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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

(One-hundred-and-twelfth session, 31 January – 3 February 2006,  
agenda item 9 (b) (ii))

**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

**COMPUTERIZATION OF THE TIR SYSTEM THROUGH A PUBLIC/PRIVATE  
PARTNERSHIP**

Note by the International Road Transport Union (IRU)

**INTRODUCTION**

1. During the last sessions of WP.30 and of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical aspects of Computerization of the TIR procedure, IRU and its Member Associations expressed great concern regarding the lack of progress in the eTIR project and the unrealistic direction that the project has taken. In the parallel document for the WP.30 (to be discussed under the same agenda item 9 (b) (ii)), the IRU and its Member Associations state the fear that NO COMPUTERIZATION OF THE TIR SYSTEM WILL BE ACHIEVED FOR MANY YEARS if the direction of the project is not reassessed.

2. IRU and its Member Associations are of the opinion that the continued success of the TIR system and its importance for public control as well as for trade and transport depends, in addition to its further geographical expansion, on the gradual (step-by-step) substitution of the paper based system with a computerized system.

3. This opinion was shared by the External Evaluation Report, *THE STATE OF THE UNECE*, published in June 2005 (extract, see footnote)<sup>1</sup>.

4. IRU and its Member Associations have decided to continue to contribute in a constructive way to the realization of a computerized TIR System by presenting the following proposal.

### **WHY eTIR IN PUBLIC/PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP?**

5. For more than 55 years, the TIR system has been a public/private facilitation tool. The co-operation between public authorities and private organizations has clearly proven significant effective advantages for both the public sector (Customs administrations of the Contracting Parties) and the private sector (trade and transport companies).

6. The partnership gathers the strengths of both the Public and Private sectors, allowing all the partners involved to play their role and to fulfill their obligations. Through this partnership, constraints of financial, legal, technical and political nature affecting the successful development of the Convention and the TIR system can be identified and eliminated in a uniform way.

### **ELEMENTS OF PARTNERSHIP TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE COMPUTERIZATION OF THE TIR PROCEDURE**

7. The partnership is based on consensus (within the UNECE framework) between the Contracting Parties, with the co-operation of the private road transport organizations. This consensus should be reached on realistic, secured and harmonized procedures, means and standards to be able to exchange electronic data, with greater speed, efficiency, accuracy.

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<sup>1</sup> *“TIR is a good example of UNECE’s influence on global trade facilitation. Nearly twenty-five years after its revision in 1975, the TIR Convention has proved to be one of the most effective international instruments prepared under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). Everyone who has ever travelled on European roads will recognize the familiar blue and white TIR plate borne by thousands of lorries and semi-trailers using the TIR Customs transit system. For the driver, the transport operator and the shipper, this plate stands for fast and efficient international transportation by road. TIR is a good example of UNECE’s influence on global trade facilitation. Member States maintain that the TIR Convention must be further expanded to include territories outside the UNECE region. The TIR Convention also needs to have at least some of its procedures computerized.”* (source: *THE STATE OF THE UNECE External evaluation report, June 30, 2005, Pekka Haavisto, Karl Th. Paschke, Johannah Bernstein, Tapio Wallenius, section 7.2, pp 40-41*).

8. The following objectives should be pursued:
- The paper declaration in the TIR Carnet used today will tomorrow be a standard set of data transmitted electronically to customs – the electronic TIR-declaration;
  - Today’s TIR Carnet as a guarantee document will tomorrow be an electronic guarantee sent through secured channels;
  - The manual checks made by the issuing Association upon the return of the used paper TIR Carnet after completion of the TIR transport will tomorrow be an automatic and systematic control mechanism;
  - The data elements in the paper TIR Carnet will be substituted by standard datasets ready to be exchanged between the transport operator, the organizations involved and customs;
  - Authorization for access to the TIR procedure will be controlled automatically through the electronic system in place. Suspension and revocation of the authorization will also be verifiable automatically;
  - Existing transmission systems like the internal control systems within the involved national Associations and international organization, ITDB online, SafeTIR and CUTE-Wise will be used and connected in the framework of a fully computerized TIR procedure.
9. The pillars in the existing TIR system will continue to exist, and the Convention should only be changed to refer to the use of new technologies in general, leaving the existing text of the Convention as it stands, with only minor technical modifications as a consequence of the new approach.

#### **EXISTING COMPUTERIZED ELEMENTS IN THE ETIR BUILDING BLOCKS**

- ITDB online, containing data on the Holder’s identity, address, status, etc., provided by Customs in co-operation with National Associations, constitutes an important tool for the controlled access;
- Data on the “life cycle” of guarantees contained in internal electronic systems within the national and international organizations are accessible through CUTE-Wise;
- Details on the issuance of guarantee: Issuing Association, Holder and guarantee details provided by existing electronic systems are accessible through CUTE-Wise;
- Data on the termination of TIR transports provided by Customs and used by both Customs and Associations, are accessible through CUTE-Wise;
- Lists of invalidated guarantees are accessible through CUTE-Wise;

- National Customs systems, are managing the TIR operations nationally.

## **MISSING ELEMENTS TO COMPLETE THE COMPUTERIZATION OF THE TIR PROCEDURE**

10. The additional elements needed in a computerized TIR system are as follows:
  - a. **The declaration:** A standard pre-TIR declaration is completed by the Holder on the basis of a standard dataset and transmitted electronically through a secured Web-service (facilitated by the national Associations and international organization involved) to the central point of the Customs system of the country of departure and all successive countries' Customs systems. Once the Customs Office of departure has sent the departure data, the status of the pre-TIR-declaration turns to a TIR declaration. It will be accessible in CUTE-Wise. The data elements in the declaration correspond to the data elements in the TIR Carnet today.
  - b. **Guarantee:** The International Organization attributes a certain quantity of guarantees containing individual and unique TIR guarantees numbers (in replacement of today's TIR carnets numbers) to the Associations, according to their needs and on the basis of one guarantee per transit operation. The issuing Association issues guarantees to its Holders under today's conditions and within predefined quotas through a secured Web service that also enables the Holder to complete the pre-TIR declaration. The Holder may print out a confirmation message for the guarantee and the associated completed pre-TIR declaration in a secured manner.
  - c. **Departure data:** Customs Office of departure retrieves the pre-TIR declaration data as sent by the Holder through the Web-service to its national system, checks the data, and may also check the status of the guarantee through CUTE-Wise and the status of the Holder through ITDB by use of the ID number. The Customs Office of departure carries out the same controls as today. All data elements on the departure (reference number, name and number of Customs Office, date, sealing reference, confirmation of the conformity of the load, loading compartment and the accompanying documents) are sent to CUTE-Wise online (as a data on termination of TIR transport today). As mentioned above, the departure data turns the status of the "pre-TIR declaration" to a "TIR declaration" in CUTE-Wise. Relevant data for the national management of the TIR operation may be exchanged internally within the Customs administration (i.e. possible transmission of data to the Customs Office of exit).
  - d. **Customs office of exit:** Customs Office of exit registers all the nationally required data elements in its national system and only sends data online to CUTE-Wise to confirm the exit (could be limited to TIR guarantee unique number, name and number of Customs

Office, date, as the data on termination of TIR transport today). Discharge process takes place according to national rules.

- e. **Customs office of entry:** Customs Office of entry, using the declaration data previously sent to its National Customs system, registers all the nationally required data elements in its national system and only sends data online to CUTE-Wise to confirm the entry (could be limited to TIR guarantee unique number, name and number of Customs Office, date). Relevant data for national management may be exchanged internally.
- f. **Fallback:** Like all other IT systems the public and/or the private electronic system can be down. Fallback procedures have to be worked out, in principle based on a printout of the electronic pre-TIR-declaration.

## **PUBLIC SUPERVISION**

11. IRU and its Member Associations have noted the clearly expressed wish for the public supervision of a computerized TIR system. The public supervision could be organized by defining the respective obligations of the parties involved regarding security standards for transmission, confidentiality and access rights to the computerized system, etc. For IRU and its Member Associations, it will be important to obtain a clearer vision of the elements, which Customs authorities would then like to see built in. It is understood that similar control systems already are in place in connection with other IT developments in the public/private partnership.

## **CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS**

12. The concept presented above is based on the Reference Model (TRANS/WP.30/2005/32) elaborated by the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical aspects of Computerization of the TIR procedure expected to be endorsed at the 112<sup>th</sup> meeting of WP.30. It is based on the following considerations:

- a. the financial constraints for all parties involved must be taken into account;
- b. the TIR procedures are already partly computerized.

13. The concept described in this document is therefore proposing to base the future system on the elements already computerized, to take advantage of their synergy by organizing their connectivity efficiently, at the lowest possible cost for all parties involved, thus ensuring the sustainability of the TIR system.

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