



Sixth Technical Cooperation Workshop for the Western Balkans
***EU ELECTRONIC FREIGHT TRANSPORT INFORMATION REGULATION AND THE
USE OF UN/CEFACT SEMANTIC STANDARDS AND MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT
REFERENCE DATA MODEL IN THE WESTERN BALKANS***

Skopje, hotel Aleksandar Palace, 8-9 February 2024

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), working with partners in North Macedonia and the region, with support from the Transport Community, is organizing the sixth technical cooperation workshop on trade facilitation, data sharing and Single Window for the Western Balkans on 8-9 February 2024, in Skopje, North Macedonia. This event is part of a series of workshops held in the Western Balkans since 2006. This year, the workshop will respond to the need of the regulatory agencies and business community the Western Balkans to deepen the process of European integration and focus on the roll out of EU Regulations [2020/1056 on Electronic Freight Transport Information \(eFTI\)](#) and [2022/2399 establishing the European Union Single Window Environment for Customs](#), as well as the related implementation of UN/CEFACT recommendations, [semantic standards and Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model](#).

The objective of the workshop is to assist relevant stakeholders in the Western Balkans, notably ministries of transport, trade, digitalization, customs, other regulatory agencies, and the business community to use the UN standards and implement the EU legislation. It also aims at assisting implementers of Single Window projects in keeping track with the implementation of relevant new additions to the *acquis communautaire*. The workshop will aim at improving the understanding of the EU regulations, and how UN/CEFACT global semantic standards and reference data models help achieve them. The eFTI Regulation, adopted in July 2020 to be implemented in five years, aims at providing opportunity to the private sector to exchange with competent authorities all information on the transportation of commercial cargo inside the European Union in an electronic and multimodal format. It offers a foundation for the transition from exchanging paper or electronic documents accompanying goods in international trade and transport to electronic exchange of data and data sets. Aligned and standardized information exchange on this level will very much benefit the collection of data and functioning of Single Window and regulatory IT systems. Knowledge about these developments is very much in the interest of the Western Balkan countries, which aspire accession to the EU.

The use of UN/CEFACT global standards and reference data models is discussed at the [Digital Transport and Logistics Forum \(DTLF\)](#): an expert group of the European Commission bringing together public and private stakeholders to support digital transformation for the development of interoperable corridor freight information exchange. An important objective of the workshop will be to reinforce, in the countries, the link between the business and regulatory agencies dealing with the implementation of the relevant standards and EU regulations. Relevant experts and decisionmakers from government institutions and the private sector (transporters, forwarders, exporters, and importers) are invited to this hybrid workshop. The connection between European Union legislation on electronic freight transport information, customs and maritime single window environment, and maritime single window and the UN/CEFACT standards and Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model will contribute to more efficient transport and trade in the region. A recent study estimated the savings from implementing the EU Regulation on eFTI could be over EUR 20 million annually and EUR 27.3 million annually when eFTI is fully implemented.

UNECE is currently supporting pilot testing projects and we will discuss further projects with stakeholders in the region.

Representatives from the Western Balkans, UNECE, the European Commission, the World Bank, CEFTA, UNCTAD/ASYCUDA and other stakeholders are invited to participate in the workshop. For information, please contact Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, ECE Economic Cooperation and Trade Division: mario.apostolov@un.org, tel. +41 79 2790936; Mr. Zoran Jolevski: z.jolevski@eurm.edu.mk; or Mr. Grant Akopyan: grant.akopyan@un.org. The materials of this workshop will be uploaded on the UNECE web site.

Everyone interested to participate, please register at the registration form for the workshop at the following url: <https://forms.office.com/e/SP7D1yjFN9> or the QR-code below:



PRELIMINARY AGENDA
Sixth Technical Cooperation Workshop for the Western Balkans
*EU's Electronic Freight Transport Information Regulation and the Use of
 UN/CEFACT Semantic Standards and Multimodal Transport Reference Data
 Model in the Western Balkans*

8 February 2024

- 10:00 – 10:35 **Opening****
- 10:00 – 10:07 *Mr. Goran Temovski, on behalf of the Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of North Macedonia*
- 10:07 – 10:14 *Mr. Zlatko Veterovski, Assistant Director General of the Customs Administration of North Macedonia*
- 10:14 – 10:20 *Ms. Elisabeth Tuerk, Director, Economic Cooperation and Trade Division, UNECE*
- 10:20 – 10:27 *Mr. Matej Zakonjšek, Director, Transport Community Permanent Secretariat*
- 10:26 – 10:34 Introduction to the structure and objectives of the workshop
Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, ECTD, UNECE
- Adoption of the agenda
- 10:34 – 13:00 **Session I: Digitalization of multimodal transport and trade information flows; EU legislation and UN/CEFACT standards: challenges for the Western Balkans****
- Moderator: *Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, ECTD, UNECE*
- 10:34 – 10:55 Keynote presentation: the European Union's electronic Freight Transport Information (eFTI) Regulation and progress in its implementation
Mr. Villu Varjas, DG MOVE, European Commission
- 10:55 – 11:10 Progress in the implementation of the EU Single Window Environment for Customs
Mr. Zahouani Saadaoui, Head of Sector, DG TAXUD, European Commission
- 11:10 – 11:25 *coffee break*
- 11:25 – 11:40 The Multimodal Transport Reference Data Model (MMT RDM) and other semantic standards of the UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) in the implementation of the EU eFTI and EUMSWE maritime SW legislation
Ms. Sue Probert, Chairperson, UN/CEFACT
- 11:40 – 11:55 Developing eFTI-supporting platforms using the global standards
Ms. Ulrika Hurt, Estonia (online)
- 11:55 – 12:10 Development of the Single Window in North Macedonia and seamless collection of data from business
Mr. Anastas Mazonkovski, Assistant Director, ICT Sector, Customs Administration, North Macedonia

- 12:10 – 12:25 Link between Single Window and standardized digitalization of data in documents accompanying goods in the supply chain
Mr. Bill Gain, the World Bank
- 12:25 – 12:30 Discussion
- 12:30 – 13:30 *Lunch break*
- 13:30 – 15:30 Session II: Digitalization of multimodal transport and trade data and document exchange and the international standards**
- Moderator: Mr. Zoran Jolevski, UNECE Consultant, North Macedonia
- 13:30 – 14:00 Panel on digitalization of documents in the five modes of transport using the UN standards: road (eCMR), rail (eCIM/SMGS), inland water, air (eAWB), maritime, as well as commercial documents (invoices and certificates), dangerous goods declarations:
Mr. Mario Apostolov, UNECE Regional Adviser, UN/CEFACT experts, representatives of the countries
- 14:00 – 14:20 Presentation of the UN/CEFACT standards on the UN website – how to use them?
Mr. Kevin Bishop, Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE
- 14:20 – 14:45 Transport Community Strategy, EU eFTI Regulation and the international standards.
Mr. Nedim Begovic and Mr. Mate Gjorgjevski, the Transport Community
- 14:45 – 15:05 Project on the Implementation of the eFTI Regulation in the Western Balkans
Mr. Arturas Piliponis, EU4Digital Facility
- 15:05 – 15:30 Discussion on the development implications for the region
- 15:30 – 15:45 *coffee break*
- 15:45 – 17:30 Session III: Using the UN/CEFACT digitalization standards for interoperability between multimodal transport data exchange and regulatory systems**
- Moderator: Mr. Zlatko Veterovski, Customs Administration, North Macedonia
- 16:00 – 16:30 Use of international standards in ASYCUDA
Mr. Constantin Ciuta, Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD/ASYCUDA team
- 16:30 – 16:50 Update on CEFTA and SEED+ activities from the perspective of integrating business information – possible link to the eFTI information exchange
Ms. Edna Karadza, CEFTA Secretariat and Mr. Vladimir Obucina, SEED+
- 16:50 – 17:30 discussion

9 February 2024

10:00 – 12:30 Session IV: The development perspective

Moderator: Mr. Mario Apostolov, Regional Adviser, ECTD, UNECE and
Mr. Zoran Jolevski, UNECE Consultant, North Macedonia

10:00 – 10:15 The European perspective of the Western Balkans, alignment to the EU Regulations and use of the UN standards for digitalization of trade and transport
Mr. Zoran Jolevski, UNECE Consultant, European University, North Macedonia

Implementation projects need not only awareness raising, but real technical expertise, to be applied in the development of practical solutions and applying the standards in existing broader trade facilitation, electronic business, and data sharing projects. For this reason, it is important to focus resources on this practical aspect of supply chain digitalization.

10:15 – 10:45 Readiness of the Western Balkan countries and the business community to implement the EU legislation and UN/CEFACT standards for digitalization of multimodal data and document exchange.
Presentations by representatives from the Western Balkans

10:45 – 11:00 Implications, readiness, and ongoing projects
Representatives of transport agencies, customs, business in the Western Balkans

11:00 – 11:15 Discussion on needs and next steps from the perspective of the countries

11:15 – 11:30 coffee break

11:30 – 12:30 representatives of international partners, development partners, technical assistance projects, etc. *Ms. Sue Probert, UN/CEFACT; Ms. Violane Konar-Leacy, World Bank
Mr. Zahouani Saadaoui, DG TAXUD, Mr. Constantin Ciuta, UNCTAD ASYCUDA,
Mr. Villu Varjas, DG MOVE*

12:30 – 13:00 Conclusions and recommendations

13:00 Closing the workshop