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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

**Working Party on Customs Questions affecting
Transport****Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and
Technical aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure****Nineteenth session**

Belgrade, 13–14 September 2011

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

eTIR in a Single Window environment**eTIR in a Single Window environment****Note by the secretariat****I. Background**

1. At its eighteenth session, the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (further referred to as “the Expert Group”) agreed that the recent developments on implementing national Single Windows deserve to be analyzed in the framework of the eTIR project. This document has been prepared by the secretariat, at the request of the Expert Group, to facilitate the discussion on the issue.

II. Definitions and references

2. According to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) Recommendation 33, a Single Window is defined as “a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements. If information is electronic, then individual data elements should only be submitted once.”

3. Both United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)¹ and World Customs Organization (WCO)² maintain repositories of Single Window projects (existing and under development).

III. National, regional or international Single Windows

4. National Single Windows facilitate the submission of information to various governmental agencies in a given country. However, in case of international trade, traders and transport companies are still required to provide the same information to the country of exportation, to those along the route (in particular when goods are transported by inland transport modes) and to the country of importation. To further facilitate trade and transport, some regional Single Windows are under development, e.g. the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Single Window. Their objective is to enable the exchange of information between different national Single Windows, thus removing the necessity to resubmit information to all countries along the supply chain but also to further ensure that all countries are provided with the same information.

5. On 6–7 June 2011, the Cassandra project³ was launched by an international consortium comprising 27 partners. The project is co-funded by the European Commission (EC) Seven Framework Program (FP7) and is aimed at developing an international data pipeline that connects all actors in the supply chain. The objective of the project is to replace the numerous exchanges of documents and messages in the supply chain by information sharing and role-based rights to access information. In other words, the information required by the various players along the supply chain will be made available through the pipeline in a standard manner. The various actors, e.g. Customs authorities, would then have the right to access the information that is required to perform their role. If such a project would be implemented successfully, it could be seen as a global international Single Window. Before then, alternative solutions still have to be found to facilitate trade and transport beyond national or regional borders.

IV. The eTIR international system connecting Single Windows

6. The eTIR international system, as described in the eTIR Reference Model (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2011/4), plays a role similar as the Cassandra information pipeline or the EC New Computerized Transit System (NCTS). Indeed, all three allow in their design various Customs administrations to have access to information provided once by traders or transport operators. Furthermore, the eTIR international system also allows the sharing of guarantee related information.

7. In that respect, the envisaged computerized TIR system is in line with the general principle of Single Windows. Nevertheless, the eTIR project does not consider the requirement of other governmental agencies (OGA) in relation to the TIR procedure. Consequently, even if the information contained in the TIR Carnet is transmitted from one country to the next automatically, all other information that is required by Customs and OGA stills has to be provided to each national Single Window or to every government agency if no Single Window is available.

¹ www.unece.org/cefact/single_window/

² www.wcoomd.org/sw_overview.htm

³ www.cassandra-project.eu/

8. In view of the above, the question remains if the eTIR project could contribute to further facilitate the provision of information related to the requirements of OGA.

V. OGA requirement related to the TIR procedure

9. On the one hand, requirements from OGA with respect to the TIR procedure in the form of documents attached to the TIR Carnet could automatically be dealt with if the issue of the dematerialization of document gets solved. On the other hand, OGA can require the provision of additional information in the form of a separate declaration or additional data elements to be included in the Customs declaration (possibly by means of a Single Window). In the latter case, and if Contracting Parties would agree, it would be possible to provide, within the eTIR system, the possibility to provide additional data elements, intended for OGA along the route. Considering that the eTIR data model is, to a large extent, based on the WCO data model (DM) version 3, the inclusion of OGA requirements in eTIR messages might be fairly easy to achieve from a technical perspective. Indeed, the WCO DM version 3 has had OGA requirements in scope from the beginning and, if required, additional OGA transit requirements could also be included upon request by national administrations. The Expert Group might nevertheless consider that the requirements of OGA fall outside the scope of the TIR Convention and, therefore, using eTIR as a vehicle for conveying OGA information might also be a complicating factor from a legal point of view.

10. In any case, the eTIR project has gone through the simplification and harmonization processes, as described in UN/CEFACT Resolution No. 34. These processes resulted in the development of an eTIR data model based on international standards, which is already a first step toward ensuring the re-usability of the data and, therefore, will facilitate the integration of eTIR in Single Window environments.

VI. Further considerations

11. The Expert Group may wish consider the information above, decide if OGA requirements should be considered in the framework of the eTIR and instruct the secretariat on the next steps, if necessary.
