

**International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982
("Harmonization Convention")**

Preliminary results of the survey concerning the implementation of Annex 8

Note by the secretariat

A. BACKGROUND

1. The Working Party, at its 122nd session, considered and approved, subject to minor modifications, a draft questionnaire concerning the application of Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention at the national level (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2009/8 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/244, para. 15).

2. At its 123rd session, the secretariat informed the Working Party of activities with regard to the survey of the implementation of Annex 8 at the national level. The questionnaire (in English, French and Russian) was distributed to the Ministries for Foreign Affairs of the Contracting Parties to the Harmonization Convention and a deadline for reply was set at 31 December 2009. In view of extensive and time-consuming national coordination that might be required in order to fill-in the questionnaire, the secretariat informed that it would be willing to process replies received after the deadline (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/246, para. 14).

3. At its 124th session, the Working Party was informed of the status of replies to the survey concerning the implementation of Annex 8 at the national level and encouraged all Contracting Parties, which had not yet answered, to do so as soon as possible (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/246, para. 12).

B. REPLIES

4. The following 20 countries have replied to the questionnaire: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Mongolia, Netherlands, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan. Most replies were prepared by the national Customs administration and transmitted through the Permanent Mission of those countries in Geneva. Some replies were prepared by the respective Ministries of Transport. For one country, two replies (one from Customs, one from the Ministry of Transport) were received.

C. PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

5. Statistics of the answers to specific questions is given below.

Question 1. *Please provide information regarding the official publication of Annex 8 in your country.*

<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>It has been published on _____ (date of publication)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>It is scheduled to be published on _____ (expected date of publication)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>It has neither been published nor scheduled to be published</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Other (please specify) _____</i>

Except for 5 countries, other respondents indicated that they had already published or scheduled the publication of Annex 8. One country indicated that it was awaiting Parliamentary approval of the Annex.

In this context, it should be pointed out that, regardless of domestic approval/publication procedures, Annex 8 became legally binding for all Contracting Parties as of 20 May 2008.

Question 2. *Has your country taken measures to facilitate the granting of visas for professional drivers in accordance with national best practice for all visa applicants, national immigration rules and/or international commitments?*

<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes. Please briefly describe these measures: _____</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No. Please briefly explain the reason: _____</i>

Countries which are members of the Schengen agreement pointed out that they can facilitate the granting of visas only if such facilitation is in line with the Schengen treaty. Some EU countries made reference to special agreements with third countries. In general, non-EU respondents have introduced visa facilitation measures for professional drivers. In addition, some non-EU countries assist their own operators in obtaining visas to foreign countries.

Question 3. *Does your country regularly exchange information with other Contracting Parties on best practices with regard to the facilitation of visa procedures for professional drivers?*

<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Yes</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>No</i>

Any additional comments: _____

Half of respondents replied 'Yes' to this question. Some others (mainly from Customs) indicated that they are not in a position to reply as this issue falls within the competence of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

Question 4. *How does your country regularly inform all parties involved in international transport operations:*

- (a) on border control requirements for international road transport operations in force?*
- (b) on border control requirements for international road transport operations planned?*
- (c) on the actual situation at borders?*

The respondents inform all parties involved in international transport operations by various means such as:

- through the European Commission;
- via websites;
- at bilateral and multilateral meetings;
- through mass media;
- by publishing official instructions in legal journals;
- by publishing announcements at border crossings;
- by exchange of correspondence.

With regard to the actual situation at borders, more advanced tools are also used, including real-time web and SMS information on border delays.

Question 5. Which control procedures have been transferred to the places of departure and destination of the goods transported by road so as to alleviate congestion at the border crossing points?

<input type="checkbox"/>	None;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medico-sanitary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Veterinary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Phytosanitary inspection;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Controls of compliance with technical standards;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Quality controls;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vehicle inspections;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Weighing of vehicles;
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) _____

Any additional comments: _____

The numbers of respondents that have transferred the relevant controls to inland offices are given in the table below.

Medico-sanitary inspection	6
Veterinary inspection	10
Phytosanitary inspection	10
Controls of compliance with technical standards	7
Quality controls	7
Vehicle inspections	9
Weighing of vehicles	6
None	3

One country shifts cargo from one border crossing point to another (including in consultation with the competent authorities of neighbouring countries) to avoid queues at border crossing points. One respondent also indicated that its country had shifted inspections of Customs seals affixed to the road vehicles to inland offices.

Question 6. Which measures have been undertaken at the border crossing points in your country in order to give priority to urgent consignments, e.g. live animals and perishable goods?

- Waiting times for vehicles transporting such goods have been minimized;
- Required controls are carried out as quickly as possible;
- Refrigerating units of vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs are allowed to operate during the time of crossing the border;
- Cooperation with other Contracting Parties regarding sanitary inspections of such goods.

The replies are summarized in the table below.

Waiting times for vehicles transporting such goods have been minimized	11 respondents
Required controls are carried out as quickly as possible	16
Refrigerating units of vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs are allowed to operate during the time of crossing the border	11
Cooperation with other Contracting Parties regarding sanitary inspections of such goods	8

Question 7. Is your country a Contracting Party to the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections (1997)?

- Yes (go to question 9)
- No (go to question 8)

11 respondents indicated that their country is a Contracting Party to the above Agreement.

Question 8. Does your country accept the International Technical Inspection Certificate as provided for in the above Agreement (also reproduced in Appendix 1 to Annex 8)?

- Yes
- No

One country, which is not a Contracting Party to the underlying Agreement, indicated that it nevertheless accepts the above Certificate. On the other hand, two countries, which are Contracting Parties to the 1997 Agreement, responded that they do not accept the Certificate, although this is an obligation according to the Agreement.

Question 9. Is your country a Contracting Party to the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (1970)?

- Yes
- No

14 respondents indicated that their country is a Contracting Party to the 1970 Agreement.

Question 10. Does your country accept the International Vehicle Weight Certificates (please refer to Appendix 2 to Annex 8) issued in other Contracting Parties?

Yes (go to questions 11, 12 and 13)

No (go to question 14)

Any additional comments: _____

5 countries accept the International Vehicle Weight Certificate. One respondent indicated that the competent authorities of its country had not received from UNECE a list of available weighing stations authorized to issue the certificates other Contracting Parties.

Question 11. Has your country approved weighing stations which are authorized to issue the International Vehicle Weight Certificates?

Yes

No

Any additional comments: _____

3 countries have approved weighing stations to issue the Certificates. 2 countries indicated that activities were under way to have such stations approved.

Question 12. Has your country published a list of all weighing stations authorized to issue the International Vehicle Weight Certificates?

Yes

No

Any additional comments: _____

The 3 countries which have approved weighing stations have also published their list.

Question 13. Has your country transmitted this list to UNECE?

Yes

No

Any additional comments: _____

2 countries have forwarded their listings to UNECE.

Question 14. Which of the following infrastructure requirements for border crossing points open for international goods traffic does your country meet?

Facilities for joint controls with neighbour States (one-stop technology), 24 hours a day;

Separation of traffic for different types of traffic on both sides of the border allowing to give preference to vehicles under cover of valid international Customs transit documents or carrying live animals or perishable foodstuffs;

Off-lane control areas for random cargo and vehicle checks;

Appropriate parking and terminal facilities;

- Proper hygiene, social and telecommunications facilities for drivers;*
- Adequate facilities for forwarding agents, so that they can offer services to transport operators on a competitive basis.*

Any additional comments: _____

The replies are summarized in the table below.

Facilities for joint controls with neighbour States (one-stop technology), 24 hours a day	10
Separation of traffic for different types of traffic on both sides of the border	13
Off-lane control areas for random cargo and vehicle checks	14
Appropriate parking and terminal facilities	15
Proper hygiene, social and telecommunications facilities for drivers	9
Adequate facilities for forwarding agents, so that they can offer services to transport operators on a competitive basis	8

As additional comments, some respondents highlighted the ongoing activities with a view to improving the border crossing infrastructure, for example, the purchase and installation of non-intrusive scanning equipment.

D. FOLLOW-UP

6. The UNECE secretariat will continue its efforts to obtain missing replies from other Contracting Parties as well as to clarify any inconsistencies in the replies already received.
