


Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport
160th session

Geneva, 8–10 June 2022

**Report of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting
Transport on its 160th session**

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Attendance.....	1	3
II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)	2	3
III. Election of officers (agenda item 2).....	3–4	3
IV. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 3).....	5–13	3
Alignment of the work of the Working Party with the Inland Transport Committee Strategy.....	5–13	3
V. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975) (agenda item 4)	14–29	5
A. Status of the Convention.....	14–15	5
B. Revision of the Convention	16	5
Amendment proposals to the Convention.....	16	5
C. Application of the Convention.....	17–29	5
1. Comments to the TIR Convention.....	17	5
2. eTIR.....	18–21	6
(a) eTIR international system: interconnection projects	18	6
(b) Activities of the Technical Implementation Body	19–21	6
3. New developments in the application of the Convention.....	22	6
4. TIR-related electronic data interchange systems.....	23	6
5. Settlement of claims for payments	24	7
6. Other matters	25–29	7

VI.	International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls for Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention) (agenda item 5)	30–32	7
	A. Status of the Convention.....	30	7
	B. Issues in the application of the Convention	31–32	7
VII.	Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-Luggage carried in International Traffic by Rail (agenda item 6).....	33	8
	Status of the Convention	33	8
VIII.	Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956) (agenda item 7).....	34–43	8
	A. Status of the Conventions	34	8
	B. High-level workshop on the functioning of the 1954 and 1956 temporary importation conventions and their digitalization (Thursday, 9 June 2022).....	35–43	9
IX.	Introduction of new technologies in rail, road, road-based mobility, inland waterway, logistics and intermodal transport until 2030 (agenda item 8)....	44	10
X.	Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 9).....	45	10
	A. European Union.....	46	10
	B. Economic Cooperation Organization.....	47	10
	C. Eurasian Economic Union	48	10
	D. World Customs Organization	49–51	11
XI.	Other business (agenda item 10)	52–55	11
	A. Dates of the next sessions	52	11
	B. Restriction on the distribution of documents	53	11
	C. Tribute to Mr. H. Greven.....	54	11
	C. List of decisions.....	55	12
XII.	Adoption of the report (agenda item 11)	55	12
Annex			
	List of decisions taken at the 160th session of the Working Party		13

I. Attendance

1. The Working Party held its 160th session on 8, 9 and 10 (a.m.) June 2022, virtually and in-person, in Geneva. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Albania, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Libya, Mozambique, Netherlands, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam and Yemen. Representatives of the European Union were present. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), World Customs Organization (WCO). The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), International Road Transport Union (IRU).

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

2. The Working Party adopted the provisional agenda, prepared by the secretariat, with an additional point of information by the secretariat under agenda item 4 (vi) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/319).

III. Election of officers (agenda item 2)

3. The Working Party (WP.30) confirmed Mr. O. Fedorov (Ukraine), longstanding Chair of WP.30, as Chair of its meetings in 2022, thanking him for the fact that, faced with difficult circumstances, he had expressed the willingness to continue chairing the Working Party. The Working Party welcomed the offer by the European Union to have some of its delegates, available in the room, to assist the Chair in case of any problem. The Working Party strongly encouraged interested governments to nominate a candidate for the post of Vice-Chair in order to facilitate any future election process.

4. The Working Party observed a minute of silence for the victims in Ukraine.

IV. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 3)

Alignment of the work of the Working Party with the Inland Transport Committee strategy

5. The Working Party recalled its ongoing discussions of the topic, which were initiated at its 154th session (February 2020) (Please refer to ECE/TRANS/WP.30/308, paras. 6–9, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/310, paras. 3 and 4, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/312, paras. 5–8, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/314, paras. 4–10, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/316, paras. 3–9 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/318, paras. 5 and 6) on the basis of documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2020/8.

6. In particular, the Working Party recalled that, at its October 2021 session, it confirmed that this had been a useful exercise, which had highlighted issues in the application of various legal instruments, leading to a review of their relevance at national level, including, at times, up to denunciations. Although it had been established that some legal instruments had lost their relevance or seemed to have been overtaken by more recent legislation, developed under the aegis of the United Nations or other international organizations, such as, in particular, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the Working Party was of the view that these legal

instruments should continue to exist, as they may very well have served as the basis for more recently developed legal instruments and, therefore, continued to be of relevance. At the same time, and exactly for the same reason, the Working Party felt that there was no reason, or it could even be risky, to amend or adjust them to current realities as, by doing so, they might undermine the construction of more recent legislation that has been based on them. The Working Party was of the view that this exercise should now be considered finalized and requested the secretariat to report this to the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its February 2022 session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/316, paras. 8 and 9). At its 159th session (February 2022), the Working Party confirmed its findings at its previous session and took note that they had been transmitted to ITC for consideration, in document ECE/TRANS/2022/25 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/318, para. 6).

7. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the latest developments on this issue, such as, but not limited to, the reporting to ITC.

8. In the context of this agenda item, the Working Party noted that ITC, on the occasion of the commemoration of its seventy-fifth anniversary, adopted a resolution entitled “Ushering in a decade of delivery for sustainable inland transport and sustainable development”, The Ministerial Resolution recognizes and validates 75 years of accomplishments of ITC, leveraging its unique assets for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals on the road to 2030.

9. The Working Party took note that, at that same session, ITC, in line with its decisions since the adoption of the ITC Strategy, had welcomed the progress achieved during 2021 by its Working Parties in implementing the ITC Strategy until 2030. In the context of this activity, the Working Party noted that the secretariat had transmitted to ITC the findings at its 158th and 159th session, that the Working Party considered its contribution to this exercise finalized.¹

10. Under this agenda item, the Working Party was informed that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted, on 16 February 2022 resolution 2022/2, entitled “Revised terms of reference of the Inland Transport Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe” (E/RES/2022/2) (see ECE/TRANS/316). As a consequence, ITC now adopts the so-called hybrid approach for membership, meaning that non-ECE member States can participate as full members in segments of ITC sessions that deal with legal instruments to which they are contracting parties and remain in a consultative capacity in other parts. This means that, depending on the topic, membership of ITC can range between 56 (the number of ECE member States) and 151 (number of countries that are party to, at least, one legal instrument). At the same time, it was underlined that it is the sole competence of contracting parties to legal instruments, acting as administrative committees, to take decisions on their application, including, but not limited to, proposals for amendments.

11. The Working Party took note of Informal document WP.30 No. 4 (2022), containing a letter by the Chair of ITC and the Director of the Sustainable Transport Division. In this letter, addressed at the Chairs of Working Parties and Administrative Committees, they were seeking support and contribution for, inter alia, the following issues:

- (a) Newly adopted Rules of Procedures of ITC;
- (b) Continuation of the implementation of the ITC Strategy;
- (c) Preparation of an overview of current activities of working parties in the field of information and computerization technologies.

12. In reply to this letter, the Chair recalled the ongoing work on digitalization in general, undertaken by the Working Party. He raised, in particular, the issue of paper-based documents that still exist within the framework of the Harmonization Convention, 1982 and thought it good to revisit this when reviewing the outcome of the 2023 survey on Annex 8 of the Convention.

¹ For more information on the presentation by the secretariat to ITC, please refer to <https://unece.org/info/Transport/Inland-Transport-Committee/events/362658>

13. Under this agenda item, the Working Party took note that, on 11 March 2022, France informed the Secretary-General of the United Nations that it denounced the Customs Convention concerning Spare Parts Used for Repairing EUROPE Wagons, of 15 January 1958. The denunciation shall take effect for France on 11 September 2022. With this action, the Convention will have six remaining contracting parties: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Netherlands and Switzerland. In accordance with its Article 8, the Convention will cease to have effect if, for any period of twelve consecutive months after its entry into force, the number of contracting parties is less than three (see also depositary notification C.N.76.2022.TREATIES-XI.A.12). In this context, the secretariat informed the Working Party that only the French text of the Convention is authentic and that, thus, the number of three, mentioned in Article 8, applies and not the English text, which erroneously mentions the number as five.

V. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975) (agenda item 4)

A. Status of the Convention

14. The Working Party was informed that, since its previous session, no changes in the status of the TIR Convention, 1975 and the number of contracting parties had occurred. Since the entry into force of the accession of Egypt on 16 June 2021, the Convention has seventy-seven contracting parties and, since the activation of the system for Qatar, TIR operations can now be established with sixty-five countries.

15. The Working Party took note that, on 1 April 2022, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, issued depositary notification C.N.91.2022.TREATIES-XI.A.16, informing that, by 25 March 2022, none of the parties to TIR Convention had communicated an objection to the proposed amendments to Article 18 and Annexes 1 and 6 of the Convention.² Consequently, in accordance with the provisions of article 59 (3) of the Convention, the amendments shall come into force with respect to all Parties to the Convention on 25 June 2022. With the entry into force of these amendments, the number of places of loading and unloading per TIR transport will increase from four to, maximally, eight. Consequently, the lay-out of the TIR Carnet, Version 1 and Version 2, will be adjusted accordingly. More detailed information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.³

B. Revision of the Convention

Amendment proposals to the Convention

16. The Working Party took note that, at present, no amendment proposals to the Convention had been submitted for its consideration. The Working Party recalled the extensive work undertaken in the past few years, leading up, finally, to the latest set of amendment proposals that will enter into force on 25 June 2022, conscious that new amendment proposals are already under preparation, for consideration in the near future.

C. Application of the Convention

1. Comments to the TIR Convention

17. The Working Party took note that, at present, no proposals for new comments to provisions of the Convention, had been submitted for its consideration.

² For more information, please refer to depositary notification C.N.99.2021.TREATIES-XI.16, of 25 March 2021.

³ www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html.

2. eTIR

(a) eTIR international system: interconnection projects

18. The Working Party took note of the latest developments in the eTIR international system, in particular the deployment of version 4.3.8 of the eTIR international system and the fact that Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tunisia and Uzbekistan had finalized the interconnection of their national customs systems with the eTIR international system, that Pakistan was nearly there and that Türkiye was progressing as well as of the progress in the preparation of a framework for the conformance tests.

(b) Activities of the Technical Implementation Body

19. The Working Party recalled that the TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2), at its seventy-seventh session (February 2022), adopted, in line with Annex 11, Article 5, the eTIR concepts and the eTIR functional specifications, contained in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/3-ECE/TRANS/WP30/AC.2/2022/12 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/4-ECE/TRANS/WP30/AC.2/2022/13, including the amendments adopted by the Technical Implementation Body (TIB) at its first session (as well as some amendments thereto), contained in documents ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/6 and ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/7. Together with the adoption of the eTIR technical specifications (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/TIB/2022/5-ECE/TRANS/WP30/AC.2/2022/14) by TIB at its first session in January 2022, this provides a complete legal and technical basis for those countries that are willing to implement the eTIR procedure as soon as possible, while noting that the ongoing work will allow all other contracting parties to Annex 11 to bring forward their requirements for consideration by TIB and the Committee in version 4.4 of the eTIR specifications (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/157, paras. 29 and 33). In response to a question from the EU-delegation of the European Union, the secretariat clarified that while version 4.3 of the eTIR specifications has been mainly developed on the basis of the requirements already contained in the TIR Convention, version 4.4 and the following versions, should allow to integrate specific national or regional requirements and additional functionalities in order further improve the eTIR procedure. The secretariat also clarified that the eTIR technical specifications contain a description of the update cycles which will lead to new versions and sub-versions of the eTIR specifications and of the eTIR international system.

20. The Working Party took note that the second session of TIB will be held from 30 August to 2 September 2022 in Geneva, and will consider, inter alia, the conformance test procedure and proposals of amendments to be included in version 4.4 of the eTIR specifications. The Working Party further noted that documents for the second session of TIB have to be submitted before 22 June 2022 and that any proposal by Governments should reach the secretariat one week prior to that in order to allow for the preparation of the documents.

21. Under this agenda item, the secretariat informed the Working Party about the latest developments in the International TIR Databank (ITDB), notably the change of the TIR Carnet holder status notification system to be deployed and in production by the end of June 2022. It also provided updates on the TIR Carnet holder web portal to be released for testing also by the end of June 2022, and in production by end of 2022, as well as about the start of the holder and customs officer mobile applications. The Working Party mandated the secretariat to include ITDB as a fixed feature in its future agendas.

3. New developments in the application of the Convention

22. No new development was raised under this agenda item.

4. TIR-related electronic data interchange systems

23. The Working Party was informed by IRU about the latest statistical data on the performance of contracting parties in the control system for TIR Carnets — SafeTIR system (Informal document WP.30 (2022) No. 5).

5. Settlement of claims for payments

24. The Working Party was informed by IRU about the current situation on the settlement of claims for payments made by customs authorities against national guaranteeing associations (Informal document WP.30 (2022) No. 6).

6. Other matters

25. Under this agenda item, the secretariat invited countries to provide information on their national technical authorities in charge of performing technical checks, required under the TIR Convention, to issue or renew certificates of approval and to conduct technical checks and/or to nominate experts that could be invited to engage in technical workshops on the application of Annexes 2 and 7 of the Convention for interested parties of present and prospective contracting parties.

26. Under this agenda item, the delegation of the Republic of Moldova asked for the urgent attention of the Working Party for the persistent problems faced by transporters since the invasion of Ukraine, leading to disproportionately lengthy waiting times at the Moldovan/Romanian border (on average seven days). The delegation of Ukraine stated that, despite the situation in that country, all possible measures were undertaken to ensure the uninterrupted application of the TIR Convention on its territory. The delegation of Romania informed the Working Party that the Romanian customs authorities are permanently monitoring the situation at the borders and are taking all necessary measures to facilitate the flow of goods.

27. From its side, IRU stressed the need to, jointly with the TIR secretariat and relevant customs authorities, coordinate efforts and decide on specific actions that would increase capacity of road transport / border crossings while reducing waiting times, to support the increased flow of goods, notably grain, from Ukraine. In order to increase the traffic throughput across the borders, all formalities should, where possible, be moved from the borders to inland customs offices of departure and destination. To that end, all parties should consider how to benefit more from such United Nations conventions as the TIR and Harmonization Conventions. Besides, flexibilities on both the European Union and Ukrainian sides should be further considered. A number of European Union member States have already implemented certain derogations, such as on permits. Since it is challenging for European Union operators to carry out transportation from/to Ukraine, because of the lack of third-party liability insurance for the territory of Ukraine, Ukrainian operators, who do not face this problem, need to have sufficient capacities in terms of fleet and drivers to support the high transportation volumes. It called on all parties - competent authorities, national associations, IRU and ECE - to urgently define the right set of measures.

28. The delegation of the European Union referred to the ongoing monitoring and reporting at all levels of the encountered problems for the transport industry at large, at borders and in the application of the existing sanctions.

29. The secretariat called upon all Governments to attribute maximum priority to the facilitations provided to the authorities and transport sector in application of the TIR and Harmonization Conventions and to continue engaging in bilateral meetings between adjacent customs offices and countries to address and, possibly, solve the ongoing difficulties. The secretariat stands ready to coordinate any of those activities/meetings, if needed or requested.

VI. International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention) (agenda item 5)

A. Status of the Convention

30. The Working Party was informed that, since the accession of Turkmenistan in 2016, the Convention now has fifty-eighth contracting parties. More detailed information on the

status of the Convention as well as on various depositary notifications is available on the ECE website.⁴

B. Issues in the application of the Convention

31. Under this agenda item, the Working Party was informed that, so far, Albania, Austria, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, France, Kazakhstan, Poland, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United Kingdom had replied to the survey on the application of Annex 9 of the Harmonization Convention (contained in Informal document SC.2 No. 3 (2021), conducted by the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) with a deadline of 31 March 2022. The Secretary of SC.2 expects to prepare a summary document for discussion at the forthcoming session of SC.2 (November 2022). (See ECE/TRANS/WP.30/318, paras. 21 and 22).

32. The Working Party mandated the secretariat to start with first preparations for the 2023 launch of the survey on the application of Annex 8 of the Harmonization Convention by reissuing document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2009/8, with the list of questions as approved at its 122nd session (June 2009). The Working Party requested delegations to provide the secretariat with the names of dedicated focal points who should coordinate national replies.

VII. Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-Luggage carried in International Traffic by Rail (agenda item 6)

Status of the Convention

33. The Working Party recalled that, at its 156th session (February 2021), the delegation of the Russian Federation informed the meeting that, at the national level, all required procedures in preparation of signing the Convention had been completed and that a Government decree to that extent had been issued. Steps were being undertaken at the level of the Ministry of Transport in order to facilitate signing the Convention in New York. The Working Party further noted that, on 26 September 2019, Chad had become signatory to the Convention. No further developments were reported under this agenda item.

VIII. Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956) (agenda item 7)

A. Status of the Conventions

34. The Working Party was informed that, since its previous session, no changes in the status and the number of contracting parties to the Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles has occurred and that the Conventions have 80 and 26 contracting parties, respectively. More detailed information on this issue as well as on depositary notifications is available on the TIR website.⁵

⁴ www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html.

⁵ www.unece.org/tir/tir-depositary_notification.html.

B. High-level workshop on the functioning of the 1954 and 1956 temporary importation conventions and their digitalization (Thursday, 9 June 2022)⁶

35. Part of this session of WP.30 was reserved for a high-level workshop, dedicated to the functioning of the 1954 and 1956 temporary importation conventions and their digitalization, in particular, but not limited to, the efforts undertaken jointly by ECE and the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding concluded in 2021 to develop an eCPD system. The agenda of the workshop was contained in Informal document WP.30 (2022) No. 3.

36. Mr. H. Turki of FIA acted as Chair of the workshop, which was opened by Mr. D. Mariyasın, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and Mr. A. Sanz de Barros, President of the Senate of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA). Mr. Mariyasın focused this statement on the relevance of the two temporary importation conventions within the framework of the United Nations legal instruments in the field of border crossing facilitation and the urgent need to digitalize them. Mr. Sanz recalled that, true to its spirit, the vision of FIA is to create for the 1954 and 1956 temporary importation conventions a highly secure, reliable and user-friendly solution to facilitate cross-border mobility for millions of motorists, expatriate workers and transport operators throughout key economic corridors, while giving customs authorities and other government agencies the necessary financial and security guarantees.

37. Mr. A. Bouten of ECE delivered a presentation on the status and main provisions of the 1954 and 1956 temporary importation conventions and their role in facilitating the crossing of borders.

38. Mr. B. Nordlund of FIA elaborated on the use of the Carnet de Passage en Douane (CPD) system and the roles and responsibilities of the various actors. He explained the functioning of the recently introduced QR-codes attached to CPD booklets. Finally, he gave an extensive description of the claim raising and resolution process stipulated by the two conventions.

39. Mr. K. Alexopoulos of ECE and Mr. H. Turki of FIA explained the plans how to gradually move from the paper-based CPD to the electronic CPD (eCPD) by, inter alia, drawing from the lessons learned in the process of converting the TIR system to eTIR.

40. Mr. C. Davies of the Australian Border Force (ABF) talked about the Australian experience with the CPD system for vehicle importation and its aspirations for the future eCPD system, within the overall efforts to digitalize customs procedures at borders.

41. On behalf of the Australia Automobile Association (AAA), participants in the workshop were introduced to the so-called "CPD Trip Planner", an application that makes vehicle owners familiar with all requirements in the countries of transit and destination when planning a trip.

42. The last speaker, Mr. A. Sarris of the Emirates Motorsports Organization (EMSO), presented a case study on how the United Arab Emirates had moved to a full-fledged electronic CPD service.

43. Delegations expressed thanks to ECE and FIA for having organized this high-level workshop and various countries and organizations expressed an interest to repeat the workshop any time soon for their country or region.

⁶ All presentations are available at: <https://unece.org/info/Transport/Border-Crossing-Facilitation/events/365180>

IX. Introduction of new technologies in rail, road, road-based mobility, inland waterway, logistics and intermodal transport until 2030 (agenda item 8)

44. Under this agenda item, the Chair raised the issue of the latest developments in the field of inland water transport on the use of digital documents. The Working Party requested the secretariat to get in touch with the Secretary of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) for more information and, possibly, a presentation at one of its future sessions.

X. Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 9)

45. The Working Party took note of activities by various regional economic commissions or Customs Unions as well as by other organizations, both intergovernmental and non-governmental, and countries as far as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party.

A. European Union

46. The Working Party was informed about a series of recent developments in the European Union related to the activities of the Working Party:

(a) The report of the (external) Wise Persons Group on Challenges facing the Customs Union and its follow up;⁷

(b) The European Union's Single Window environment for customs - a tool to streamline digital customs cooperation and facilitate trade;⁸

(c) The authorized consignor for TIR in the European Union. The European Union is reflecting on how to introduce this facilitation for TIR in its legal order and will consult the IRU on certain aspects of practical implementation;

(d) Guidelines on European Union sanctions and their application by customs;⁹

(e) The extension of the Convention on a common transit procedure to Ukraine. The European Union and some other contracting parties to the Convention are working with Ukraine on the final steps to be taken so that Ukraine can still be invited to join the Convention in 2022.

B. Economic Cooperation Organization

47. The Working Party was informed about relevant activities and ongoing projects carried out by the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). The Working Party took note that two test rounds had been organized, together with IRU, of goods transports between Pakistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Türkiye and Azerbaijan and vice versa. In collaboration with ECE, ECO had already organized three meetings on eTIR and eCMR and more meetings have been planned. The delegate of ECO finally touched upon ongoing problems related to the banking system in the region, difficulties in obtaining visa and the increasing costs and fees for road transport.

⁷ For more information, please check: https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs-4/wise-persons-group-challenges-facing-customs-union-wpg_en

⁸ For more information, please check:

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_3210

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/business_economy_euro/banking_and_finance/documents/faqs-sanctions-russia-customs_en.pdf

C. Eurasian Economic Union

48. There was no intervention from the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) under this agenda item.

D. World Customs Organization

49. The Working Party was informed about recent activities of the World Customs Organization (WCO) as far as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party. In particular, the Working Party took note of the WCO slogan for 2022: "Scaling up Customs Digital Transformation by Embracing a Data Culture and Building a data Ecosystem". In this context, the activities of WCO focussed on: fully digital environment from across the trade ecosystem; establishing formal data governance, making use of the standards by providing appropriate management of data and by adopting progressive approaches, etc. Data-related topics have been added to the agendas of WCO meetings, seminars, e-learning, capacity building events and publications.

50. Discussions on customs-railway cooperation (started in 2017) have led to the (upcoming) publication of a Railway Guidance, which aims to promote electronic customs procedures in railway transportation; simplify and harmonize customs regulations and legislations; enhance customs procedures/controls to be globally applied; encourage the use of advanced technology and electronic seals and strengthen the cooperation between governments and with the business industry.

51. Finally, the delegate of WCO reported on recent developments under the Istanbul Convention, where the joint ATA/Istanbul Administrative Committee has made progress with the development of a centralized electronic ATA Carnet system.

XI. Other business (agenda item 10)

A. Dates of the next sessions

52. The Working Party tentatively decided to hold its 161st session on 11 (p.m.), 12 (a.m.) and 14 (a.m.) October 2022 and the 162nd session on 7, 8 and 10 (a.m.) February 2023, subject to potential adjustments due to the ongoing United Nations liquidity crisis.

B. Restriction on the distribution of documents

53. The Working Party decided that there would be no restrictions on the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session.

C. Tribute to Mr. H. Greven

54. The Working Party paid tribute to Mr. Hans Greven from the Dutch customs administration for his longstanding service to the computerization of the TIR procedure. Mr. Greven has been a highly appreciated participant in the sessions of the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization (GE.1) since 2008 and served as its Chair in 2018 and 2019. More importantly, however, Mr. Greven, with his extended expertise in customs and Information and Communication Technology matters, contributed extensively to the elaboration of the eTIR specifications for the computerization of the TIR procedure. The elaboration, over many years, of these vast and highly complex documents, leading up to the adoption of Annex 11 in 2021, would not have been possible without the invaluable inputs by Mr. Greven. The Working Party wished Mr. Greven all the best in the pursuit of his personal life.

D. List of decisions

55. The list of decisions is attached as Annex to the final report.

XII. Adoption of the report (agenda item 11)

56. The Working Party adopted the report on its 160th session on the basis of the draft prepared by the secretariat.

Annex

List of decisions taken at the 160th session of the Working Party

<i>Reference in final report (para.)</i>	<i>Short description of decision</i>	<i>Actor</i>	<i>Deadline</i>
3	3. The Working Party confirmed Mr. O. Fedorov, longstanding Chair of WP.30, as Chair of its meetings in 2022.	WP.30	
10	10. The Working Party underlined that it is the sole competence of contracting parties to legal instruments, acting as administrative committees, to take decisions on their application, including, but not limited to, proposals for amendments.	WP.30 and Administrative Committees	
12	12. The Chair proposed to revisit the issue of paper-based documents that still exist within the framework of the Harmonization Convention when reviewing the outcome of the 2023 survey on Annex 8 of the Convention.	Secretariat/ WP.30	2023
21	21. The Working Party mandated the secretariat to include ITDB as a fixed feature in its future agendas.	Secretariat	As of agenda 161st session
25	25. The secretariat invited countries to provide information on their national technical authorities in charge of performing technical checks, required under the TIR Convention, to issue or renew certificates of approval and to conduct technical checks and/or nominate experts that could be invited to engage in technical workshops on the application of Annexes 2 and 7 of the Convention for interested parties of present and prospective contracting parties.	WP.30 delegations	
32	32. The Working Party mandated the secretariat to start with first preparations for the 2023 launch of the survey on the application of Annex 8 of the Harmonization Convention by reissuing document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2009/8, with the list of questions as approved at its 122nd session (June 2009).	Secretariat	Agenda 161st session
32	32. The Working Party requested delegations to provide the secretariat with the names of dedicated focal points who should coordinate national replies.	WP.30 delegations	
44	44. The Working Party requested the secretariat to get in touch with the Secretary of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) for more information and, possibly, a presentation at one of its future sessions.	Secretariat	
52	52. The Working Party tentatively decided to hold its 161st session on 11 (p.m.), 12 (a.m.) and 14 (a.m.) October 2022, subject to potential adjustments due to the ongoing United Nations liquidity crisis.		19 July 2022 – agenda 2 August 2022 – documents