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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Administrative Committee
for the TIR Convention

**REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE FOR THE
TIR CONVENTION 1975 ON ITS TWENTIETH SESSION
(24-25 October 1996)**

ATTENDANCE

1. The Administrative Committee held its twentieth session at Geneva on 24 and 25 October 1996. The following representatives of the Contracting Parties attended: Armenia; Austria; Belgium; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria, Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Ireland; Italy; Lithuania; Morocco; Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey; United Kingdom; United States of America; Uzbekistan; European Economic Community.
2. The following international organization was represented as an observer: International Road Transport Union (IRU).
3. The Committee noted that the required quorum according to Annex 8, Article 6 of the Convention had been attained.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

4. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/40) prepared by the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

5. In accordance with Annex 8, Article 3 of the Convention, the Committee elected Mr. J. Byrgesen (Denmark) as Chairman and Mr. J. Elizalde of Spain as Vice-Chairman of its twentieth session.

6. The Committee reiterated that, in accordance with Annex 8, Article 1 of the Convention, competent administrations of States referred to in Article 52, paragraph 1 of the Convention, which were not Contracting Parties to the Convention or representatives of international organizations, could participate as observers in its sessions.

STATUS OF THE TIR CONVENTION, 1975

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/40, annex.

7. The Committee was informed that the TIR Convention, 1975, currently had 58 Contracting Parties, including the European Economic Community. The Committee noted that the following countries would become Contracting Parties to the Convention: Azerbaijan on 12 December 1996; Tajikistan on 11 March 1997 and Turkmenistan on 18 March 1997.

8. This would bring the number of Contracting Parties to 61.

STATUS OF AMENDMENTS TO THE TIR CONVENTION, 1975

9. The Committee was informed that no new amendments to the Convention had come into force.

REVISION OF THE CONVENTION

(a) Proposals for amendments to the Convention

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/R.23 (TRANS/WP.30/R.170); TRANS/WP.30/R.172; TRANS/WP.30/170; TRANS/WP.30/R.168; ECE/TRANS/111.

10. The Chairman of the ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) informed the Administrative Committee about the modifications agreed upon by the Working Party at its eighty-sixth session regarding the amendment proposals as circulated in document TRANS/WP.30/R.170. He pointed out that, due to the urgency of the situation, the Working Party had been dedicated almost entirely to the revision of the TIR Convention. The exact wording of the amendment proposals agreed upon so far by the Working Party is contained in the reports of the Working Party at its eighty-fourth, eighty-fifth and eighty-sixth sessions.

11. The representative of the Russian Federation pointed out that the crisis of the TIR Convention was largely attributable to the inoperative guarantee system. However, a consideration of issues related to improving the guarantee system has been unjustifiably delayed. He therefore felt that the ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) should be entrusted with examining the problems of the functioning of the guarantee system as a matter of priority at its next meeting.

(b) Revision procedure

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/R.23 (TRANS/WP.30/R.170).

12. The Committee considered whether to proceed in accordance with the amendment procedure foreseen in the Convention or to endeavour to speed up this procedure with a view to implementing at least some of the amendments at an earlier date than provided for in the Convention.

13. In order to provide the Committee with a basis for discussion of this second option, the secretariat had prepared a draft resolution on short term control measures to ensure the security and efficient functioning of the TIR Customs transit procedure.

14. In referring to the draft Resolution, the Committee felt that, even if the amendments contained therein were adopted, each Contracting Party subsequently had to proceed according to the Convention with the national legislative procedures. In this context, it was also pointed out that it had not been possible to include all elements of the revision procedure in the draft Resolution.

15. As the Committee felt that discussions of the draft Resolution should not start before consideration of the pertinent background documents for the revision had been concluded, it decided to request the ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) to continue its work on the revision procedure.

OTHER PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE CONVENTION

16. The Committee was informed that no other proposals for amendments to the Convention had been received.

APPLICATION OF THE CONVENTION

(a) Control system for TIR Carnets: Implementation of the Recommendation adopted on 20 October 1995

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/37, annex 4; TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/39.

17. The representative of the IRU reported that it had made substantial progress in the implementation of the Recommendation adopted on 20 October 1995 on a Control System for TIR Carnets. As of 21 October 1996, out of 45 Contracting Parties with which TIR operations could be carried out, 35 had been provided by the IRU with computerized (EDI) links for the transmission of data on discharged TIR Carnets. He further pointed out that although the system provided neither perfect data quality in every instance, nor complete exchange of data, the physical possibility for data exchange had been established in most cases and it was, at a minimum, possible to obtain certainty about the completion or non-completion of the TIR transit operation.

18. The representative of the IRU noted, moreover, that there was still a lack of liaison offices to handle cases which showed a discrepancy between the computerized information obtained through the EDI system and the information appearing on the TIR Carnet.

19. The representative of the European Economic Community informed the Committee that the Director General of DG XXI had written to all Contracting Parties of the Convention asking them to support the development and implementation of the IRU SAFETIR system and urged Contracting Parties who were not yet linked to the system to take the necessary steps as soon as possible.

(b) TIR Handbook: Comments adopted by the ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

Documentation: TIR Handbook (UN Sales Publication).

20. The Committee was informed that no new comments had been prepared and adopted by the ECE Working Party.

21. The 1995 TIR Handbook prepared by the ECE secretariat, a comprehensive reference manual on the functioning and interpretation of the TIR system, may be ordered in English, French and Russian from selected national booksellers or from UN Publications, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland; Telefax: +41-22-917-0027.

(c) International registry on Customs sealing devices

Documentation: ECE publication (restricted).

22. The Committee took note of the latest edition of the ECE International Register on Customs sealing devices and Customs stamps used for the TIR regime which was maintained by the ECE secretariat in English, French and Russian and covered at present 33 countries.

23. The Committee invited the Customs authorities of countries for whom information had not yet been submitted on Customs sealing devices used for the TIR regime to send the required information to the ECE secretariat as soon as possible.

24. The Committee noted that the latest information provided by Bulgaria and Croatia would be inserted into subsequent editions of the register.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Dates of next sessions

25. The Committee decided to hold its next (twenty-first) session on 2 and 3 December 1996 and its subsequent (twenty-second) session on 27 and 28 February 1997. The secretariat was requested to inform all Contracting Parties of the importance to be represented at these forthcoming sessions of the Committee in order to continue to make progress on the revision of the TIR Convention.

(b) Restriction on the distribution of documents

26. The Committee decided that no restriction should be placed on the distribution of documents for the current session with the exception of the ECE International Registry on Customs Sealing Devices prepared by the secretariat.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

27. The Committee agreed to adopt the report on its twentieth session at the forthcoming twenty-first session (2 and 3 December 1996) on the basis of a draft to be prepared by the ECE secretariat.
