages and procedures;
- To provide feedback on possible issues and to correct them before the launch of the fully functional eTIR international system.

#### **D. Limitations of the pilot project**

10. As compared to the fully fledged eTIR system, described in the eTIR Reference Model, the pilot project has certain limitations:

- The data on guarantees is managed by IRU (and replicated in the eTIR international system, hosted by UNECE, for possible consultation by the customs administrations of the pilot countries);
- Contracting Parties exchange their C2C information via the IRU database, with replication of the data in the eTIR international system, hosted by UNECE, to ensure authenticity and for possible consultation of the data by the customs administrations of the pilot countries;
- Required use of TIR-EPD for the pre-declarations (including cases of change of itinerary);
- Pre-declarations are not uniform as per eTIR standard, e.g. they may contain different goods commodity classifications depending on where they are sent (e.g. using Integrated Tariff of the European Union (TARIC) or Commodity Nomenclature of Foreign Economic Activity of the Customs Union (TNVED) codes), which could make it difficult to automatically compare the declarations submitted to different countries.

#### **E. Financial aspects**

11. IRU has agreed that if the secretariat would require additional resources to implement the pilot at its end, it would be available to provide the necessary financial assistance. The secretariat and IRU agreed that the costs of the pilot project for all parties involved shall be kept at a minimal level. Cost estimates and actual expenditures will be made transparent and will be subject to the normal procedures of the United Nations.

### **III. Long term vision**

12. The pilot project will constitute a first step towards developing a fully functional eTIR international system. The common objective of Contracting Parties, the UNECE secretariat and IRU is to ultimately implement the eTIR system as is described in the eTIR Reference Model.

### **IV. Further considerations**

13. The Working Party may wish to consider the proposed pilot project and, possibly, support it by encouraging two neighbouring Contracting Parties to volunteer for the pilot. It may also encourage the pilot countries to seriously consider the legal aspects involved in the suppression of the paper TIR Carnet in the framework of the pilot project, taking into account the Working Party's deliberations on the issue, including documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2014/7 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2014/8. The pilot countries are also

invited to provide feedback to the Working Party so that it can prepare recommendations for the Administrative Committee (AC.2) on the ways and procedures to launch the eTIR project, to the benefit of all Contracting Parties.

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