History of the TIR

Background

Under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the TIR transit system was developed soon after the Second World War in order to help revitalise the economies of post war Europe. The TIR Agreement was concluded in 1949 and its success led to the establishment in 1959 of the first TIR Convention.


Each EU Member State, including the Union itself, is a Contracting Party to the TIR Convention 1975.

The TIR Convention is maintained by the UNECE who, in co-operation with the TIR secretariat, also maintain a publication known as the TIR Handbook. The Handbook not only contains the text of the Convention but also a wealth of other useful information concerning the practical application of the Convention.

The TIR transit system is founded on the following five main principles (the so-called pillars):

- the use of secure vehicles or containers,
- the international guarantee chain,
- the TIR carnet,
- the mutual recognition of customs controls, and
- controlled access to use the system.

The TIR Convention 1975 is dynamic in the sense that it has been amended many times over the years in order to reflect changes in respect of each of these main principles. In recent years the amendments have been structured and taken forward in discrete phases.

The first two phases introduced arrangements whereby access to use the TIR system would be subject to customs authorisation (the so-called "controlled access") and a clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the major players involved in the TIR system. The third phase, which is currently in progress, includes a project to computerise the TIR system (eTIR international system) and measures in order to increase the transparency of the international organisation.