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Report of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport on its 139th session

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Attendance.....	1	3
II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)	2	3
III. Opening statement.....	3	3
IV. Election of officers (agenda item 2).....	4	3
V. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 3)	5	3
VI. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975) (agenda item 4)	6–31	4
A. Status of the Convention	6	4
B. Revision of the Convention	7–22	4
1. Amendment proposals to the Convention	7–15	4
2. Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process.....	16–19	6
3. Amendment proposal to the Convention: Use of the TIR procedure in a Customs Union with a single Customs territory	20	7
4. Amendment proposals to the Convention: Audit requirements for an authorized international organization.....	21–22	7
C. Application of the Convention.....	23–31	8
1. New developments in the application of the Convention	23–27	8

2.	Increase in the number of loading and unloading places	28	9
3.	TIR-related electronic data interchange systems	29	9
4.	Settlement of claims for payments	30	9
5.	Other matters	31	9
VII.	Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Working Party (agenda item 5)	32–34	9
VIII.	International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (“Harmonization Convention”) (agenda item 6).....	35–40	10
A.	Status of the Convention	35	10
B.	Annex 8 on road transport	36	10
C.	Annex 9 on rail border crossings	37–38	10
D.	Border performance measurement and the Harmonization Convention	39–40	11
IX.	International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage carried by Rail, of 10 January 1952 (agenda item 7).....	41–42	11
X.	Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956) (agenda item 8).....	43–44	11
XI.	Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 9)	45–50	12
A.	European Union	46	12
B.	Economic Cooperation Organization	47–48	12
C.	Eurasian Economic Union of the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation.....	49	12
D.	World Customs Organization	50	12
XII.	Other business (agenda item 10)	51–52	13
A.	Dates of the next session.....	51	13
B.	Restriction on the distribution of documents	52	13
XIII.	Adoption of the report (agenda item 11)	53	13

I. Attendance

1. The Working Party (WP.30) held its 139th session from 3–6 February 2015 in Geneva. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Representatives of the European Union (EU) were also present. The following intergovernmental organization was represented: Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The following non-governmental organizations were represented: the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and Alliance Internationale de Tourisme/Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (AIT/FIA).

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

2. WP.30 adopted the provisional agenda, prepared by the secretariat, subject to the modification of the title of agenda item 9 (c) to read: “Eurasian Economic Union” (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/277).

III. Opening statement

3. In her opening statement, Mrs. Eva Molnar, Director, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Transport Division, reiterated the importance of the Working Party as a forum for technical cooperation and economic integration in the area of border crossing facilitation. Mrs. Molnar also underscored the importance of the newly adopted United Nations General Assembly resolution 69/213 on the “Role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development”. The resolution which was sponsored by Turkmenistan and a number of other United Nations Member States to further promote border crossing facilitation, transport connectivity and cooperation, is the first of its kind. As a final note, Mrs. Molnar expressed her hopes and expectations for a fruitful and constructive session.

IV. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

4. In accordance with the Commission’s rules of procedure and established practice, the Working Party elected Mrs. Helen Metaxa-Mariatou (Greece) as Chair and Ms. Elisaveta Takova (Bulgaria) as Vice-Chair for its sessions in 2015.

V. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 3)

5. Mrs. Molnar, congratulated the newly elected Chair and thanked Mr. Oleksandr Fedorov (Ukraine) for the four years of his chairmanship of the Working Party. She informed the Working Party about the forthcoming seventy-seventh session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) (Geneva, 24–26 February 2015), its policy segment that will be devoted to innovations for sustainable inland transport and mobility, and its “meeting of the

Chairs” that will continue discussions on the participation of non-UNECE Contracting Parties to the legal instruments in the meetings of UNECE subsidiary bodies. The Working Party was also informed that the secretariat is in the process of organizing an exhibition on city logistics during the ITC meeting. Finally, the Working Party took note of the forthcoming session of the Economic Commission for Europe, to be held from 14–16 April 2015, and where a specialized panel on transport connectivity would be held.

VI. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975) (agenda item 4)

A. Status of the Convention

6. The Working Party recalled that the proposals to amend Annex 1, Annex 6 as well as Annex 9, Part I, paragraph 3 (vi) of the Convention entered into force on 1 January 2015 for all Contracting Parties (C.N.426.2014.TREATIES-XI.A.16). The EU informed the Working Party that the amendments have also been made available in the twenty-four official EU languages.¹ The Working Party further noted that the status of the Convention and the number of Contracting Parties had not changed. Thus, the TIR Convention has, to date, 68 Contracting Parties (including the European Union) and is operational in 58 countries. More detailed information on these issues as well as on various Depositary Notifications is available on the TIR website.²

B. Revision of the Convention

1. Amendment proposals to the Convention

7. The Working Party considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2014/17, transmitted by the Government of the Russian Federation and containing various proposals to amend the TIR Convention, in combination with document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/1 and its Add.1, consolidating comments by various Contracting Parties on the proposals made by the Russian Federation in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2014/17 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2014/14. The Working Party decided to consider each amendment proposal, as contained in the above-mentioned documents, individually, as follows:

8. The Working Party held extensive discussions on the proposal to amend Annex 9, Part I, paragraph 3(ii), and took note of the position of the Russian Federation that the TIR Convention would benefit from further flexibility, if a Contracting Party will be granted a right to establish its own maximum level of guarantee or remove it based on the market conditions, transport sector specificities and economic realities. The Working Party was of the view that it would also be necessary to consider other options, as well as to carefully consider other provisions of the Convention that may be affected by such an amendment. In conclusion, the Working Party was of the view that this proposal is substantively related to current discussions taking place in the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB). In view of this, the Working Party agreed to request the Administrative Committee to mandate the TIRExB to include this proposal in its considerations and to provide its expert opinion, while, at the same time WP.30 would continue its deliberations at subsequent sessions. Furthermore,

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=OJ:L:2012:346:TOC>

² www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html

WP.30 agreed that further feedback from Contracting Parties would be warranted to facilitate discussions and an eventual decision. The IRU supported the need to progress on this key issue and mentioned that the approval of the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation would not prevent the TIRExB from continuing to develop further recommendations in relation to the TIR guarantee level.

9. With reference to the proposal to amend Annex 8, Article 1bis, the Russian Federation briefly clarified the objective of its proposal to increase transparency in the TIR system. Several delegations commented on the relevance of this proposal to ongoing discussions on the so-called “o, p and q” provisions relating to audit requirements for the authorized international organizations. Some delegations also raised questions about the exact procedures and mechanisms that would need to be established to carry out such audits. As a conclusion, the Working Party agreed that it would be beneficial to consider this proposal in conjunction with the considerations on the “o, p and q” provisions, under agenda item 4 (b) (iv).

10. The Working Party, in its consideration of the proposal to amend Article 1, paragraph (q), lines 1–2, took note of the clarifications provided by the Russian Federation: namely that due to peculiarities relating to mandates and structure at the governmental level, it is possible that the competent authority to authorize a guaranteeing association may not always necessarily be the customs administration; furthermore the delegation of the Russian Federation highlighted that the purpose of its proposal was to align the language with that of Article 6. Thus, the Russian Federation proposed to broaden the scope of the provision to provide the flexibility deemed necessary given the different administrative arrangements that exist in various Contracting Parties. Several delegations expressed their concerns as to the possible legislative complications this amendment could have at the national level. Some delegations proposed that the term “customs authorities” remains unchanged and that it should be supplemented by an additional phrase such as “or other competent authorities”. The Working Party decided, after thorough discussion, to revert to this issue at its next session and requested the secretariat to prepare a draft proposal with background information on other provisions of the Convention that also may be affected or that may need to be amended.

11. With reference to the proposal to amend Article 3(b) line 1, the Russian Federation proposed using the term “approval” regarding the customs seals, vehicles and other technical equipment, whereas to use the term “authorization” with reference to the guaranteeing association, introduced in paragraph 1, part 1 of annex 9. The Working Party was in general agreement that a closer examination of the use of the terms “approval” and “authorization” was warranted, to ensure consistency and accuracy. The Working Party requested the secretariat to review the overall consistency in the use of these two terms and to develop proposals for new definitions if necessary.

12. The Working Party considered the proposal to amend Annex 9, Part I, Article 3 (vii) line 2, and concluded that, similar to the proposal for Article 3(b) line 1, further review was warranted before reaching a decision. Delegations were invited to send their proposals, to the secretariat, on terms to be defined in Article 1 of the Convention before 1 April 2015. The secretariat was requested to consolidate these proposals for the next session.

13. The Working Party agreed in principle with the proposal to amend Annex 9, Part I, para. 5, first sentence, subject to a modified formulation, to be prepared by the secretariat for the next session for the consideration of the Working Party. The Working Party also decided to revert its discussions on the proposal to amend Annex 9, Part I, para. 7, line 2 to the next session.

14. The Working Party considered the proposal to amend Annex 8, Article 9, to expand the membership in the TIR Executive Board and change the principles of the formation of

the board in order to give a more prevalent position to the Contracting Parties that actively implement the Convention. The delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of), referring to the documents submitted on this item at earlier sessions as well as to on-going discussions within the Informal Group, reiterated the importance of this issue and informed the Working Party that the deliberations of the Informal Group have not yet come to concrete conclusions. The delegations of Iran (Islamic Republic of) and the Russian Federation urged Contracting Parties and the members of the TIRExB to actively participate in the informal group deliberations and to contribute their experiences and expertise with a view to increasing its effectiveness. The Russian delegation expressed its disappointment over the fact that activities of the informal group lack attendance as well as over the apparent indifference of the majority of the Contracting Parties over a significant period of time. Some delegations said it should be rather Contracting Parties than TIRExB members participating in such discussions. Several delegations raised concerns on the possible consequences of expansion, possibly related to the flexibility and efficiency of the Board, as well as the risk that enlargement may compromise the principle by which experts are nominated on the basis of qualifications and expertise rather than on the basis of TIR Carnets' turnover in their country. Furthermore, attention was drawn to the overall economic climate that calls for reduction rather than for expansion of groups. Some delegations underlined that the TIRExB Chair can invite experts to take part in sessions, if such experts had particular concerns or if their expertise would be beneficial in any particularly challenging issue.

15. The Working Party also took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/2 on all outstanding proposals for amendments to the Convention, including issues that had been previously discussed by the Working Party but on which decisions had not been taken. The Working Party agreed to continue addressing the outstanding proposals on its current agenda as well as to inform the secretariat before 1 April 2015 on the priority with which the outstanding proposals should be addressed in future sessions. The Working Party also decided to revert to the discussion of the amendment proposals (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2014/17 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2014/14) at its next session. Delegations were invited to transmit any further comments to all proposals to the secretariat by 1 April 2015.

2. Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process

16. The Working Party endorsed the report of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.1) on its twenty-fourth session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/3 and Corr.1).

17. The Working Party took note that, for technical reasons, document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2011/4/Rev.1 containing version 4.1 of the eTIR Reference model was not available in all working languages and decided to postpone the discussion and possible endorsement of this document to its June session. The Working Party recalled that it had, in 2007, validated the first two chapters of the eTIR Reference Model containing, inter alia, the concepts governing the eTIR project. It was agreed that, upon issuance of the document in all working languages, Contracting Parties will be notified and asked to provide comments which would be consolidated for the June session by the secretariat. The Working Party underlined the wide scope of possible comments, for example, the translation of the eTIR concepts in technical requirements or errors in the technical requirements. The Working Party also took note that the summary of GE.1 activities in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/4 was prepared to facilitate the consideration of the eTIR Reference Model and decided to consider this document together with the eTIR Reference Model at its June session.

18. The Working Party was informed about:

(a) the Italian proposal to amend the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the eTIR Pilot Project between Italy and Turkey with the aim to extend the scope of the pilot to a more general trade facilitation project;

(b) the progress in finalizing the ToR of the UNECE/IRU eTIR Pilot Project between Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey and the finalization of the IT developments at the IRU to allow for the management of electronic guarantees and the exchange of messages with customs administrations within the framework of this project;

(c) the progress in implementing the United Nations Development Account project: “Strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to facilitate legitimate border crossing, regional cooperation and integration”, and, in particular, the outcome of the first interregional Expert Group meeting for this project which took place on 8 December 2014 in Geneva.³

19. The Working Party considered and approved the ToR and tentative workplan of the Group of Experts on Legal Aspects of the Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE) as outlined in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2014/14. The secretariat was asked to submit the request for the establishment of the GE to the Inland Transport Committee for approval and, subsequently, to the Executive Committee of UNECE (EXCOM).

3. Amendment proposal to the Convention: Use of the TIR procedure in a Customs Union with a single Customs territory

20. The Working Party reconsidered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/9 on the implementation of the TIR procedure in a Customs Union with a single customs territory. The Working Party decided not to revert to this issue at future sessions, and to resume its discussions on the use of the TIR procedure in a Customs Union upon request and after the Eurasian Economic Union has concluded its deliberations on this issue.

4. Amendment proposals to the Convention: Audit requirements for an authorized international organization

21. The Working Party took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/5, containing the result of consultations between IRU and UNECE secretariats on the wording of the possible new provisions (o), (p) and (q) to Annex 9, Part III of the Convention. The document also included the checklist of all documents submitted by IRU to fulfil its obligations under Annex 9, Part III. The Working Party also took note that the United Nations Office for Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) had informed the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) that it was not available to serve as regular auditor of IRU as an authorized international organization but that it could confirm that the audited accounts, submitted by IRU, seemed, at face value, to be in conformity with the provisions of Annex 9, Part III. Furthermore, OIOS confirmed that it selects its audits on the basis of a risk analysis.

22. The Working Party noted that the voluminous documentation submitted by IRU needed expert examination, reiterated the need for maximum transparency in the functioning of an authorized international organization and noted the significant progress achieved thus far. The Working Party, accordingly, agreed to submit the documents to the Administrative Committee for consideration. The Working Party decided that the

³ All information about the project is available at www.unece.org/trans/themes/unda_customs-to-customs.html

secretariat should prepare, together with the IRU, a new document on other relevant aspects of an auditing procedure by a United Nations competent body or, in particular, persons duly authorized by the United Nations or other competent bodies (such as TIRExB or AC.2) to carry out inspections and audits of records and accounts relevant to the TIR Convention, of an authorized international organization.

C. Application of the Convention

1. New developments in the application of the Convention

23. The Working Party recalled the extensive discussions at its previous sessions on the measures introduced by national competent authorities that affect the implementation of the TIR procedure (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/270, paras. 19–30, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/272, paras. 37–43, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/274, paras. 26–30, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/276, paras. 13–19). The secretariat informed the Working Party that document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/6 had not been issued in the absence of new developments, other than the notification dated 27 November 2014, by the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation (FCS) to the Association of International Road Carriers (ASMAP) of the Russian Federation on the extension of the current guarantee agreement until 28 February 2015.

24. The Working Party considered Informal document WP.30 (2015) No. 7, containing an excerpt from the report of the TIRExB at its sixty-first session on the assessment of the TIRExB of the measure introduced by the State Fiscal Service (SFS) of Ukraine to no longer accept, temporarily, TIR Carnets issued by ASMAP of the Russian Federation. The delegation of Ukraine stated that such actions are a direct result and a reaction to the violation of the provisions of the TIR Convention by the Russian Federation since September 2013. It was further stated that this measure will be discontinued immediately after the restoration of the functioning of the TIR Convention without any exclusions and limitations on the territory of the Russian Federation. The Working Party regretted that the document was not available in all ECE working languages. Despite the late availability of the document, the Working Party took note of the assessment of the TIRExB, which qualifies the measure as being in contradiction with the provisions of Articles 3, paragraph (b), 4 and 6 of the Convention.

25. The delegation of the Russian Federation disagreed with the reaction of the Working Party, called upon other delegations to respond to the assessment of the TIRExB and invited Contracting Parties to qualify the decision taken by the competent authorities of Ukraine to no longer accept TIR Carnets issued by ASMAP of the Russian Federation, as a measure that is not only discriminatory for the Russian economy and more specifically its transport sector, but is also a severe violation of the TIR Convention and of general international law. The delegation of the Russian Federation requested that its proposal be put to a vote for inclusion in the report as a decision of the Working Party. The Chair called for a vote, during which the proposal did not find favour. The delegation of the Russian Federation requested a reflection in the report that the result of the vote demonstrated an arbitrary approach and indifference by the Working Party towards the interests and concerns of a specific Contracting Party.

26. The delegation of the Russian Federation also underscored that improvement is necessary in the functioning of TIRExB in order to preserve the integrity of this body and to ensure that conflicts of interest among its members are avoided. In this regard, the delegation of the Russian Federation highlighted cases when, in its view, an expert of the Board clearly served as an agent of a national government by openly and fully aligning his position with that of his country.

27. Representatives of EU, Turkey and Ukraine expressed their interest in any new developments and plans for the future implementation of the TIR Convention in the

Russian Federation, but their request remained unanswered. The Russian Federation explained that its reaction ensued from the failure of the Working Party to duly qualify the decision by Ukraine to discriminate against Russian transport sector.

2. Increase in the number of loading and unloading places

28. The delegation of Turkey reiterated its continued attempts to seek a decision from the Working Party about an increase in the number of places of loading and unloading, bearing in mind the advantages for the road transport industry. Some delegations expressed support for the optional introduction of an increased number of places for loading and unloading and a more flexible application of the TIR Convention. The delegation of the EU reiterated that it does not see the immediate need to introduce such an option into the Convention, but would consider the proposal if necessary in future, including its possible consequences. The delegation of Ukraine maintained its support for the proposal for the Working Party to continue its consideration of this issue. The delegation of Azerbaijan was of the view that the possible consequences, if any, of a positive decision to introduce this option should be presented. As a conclusion, the Working Party decided to reconsider this issue at its next session in conjunction with the amendment proposals as contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/2.

3. TIR-related electronic data interchange systems

29. The Working Party was informed by IRU about the latest statistical data on the performance of Contracting Parties in the control system for TIR Carnets — SafeTIR system (Informal document WP.30 (2015) No. 5).

4. Settlement of claims for payments

30. The Working Party took note of Informal document WP.30 (2015) No. 2, submitted by IRU on the current situation on the settlement of claims for payments made by customs authorities against national guaranteeing associations. The Working Party took note of the decrease of 33 per cent in 2014 compared to the previous year (2013), in the distribution of TIR Carnets.

5. Other matters

31. No other matters were raised.

VII. Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Working Party (agenda item 5)

32. The Working Party considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/7 containing its draft ToR and Rules of Procedure (RoP). The Working Party was informed about ongoing discussions in the ITC on the status of participation of non-ECE countries that are Contracting Parties to Conventions and Agreements administered by ITC subsidiary bodies (see document ECE/TRANS/2015/2).

33. WP.30 noted that some Working Parties had implemented the so-called “hybrid solution” (e.g. the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods) while other Working Parties had granted full member status to non-ECE Contracting Parties (e.g. the World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations).

34. The Working Party was of the view that, although it was not opposed to the ‘hybrid’ solution, it would reconsider and, possibly, endorse its ToR and RoP at its next session, subsequent to the discussions and decisions of the Inland Transport Committee at its

seventy-seventh session on 24–26 February 2015. Furthermore some delegations noted that this approach would ensure the avoidance of setting any precedent.

VIII. International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (“Harmonization Convention”) (agenda item 6)

A. Status of the Convention

35. The Working Party was informed that the status of the Convention and the number of Contracting Parties had not changed. The Harmonization Convention has, to date, 57 Contracting Parties (including the European Union). More detailed information, as well as on various Depository Notifications are available on the UNECE website.

B. Annex 8 on road transport

36. WP.30 was informed about the preliminary results of the biennial survey on the national application of Annex 8, conducted by the secretariat, as mandated by the Administrative Committee of the Harmonization Convention, 1982 (AC.3) at its tenth session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/20, para. 21). The Working Party noted that as of the end of January 2015, the secretariat had received fourteen replies to the survey. The Working Party took note of information and requested other delegations to submit the required information to the secretariat by 28 February 2015, and enable secretariat to finalize the results of this survey.

C. Annex 9 on rail border crossings

37. WP.30 recalled that the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) at its sixty-sixth session had decided to develop a mechanism to monitor the implementation of the new Annex 9 of the Harmonization Convention. Proper implementation of the Harmonization Convention is the responsibility of Contracting Parties. The UNECE secretariat and relevant international organizations (i.e. Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), etc.), however, could play an important role in assisting countries in complying with the legal provisions of the new Annex 9.

38. One of the actions agreed upon was the development and distribution of a questionnaire to identify the current situation at rail border crossings in UNECE countries who are Contracting Parties to the Convention, based on the needs and provisions of Annex 9 of the Harmonization Convention. The results were presented by the secretariat at the sixty-eighth session of SC.2 (Informal document SC.2 (2014) No. 2). Twenty-seven Contracting Parties to the Harmonization Convention replied to the questionnaire. The Working Party took note of the preliminary results of the survey: (a) in principle, the procedures of Annex 9 on the facilitation of border crossings had been implemented in member countries; (b) the measures taken included the technological reinforcement of railway border stations (installation of information technology systems and means of communication, devices, etc.) and improvement of infrastructure in order to ensure that capacity in stations corresponds to traffic volumes; (c) the bilateral negotiations and signing of bilateral agreements with the aim of minimizing delays of passenger and freight trains; and, (d) control of transit goods was conducted only when justified by prevailing circumstances.

D. Border performance measurement and the Harmonization Convention

39. The Working Party was informed about decision of the Administrative Committee of the Harmonization Convention (AC.3) at its tenth session to organize, in 2015, a workshop on best practices and performance measurement of national border authorities (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/20). Several delegations expressed their interest in such an event and their willingness to contribute. The Working Party welcomed the organization of the workshop and requested the secretariat to provide further information at its next session.

40. The delegation of Ukraine provided information to the Working Party on the discussions that took place at the same session of AC.3 on the proposal to develop a new Annex 10 to the Harmonization Convention on sea ports. The delegation of Ukraine also noted that Ukrainian experts together with the secretariat have begun work on a first draft of the annex. WP.30 would be informed in due time.

IX. International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage carried by Rail, of 10 January 1952 (agenda item 7)

41. The Working Party recalled its previous discussions on the drafting of a new convention to facilitate the crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail. It took note of Informal document WP.30 (2015) No. 4 containing an update from OSJD on the work of an informal group of experts tasked to elaborate a draft. The joint meeting of the Plenipotentiary Representatives of Members of OSJD Ministerial Conference and of the Conference of General Directors of OSJD Railways (December 2014, Warsaw) decided that two meetings of the group of experts would be held in 2015. The first meeting (26–27 May 2015, Warsaw) is expected to reach agreement on the concept of the new convention which will enable refining its text. The Working Party recalled that a preliminary concept on the structure and purpose of the envisaged convention was presented at its previous session (Informal document WP.30 (2014) No. 12).

42. The OSJD also extended an invitation to WP.30 delegations to take part in the VIII Interdepartmental conference “Rail Transport Border Crossing Practice” (22–23 September 2015, Gdansk, Poland).

X. Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956) (agenda item 8)

43. The Working Party was informed that on 1 January 2015, the period for notification of objections to an amendment to Annex I of the Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) had expired. Thus, as of 1 April 2015, the amendment would enter into force for all Contracting Parties; and the Carnets used for Carnet de Passage en Douane (CPD) operations within a specific region could be printed in combinations of two United Nations official languages on the condition that one of the two languages be English or French (depository notification C.N.26.2015.TREATIES-XI.A.8 of 13 January 2015). The delegation of the EU requested the secretariat to clarify the reason for which the Working Party had not been informed at its last session of the Depository Notification (C.N.315.2014.TREATIES-XI.A.8) on the period for objections. The secretariat informed the Working Party that the Notification had been circulated by the Secretary-General through diplomatic channels.

44. Aware of the vast usage of the CPD system in Arabic speaking countries, the Working Party considered the proposal by the secretariat to proceed with the translation of the Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles into the Arabic language. The proposal was supported by AIT/ FIA,

and the representative provided information on the use of CPD in Arabic speaking countries and the practical benefits of having the text of the Conventions available in the Arabic language. In conclusion, the Working Party decided to mandate the secretariat to have the text of the Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles issued in Arabic, as well as update/consolidate the legal text in the other available languages, and requested the secretariat to transmit its request to the Inland Transport Committee for endorsement.

XI. Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 9)

45. The Working Party took note of activities by regional economic organizations or Customs Unions as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and countries as far as they related to matters of interest to the Working Party.

A. European Union

46. The delegation of the EU informed the Working Party on the continued work towards the development and finalization, before the summer of 2015, of the implementing provisions and the delegating acts of the new Union Customs Code (UCC) which is expected to enter into force on 1 May 2016. The Working Party noted that transitional periods would be defined, in particular, for procedures involving Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Moreover, it welcomed the offer by the EU to receive a more detailed presentation on the progress toward the implementation of the UCC at an upcoming session. Finally, the Working Party was informed about the forthcoming extension of the Common Transit Convention to include the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, possibly in the summer of 2015, and Serbia later on in the year.

B. Economic Cooperation Organization

47. The Working Party was informed about the ongoing efforts to finalize the internal procedures required for the accession of Pakistan to the TIR Convention. Furthermore, the delegation of ECO informed the Working Party about the jointly organized ECO/IRU Regional Conference on Transit by Road and TIR Convention held in October 2014 in Tehran. WP.30 was also informed that in 2014, ECO began revising the ECO Road and Railway Transit Routes' maps and that the updated versions are expected to be published in the spring of 2015.

48. The progress made by TIR Contracting Parties of ECO towards computerization of the TIR system was also mentioned, and in particular, the eTIR Pilot Project between Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey. Among the capacity-building programmes, the regional workshop on the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and the modernization of border crossing points were highlighted. In addition, a regional workshop dedicated to road safety is being planned, possibly with the support of UNECE. The representative of the ECO secretariat also informed the Working Party about their other activities aimed at improving regional transport connectivity, infrastructure development and transport facilitation.

C. Eurasian Economic Union of the Republic of Belarus, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation

49. No information was provided.

D. World Customs Organization

50. No information was provided.

XII. Other business (agenda item 10)**A. Dates of the next sessions**

51. The Working Party decided to conduct its 140th session from 9–12 June 2015.

B. Restriction on the distribution of documents

52. The Working Party decided that there would be no restrictions on the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session.

XIII. Adoption of the report (agenda item 11)

53. In accordance with established practice, the Working Party adopted the report of its 139th session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.
