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Report of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport on its 145th session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party (WP.30) held its 145th session from 14-17 February 2017 in Geneva. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cameroun, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine. Representatives of the European Union (EU) were also present. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC), Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Alliance Internationale de Tourisme / Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (AIT/FIA), Bureau International des Containers et du Transport Intermodal (BIC) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

2. WP.30 adopted the provisional agenda, prepared by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/289).

III. Opening statement

3. In her opening statement, the Director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), Sustainable Transport Division recalled that the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) will hold its 2017 celebratory session from 21 to 24 February 2017. Additional events would include a Ministerial Meeting on the 'Past and Future of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee' (21 February 2017), which will conclude with the adoption of a Ministerial resolution aimed at highlighting the seventy years of substantive contribution of ITC and its subsidiary bodies in the field of transport and to encourage further outputs from the contemporary global transport environment, including, but not limited to, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She encouraged all Governments and other interested parties to participate in the session of ITC and in the various side-events organized in conjunction with it.

4. She noted, with pleasure, that the Working Party seemed on the verge of finalizing its considerations on an extensive package of amendments that had been put on the table, further to the original package of proposals from the Russian Federation. She expressed the hope that trust in the value and functioning of the TIR system would be restored before long.

5. She expressed her concern about the developments in some countries, where customs authorities seem to have adopted the practice to refuse TIR transports in case the customs duties and taxes of the transported goods exceeded the nationally agreed maximum guarantee amount, as this was setting a dangerous precedent for limiting the application of the TIR Convention and she encouraged the affected countries, in consultation with their national associations and the international guarantee chain, to seek mutually satisfactory solutions to end this practice.

6. Further to a request from the delegation of Ukraine to have excerpts of her speech on hinterland supply chains at the 2016 International Transport Forum reproduced, she

regretted to inform the Working Party that it was no longer available. However, she clearly recalled that the gist of the speech focused on multimodality, which can only function if there is seamless connectivity, that hinterland connections form the weakest part in the global supply chain and that port authorities should get more involved in improving hinterland connectivity, not just through investments in more infrastructure but also by further applying facilitation tools. From this perspective, she reconfirmed her support for all efforts to reinforce the facilitation of customs and border procedures at ports through, if possible, the creation of a new Annex 10 to the Harmonization Convention, 1982, in addition to the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

7. She welcomed the consolidated draft of the new Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage carried by Rail, which was now available in the three official UNECE languages for consideration by WP.30 and by the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2). She encouraged the Working Party to make all efforts to stick to the proposed timeline for finalization and adoption of the final text, while fully understanding that such a schedule could only be maintained if Governments would constructively contribute to further discussions and would unequivocally express their intention to accede to this new legal instrument once endorsed by ITC.

8. She informed the Working Party that, as of 1 November 2016, Mr. A. Bouten, legal officer at the TIR secretariat, had been selected as regular UNECE Economic Affairs Officer, succeeding Mr. S. Kouzmine, that a new incumbent for the post of legal officer at the TIR secretariat had been selected and that, further to the promotion of Ms. Y. Brynkina to a regular post in the Division, a successor had been selected. Both selected candidates would join the ranks of the TIR secretariat shortly. Finally, with much regret, she announced that Mr. M. Pesut, Chief of the Transport Facilitation and Economics Section, would retire at the end of February 2017. She thanked Mr. Pesut for his contribution to the work of the section and wished him the best of luck in his new life.

IV. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

9. In accordance with the Commission's rules and procedures and established practice, the Working Party elected Mr. R. Kristiansson (Sweden) as Chair and Mr. A. Fedorov (Ukraine) as Vice-Chair for its sessions in 2017.

10. The secretariat conveyed the best regards of Ms. H. Metaxa-Mariatou (Greece), who, due to other obligations within the Government of Greece, was unable to further attend sessions of the Working Party, and wished all the best to all participants, past and present, whom she had gotten to know and appreciate over so many years. She promised to stay in close touch with the TIR family and continue to study documents and reports to keep herself well informed, also in the future.

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

11. The Working Party was informed about the preparations for the sixty-seventh session of the Commission (26-27 April 2017), which would, inter alia, include a high-level panel of senior representatives of different portfolios (e.g., health, transport, energy, environment, trade and gender equality). They would share experiences, lessons and good

practices to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and highlight the necessity and the value of integrated approaches towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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

12. The Working Party was informed that, pursuant to depositary notification C.N.742.2016.TREATIES-XI.16 of October 2016, in which the Secretary-General of the United Nations informed that none of the Contracting Parties had raised an objection to proposals to amend Annexes 2, 6 and 7, these proposals had entered into force on 1 January 2017. The Working Party further took note that, on 5 January 2017, the accession of the People's Republic of China to the TIR Convention, 1975 had entered into force, making China its seventieth Contracting Party. More detailed information on these issues as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.¹

13. The Working Party was informed that, on 27 January 2017, the Federal Board of Revenue of Pakistan and the Pakistan National Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce (PNC-ICC), had signed the agreement, in accordance with Annex 9, Part I of the TIR Convention, further paving the way towards implementation of the TIR Convention in Pakistan.

14. In reply to a question from the delegation of the Russian Federation, IRU informed the Working Party that the Government of China had not yet authorized a national association to act as guarantor and to issue TIR Carnets. More news should be available at the June 2017 session of the Working Party. The delegations of Kyrgyzstan and the Russian Federation expressed their readiness to collaborate with the Chinese authorities to identify possible border crossing points.

15. The EU also informed the Working Party that the aforementioned amendments had been published in the Official Journal of the EU in 23 official EU languages (L 321/2016 of 29 November 2016)².

B. Revision of the Convention

1. Amendment proposals to the Convention

16. The Working Party considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/1 by IRU about the results of a survey among Contracting Parties on the national levels of customs duties and taxes of tobacco and alcohol products. It welcomed the results, but was of the opinion that the outcome might be slightly biased because, in addition to sixteen EU member States, only Switzerland and Turkey had submitted their replies. In particular, the Working Party noted that whereas the average claim for a transport of alcohol amounted to 103,972 euros, this went up to 519,058 euros for a transport of tobacco. In reply to various questions from the floor, IRU replied that the two main remaining issues now seem to be whether or not

¹ www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html

² eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L:2016:321:TOC

tobacco and alcohol can be covered by one single TIR Carnet or, alternatively, to continue the practice of not issuing tobacco / alcohol TIR Carnets. The Working Party requested IRU, in consultation with the secretariat, to send reminders to all missing countries and, seek their replies not later than by 31 March 2017, so that it could revert to this issue at its next session. Finally, the Working Party was informed by IRU that the planned pilot of a fixed number of 100 transports of specific alcohol products with the HS codes 22.07.10 and 22.08, had to be cancelled. In this context, the delegations of the Russian Federation and Ukraine reminded IRU of its mandate under Article 6, para. 2 bis, inviting Contracting Parties to also explore other insurance companies.

17. The Working Party recalled that, at its previous session, it had recommended Contracting Parties to already start preparing amendment of their national agreements between customs and national associations to reflect the recommended maximum amount of 100,000 euros (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/288, para. 10). The Working Party was briefed by the delegation of Ukraine about recent developments in this field.

18. The Working Party considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/2, prepared by the secretariat on the basis of the discussions at the previous session, on a possible amendment to Article 20, namely to alter the formulation to accommodate the use of the TIR system in a Customs Union. Several delegations noted that the formulation as elaborated in the document, referring to a TIR operation, continued to present difficulties with the implementation of this provision in Customs Unions. The delegations of Belarus and of the Russian Federation provided oral proposals for alternative formulations. In view of the new material, the Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare a new document for the next session, which would provide in writing all the available proposals for Article 20 for further consideration and possible decision. Delegations were also invited to provide their proposals in writing, for inclusion in this document, no later than by 20 March 2017.

2. Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process

19. The Working Party endorsed the report of the twenty-fifth session (19-20 September 2016, Geneva) of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.1), as contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/3. Note was taken that the delegation of the Russian Federation did not agree with the conclusions of GE.1 in para. 16 thereof on the mutual recognition of electronic signatures. It further noted that the twenty-sixth session of GE.1 would take place in Geneva on 18 and 19 May 2017, in conjunction with the fourth session of the Group of Experts on the Legal Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.2).

20. The Working Party noted that Step 2 of the UNECE-IRU eTIR pilot project between Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey would end on 20 February 2017. A preliminary analysis of the results of the survey carried out among all stakeholders indicated a great level of satisfaction and the need to continue to improve the systems to include new functionalities and, possibly, involve additional customs administrations. The final report of the project as well as a new Memorandum of Understanding between UNECE and IRU were under preparation. The Board also took note that, further to having successfully secured the transmission of electronic messages with the central exchange platform, the test phase of the eTIR pilot between Georgia and Turkey was about to be finalized.

21. Finally, the Working Party recalled the multimodal eTIR pilot project launched by the customs administrations of Turkey and Ukraine. The Working Party took note that parties are looking forward to the final report of the UNECE-IRU eTIR pilot project between Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey to better shape their project. The delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of) expressed an interest in taking part in this multimodal eTIR pilot project. The delegation of Kazakhstan expressed its support for the UNECE-IRU pilot

project and indicated that it is interested in participating in the project and preparing for that.

22. The Working Party was orally briefed by the Chair of GE.2 about the outcome of the third session which took place in Geneva on 12 and 13 December 2016. Among others, the Chair highlighted that GE.2 had reviewed the results of the survey on authentication mechanisms and had decided to conclude its considerations at the next session after reviewing replies from a broader geographical distribution of Contracting Parties. GE.2 had also placed particular emphasis on the discussion of possible financing mechanisms for eTIR and had, in this respect, transmitted document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/2016/7 for the consideration of the Working Party. WP.30 further noted that the issue of financing would also be raised at the session of ITC (21 to 24 February 2017). On this issue, a number of delegations, as well as IRU and representatives of the private sector underscored the importance of securing the necessary funds for the eTIR project. At the same time, concerns were raised from the side of the guarantee chain with regard to the possibility of raising the funds through an amount per TIR transport, in particularly as long as the full business to customs to business aspect of eTIR is not implemented.

23. Furthermore, IRU recalled that during the GE.2 meeting in December 2016, IRU had submitted a proposal to expedite the implementation of computerization, by means of introducing a single and generic provision in the body of the TIR Convention, as per the example of e-ATA. This would serve as an intermediate legal framework which would provide those Contracting Parties that wished to do so, the option to immediately start carrying out TIR transports, while the eTIR legal framework is being set and implemented. The Working Party agreed to study such a proposal at its next session and requested IRU to prepare a document to that end. The delegation of Kazakhstan expressed its support for this intermediate solution. Moreover, IRU expressed its belief that Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and solutions, developed within the framework of the UNECE/IRU eTIR pilot project form an integral part of the UNECE Reference Model, to which all cross-references are made with regard to the future legal framework e.g. Annex/Protocol. Finally, IRU highlighted the importance of a swift shift to a fully electronic TIR procedure, particularly in light of developments in various Contracting Parties that would make the use of electronic declarations mandatory within a relatively short time frame. Against this background, WP.30 agreed that the work on the legal as well as any pending technical aspects should be concluded as soon as possible and encouraged all Contracting Parties to participate in the work on computerization of the TIR procedure.

C. Application of the Convention

1. New developments in the application of the Convention

24. The Working Party recalled that, at its previous session, the then Chair, referring to official information she had received, requested clarification from the delegation of Belarus on incidents in which the customs authorities of Belarus refuse to open a TIR procedure for transit operations where the customs duties and taxes at risk exceed 60,000 euros. The Working Party had invited TIRExB to further assess this situation (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/288, para. 20).

25. The Chair of TIRExB reported that, in the view of some members of the Board, this course of action was correct, as the associations only provide guarantee up to the amount of 60,000 euros. Others clearly stated that they did not to share this view, as it seriously impacted the relevance of the TIR Convention, to the detriment of the transport industry and recommended Belarus to stop this practice. In addition, at its seventy-first session, the Board had considered, but had not reached agreement on an assessment by the secretariat,

which elaborated the situations stipulated in the Convention, in which countries are entitled to refuse to accept TIR Carnets that had been issued correctly in another TIR Contracting Party. According to this assessment, the fact that the guarantee by the national association does not fully cover the amount of customs duties and taxes does not constitute such right for customs authorities to refuse a TIR Carnet. In the view of the majority of the Board, the only reasonable option for Contracting Parties facing this kind of situation, was to raise the level of the maximum guarantee.

26. The Working Party had an extensive exchange of views on the issue, without reaching consensus. At the request of the delegation of Belarus, the Working Party agreed to transmit to the TIR Administrative Committee the request to share, from the latest surveys on customs claims, the country-by-country replies on the number and amounts of TIR operations in their territory, where the amount of customs duties and taxes exceeded 60,000 euros.

2. TIR-related electronic data interchange systems

27. The Working Party took note of Informal document WP.30 (2017) No. 2 by IRU about the latest statistical data on the performance of Contracting Parties in the control system for TIR Carnets — SafeTIR system.

3. Settlement of claims for payments

28. The Working Party was informed by IRU about the current situation on the settlement of claims for payments made by customs authorities against national guaranteeing associations, contained in Informal document WP.30 (2017) No. 4.

4. Relation between the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement, the TIR Convention and other legal instruments

29. The Working Party took note that the secretariat continued to promote the linkages between transport, customs and trade facilitation within the framework of the World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA).

5. Other matters

30. The Working Party took note of the executive summary of the “Review of governance and compliance areas and fact finding investigation” of IRU, conducted by Ernst&Young (EY), which the secretariat had made available to Governments as confidential copy through their respective permanent missions in Geneva.³ Various delegations requested IRU to provide a full copy of the report. In reply to various questions from the delegation of the Russian Federation on financial links and services and, in particular, on para. 25 of the executive summary, the representative of IRU stated not to be in a position to answer, but that the questions would be transferred to the competent services of IRU and the auditors for reply. IRU also informed the Working Party that it was looking into the matter and that, as soon as its legal services had agreed on a correct formal procedure, a copy of the report could be shared with interested parties, while ensuring the required level of confidentiality.

³ This executive summary replaces document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/4, which has not been issued.

VII. International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (“Harmonization Convention”) (agenda item 5)

A. Status of the Convention

31. The Working Party was informed that, on 28 November 2016, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, had issued the following depositary notification: C.N. 887.2016.TREATIES-XI.A.17, informing that on 27 November 2016 the Government of Turkmenistan had deposited its instruments of accession to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 ("Harmonization Convention"). In accordance with its Article 17 (2), the Convention will enter into force for Turkmenistan on 27 February 2017. With the accession of Turkmenistan, the Harmonization Convention will have fifty-eight Contracting Parties. More detailed information on this issue, as well as on various depositary notifications, is available on the UNECE website.⁴

B. Proposal on a new Annex 10 on sea ports

32. The Working Party revisited document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/16, in conjunction with document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/5. It took note that, further to a request for comments or considerations by delegations, the secretariat had received a letter from the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as contained in Informal document WP.30 (2017) No. 1. The secretariat had also received a contribution from the Government of Turkey (Informal document WP.30 (2017) No. 3, outlining its position on some of the provisions of the draft Annex. The delegation of Ukraine continued to advocate the relevance of the new draft, particularly for hinterland connections within the supply chain. Various other delegations stated that they questioned the added value of draft Annex 10, in particular in view of the existing International Maritime Organization (IMO) Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL), and warned that its coming into existence could lead to legal confusion or, even, contradiction. They supported the preliminary conclusions by the secretariat in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/5, in particular with regard to the limited added value of the provisions of draft Annex 10 over the FAL Convention. In its current state, the draft contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/16, was viewed by various delegations to lack the consistency and clarity of structure to be considered as a workable draft.

33. In conclusion, the Working Party gladly accepted the offer of the delegation of Ukraine to give, at the next session, a presentation, outlining the scope and the purpose of draft Annex 10, and developing on its relevance for the supply chain by providing a gap analysis for the current legislation in force. The Working Party further requested the secretariat to prepare a list of Contracting Parties to the Harmonization Convention and to the FAL Convention for comparison and to extend an invitation to IMO to attend future sessions.

34. The secretariat informed the Working Party that it had conducted a biennial survey on the application of Annex 8 of the Convention. Considering the absence of response from some major countries, the Working Party agreed to extend the deadline to 20 March 2017,

⁴ www.unece.org/trans/bcf/welcome.html

and requested the secretariat to send reminder letters to those countries that had not yet replied to the survey. The Working Party decided to revert to the issue at its next session.

VIII. International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage carried by Rail, of 10 January 1952 (agenda item 6)

35. The Working Party took note that the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) met in November 2016 and that, as mandated by the Working Party, the secretariat had participated in the session. On that occasion, delegates of SC.2 and WP.30 had been given the opportunity to discuss the draft Convention (for information: only one delegate from WP.30 attended the session). SC.2 agreed with WP.30 that convening a dedicated ad hoc session to the draft text was premature. However, SC.2 agreed on what seemed to be the most feasible road map for further discussing the draft, which is (a) a first substantial review of the draft by WP.30 in February 2017; (b) circulation of an amended draft by the secretariat to WP.30 and to the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs in New York in March 2017; (c) finalization of the draft by WP.30 in June 2017; (d) circulation of the final text to WP.30 and SC.2 in July 2017; (e) adoption of the final text by WP.30 in October 2017; (f) adoption of the final text by SC.2 in November 2017; and (g) endorsement of the final text by the Inland Transport Committee in February 2018. At the same time, SC.2 acknowledged that such a schedule could only be maintained if governments would constructively contribute to further discussions and would unequivocally express their intention to accede to this new legal instrument once endorsed by ITC.

36. The Working Party took note that the secretariat had also issued Informal documents WP.30 (2017) No. 5 and No. 6, by the Government of the Russian Federation and by OSJD, respectively, containing an amended version of the text of the draft Convention. This draft had been prepared by the Informal Group of Experts, taking into account observations and remarks from Belarus, Poland, Russian Federation and Tajikistan.

37. In his intervention, the representative of the European Commission stated that, although the EU had contributed to the past discussions on this issue by providing provisional general and technical comment, the European Commission did not yet dispose of a mandate to enter into negotiations towards the conclusion of a new international legal instrument. In addition, the Working Party had not yet agreed with the, in his view, ambitious road map. He further explained the complex coordination required for the issue at hand, as it covers three major EU policy areas: railways, customs and the EU acquis on border management. So far, on none of the aforementioned areas had the EU identified any added value or benefits of the draft Convention. Several provisions even seemed to be incompatible with the EU acquis. Finally, in his view, the new Convention would not make bilateral agreements redundant, and perhaps not even facilitate them as the Convention does not contain a model for such agreements. He requested delegates to provide concise, convincing arguments on possible benefits. So far, the only function that the Convention could serve would be as a reference for bilateral agreements for a small number of countries.

38. The representative of OSJD clarified, once more, the background and need for developing a new Convention, mainly because the existing 1952 Convention was outdated and did not fulfil modern railway requirements. The representative of OSJD noted the recent decrease of railway traffic of passengers and luggage from East to West and stressed that one of the reasons for this process is administrative barriers when crossing borders. The draft Convention is aimed at improving the situation. He further mentioned that, while this project is actuality for European States, at the same time it serves the specific interest of

countries like China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia and other countries of Central Asia. The delegation of the Russian Federation supported the position of OSJD, stressing its relevance for the Eurasian continent as a whole. In its view, the draft Convention would serve as a base document for concluding multilateral and bilateral agreements.

39. The representative of OTIF, in referring to the non-binding nature of many provisions of the new Convention, proposed to follow the soft law approach, where a resolution, recommendation or a code of conduct by ITC could guide interested countries to conclude a set of bi- or multilateral agreements to address pressing border crossing passenger and luggage issues.

40. In reply to a proposal from the delegation of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, the Working Party agreed that it would continue its discussions at the next session on the basis of an amended draft, including the changes proposed in Informal document WP.30 (2017) No. 5. In addition, the secretariat was requested to extend an invitation to SC.2 participants to engage in the discussions and, to streamline the efficiency of participants, the secretariat was requested to indicate, in the draft agenda, a specific time frame, during which the issue would be discussed. Finally, the secretariat was requested to prepare a short overview of the course of discussions on the new draft, for the next session for information of the Working Party. Delegations were invited to submit any written contributions to the discussions not later than by 20 March 2017 to the secretariat. The delegation of EU indicated that they would need at least six weeks to reach a coordination position among EU Member States and would, therefore, not be able to meet this deadline. The Working Party mandated the secretariat to report its findings to ITC. Finally, The Working Party invited the informal group of experts to hold a consultation meeting with participation of representatives of interested states, regional organizations for economic integration and international organizations to review the wording of the draft Convention, in preparation of the 146th session of WP.30.

IX. Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956) (agenda item 7)

41. The Working Party was informed about the status of the Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles and took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/6⁵ which provides an overview of the functions of the Carnet de Passage en Douane (CPD) system. In particular, the Working Party took note of the interesting data on the distribution of CPD Carnets and the claims statistics.

X. Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 8)

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

⁵ Prepared by the secretariat, in consultation with AIT/FIA.

A. European Union

43. The Working Party was informed about recent developments in the European Union related to the activities of the Working Party. The EU informed the Working Party about the Union Customs Code (UCC) Work Programme relating to the development and deployment of the electronic systems provided for therein.⁶ This might be of interest, in particular, for operators, as it provided detailed information on the Information Technology schedule in relation to the implementation of UCC.

B. Economic Cooperation Organization

44. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) reported on the major findings of a “Feasibility Study on the customs provisions of the Transit Transport Framework Agreement (TTFA) and the modernization of border crossing points in the ECO region” which had been presented to the fifth meeting of the Customs Transit Committee (15 November 2016, Teheran). The study launched, inter alia, a 5-year Plan of Action on customs modernization through three major components: (a) upgrading/modernizing existing border crossing points services; (b) improving customs-related infrastructure; and (c) institutional and legal strengthening.

45. The seventh meeting of the ECO Heads of Customs Administrations (October 2016, Tehran) welcomed the eTIR pilot project between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Turkey in cooperation with UNECE and IRU, acknowledging the relevance of this project, particularly in the ECO region. The meeting considered eTIR to be a way forward for integration of the region. The Heads supported full computerization of the TIR system and called on all TIR Contracting Parties, UNECE and IRU to continue with its implementation and expansion.

46. The twenty-seventh ECO Regional Planning Council (December 2016, Tehran) was briefed on the latest status of activating the TIR system in Pakistan, notably, the establishment of a TIR National Authorization Committee. A field study on the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI) and Kyrgyz-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI) Road Corridors was due to start, as soon as the lead consultant for the study was selected and recruited.

47. The meeting of the Heads of Railways connecting Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran (KTI), held on 6 February 2017, had mandated the ECO secretariat to initiate a process of trilateral agreements towards commercialization of the KTI railway corridor. Full cooperation was requested from the concerned member States, with the collaboration of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). The intergovernmental agreement, based on the results of the approved study, may include, among others, establishment of a regional corridor management mechanism in the form of a Corridor Management Entity (CME), along with necessary measures to address, inter alia, the institutional, financial, technical, operational and legal aspects of commercialization of the corridor. The meeting was preceded by a two-day inter-agency meeting of the secretariats of ECO, IDB and UNESCAP which developed a draft road map on commercialization of the corridor.

⁶ ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/business/union-customs-code/ucc-work-programme_en

C. Eurasian Economic Union

48. The Working Party was informed about the relevant activities and projects undertaken within the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). In particular, the Working Party took note that: (a) the work towards the process of signing the Customs Code of the EEU is continuing; (b) work had started on the elaboration of twenty-six priority documents for the implementation of the EEU Customs Code, which should ensure its application in full; and (c) the information regarding this is available on the EEC and EEU websites.

D. World Customs Organization

49. Due to the absence of a delegation from the World Customs Organization (WCO) at the session, no information was provided under this agenda item.

E. Bureau International des Containers et du Transport Intermodal

50. The Working Party took note of a presentation⁷ by BIC on recent developments, such as the IMO SOLAS mandatory container weight verification requirements, which entered into force on 1 July 2016, and the launch of a BIC Technical Characteristics Database (TCD), which, once populated, will offer shippers, forwarders and other intermediaries a platform to easily exchange container fleet technical details, such as, in particular, the verified gross mass (VGM) of a container in order to be loaded on a ship.

XI. Other business (agenda item 9)

A. List of decisions

51. Under this agenda item, the Working Party recalled that, as requested at the 142nd session, the secretariat includes a list of decisions as Annex to the final reports of sessions. The Working Party requested the secretariat to continue this practice of attaching a list of decisions to each report of the Working Party, thus keeping track of the status of decisions and to include the issue as a separate agenda item for its future sessions. The secretariat agreed to this, adding that the list would also be attached to future draft agendas.

B. Information on the borders between Belarus and the Russian Federation

52. The French delegation drew the attention of the Working Party to information received through official channels, informing of the application of new measures for third country nationals, entering the Russian territory through Belarus. According to this information, third country nationals were no longer authorized to enter Russian territory through the Belarus border. He requested clarification of these measures and their consequences for third country international drivers in general and their impact on TIR transports in particular. The Russian delegation explained that this matter does not affect TIR transports as such, but that, upon entry of the territory of the Russian Federation, third country nationals need to produce a passport with a valid visa. At the request of the

⁷ Available at www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/bcf/wp30/documents/2017/WP30_145_BIC.pdf

representative of the European Commission, the Working Party agreed to revert to this issue at its next session.

C. Dates of the next sessions

53. The Working Party decided to hold its 146th session from 13 to 16 June 2017 and the 147th session from 10 to 13 October 2017.

D. Restriction on the distribution of documents

54. The Working Party decided that there would not be any restrictions on the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session. At the same time, delegations were reminded of the confidential nature of the external audit report of IRU.

XII. Adoption of the report (agenda item 10)

55. In accordance with established practice, the Working Party adopted the report on its 145th session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat. When reading the report, the Working Party, once more requested the secretariat to make the final report of its session available as a pre-session document well in advance of its next session (13-16 June 2017), so that French and Russian speaking delegations could also take the findings of the report into due consideration when preparing for the session. The Working Party took note that ITC, at its forthcoming session, will consider this matter, against the background of various complaints from the Sustainable Transport Division.

Annex I

List of decisions taken at the 143rd session of the Working Party

<i>Reference in final report (para.)</i>	<i>Short description of decision</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Action</i>
11	Distribute results IRU external audit to WP.30 and AC.2	secretariat	when available	<u>By email on 16 January 2017¹</u>
14	Transmit statement to ITC for consideration at its 2017 session	secretariat	pending	<u>See ECE/TRANS/2017/22, para. 29</u>
18	Transmit amendment proposals to AC.2, including reservation from Kazakhstan	secretariat	4/8/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2016/4/Rev.1
20	Decision not to revert to issue after outcome TIRExB assessment	WP.30	pending	<u>See ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/131, para. 45</u>
22	Request for new document on E.N. 0.8.3	secretariat	16/8/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/13
23	Request for more information on T/A TIR Carnet	IRU	11/10/2016	Informal document WP.30 (2016) No. 12
23	Request for a new document on various guarantee issues	secretariat	16/8/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/14
24	Transmit amendment proposals to AC.2, including reservation from Kazakhstan	secretariat	4/8/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2016/18
25	Request for revision of ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/9	secretariat	16/8/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/15
28	Transmit proposals to AC.2, including reservation from the Russian Federation	secretariat	4/8/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2016/18
28	Provide more info to AC.2 on proposal to amend Art. 18	IRU	11/10/2016	Informal document WP.30/AC.2 (2016) No. 10
37	Review claims statistics for Iran (Islamic Republic of)	IRU	11/10/2016	Informal document WP.30 (2016) No. 14
39	Transmit document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/12 to AC.2	secretariat	4/8/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2016/4/Rev.1
40	Submit arguments to AC.2	Delegation of Kazakhstan	18/8/2016	Orally, at 64th session of AC.2
41	Update and prepare list of decisions	secretariat	done	ECE/TRANS/286, Annexes
48–49	Incorporate proposal from Azerbaijan and issue new draft	secretariat	16/8/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/16

¹ Changes with regard to previous lists of decisions are underlined. Deletions are in ~~strike through~~.

*Reference
in final
report
(para.)*

<i>Short description of decision</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Action</i>
49 Prepare well-balanced position on draft Annex 10	WP.30	11/10/2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/17
52 Issue new draft	secretariat	before 11/7/2016	<u>ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2016/3</u>
54 Report on findings WP.30 to SC.2 and ITC	Secretariat / Chair	November 2016 and February 2017	<u>WP.30: done</u> <u>ITC: pending</u>

Annex II

List of decisions taken at the 144th session of the Working Party

<i>Reference in final report (para.)</i>	<i>Short description of decision</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Action</i>
4	Participation in ITC and, in particular, Ministerial Segment	WP.30	21-24 February 2017	None
10	Transfer proposal to amend E.N. 0.8.3 to AC.2	secretariat	8 December 2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2017/3
10	Organize survey on duties and taxes T/A products	IRU, with secretariat	asap	<u>Done, with reminders sent on 20 February 2017</u>
13	Prepare new document on Article 20 +	secretariat	6 December 2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/2
	Transfer proposal on Annex 9, Part I to AC.2		8 December 2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2017/5
14	Request ITC to prolong mandate GE.1	secretariat	ITC agenda	ECE/TRANS/269/Add.1, agenda item 5 (h)
14	Raise the financing of the eTIR international system with ITC	secretariat	ITC agenda	ECE/TRANS/269/Add.1, agenda item 5 (h)
20	Invite TIRExB to assess situation in Belarus and other countries	secretariat	TIRExB agenda	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/133, paras. 14 and 18
26	Submit comments to ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2016/16	delegations	By 15 November 2016	Informal documents WP.30 (2017) No. 1 and No. 3
26	Review relevance of IMO-FAL 65 Convention	secretariat	6 December 2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/5
26	Revisit letter by Mrs. Molnar of 2010 as well as excerpts from her 2016 ITC speech	secretariat	6 December 2016	Informal document WP.30 (2011) No. 7
29	Discuss possibility to publish meeting recordings	secretariat	pending	<u>Recording for internal purposes only</u>
30	Continue issuing lists of decisions	secretariat	ongoing	
30	Add new agenda item on list of decisions to WP.30 agenda	secretariat	22 November 2016	ECE/TRANS/289, agenda item 9 (a)
34	Submit informal draft new Convention to SC.2	secretariat	done	

<i>Reference in final report (para.)</i>	<i>Short description of decision</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Action</i>
35	Submit text of draft new Convention for translation	secretariat	6 December 2016	ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2016/3
36	Report findings WP.30 to SC.2 and ITC	secretariat	pending	See ECE/TRANS/SC.2/226, paras. 29-35; ITC: pending
38	Prepare overview of functions CPD system	secretariat, with AIT/FAI	6 December 2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/6
48	Complain about ongoing problems with availability of reports as pre-session documents	secretariat	ongoing	See ECE/TRANS/2017/29

Annex III

List of decisions taken at the 145th session of the Working Party

<i>Reference in final report (para.)</i>	<i>Short description of decision</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Action</i>
3	Participation in ITC and, in particular, Ministerial Segment	WP.30	21-24 February 2017	None
16	Prolong survey on duties and taxes T/A products	IRU, with secretariat	asap	Done, with reminders sent on 20 February 2017
18	Prepare new document on Article 20	secretariat	4 April 2017	
22	Put document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/GE.2/2016/7 on the agenda of WP.30	secretariat	ITC agenda	ECE/TRANS/269/Add.1, agenda item 5 (h)
22	Raise the financing of the eTIR international system with ITC	secretariat	ITC agenda	ECE/TRANS/269/Add.1, agenda item 5 (h)
23	Study example of e-ATA	IRU	4 April 2017	
30	Provide full text of external audit report to delegations + answer specific questions	IRU IRU	asap By 4 April 2017 or orally	
33	Presentation on relevance Annex 10	Delegation of Ukraine	13-14 June 2017	
34	Invite IMO representative(s) to attend future sessions of WP.30	secretariat	asap	New deadline for replies set at 20 March 2017, for inclusion in next agenda WP.30
40	Prepare amended draft to ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2016/3 based on Informal document WP.30 (2017) No. 5 by the Russian Federation	secretariat	4 April 2017	
50	Put presentation BIC on the WP.30 website	secretariat	asap	Done
51	Continue issuing lists of decisions and add to draft agendas	secretariat	ongoing	
52	Revert to issue of entry to the Russian Federation through Belarus of third country nationals	Russian Federation	asap or orally at the next session	
55	Request final report to be made available as pre-session document	secretariat	done	

<i>Reference in final report (para.)</i>	<i>Short description of decision</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	<i>Action</i>
38	Prepare overview of functions CPD system	secretariat, with AIT/FAI	6 December 2016	ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2017/6
48	Complain about ongoing problems with availability of reports as pre-session documents	secretariat	ongoing	See ECE/TRANS/2017/29
