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Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

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Item 4 (b) (i) of the provisional agenda

Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975):

Revision of the Convention –

Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process

Roles and responsibilities of eTIR focal points

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport (WP.30), at its 124th session in February 2010, considered the importance of the eTIR project and how to promote the broadest participation in it. A network of national focal points for eTIR (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/248, para. 22) was proposed. At its 125th session, WP.30 stressed the importance for every Contracting Party to the TIR Convention to nominate a focal point for the eTIR project and to inform the secretariat accordingly (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/250, para. 19).

2. A letter sent to Directors General of customs administrations on 27 March 2012 by Mrs. Molnar, Director of the UNECE Transport Division, encouraged national customs administrations to participate in meetings of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.1) and, at least, appoint a dedicated eTIR focal point.

3. At its twenty-second session, GE.1 requested the secretariat to prepare a short document on the roles and responsibilities of eTIR focal points (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/10, para. 10). In line with this request, the secretariat prepared Informal document GE.1 No. 8 (2013), which was welcomed by GE.1 at its twenty-third session. GE.1 requested its circulation to the eTIR focal points for comments. None were received and the secretariat has prepared this document for consideration by the Working Party.

II. Roles and responsibilities of eTIR focal points

4. The network of eTIR focal points was established to ensure an adequate distribution of information on the eTIR Project at the national level as well as to allow countries which do not directly participate in the meetings GE.1 to provide national inputs on the eTIR Project. It was also foreseen that eTIR focal points act as liaisons with the eTIR Project to facilitate its implementation at the national level.

5. The secretariat proposes to further clarify the roles and responsibilities of eTIR focal points as follows:

During the inception and elaboration phases, eTIR focal point should:

- Receive requests (including surveys) on the eTIR project from WP.30, its Expert Groups and the secretariat; coordinate with the relevant national experts (including with colleagues from other ministries, if necessary) and reply within deadlines.
- Remain informed about the eTIR project developments, including the eTIR documentation for GE.1 meetings and provide feedback, if necessary.
- Ensure that the objectives and envisaged implementation of the eTIR project are in line with their national strategies for the computerization of customs procedures, in particular the transit procedure.
- Promote the eTIR project nationally (across ministries) to ensure awareness of the project and its inclusion in mid- and long-term national information and communications technologies (ICT) development and maintenance plans.
- Contribute actively to GE.1 meetings, either by direct attendance or by submitting documents.

6. The roles and responsibilities of eTIR focal points during the construction and transition phases of the project will need further definition in the future, but, in summary, on top of the roles defined above, they will be in charge of coordinating the exchange of information between the national teams working on the implementation of eTIR and those responsible for its international aspects.

III. Further considerations

7. The Working Party may wish to consider and, possibly, endorse this document, as well as provide guidance on further promoting the network of eTIR focal points among national customs administrations.
