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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

##### 165th session

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda

#### **International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention)**

## **Outcome of the 2023 Survey on the application of Annex 8\***

### **Note by the secretariat**

#### **I. Background**

1. On 20 May 2008, Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention came into force. According to Article 7 "Reporting mechanism" of the Annex, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) shall carry out, every five year, a survey among Contracting Parties on progress made to improve border crossing procedures in their countries.
2. The last survey was conducted in 2016 and its results were published in 2017 (document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/13).
3. In April 2023, the ECE secretariat initiated the present 5 years survey. The survey has been conducted by the questionnaire which was approved by the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) at its 122nd session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2009/8 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/244, para. 15). The current document contains the summary and the analysis of replies on the progress in implementing Annex 8 on road transport at the national level.

#### **II. Replies**

4. The following 3 countries replied to the questionnaire: Hungary, Switzerland and Turkiye. Germany and Greece replied that there were no changes comparing to their replies in 2016. Turkiye provided only one update comparing to the reply of the country in 2016. It should be reminded that in 2016 seventeen countries had replied to the questionnaire. It is

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\* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



also worth underlining that the countries that had responded to the previous survey(s), were requested to indicate only the changes since then.

### III. Results of the survey

5. Statistics of the replies to specific questions is given below.

**Question 1.** Please provide information regarding the official publication of Annex 8 in your country.

	It has been published on _____ (date of publication)
	It is scheduled to be published on _____ (expected date of publication)
	It has neither been published nor scheduled to be published
	Other (please specify) _____

The two countries indicated that they have already published Annex 8. In the 2016 survey twelve respondents indicated that they have already published Annex 8. One country indicated that it was scheduled to be published in 2017. Four countries replied that it has neither been published nor scheduled to be published, whereas two of these countries were Member States of the European Union which had already published Annex 8.

**Question 2.** Has your country taken measures to facilitate the granting of visas for professional drivers in accordance with national best practice for all visa applicants, national immigration rules and/or international commitments?

	Yes. Please briefly describe these measures: _____
	No. Please briefly explain the reason: _____

Switzerland mentioned that has signed visa facilitation agreements with various countries including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldavia. These agreements provide for facilitations for drivers directly, notably with regard to the duration of validity of visas and the visa fee.

Hungary replied that for Schengen visas (visas for intended stays in the territory of the Member States not exceeding 90 days in any period of 180 days), professional drivers can apply for a business visa. Supporting documents, such as employer's certificate, are checked by the consulate. For visas under national jurisdiction ("D" types of visas for a period exceeding 90 days), if the purpose of the journey is supported by an employer's certificate issued by a qualified employer, professional drivers can apply for an employment visa.

**Question 3.** Does your country regularly exchange information with other Contracting Parties on best practices with regard to the facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers?

	Yes
	No

Any additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Hungary replied "Yes" and Switzerland replied "No".

The Hungarian Consular missions concerned pay particular attention for informing the parties. For example the Hungarian Consulate General in Istanbul organizes regular meetings and training sessions for freight forwarding companies, and we regularly present the procedures introduced for freight forwarders to the Turkish organization of the Association of International Forwarding and Logistic Service Providers.

**Question 4.** How does your country regularly inform all parties involved in international transport operations:

- (a) on border control requirements for international road transport operations in force?
- (b) on border control requirements for international road transport operations planned?
- (c) on the actual situation at borders?

Hungary replied that the National Tax and Customs Administration provides information materials regarding customs matter at the border crossing points and on the internet in the NTCA's website: [www.nav.gov.hu](http://www.nav.gov.hu).

**Question 5.** Which control procedures have been transferred to the places of departure and destination of the goods transported by road so as to alleviate congestion at the border crossing points?

<input type="checkbox"/>	None;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medico-sanitary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Veterinary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phytosanitary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Controls of compliance with technical standards;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality controls;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicle inspections;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weighing of vehicles;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____

Any additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Hungary replied "None". Because these control procedures could be conducted at the border crossing points too, when appropriate. In this question the customs authority is not competent. Order, rule and supervision of border crossing point is the scope of Police Authority.

Switzerland replied that in the veterinary and phytosanitary field, Switzerland and the European Union are considered a common veterinary and phytosanitary area, which means that border controls are mutually recognized. Therefore, veterinary and phytosanitary inspections only take place at the European Union external border. In Switzerland, only the airports of Geneva and Zurich are the external border of the European Union. A veterinary or phytosanitary inspection is only carried out at these two points of entry. For shipments from the European Union (or from a third country via the European Union) by road, controls are carried out by the competent authorities of the Canton of destination.

**Question 6.** Which measures have been undertaken at the border crossing points in your country in order to give priority to urgent consignments, e.g. live animals and perishable goods?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Waiting times for vehicles transporting such goods have been minimized;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Required controls are carried out as quickly as possible;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refrigerating units of vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs are allowed to operate during the time of crossing the border;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cooperation with other Contracting Parties regarding sanitary inspections of such goods.

Hungary only replied to this question indicating the first three.

**Question 7.** Is your country a Contracting Party to the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections (1997)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes (go to question 9)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No (go to question 8)

Hungary replied “Yes” and Switzerland replied “No”.

**Question 8.** Does your country accept the International Technical Inspection Certificate as provided for in the above Agreement (also reproduced in Appendix 1 to Annex 8)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Switzerland replied “No”.

**Question 9.** Is your country a Contracting Party to the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (1970)?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Hungary replied “Yes”.

**Question 10.** Does your country accept the International Vehicle Weight Certificates (please refer to Appendix 2 to Annex 8) issued in other Contracting Parties?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes (go to questions 11, 12 and 13)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No (go to question 14)

Any additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Switzerland replied “No” but also made the comment that for “Questions 7 – 10: Switzerland has signed both agreements, but they have not yet been ratified”.

Hungary replied “Yes”.

**Question 11.** Which of the following infrastructure requirements for border crossing points open for international goods traffic does your country meet?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Facilities for joint controls with neighbour States (one-stop technology), 24 hours a day;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Separation of traffic for different types of traffic on both sides of the border allowing to give preference to vehicles under cover of valid international Customs transit documents or carrying live animals or perishable foodstuffs;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Off-lane control areas for random cargo and vehicle checks;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appropriate parking and terminal facilities;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Proper hygiene, social and telecommunications facilities for drivers;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Adequate facilities for forwarding agents, so that they can offer services to transport operators on a competitive basis.

Hungary marked the first three making the comment that the first one does not apply to trucks.

Turkiye made a more general comment: “With regards to the renovation of our BCPs in line with the One Stop Project, Karkamış, Çobanbey, Kapıköy, Sarp, Kapıkule, Hamzabeyli, Öncüpınar, İpsala and Habur BCPs are modernized. The works on Pazarkule, Dereköy, Türkgözü, Gürbulak, Üzümlü and Zeytin Dalı BCPs are ongoing”.

## IV. Preliminary conclusions from the survey

6. Since only two countries replied to the questionnaire and Turkiye provided some updates, we cannot really provide any analysis or preliminary conclusions from the survey. Instead, we are reproducing the preliminary conclusions of 2017 if they are of any value for the Working Party.

7. The analysis of the replies shows that the Contracting Parties have achieved progress in improving border crossing procedures in their countries under several topics. The progress is widespread, in particular concerning provisions such as: providing information to all parties involved in transport operations: creating priority to urgent consignments (perishable goods and live animals) and improving infrastructure at border crossing points.

8. With regard to specific parts of the survey, conclusions are as follows:

(a) Official publication of Annex 8: Whereas most respondents mentioned their publishing Annex 8, there are countries who stated that the Annex has neither been published nor scheduled to be published. In this regard, it should be pointed out, once more, that regardless of domestic approval/publication procedures, Annex 8 has become legally binding for all Contracting Parties as of 20 May 2008.

(b) Facilitation of visa procedures: Most respondents indicated that measures have been taken in their countries in order to facilitate the granting of visas for professional drivers. What is noticeable about these measures is that they are provided mostly on a basis of reciprocity. Furthermore, there is still a significant number of Contracting Parties that have not acted on this issue yet.

(c) Providing information to all parties: All the countries that responded, share information with parties involved in transport about border control requirements in force or planned and the actual situation at borders. They utilize several different instruments, including electronic means, to send information as soon as possible.

(d) Transfer of control procedures: The progress is rather limited on this topic. Particularly, the transfers of inspection and weighing of vehicles, and quality controls to the places of departure and destination are rarely realized.

(e) Priority for urgent consignments: All respondents indicated that they have taken measures to give priority to urgent consignments. However, among these measures, cooperation with other Contracting Parties regarding sanitary inspections seems to be the least applied.

(f) Technical inspection of vehicles: There is very limited application of the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections, 1997. Most of the respondents are neither Contracting Party to this agreement nor accepting the International Technical Inspection Certificate as provided for in the agreement (also reproduced in Appendix 1 to Annex 8).

(g) Carriage of perishable foodstuffs: Almost all respondents indicated that they are Contracting Party to the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage, 1970 (ATP).

(h) Use of IVWC: There are some respondents who state that they accept IVWCs issued in other Contracting Parties, however there is no progress in the Contracting Parties in authorizing weighing stations to issue certificates since the last survey.

(i) Infrastructure requirements: Most countries meet several of the infrastructure requirements, whereas the level of conformity is limited in the cases of separation of traffic and the availability of facilities for drivers and forwarding agents.

9. The conclusions from the analysis indicate that Contracting Parties are successfully implementing several provisions of Annex 8. However, there is also a need for further action on topics such as: use of IVWC; facilitation of visa procedures; transfer of control procedures from the border crossing points to places of departure and destination; accession to the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical

Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections (1997) and acceptance of the International Technical Inspection Certificate, etc.

10. The Working Party may wish to consider actions to stimulate further implementation of the provisions of the Harmonization Convention and of its Annexes.

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