

**TIR EXECUTIVE BOARD (TIRExB)**

**COMMISSION DE CONTROLE TIR (TIRExB)**

**ИСПОЛНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ СОВЕТ МДП (ИСМДП)**

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## **Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention, 1975**

### **TIR Executive Board (TIRExB)**

**Hundredth session**

Geneva, 3 June 2024

## **Report of the hundredth session of the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB)**

### **I. Attendance**

1. The TIR Executive Board (TIRExB, also referred to hereafter as the Board) held its hundredth session on 3 June 2024 in Geneva.
2. The following members of TIRExB were present: Mr. M. Ciampi (Italy), Mr. E. Khakimov (Uzbekistan), Mr. P. J. Laborie (European Commission), Mr. H. R. Mayer (Austria), Mr. A. Şenmanav (Türkiye) and Ms. C. Zuidgeest (Netherlands).
3. Ms. T. Rey-Bellet attended the session as observer, representing the International Road Transport Union (IRU). Ms. F. Coulon (Chair of the Administrative Committee for the TIR Convention – AC.2), Mr. M. Rathje (representative of the European Union) and Mr. C. Moreno (consultant hired to work on legal issues and the financing of the TIR secretariat) were also invited by the chair to take part in the discussions under agenda item 5 (c).

### **II. Opening statements**

4. Mr. M. Ciampi (TIRExB Chair) opened the 100<sup>th</sup> session of the Board by recalling that 25 years and 100 sessions of the TIR Executive Board had been dedicated to fulfilling the important mandates entrusted to the Board by the Contracting Parties of the TIR Convention. He not only highlighted the numerous achievements of the Board over the years but also stressed that the Board will continue to turn challenges into opportunities. The full speech is reproduced in Annex.
5. Mr. K. Alexopoulos (TIR Secretary) also addressed the Board on behalf of UNECE, highlighting the importance of the work of the board for the development and operations of the TIR system and that the contribution of its members to the UN public good called TIR Convention, in their personal capacity, it is a contribution to the humanity and this is much appreciated by the secretariat, the contracting parties to the TIR Convention and the private sector. He stated that the experience and the advice provided by the members of the board are of paramount importance for the secretariat and him personally, paving the way for a sustainable future of the TIR system.

### **III. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)**

*Documentation:* Informal document TIRExB/AGE/2024/100

6. The Board adopted the agenda of the session as contained in Informal document TIRExB/AGE/2024/100, and agreed, time permitting, to consider Informal document No.6 (2024), transmitted by IRU, under agenda item 10.B.

#### **IV. Adoption of the report of the ninety-ninth session of TIRExB (agenda item 2)**

*Documentation:* Informal document TIRExB/REP/2023/99 draft

7. The Board adopted the report of its ninety-ninth session, as contained in Informal document TIRExB/REP/2023/99 draft, pending a few editorial changes, and requested the secretariat to submit the final report to AC.2 for endorsement.

#### **V. Promotion of the geographical expansion of the TIR system (agenda item 3)**

*Documentation:* Informal document No. 8/Rev.2 (2023)

8. The Board considered the revised working draft of the roadmap on the geographical expansion of the TIR system in new regions, as contained in Informal document No. 8/Rev.2 (2023).

9. The Board welcomed the contribution to the document made by the IRU, in particular, a list of corridors along which the TIR system could bring value, and the substantial improvement brought to the draft document by the secretariat in this second revision. The board suggested that more substance should be included in the corridors analysis in the form of prioritization. Possible volumes on TIR carnets and major challenges to be addressed for each corridor should be included.

10. The Board stressed that, despite the limited results obtained by the IRU in the past regarding the promotion of the TIR system on the African continent, African countries should be included in the roadmap, in particular the Maghreb region (in which various countries are already Contracting Parties to the TIR Conventions) and sub-Saharan Africa (in which many countries are land-locked).

11. With regard to the structure of the roadmap, the Board reiterated that its final version should be concise and focused on action plans while at the same time agreeing to keep other chapters, possibly as annexes, to explain the rationale behind the establishment of the roadmap. It was also suggested to present the action plan by type of actions and, for each type of action, list the countries concerned and the timing.

12. The Board welcomed the proposal by IRU, that, at every session, IRU would share with the Board a summary of the actions it will have undertaken to geographically expand the usage of the TIR system, as well as possible difficulties encountered, seeking assistance from the Board when possible.

13. Mr. E. Khakimov also informed the Board that, in the medium term, a new regional transit system could be activated among countries of the Eurasian Economic Union and trigger a significant reduction in the usage of the TIR system in Central Asia.

14. Finally, the Board requested the secretariat to continue working on the roadmap and share the revised version with the members of the Board if possible, well before the next session in order to make progress towards its finalization between sessions.

## **VI. Adaptation of the TIR procedure to modern business, logistics and transport requirements (agenda item 4)**

15. The Board took note that the secretariat had hired the consultant to do the graphic design and prepare the publication of the guidelines for the use of the TIR and eTIR procedures for intermodal transport and provided some comments on the two proposed design options, inter alia, that images of TIR trucks should be used and the usage of colours in the brochure should be reduced and harmonized. The Board further noted that the secretariat intends to include general information on TIR and eTIR in the brochure including the several applications developed by the secretariat servicing eTIR and the procedures and time requested for a contracting party to become operational. This would transform the brochure from guidelines on the intermodal aspects of TIR to a more generic and quite comprehensive brochure on TIR and eTIR, fully servicing the purpose which is the preparation of a communications tool.

16. Finally, the Board noted that, once the designer delivers a full draft version of the brochure, the secretariat will seek comments from the members of the Board before finalizing and printing it.

## **VII. Computerization of the TIR procedure (agenda item 5)**

### **A. Interconnection of national customs systems with the eTIR international system**

17. The Board took note that the secretariat received draft reports from the consultants working on the interconnection of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. It also noted that a draft report for Tajikistan will soon follow. Furthermore, the Board noted that, further to the installation of the eTIR National Application (NA) on premises as a standalone application including three days of training delivered by the secretariat, Iran became the sixth country to be interconnected with the eTIR international system along with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Pakistan, Tunisia and Uzbekistan.

18. Mr. E. Khakimov stated that, after the interconnection of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, the eTIR procedure could possibly be used for the transport of personal cars from China to Central Asia, by first starting transports at the Border and for the whole transport once China becomes interconnected.

19. Following a question by one of its members, the Board also took note that, while new versions of the eTIR NA will be made available free of charge, the licencing agreement currently under preparation foresees that the maintenance of the eTIR NA installed on premises will be maintained by the customs administrations using it thus ensuring the United Nations does not incur any liability with regard to its hosting, usage or maintenance. However, the secretariat, when new versions of the eTIR technical specifications are adopted, will develop revised versions of the eTIR NA and offer them at no cost to the contracting parties already using the system.

### **B. International TIR Data Bank and other IT projects**

20. The Board welcomed the status report on the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB) and other ICT projects delivered by the secretariat. It was informed about the current status of data recordings and usage figures in ITDB (1,181 web application users, 30,263 authorized TIR Carnet holders, 295 customs stamps and seals records and 2,754 customs offices operational for TIR procedures). It was further informed about the recent achievements by the TIR secretariat, in particular, the finalisation of the eTIR National Application API and the eTIR NA language support extension. It was also informed of

the implementation of a proof of concept for the ITDB API to allow national customs systems to update TIR Carnet holder and customs office records via web services in response to the request from the Uzbek customs authorities. The Board mandated the secretariat to start tests with volunteer customs authorities.

21. The Board also took note of TIRExB Informal document No.1 (2024), transmitted by IRU, regarding a technical option to allow access to customs offices data contained in ITDB. While the Board agreed with the technical solution, consisting of a downloadable CSV file, it requested more time to consider how the provisions of Annex 11, Article 13<sup>1</sup> should be implemented in ITDB. In this regard, it requested the secretariat to prepare a document for its next session, possibly containing the result of a short survey on the matter among TIR focal points.

### C. Financing of the eTIR international system

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/9 - ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/6

22. The Board recalled the two Friends of the Chair online meetings organized on 13 and 21 March 2024, which have been instrumental for the preparation of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/9 - ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/6, containing a proposal on the possible financing mechanisms for the operation of the eTIR international system at ECE submitted by TIRExB - friends of the chair meetings.

23. Mr. A. Şenmanav, informed the Board that, at the coming eighty-third session of AC.2, Türkiye will also propose a new financing mechanism based on the idea of a lumpsum transfer, from the international organization, including the required budget for financing the hosting and operation of the eTIR international system, as well as for financing the operations of the TIRExB and TIR secretariat. The international organization could then recover the transferred amount from national associations in equal or almost equal parts.

24. While the idea was supported in principle by Mr. E. Khakimov, other members of the Board, IRU and invited participants, stressed that such a mechanism could lead to a significant reduction in the geographical coverage of the TIR and eTIR guarantees as this could cause national associations issuing few TIR Carnets to withdraw from the guarantee chain. This could possibly have even more dramatic consequences for customs unions since all countries which are part of the customs union need to have an active guaranteeing association. IRU further stressed that, currently, to ensure the widest geographical coverage of the TIR system, they assist associations issuing few TIR Carnets to avoid them withdrawing from the TIR system. Some members of the Board were also of the view that, considering the urgency of establishing a mechanism to finance the hosting and operation of the eTIR international system, it might be preferable to first explore the mechanism already contained in Annex 11.

25. With regard to the alternative sources of funding proposed in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2024/9 – ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2024/6, some members and invited participants, as well as IRU, supported the idea of establishing a multi-donor trust fund which would allow various donors to contribute to the hosting and operation of the eTIR international system. The Board also recalled that contributions from donors will have to comply with the financial rules and regulations for extrabudgetary funds and projects of the United Nations, including due diligence requirements, be approved by AC.2 and, when required, by the UNECE Executive Committee (ExCom). As a first step

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<sup>1</sup> Article 13 - Publication of the customs offices capable of handling eTIR - The competent authorities shall ensure that the list of customs offices of departure, customs offices en route and customs offices of destination approved for accomplishing TIR operations under the eTIR procedure, is at all times accurate and updated in the electronic database for approved customs offices, developed and maintained by the TIR Executive Board.

in this direction, IRU announced that they would provide the first contribution to such fund for the financing of the P3 Information Systems officer currently financed in line with the ECE-IRU MoU on eTIR. While thanking IRU for its willingness to be the first contributor to a possible multiparter trust fund, considering that the main proposed source of funding will be from or channelled through IRU, an invited participant questioned if AC.2 would agree with donations from IRU.

26. Some members of the Board suggested that a one-year extension of the ECE-IRU MoU on eTIR could provide sufficient time for AC.2 to consider the various proposed financing mechanisms in depth and agree on the most appropriate one. IRU stressed that it has indeed contributed to the development of the eTIR international system for the past 6 years, recognising the importance of eTIR for the industry, and commented that the requested extension would need to be accepted by their Presidential Executive.

#### **D. Explanatory note on the use of the eTIR accompanying document**

Documentation: Informal document No. 15/Rev.1 (2023)

27. The Board thanked the Government of Türkiye for transmitting Informal document No. 15/Rev.1 (2023), now containing the requested clarifications and procedural details related to a possible new Explanatory Note to Annex 11 introducing the usage of the eTIR accompanying document en route or at destination in countries that have not yet interconnected with the eTIR international system.

28. While acknowledging the possible benefits of this new proposal for interconnected countries which could start using the eTIR procedure regardless of the interconnection status of their neighbours and along corridors crossing countries that are not willing or ready to interconnect to the eTIR international system, the Board (a) questioned whether this procedure could really be considered a fallback procedure, (b) stressed that it still required the handling of paper documents, (c) underlined that it requires significant changes to the ITDB and (d) wondered if this new proposed procedure would not encourage some countries to not interconnect to the eTIR international system. Also, it was stressed that such a proposal requires time to be implemented, most probably 1 to 2 years, and during this period all efforts should be made to ensure that the majority of the countries are interconnected with the eTIR international system.

29. The Board decided that, while TIB will consider the technical feasibility of the proposal without preparing amendment proposals for the eTIR specifications, it will continue its consideration on the proposed proposal at its next session.

### **VIII. Support training activities on the application of the TIR Convention (agenda item 6)**

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2023/11/Rev.1

30. The Board took note that the secretariat was about to finalize the twelfth revised edition of the TIR Handbook, including the comment and examples of good practice contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/2023/11/Rev.1. The Board agreed to provide comments, if any, on a draft document in track changes to be circulated during the summer.

31. The Board further questioned if the latest package of amendments tabled for the October 2024 session of AC.2 should also be included in the twelfth revised edition, in particular the change related to the validity of the certificate of approval. It also recalled that chapter 6 of the TIR Handbook (Example authorization of associations to issue TIR Carnets and act as guarantor and example agreement) shall be revised in accordance to the changes introduced by Annex 11, Article 10, i.e., that “the procedure described in

paragraph 3 shall be established in the agreement between the competent authorities and the national guaranteeing association, as stipulated by Annex 9, Part I, paragraph 1 (d)”.

## **IX. Supervision of the centralized printing and distribution of the TIR Carnets, including the monitoring of the price of TIR Carnets (agenda item 7)**

Documentation: Informal document No.7/Rev.1 (2023), Informal document No. 2 (2024)

32. The Board took note of Informal documents No.7/Rev.1 (2023) and No. 2 (2024), containing the analyses of the prices of TIR Carnets for the years 2023 and 2024, respectively. The Board mandated the secretariat to publish the 2023 and 2024 prices on the TIR website and to transmit the analyses to AC.2.

33. The Board also requested the secretariat to forward the prices of guarantees to be used for the eTIR procedure which were transmitted to the secretariat by IRU in April 2024 and, possibly, amend future price surveys to also include those guarantees.

## **X. Supervision of the functioning of the TIR international guarantee system (agenda item 8)**

Documentation: Informal document No. 3 (2024)

34. The Board noted that the secretariat had prepared Informal document No. 3 (2024), presenting the results of the survey on customs claims and the TIR guarantee levels covering the years 2019–2022 and, due to lack of time, decided to consider it at its next session.

## **XI. Settlement of disputes between contracting parties, associations, insurance companies and international (agenda item 9)**

### **Regular checks on TIR transports at certain border crossing points**

Documentation: Informal document No. 4 (2024) and Informal document No. 5 (2024)

35. At the request of the Board, on 30 November 2023, an informal online meeting was organized to discuss the regular checks on TIR Transport at certain border crossing of Azerbaijan, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Türkiye, clarify the situation and, possibly, identify means to reduce the number of unnecessary physical controls of vehicles traveling under cover of TIR Carnets. The Board took note of Informal document No. 4 (2024), presenting a summary of the outcome of the informal meeting.

36. Furthermore, the Board welcomed and took note of further development of the situation as provided by IRU in Informal document No. 5 (2024).

## **XII. Miscellaneous (agenda item 10)**

### **A. Activities of the secretariat**

#### **(a) Follow-up actions to previous decisions by TIRExB**

37. Nothing was reported under this agenda item.

(b) Organization of TIR related events

38. Nothing was reported under this agenda item.

(c) Status report of consultancies

39. The Board recalled that the consultant hired to design and prepare the publication of the guidelines for the use of the TIR and eTIR procedures for intermodal transport had started her work (see agenda item 4). All the other consultants had delivered the requested results and had been paid.

**B. Other matters**

40. The Board took note of Informal document No.6 (2024), transmitted by IRU, on the termination of TIR carnets at the Russian and Kazakh borders faced by Turkish Transport operators. Due to a lack of time the Board decided to consider this issue at its next session.

**C. Restriction in the distribution of documents**

41. TIRExB decided to keep documents issued in relation to the current session restricted.

**D. Date and place of next session**

42. The Board took note that its 101st session is scheduled to take place on 7 October 2024 in conjunction with the 167th session of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport.

## **Annex - Opening speech of the Chair of TIRExB**

25 years and 100 sessions of the TIR Executive Board have been dedicated to fulfilling the important mandates entrusted to the Board by the Contracting Parties of the TIR Convention! I have had the privilege to actively take part in various composition of the Board, starting in 2013 at the 53rd session. It has also been an honour to have been elected as Chair since 2021, following Mr. Rainer Ehmcke (Germany - 1999-2000), Mr. Michal Olszewski (Poland -2001-2002), Mr. Mario Amelio (Italy - 2003-2004), Mrs. Natalya Rybkina (Russian Federation - 2005-2008), Mr. V. Luhovets (Ukraine - 2009-2010), Mrs. Helen Metaxa Mariatou (Greece - 2011-2012), Ms. A. Dubielak (Poland – 2013), Mr. H. Lindström (Finland – 2014), Ms. D. Dirlik Songür (Turkey - 2015-2020).

For all this years, the Board has been instrumental in supervising the application of the Convention, preparing countless amendments, explanatory notes and comments, supporting the training of customs personnel by means of numerous capacity-building events, assisting in the settlement of disputes, fostering the exchange of information among the actors of the TIR system, inter alia, by means of the International TIR databank, as well as, in recent years, actively contributing to modernise the TIR system, improving its intermodal application and supporting its computerization.

The last 10 years have seen a large reduction in the usage of the TIR system despite numerous new countries have ratified the TIR Convention. Also, despite the entry into force of Annex 11 in 2021, the eTIR procedure has not been used in practice by transport companies, including in countries that have already interconnected their customs system with the eTIR international system.

This is clearly an indication that, while the Board has done a lot, more remains to be done on those fronts to ensure that the only global transit system maintains its relevance and continues to bring its benefits to customs administrations, transport companies and the economies of the world. I believe that the work of the Board on the geographical expansion of the TIR system is an important step in the right direction.

The TIR Convention is now at a crossroad and the Board has a key role in ensuring that the TIR system follows a prosperous and successful road. Despite the pretty tense geopolitical situation, we shall honour the trust that was placed in us by the contracting parties to the TIR Convention and turn challenges into opportunities.

I will not take more time away from the actual work which is before us during this symbolic 100th session but want to thank you all and the members of the TIR secretariat for your expertise, efforts and dedication.

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