
31st MEETING OF THE BSEC-URTA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

TOBB Plaza

Istanbul - Turkey

Friday, 15 June 2017 at 14:00 hrs

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE IRU-BSEC-URTA-BSEC-TOBB SEMINAR ON
COMPUTERIZATION OF TIR PROCEDURES AND OTHER ROAD TRANSPORT RELATED
DOCUMENTS**

The Seminar on “Computerization of TIR Procedures and Other Transport Related Documents” was held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, on 15 June 2017. It was jointly organized by the Union of Road Transport Associations in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region (BSEC-URTA), the International Road Transport Union (IRU), the Permanent International Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC PERMIS) and the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB).

The BSEC-URTA Honorary President Mr. Vladimir Florea, as Moderator of the Seminar, welcomed all participants and thanked high-level representatives of participating international organisations, BSEC Project Coordinator, Mr. Evgeniy Koziy, IRU Head eTIR, Mr. Raphael Hirt and IRU Global Head Innovation, Mr. Zeljko Jeftic, AULT Secretary General Dr. Mahmoud Abdallatt as well as the Director of Transport Insurance Department of Insurance Company “ROSGOSSTRAKH” Natalia Polunina, for their high-level participation.

Welcoming statements were delivered by Ms. Aslı Gözütok, President of the Union of Road Transport Associations in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Region (BSEC-URTA).

BSEC-URTA President, Ms. Aslı Gözütok welcomed the participants and emphasized the role of the BSEC-URTA over the years in promoting the development of road transport in the BSEC Member States, with special reference to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region, with its main objectives to gradually liberalize the road goods transport market, simplify and harmonize custom procedures and documents, simplify and facilitate visa procedures for professional drivers.

Ms. Gözütok expressed that entry into force of the WTO TFA on 22 February 2017 launches a new phase for trade facilitation reforms all-over the world and create a significant boost for commerce and the multilateral trading system as a whole, This is also a momentum for both private and public sectors in the BSEC Member States to reinforce their cooperation and intensify efforts to implement the objectives of the MoU on the Facilitation of Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.

Mr. Evgeniy Koziy in his opening statement, focused on Significance of this Seminar as one more step in implementing the *BSEC Economic Agenda: Towards an Enhanced BSEC Partnership*, which sets the “Cooperation among the Customs and Border Crossing Administrations” and “Intensifying intra-regional trade and investments” among the seventeen goals in the priority areas of action of the Organization. He recalled the several initiatives undertaken by BSEC in cooperation with other international organizations aiming at implementing these goals, among which special reference was made to the OSCE-BSEC

Workshop on Best Practices at Border Crossing, in 2013, and the Joint UNECE-BSEC Regional Seminar on Trade Facilitation and Single Window, in 2014.

The Seminar was attended by participants from the following IRU and BSEC-URTA Member Associations, Observers and Guests: ANALTIR(AL), ABADA(AZ), AEBTRI(BG), GIRCA(GE), OFAE(GR), AITA(MD), UNTRR(RO), AMERIT(FYROM), UND(TR), TOBB(TR), LVS(LT), ROSGOSSTRAKH(RU), AULT, BSEC and IRU.

A presentation was made by Mr.Evgeny Koziy, Project Manager of BSEC PERMIS which pointed the main provision of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and how will the TFA streamline customs procedures. It was underscored that the full implementation of the TFA will reduce trade costs by 14.3% and by an even bigger percentage for developed countries. The important role of other international agreements and projects in Trade Facilitation was mentioned: WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF); the Revised Kyoto Convention; the TIR Convention; the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods; the International Convention on the Containers; the International Convention on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System; the Convention on Temporary Admission (Istanbul Convention); the BSEC Permit System; Monitoring the border waiting; BSEC Pilot Project for Introduction of the IVWC in the BSEC Region.

Mr. Koziy mentioned Transit related Global Arrangements as a Trade Facilitation Instrument, highlighting the TIR system as an important facilitation tool for international trade and transport, based on the TIR Convention, 1975, having today 70 contracting parties, and UNECE activities aimed at the computerization of the TIR Procedure and the eTIR pilot projects initiated: Georgia-Turkey and Iran-Turkey. The role of the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982, with 58 contracting parties today, in facilitating cross border transport of goods through nationally coordinated, internationally harmonized, shorter, reduced formalities and controls of goods at borders was also underlined.

Mr. Raphaël HIRT, Head of eTIR (IRU) made a presentation on Automation of TIR Procedures and Electronic Exchange of Data.. The advantages of the TIR Holder Portal, with 32 connected countries, were also presented. The TIR-EPD Usage was discussed offering details of the eTIR Pilot Project implemented by Turkey-Iran (first phase November 2015-August 2016 and second phase August 2016-February 2017) and its results with a special emphasis on the security of the procedure. This e-TIR Pilot Project enabled IRU to take the opportunity to develop additional facilities for the transport industry such as distance payment of the guarantees, for intermodal transport and the sub-contractors. Also, transport industry sees prospective in the frame of TIR computerization.

The joint UNECE-IRU Turkey-Iran Pilot project report was recently published by UNECE. It concludes in particular that:

- UNECE-IRU eTIR pilot project: Iran – Turkey was a success from multiple perspectives
- Project demonstrates that the full computerisation of TIR is feasible and that procedures implemented in this pilot could serve as a basis for similar projects in any TIR Contracting Party wishing to make progress towards the full computerisation of TIR
- Iran and Turkey, and by extension any other TIR Contracting Party, are strongly encouraged to join or launch new projects to make further progress in the full computerisation of TIR
- In light of the first 64 successful eTIR transports, and pending signature of a new IRU-UNECE MoU to ensure the sustainability of the the to ensure eTIR international system allowing further developments, stakeholders in Iran and Turkey are encouraged to continue eTIR transports between both countries, involving more transport operators and additional customs offices

He also mentioned that a new MoU was just signed between UNECE and IRU aiming at full computerisation of the TIR procedure. Further Pilot Projects will be carried out under this frame, including all countries willing to join.

Mr. Mehmet Ali Oran, EU Expert at the Ministry of Customs and Trade of the Republic of Turkey, presented the Turkish Experience and Projections in Use for the Digitalization of Transit Systems. The position of Turkey as a transit country due to its geographical location and as one of the biggest beneficiary country of the transit systems was highlighted. The Transit Systems in Turkey were explained, with emphasis on why Digitalization is crucial. After a comparison between the TIR System and the Common Transit System, the future of the TIR System and Turkey's approach were discussed, anticipating the future of Transit: e-transactions, a paperless environment and Digital Customs. Special focus was given to C2B2C and C2C data exchange within the scope of eTIR pilot projects that are being conducted by Turkey-Iran and Turkey-Georgia. Potential advantages and future prospects for adding this transit scheme to the WCO Globally Networked Customs (GNC) as a Utility Block was highlighted.

Mr. Ahmet KARAKAŞ (Expert at TOBB) focused on the Transit Facilitation from the perspective of the Private Sector. The following points were highlighted: TOBB's activities and services are fully in line with the requirements of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement; TOBB is carrying out the duties of guaranteeing and distribution of documents/permits and, on the other side, is following the other international agreements and is actively present in the international organisations; TOBB is represented in the Trade Facilitation Board established in Turkey where it defends the interests of Turkish Private Sector and provide its feedbacks for simplification, standardisation, harmonization and transparency. Information was also presented on Automation Systems used and developed by TOBB within the concept of Trade Facilitation.

Mr. Zeljko Jetic, IRU Global Head Innovation made a presentation on `` eCMR and related Pilot Projects``. The existing IT tools were mentioned, especially the Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Roads (eCMR Protocol 2008) concerning the Electronic Consignment Note, which entered into force on 5 June 2011 and is currently ratified by 11 States. The presentation estimated that the market demand for eCMR is real, as its implementation brings considerable benefits for all actors involved in financial terms and in transparency and traceability terms. Furthermore, eCMR brings increased economic competitiveness of countries and parties involved and also increases road safety

Ms. Natalia Polunina, Director of Transport Insurance Department, Rosgosstrakh Russian Federation made a presentation on the `` Impact of usage of eCMR instead of paper CMR from the perspective of an Insurer``

Conclusions

Participants to the Seminar:

- Noted the progress made by Turkey in line with the success of the ongoing eTIR pilot projects with Iran and Georgia and expressed their hope that similar Pilot projects will be soon extended to Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan and any country willing to join.
- Called on BSEC PERMIS to conduct a joint session of the Working Group on Customs Matters and BSEC-URTA Member Associations with a view to considering implementation of the e-TIR in the BSEC region.

- Stressed the importance of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of the Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region as a priority, which also contains special provisions for facilitation of customs procedures at the borders of the BSEC Member States.
- Welcomed the elaboration of the Regional Trade Facilitation Strategy for the BSEC Region, in collaboration with the BSEC Working Groups on Custom Matters and on Trade and Economic Development,

Recommendations

Participants to the Seminar made the following recommendations:

- BSEC should consider setting-up a Task Force under the joint coordination of the Working Groups on Customs Matters, on Trade and Economic Development and on Transport with participation of BSEC-URTA having as main task a coordinated implementation of the BSEC Strategy Paper on Trade Facilitation under a specific and timeframe Action Plan.
- The BSEC Member States are encouraged to allow the industry to go digital by ratifying the Additional e-CMR Protocol.
- The BSEC Member States are encouraged to join the ongoing projects aiming at Computerization of TIR procedures, based on the successful conclusions of the Iran-Turkey Pilot project, and on the new MoU signed between UNECE and IRU.
- Necessary synergies should be considered by the BSEC Member States to conduct the pilot projects related to the computerization of TIR procedures.
- UNECE and Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention should intensify their efforts for further facilitation under this Convention.
- Encouraged all the stakeholders to take tangible measures to implement the e-data exchange mechanism with the neighbouring states and potential regional partners for a more comprehensive risk analysis method and expeditious transport, to enhance the trade facilitation.
- BSEC working groups related to customs matters, to trade facilitation and road transport to jointly work for implementation of the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Facilitation of the Road Transport of Goods in the BSEC Region.