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Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport****140th session**

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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

**International Convention on the Harmonization
of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982
("Harmonization Convention") –
Annex 8 on road transport****Outcome of the 2014 UNECE survey****Note by the secretariat****I. Background**

1. On 20 May 2008, Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention came into force. According to Article 7 "Reporting mechanism" of the Annex, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe shall carry out, every second year, a survey among Contracting Parties on progress made to improve border crossing procedures in their countries.
2. The first survey was conducted in 2009–2010 and its results were published in 2011 (document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2011/1), the second — in 2012 (with the results summarized in the document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/7).
3. In October 2014, the Administrative Committee of the Harmonization Convention, 1982 (AC.3) at its tenth session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/20, para. 21) mandated the next biennial survey. The third survey (the content was similar to the previous two surveys) was held between November 2014 and January 2015 and the current document contains the summary of replies on monitoring the progress in implementing Annex 8 on road transport at the national level.

II. Replies

4. The following 17 countries replied to the questionnaire: Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Most of the replies were prepared by the national Customs administrations and transmitted through their Permanent Missions in Geneva. Some replies were prepared by the respective Ministries of Transport.

III. 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.*

	It has been published on _____ (date of publication)
	It is scheduled to be published on _____ (expected date of publication)
	It has neither been published nor scheduled to be published
	Other (please specify) _____

Fourteen respondents indicated that they had already published Annex 8. Two countries replied that it had neither been published nor was scheduled to be published. One country provided no information.

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?*

	Yes. Please briefly describe these measures: _____
	No. Please briefly explain the reason: _____

Thirteen respondents indicated that they had taken measures to facilitate the granting of visas for professional drivers. Three countries replied that they had not taken any measures. One country provided no information.

Several countries replied that the visa facilitation process was in accordance with bilateral agreements with third countries.

Some respondents indicated that the visa procedure was being carried out completely in the framework of the "reciprocity" principle and necessary measures were taken for facilitating visa procedure for professional drivers.

Countries, which are members of the Schengen agreement, pointed out that they grant visas in line with the Schengen agreement.

One country indicated that visas were issued according to the Visa Code. However, in exceptional cases, visas may be issued at border crossing points if the following conditions are satisfied: 1) the applicant fulfils the conditions laid down in Article 5(1)(a), (c), (d) and (e) of the Schengen Borders Code; 2) the applicant has not been in a position to apply for a visa in advance and submits, if required, supporting documents substantiating

unforeseeable and imperative reasons for entry; 3) the applicant's return to their country of origin or residence or transit through States other than member States fully implementing the Schengen acquis is assessed as certain.

One country replied that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided information on their website about the rules for visas, with relevant links, etc., and that there was also an online visa service.

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

Any additional comments: _____

Fifteen respondents indicated that they regularly exchanged information with other Contracting Parties. One country replied "No" and one country provided no information.

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 the following means:

- via websites;
- at bilateral and multilateral meetings between authorities as well as between authorities, trade associations and private companies;
- through mass media;
- by publishing official instructions;
- by publishing announcements at border crossings;
- by exchange of correspondence, telephone calls;
- through seminars, workshops and trainings.

One respondent indicated that it did not have, as a European Customs Union member State, borders that are crossed by road; consequently, there was no practical application.

One country indicated that since 1 January, 2014 the operation of the road border crossing points belongs to the national Police. Therefore, this information can be basically found on the national Police's website.

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;
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	Medico-sanitary inspection;
	Veterinary inspection;
	Phytosanitary inspection;
	Controls of compliance with technical standards;
	Quality controls;
	Vehicle inspections;
	Weighing of vehicles;
	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	5
Veterinary inspection	4
Phytosanitary inspection	5
Controls of compliance with technical standards	7
Quality controls	4
Vehicle inspections	3
Weighing of vehicles	5
None	2

One country replied that it carried out control procedures related to TIR regime.

One respondent indicated that it did not have, as a European Customs Union member State, borders that are crossed by road; consequently there was no practical application.

One country indicated that in exceptional circumstances the competent authorities (veterinary, phytosanitary) could decide to carry out physical inspection inland. The country also pointed out that vehicle inspections were preferably carried out inland to the extent possible.

One respondent indicated that ecological inspection was also transferred to inland terminals.

One country pointed out that controls were only being processed if legally prescribed and were aimed to be “one – stop – shop” when possible.

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	12
Required controls are carried out as quickly as possible	9
Refrigerating units of vehicles carrying perishable foodstuffs are allowed to operate during the time of crossing the border	4
Cooperation with other Contracting Parties regarding sanitary inspections of such goods	5

One respondent indicated that it did not have, as a European Customs Union member State, borders that are crossed by road; consequently there was no practical application.

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)

Nine countries are Contracting Parties to the 1997 Agreement, seven are not and one country did not provide information.

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

Three countries accept the Certificate and four do not accept.

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

Fifteen countries are Contracting Parties to the 1970 Agreement, one country is not and one provided no information.

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: _____

The following nine countries accept the International Vehicle Weight Certificates: Denmark, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland and United Kingdom. Seven do not accept and one country did not provide information.

One country commented that the control of the vehicle complied with the applicable provisions on vehicle weights and dimensions, made by the police in accordance with the provisions of EC Directive 96/53 laying down the maximum authorized dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorized weights in international traffic for certain road vehicles within the Community.

One respondent indicated that it accepted the International Vehicle Weight Certificates on a reciprocal basis.

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

	Yes
	No

Any additional comments: _____

The following five countries have approved weighing stations, which are authorized to issue the International Vehicle Weight Certificates: Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania, Russian Federation and United Kingdom. Three countries have not approved and one country provided no information.

One country indicated that there were nineteen authorized weighing stations granting the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) International Vehicle Weight Certificates and that such Certificates were in compliance with the form of the UNECE International Vehicle Weight Certificates.

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 following four countries have published a list of all weighing stations: Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania and Russian Federation. Four countries have not published and one country provided no information.

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

	Yes
	No

Any additional comments: _____

One country has transmitted this list to UNECE (Lithuania), three have not and one country provided no information.

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;
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	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.

The replies are summarized in the table below.

Facilities for joint controls with neighbour States (one-stop technology), 24-hour a day	6
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	7
Off-lane control areas for random cargo and vehicle checks	7
Appropriate parking and terminal facilities	7
Proper hygiene, social and telecommunications facilities for drivers	5
Adequate facilities for forwarding agents, so that they can offer services to transport operators on a competitive basis	5

One country indicated none of the above because it did not have, as a European Customs Union member State, borders that are crossed by road.

One country indicated that, in order to improve and reinforce insufficient infrastructure of border crossing points, which is sometimes seen as obstacles to international road transport operations, it had introduced a Build-Operate-Transfer model that is mainly based on Public-Private Partnership. These modernized border crossing points have significantly reduced the time required for clearance procedures.

IV. Preliminary Conclusions from the Survey

6. The preliminary analysis of the received answers shows that Contracting Parties are successfully implementing Annex 8, in particular, concerning provisions such as: publication of Annex 8 in countries: facilitation of visa issuance; provision of information to all parties involved in transport operations: creating priority to urgent consignments (perishable goods and live animals); improving infrastructure at border crossing points and other issues.

7. At the same time there are number of areas where further actions might be required to ensure practical implementation on a national level of relevant commitments. Among them one could mention: transfer of control procedures from the border crossings to places of departure and destination of goods (only 30–40 per cent of respondents practice); low level of participation (nine countries from survey) in the Agreement Concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections (1997) and resulting insufficient acceptance of International Technical Inspection Certificate; certain progress but still restricted application of International Vehicle Weight Certificates (only nine countries declared that they accept), etc.

8. While analyzing the results of the survey, it shall be recalled that some Contracting Parties that are members of the European Union formally do not have borders that are crossed by road.

9. The Working Party might wish to consider actions to stimulate further implementation of the provisions of the Harmonization Convention and of its annexes.
