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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

Administrative Committee for the
International Convention on the Harmonization
of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982

(Fourth session, 18 and 20 October 2000)

**REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE HARMONIZATION
OF FRONTIER CONTROLS OF GOODS, 1982
ON ITS FOURTH SESSION**

ATTENDANCE

1. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 4 of the Convention, the Administrative Committee held its fourth session at Geneva on 18 and 20 October 2000.
2. The following representatives of the Contracting Parties attended: Austria; Belarus; Belgium; Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Italy; Netherlands; Poland; Slovakia; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; United Kingdom; European Community (EC).
3. The following representatives of countries were represented as observers in accordance with Annex 7, Article 2 of the Convention: Jordan; Romania.
4. The following representatives of international organizations were represented as observers in accordance with Annex 7, Article 2 of the Convention: World Customs Organization (WCO); International Road Transport Union (IRU); Transfrigoroute (International).

5. The Administrative Committee noted that the required quorum according to Annex 7, Article 6 of the Convention had been attained.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/7; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/6; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/4; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/2.

6. The Administrative Committee adopted the agenda prepared by the UN/ECE secretariat (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/7).

7. The Administrative Committee noted that the reports of its first, second and third sessions held in 1987, 1994 and 1999 are contained in documents TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/2, TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/4 and TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/6 respectively. These reports may be obtained from the UN/ECE secretariat or may be downloaded from the relevant UN/ECE web site (www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/welctir.htm).

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

8. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 5 of the Convention, the Administrative Committee elected Mrs. H. Metaxa-Mariatou (Greece) as Chairwoman and Mr. G.-H. Bauer (Switzerland) as Vice-Chairman.

ATTENDANCE OF OBSERVERS

9. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 2 of the Convention, the Administrative Committee decided not to impose any restrictions on the attendance as observers of competent administrations of States and international organizations not Contracting Parties to the Convention.

STATUS OF THE CONVENTION

Documentation: www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/conventions/list.htm.

10. The Administrative Committee was informed that, at present, the Convention had 40 Contracting Parties, including the European Community. A list of Contracting Parties to the Convention is contained in Annex 1 to this report.

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENT OF THE CONVENTION

11. Contracting Parties to the Convention had been invited by the Executive Secretary of the UN/ECE to submit proposals for amendment of the Convention. The Administrative Committee considered the following proposals submitted by the Contracting Parties represented in the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30).

Preparation of a new annex on efficient border crossing procedures

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/2000/1; Informal document No. 15 (2000); TRANS/WP.30/2000/11; Informal Document No. 6 (1999); TRANS/WP.30/1999/12; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/6.

12. The Administrative Committee recalled that, at its third session (Geneva, 21 and 24 June 1999), it had examined proposals for the insertion of new annexes to the Convention on (a) facilitation of the passage of ATP vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs prepared by the Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs (WP.11) and (b) efficient border crossing procedures prepared by the International Road Transport Union (IRU) (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/6, paras. 12-19).

13. Following preliminary discussions on the feasibility of such new annexes, based on further contributions made by TRANSFRIGORROUTE International and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) (TRANS/WP.30/1999/12; Informal document No. 6 (1999)), the secretariat, in accordance with the decisions of the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (TRANS/WP.30/186, paras. 14-17), had convened an informal ad hoc group of experts (4-5 April 2000) which considered the key elements required for efficient border crossing procedures and prepared a first draft of a new Annex 8 to the Convention.

14. Considering the results of the expert group meeting (TRANS/WP.30/2000/11), the UN/ECE Working Party, at its ninety-fifth session, had felt that, in principle, the draft provisions for a new Annex 8 to the Convention seemed to be acceptable, but required further studies by competent national authorities and technical experts before they could be considered and adopted by the Administrative Committee at its forthcoming session in October 2000. In order to make rapid progress in this matter, the Working Party decided to create an informal ad hoc group of technical experts to consider the establishment of an International Technical Inspection Certificate for Lorries as well as an International Vehicle Weight Certificate, based on a draft prepared by the SECI Regional Road Transport Committee (TRANS/WP.30/190, paras. 8-12 and 48).

15. On the basis of the results of this expert group meeting, the secretariat has prepared a new draft Annex 8 to the Convention for consideration by the Working Party at its forthcoming session (16-20 October 2000) and by the Administrative Committee (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/2000/1).

16. The Administrative Committee noted that the UN/ECE Working Party, at its ninety-sixth session (16-20 October 2000), had reviewed the text of the proposed new Annex 8 to the Convention as contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2000/11 subject to a few modifications as contained in the report of the Working Party (TRANS/WP.30/192, paras. 10-13) and on the understanding that final approval by the Working Party and adoption by the Administrative Committee could only be accorded once the technical appendices to Articles 4 and 5 of Annex 8 had been finalized.

17. In this context, the Administrative Committee also took note of an informal submission by Transfrigoroute International and the IRU proposing a revised version of Article 4 of Annex 8 of the Convention.

18. The Administrative Committee agreed with the general conclusions of the UN/ECE Working Party. It welcomed the progress made in the preparation of the new Annex 8 of the Convention made by the UN/ECE Working Party and its group of experts and decided to consider and possibly adopt the draft Annex 8, including its technical appendices at its forthcoming session to be held in 2001.

19. In particular, the Administrative Committee endorsed the modifications proposed by the UN/ECE Working Party to the provisions of the new Annex 8 to the Convention as contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2000/11 with the following comments:

Article 4, paragraph 1

Add, in square brackets, and as an alternative to the existing paragraph 1, the following paragraph:

“[1. The Contracting Parties shall facilitate the crossing of road vehicles across borders on the basis of relevant international legal obligations to which they are Parties.]”

Article 6, sub-paragraph (ii)

Modify the wording: “valid Customs transit document” to read: “valid international Customs transit document”.

Article 7

Modify the present text of Article 7 to read as follows:

“[7. With regard to Articles 1 to 6 of this Annex, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations shall carry out, every second year, a survey among Contracting Parties on progress made to improve border crossing procedures in their countries.]”

20. The complete text of the new draft Annex 8 to the Convention as amended by the Administrative Committee is contained in Annex 2 to this report.

21. The Administrative Committee stressed that work on the technical appendices to Articles 4 and 5 should be completed as soon as possible.

22. Relevant background information on this issue is contained in the following UN/ECE documents: TRANS/WP.30/1998/12; TRANS/WP.30/1998/10; TRANS/WP.30/1998/9.

PROPOSALS OTHER THAN AMENDMENTS TO THE CONVENTION**(a) Facilitation of border crossings in international rail transport**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/128.

23. The Administrative Committee was informed of progress made in the implementation of the resolution adopted by the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee on the reduction of border stopping time of shuttle trains in international traffic (ECE/TRANS/128, paras. 71-73) as well as on relevant activities of the UN/ECE Working Party on Rail Transport. The Administrative Committee also took note of progress made in this field in the framework of the Transport Infrastructure Development Group of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI).

(b) Facilitation of border crossing procedures in international road transport

Documentation: www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/seci/intro.htm.

24. The Administrative Committee was informed about the implementation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that had been prepared and signed by eleven Ministers of Transport of the States participating in the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative (SECI). This MoU on the facilitation of international road transport of goods stipulated *inter alia* that all Parties to the MoU should accede to the "Harmonization" Convention (refer also to www.unece.org/trans/new_tir/seci/intro.htm).

(c) Measures to facilitate the world-wide implementation of the Convention

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/6; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/4; ECE/TRANS/53.

25. The Administrative Committee was informed about the activities of the UN/ECE secretariat to facilitate the world-wide implementation of the Convention in line with resolution No. 230 adopted by the UN/ECE Inland Transport Committee on 4 February 1983 entitled: "Technical assistance measures for the implementation of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods" (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/6, paras. 22-25; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/4, paras. 15-20; ECE/TRANS/53, annex 1).

26. The Administrative Committee noted in this respect that the UN/ECE secretariat, in cooperation with other Regional Commissions of the United Nations, particularly those covering Asia and the Pacific (UN/ESCAP) and Western Asia (UN/ESCWA), was continuing to organize seminars and workshops on border crossing facilitation procedures, referring also to the provisions of the "Harmonization" Convention.

OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Date of next session

27. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 4, sub-paragraph (ii) of the Convention, the Administrative Committee decided to convene its next session in the year 2001, in conjunction with one of the sessions of the UN/ECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), at a date to be determined by the UN/ECE secretariat.

(b) **Restriction on the distribution of documents**

28. The Administrative Committee decided that there should be no restriction with respect to the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

29. In accordance with Annex 7, Article 8 of the Convention, the Administrative Committee adopted the report of its fourth session on the basis of a draft prepared by the UN/ECE secretariat.

Annex 1

**Contracting Parties
to the
International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods
(21 October 1982)**

Situation as of 24 June 1999

Armenia	Lithuania
Austria	Luxembourg
Belarus	Netherlands
Belgium	Norway
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Poland
Bulgaria	Portugal
Croatia	Russian Federation
Cuba	Slovakia
Czech Republic	Slovenia
Denmark	South Africa
Estonia	Spain
Finland	Sweden
France	Switzerland
Georgia	United Kingdom
Germany	Uzbekistan
Greece	Yugoslavia
Hungary	
Ireland	European Community
Italy	
Kyrgyzstan	
Lesotho	

Annex 2

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE
HARMONIZATION OF FRONTIER CONTROLS OF GOODS, 1982
("Harmonization Convention")**

(New) Annex 8

**FACILITATION OF BORDER CROSSING PROCEDURES
FOR INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT**

Article 1

Principles

Complementing the provisions of the Convention and in particular those provided in Annex 1, the present Annex intends to define the measures that need to be implemented in order to facilitate border crossing procedures for international road transport.

Article 2

Facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers

1. The Contracting Parties shall encourage their respective authorities to facilitate the granting of visas for professional drivers engaged in international road transport aiming at simplifying the formalities, limiting the number of substantiating documents, reducing the time required to obtain visas and issuing multiple visas valid for one year without prejudice to other existing agreements.
2. The Contracting Parties shall endeavour to regularly exchange information on best practices with regard to the facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers with a view to arriving at efficient and harmonized procedures in this respect.

Article 3

International road transport operations

1. In order to facilitate the international movement of goods, Contracting Parties shall regularly inform all parties involved in international transport operations in a harmonized and co-ordinated manner on border control requirements for international road transport operations in force or planned as well as on the actual situation at borders.
2. Contracting Parties shall endeavour to transfer, to the extent possible and not only for transit traffic, all necessary control procedures to the places of origin and destination of the goods transported by road so as to alleviate congestion at the border crossing points.
3. Referring in particular to Article 7 of this Convention, priority shall be given to urgent consignments, e.g. live animals and perishable goods. In particular, the competent services at border crossing points:
 - (i) shall take the necessary measures to minimise waiting times for ATP-approved vehicles transporting perishable foodstuffs or for vehicles transporting live animals, as from their time of arrival at the frontier until their regulatory, administrative, Customs and sanitary controls;
 - (ii) shall ensure that the required regulatory controls are carried out as quickly as possible;
 - (iii) shall allow, as far as possible, the operation of the necessary cooling systems of vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs during the time of crossing the border, unless this is impossible as a result of the required control procedure;
 - (iv) shall co-operate, in particular through advance information exchange, with their counterparts in other Contracting Parties in order to accelerate border crossing procedures for perishable goods and live animals, in case these loads are subject to sanitary inspections.

[Article 4

Vehicle inspection

1. The Contracting Parties shall facilitate the crossing of road vehicles across borders by making use of the International Technical Inspection Certificate as provided for in the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections (1997).

[1. The Contracting Parties shall facilitate the crossing of road vehicles across borders on the basis of relevant international legal obligations to which they are Parties.]

2. With a view to identifying ATP-approved vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs, the Contracting Parties may utilize the distinguishing marks affixed to the relevant equipment and the ATP certificate or plate of approval provided for in the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (1970).]

[Article 5

International vehicle weight certificate

1. In order to accelerate border crossings, the Contracting Parties shall accept and mutually recognize the International Vehicle Weight Certificate as contained in the Appendix to this Annex. Vehicle weight measurements shall take place only in the country of origin of the international transport operation. Results of such a measurement shall be duly reflected and certified in the International Weight Certificate. Apart from random checks and controls in the case of supposed irregularities, no further weight measurements en route will be carried out.

2. The Contracting Parties shall communicate to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations a list of weighing stations in their country authorized in accordance with international principles, at the time of notifying him of the adoption of this Annex and in case of any subsequent changes in the list. This list will be updated and communicated to each Contracting Party whenever necessary by the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations.

3. The minimum requirements for authorized weighing stations, the principles of authorization and the basic features of weighing technology/procedure to be applied are contained in the Appendix to this Annex.]

Article 6

Border crossing points

In order to ensure that the required formalities at border crossing points are streamlined and accelerated, the Contracting Parties shall meet, as far as possible, the following minimum requirements for border crossing points open for international goods traffic:

- (i) facilities enabling joint controls between neighbouring States (one-stop technology), 24 hours a day, whenever justified by trade needs and in line with road traffic regulations;
- (ii) separation of traffic for different types of traffic on both sides of the border allowing to give preference to vehicles under the cover of valid international Customs transit documents (TIR, T) or carrying live animals or perishable foodstuffs;
- (iii) off-lane control areas for random cargo and vehicle checks;
- (iv) appropriate parking and terminal facilities;
- (v) proper hygiene, social and telecommunications facilities for drivers;
- [(vi) encouraging the establishment of forwarding agents at border crossings with adequate facilities, offering services to transport operators on a competitive basis.]

[Article 7

Reporting mechanism

With regard to Articles 1 to 6 of this Annex, the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations shall carry out, every second year, a survey among Contracting Parties on progress made to improve border crossing procedures in their countries.]
