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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Customs Questions
affecting Transport

Informal ad hoc Expert Group on the
Computerization of the TIR procedure

**Follow up to the discussion by the Working Party on the preparation of Phase III of the
TIR Revision Process at its one-hundred-and-sixth session (3-6 February 2004)**

Transmitted by the secretariat

A. BACKGROUND

At its third session on 1 and 2 September 2003 in Budapest, the Informal ad hoc Expert Group (hereafter called the Expert Group) mandated the secretariat to prepare a document for consideration at the WP.30 2004 spring session (Decisions No. 2 and 6). In this document the Working Party should be asked for clarification with regard to the (a) objectives, (b) approach and (c) title of the Computerization Project. The document concerned (TRANS/WP.30/2004/3) has been discussed at the one-hundred-and-sixth session of the Working Party (3-6 February 2004).

The secretariat reproduces in underlying document the relevant passages from the report of the one-hundred-and-sixth session of the Working Party for information of the Expert Group, together with some proposals for further consideration by the Group.

B. DISCUSSION BY THE WORKING PARTY

The Working Party took note of a presentation given by the TIR secretariat, in which it outlined the general objectives of the Computerization project and the results achieved so far, elaborating, in particular, three questions raised by the Informal ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (hereafter called “the Expert Group”) at its third session in Budapest (Hungary) on 1 and 2 September 2003 (TRANS/WP.30/2004/3).

With regard to the three questions raised, the Working Party decided as follows:

(a) The Working Party confirmed that the final objective of the computerization of the TIR procedure encompasses the computerization of the whole TIR Carnet life cycle from issuance and distribution via the TIR transport to return and repository and that it should, ultimately be aimed at replacing the current paper TIR Carnet.

The Working Party agreed that the process to achieve this objective may be challenging, requiring the input of considerable human and financial input, both at the international and the national level. Therefore, the Working Party agreed that a step-by-step approach seemed the only feasible alternative to achieve any tangible results in the near future. To that end, it mandated the secretariat, as a first step, in cooperation with the Expert Group (a) to work out concrete proposals on how to exchange the so-called ‘static’ data-elements contained in the TIR Carnet (data elements which remain unchanged throughout the TIR Transport) between the competent authorities of Contracting Parties, possibly also including the data contained in the ITDBOnline as a preliminary step, (b) to conduct a feasibility study on the practicability of such proposals and, ultimately, (3) to propose a pilot along one of the major transit corridors to implement them.

The Working Party agreed that, as a next step, the integration of the so-called ‘dynamic’ data elements (data elements which may be amended or updated in the course of the TIR Transport) should be considered. Further steps should then address the issue of inclusion of additional features, such as security and advance cargo information.

Once these tangible steps had been achieved, the Expert Group could focus its attention on further, outstanding, issues in relation to the computerization of the TIR procedure.

(b) The Working Party agreed that the approach of the computerization process should, until further notice, be focused on the establishment of an international, centralized database, whose aim it should be to facilitate the secure exchange of data between national Customs systems. At a later stage, the sharing and exchange of data with other bodies concerned (such as TIRExB,

international organizations, national associations and the international guarantee), should not be excluded.

(c) The Working Party agreed that the Project to Computerize the TIR Procedure could, in future, be referred to as “eTIR-project”.

Various Contracting Parties, in particular the European Community, as well as the IRU, underlined the importance of full computerization of the TIR procedure as a long term goal and reconfirmed their commitment to the work performed by the Expert Group (TRANS/WP.30/206, paras. 25-27 (draft)).

C. ENDORSEMENT BY THE TIR ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE

The TIR Administrative Committee, at its thirty-sixth session (5-6 February 2004) endorsed the decisions taken by the Working Party at its one-hundred-and-sixth session (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/73, paras. 38-41 (draft)).

D. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS BY THE EXPERT GROUP

The Expert Group may wish to have a first exchange of views on how to give shape to the step-by-step approach, mandated by the Working Party. In particular, the Expert Group may wish to give guidance to the secretariat with regard to the establishment of an international, centralized database through which the competent authorities of Contracting Parties could exchange the so-called ‘static’ data elements contained in the TIR Carnet (data elements which remain unchanged throughout the TIR Transport), possibly also including the data contained in the ITDBOnline as a preliminary step.
