



## Main United Nations Road Transport Agreements



European Union



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# MAIN UNITED NATIONS ROAD TRANSPORT AGREEMENTS AND CONVENTIONS ADMINISTERED BY THE UNECE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Out of the 58 United Nations transport agreements and conventions administered by the Inland Transport Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), 13 are of particular relevance to road transport. They address road transport and road traffic safety (4), border crossing facilitation (4), transport of dangerous goods and perishable foodstuffs (2), and vehicle regulations (3).

## These agreements:

- Set the basic regulatory framework and international standards facilitating cross-border road transport;
- Serve as models for national regulations;
- Reflect 60 years of experience of international collaboration in facilitating international transport

## THE ACCESSION TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE AGREEMENTS IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE FOR EUROMED COUNTRIES

UN road transport agreements are under-explored in the EuroMed region. Having so far failed to accede to them, most EuroMed countries cannot reap their proven benefits. Many EuroMed countries lack the capacity to prepare for accession, and to fully implement international agreements.

Addressing the vital need for EuroMed partner countries to comply with UN legislation, the European Union set up the EuroMed RRU Transport Project. UNECE and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) have joined to strongly advocate the UN agreements in the EuroMed region.

## The EuroMed RRU Transport Project has issued a concerted action plan for all EuroMed countries, providing:

- Technical assistance and training through dedicated seminars;
- Awareness raising through national and regional EuroMed workshops;
- Study tours on good practices involving experts from all EuroMed countries;
- Ad hoc advisory missions to EuroMed partner countries.



Palais des Nations, Geneva:  
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# ROAD TRANSPORT AND ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY

**The Convention on Road Traffic, of 1968**, aims at facilitating international road traffic and increasing road safety through the adoption of uniform road traffic rules. The Convention sets up commonly agreed rules on all factors influencing international road traffic and its safety, including the driver and the vehicle. Contracting Parties must comply and ensure compliance with these rules. The Convention establishes - without affecting the right

of a Contracting Party to make the admission of vehicles in its territory subject to an applicable national law - that Contracting Parties are bound to admit to their territories in international traffic motor vehicles and drivers that fulfil the conditions laid down in the Convention and to recognize vehicle registration certificates issued by other Contracting Parties. In addition, the Convention details the basic conditions for the admission of vehicles and drivers in

international traffic. The Convention is crucial for facilitating international road traffic, international transport and trade as well as tourism. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 72 States, of which 3 EuroMed (Israel, Morocco and Tunisia).



EUROBASKET 2011 LITHUANIA, Semifinal game, France vs Russia:  
FIBA, FIBA EUROPE, UNECE, Ministry of Transport and Basketball Federation Lithuania  
Road Safety Campaign

**The Convention on Road Signs and Signals, of 1968**, establishes a set of commonly agreed road signs and signals. It classifies road signs in three categories: danger warning, regulatory and informative, and provides for each of them definitions and physical appearance, including dimensions, shapes and colours, graphic symbols and norms for ensuring their visibility and legibility. The Convention also pre-

scribes common norms for traffic light signals and signals for pedestrians. Moreover, the Convention prescribes uniform conditions for road markings, signs for road works and signals and gates for level crossings. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 62 States, of which 2 EuroMed (Morocco and Tunisia).



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**The European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR), of 1970,**

aims at preventing drivers and crews of commercial vehicles of more than 3.5 tonnes, or transporting more than 9 people, engaged in international road transport, from driving excessive hours. Driver fatigue is known to increase the risk of serious road accidents. Non-standardized working hours may create disparities in the working conditions of professional drivers and may impact competition between companies. To this end, the AETR regulates the driving times and rest periods of professional drivers. The Agreement also defines the control devices that are used to control those periods, and sets up technical requirements for the construction, testing, installation and inspection of these devices. Additionally, the AETR also sets up requirements for the checking of driving hours by competent authorities. By regulating the driving times and rest periods of drivers of commercial vehicles engaged in international transport, the AETR creates a level playing field in the road haulage industry and helps prevent road accidents. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 51 States.

At EU level, the same subject matter is governed by respective Council Regulations. The mandatory use of the digital tachograph was introduced in the EU in 2006. The AETR Agreement is not open for accession by non-UNECE member States. Contracting Parties to AETR will be discussing the possibility of amending the agreement to allow accession by all UN member States. The implementation of the digital tachograph is a considerable political challenge requiring advanced technical expertise, strict rules and well-functioning systems at national and international levels. The Joint Research Centre (JRC) safeguards the technical interoperability of the digital tachographs and functions as the European root certification authority for AETR countries. A number of EuroMed partner countries are considering

the introduction of digital tachographs in their home markets. EuroMed partner countries look to benefit from the widely harmonized AETR framework; however, their challenge will be to harmonize national systems with international regulations when applying for accession.

**The Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), of 1956,**

facilitates international road transport by providing common conditions applicable to the international road transport contract, including a common consignment note and harmonized liability limits. The CMR fixes the conditions governing the contract for the international carriage of goods by road between the carrier and the shipper and sets the conditions of liability of the carrier in case of total or partial loss of goods or delays. The CMR has no direct implications for governments as it regulates through private law. However, in order for transport operators to take advantage of the Convention,

it must be included in national legislation. An additional Protocol to the CMR has entered into force to facilitate the use of an electronic consignment note (eCMR), with, at present, 7 Contracting Parties. The CMR Convention helps to maintain fair competition between carriers and limits the costs of international road transport, including insurance costs. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 55 States, of which 5 are EuroMed (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia).

**The Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road, of 1978,**

modifies Article 23 of the CMR Convention to introduce Special Drawing Rights (SDR) as the currency reference for the calculation of compensation due in case of damage to the goods. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 41 States, of which 3 are EuroMed (Jordan, Lebanon and Tunisia).



**Tachograph by Continental and Chip cards by Chronoservices**

# FACILITATING CROSS-BORDER TRANSPORT

## **The Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), of 1975,**

sets up the international Customs Transit procedure that permits the seamless international transport of goods by road through as many signing countries as necessary without undergoing the usual customs procedures or the need to make a financial deposit at each border. The procedure includes the use of secure vehicles or containers that have to be pre-approved by national authorities according to TIR standards. The agreement furthermore provides a cross-border guarantee system to cover duties and taxes for each transport operation. The IRU is mandated to organize the international TIR guarantee system and to distribute TIR Carnets throughout the entire TIR guarantee chain. Each vehicle must carry the TIR Carnet, which certifies the validity of the cargo through the customs office of departure. It serves as the official guaran-

tee document. The Customs authorities at intermediate borders acknowledge the validity of the TIR Carnet and would generally not undertake any additional check unless deemed necessary.

Access to the TIR system is rigorously controlled, and misuse is punished instantly. TIR operations are highly efficient thanks to computerization. The UNECE TIR secretariat maintains the International TIR Data Bank (ITDB), an international repository of all authorized users of the TIR system. It allows all Contracting Parties to access the database to check contact information and status of TIR transporters. The IRU has established an international control system (SafeTIR) to monitor the issuance and termination of TIR Carnets at the customs office of destination. In addition the TIR Electronic Pre-Dclaration (TIR-EPD) allows TIR users to submit electronically to Customs their TIR data in advance of their transport – a service the IRU has implemented

in partnership with national customs authorities. A project to fully digitalize operations - the “eTIR Project” – was launched in 2003 to fully secure electronic data exchange among customs administrations, and to manage cross-border guarantees.

The Administrative Committee of the TIR Convention is open to all members of the United Nations. It has been set up to facilitate efficient border crossing operations by reducing border delays and administrative effort by introducing an international guarantee system in place of a multitude of national guarantees. The result is a considerable reduction of international transport costs and a lower administrative burden for import-export businesses. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 68 Parties, including the European Union and 7 EuroMed (Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia).



© IRU



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## The International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, of 1982,

is a framework Convention that facilitates international border crossing for transported goods through harmonization and reduction of administrative formalities, and through reducing the number and duration of border controls. The Convention establishes the recommended procedures for carrying out efficiently all types of controls that may be necessary at borders, including Customs controls, medico-sanitary inspections, veterinary inspections, phytosanitary inspections, controls of compliance with technical standards and quality controls. Cross-border procedures call for concerted national cooperation among the various services, and with the border services of adjacent countries. The Convention foresees measures that include joint controls of goods and documents through the provision of shared facilities, same opening hours and same

types of services at shared borders. These procedures apply to all goods being imported, exported or in transit and to all modes of transport. An Administrative Committee manages the Convention, which is foreseen for global application. It establishes, through its Annex 8 dedicated to road transport, the International Vehicle Weight Certificate (IVWC) and the International Technical Inspection Certificate (ITIC) which contribute to facilitating border procedures by relying on mutual recognition of certificates to avoid repetitive border controls. The Convention provides for a reduction in the number and duration of all types of controls and best practices for efficient controls of goods at border crossings. Thanks to this one-stop-shop principle for border controls, international freight operators will save time and money. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 57 Parties, including the European Union and 3 EuroMed (Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia).



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## The Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles, of 1954, and The Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles, of 1956,

facilitate the temporary admission of vehicles from one signatory country into another without payment of import duties and taxes. Contracting Parties may prescribe that temporarily imported private or commercial road vehicles are covered by the "Carnet de passage en douane" (CPD). These Carnets guarantee payment of import duties and taxes of the vehicles to national competent authorities if the vehicle that has been temporarily admitted is not re-exported. The "Carnets de passage en douane" are issued by authorized organizations or associations, which guarantee the payment.

The Conventions describe in detail the functioning of the temporary importation procedures and the documents to be used as well as claims procedures

to be applied when the exportation of vehicles has not been carried out within the time limits prescribed. The Conventions are open to all United Nations members. They introduce uniform procedures and provide for an internationally recognized document, which replaces national procedures and documents, often different from one country to another. The procedure also avoids the operation of national guarantee systems, as all taxes and duties are covered. In addition, it ensures accurate filling-in by competent authorities and associations or private vehicle drivers. As a result, the Conventions help minimize procedures and delays at border crossings. Contracting Parties to the Convention on Private Road Vehicles on 31 March 2013: 80 States, including the European Union and 7 EuroMed (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Syria and Tunisia). Contracting Parties to the Convention on Commercial Road Vehicles at 31 March 2013: 41 Parties, including the European Union and 1 EuroMed (Algeria).

# TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND PERISHABLE FOODSTUFFS

**The European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), of 1957,** aims at ensuring the highest possible level of safety for dangerous goods transport at an acceptable cost. It defines which dangerous substances are eligible for international transport and which are not. For the former, the ADR establishes the conditions under which they can be carried.

Specific types of danger are defined (explosives, flammable liquids, flammable gases, corrosive substances, etc.) as well as packing conditions, labelling, marking, placarding, documentation and special requirements for tanks. The ADR provides requirements for transport operations, driver training as well as vehicle construction and approval. Security provisions have recently been included. The Annexes to the ADR are usually amended every two years.

While obliging Contracting Parties to accept vehicles coming from other Parties if they comply with the ADR, the Agreement preserves the right of Contracting Parties to prohibit, for reasons other than safety during carriage, the entry of dangerous goods into their territory. Contracting Parties also retain the right to arrange less stringent conditions of international transport on their territories through special bilateral or multilateral agreements.

The ADR is open for accession to all United Nations Member States. Accession has no financial implications for countries. However, for exporting countries, it imposes administrative structures for testing and approval of packagings, tanks and vehicles, for drivers and dangerous goods safety adviser training and for issuing the corresponding certificates. Being harmonized with the United Nations Model Regulations that serve as a basis for all modes of

transport and most national regulations at worldwide level, the ADR also facilitates compliance, enforcement and control. Annexes A and B are also used for regulating domestic traffic in EU countries. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 48 States, of which 2 EuroMed (Morocco and Tunisia).



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**The Protocol amending article 1(a), article 14 (1) and article 14(3)(b) of ADR, of 1993,** simplifies the procedures for amending the annexes to the ADR and harmonizes the definition of the term “vehicle” with the definition used in various EC directives. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 33 States.

**The Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP), of 1970,** establishes uniform prescriptions for the preservation of the quality of perishable foodstuffs for international transport. It defines uniform norms and standards for the special transport equipment required, and sets up uniform distinguishing marks to be affixed to the spe-

cially equipped vehicles. Among others, it specifies temperature conditions for frozen and chilled foodstuffs. The conformity of the equipment is displayed through an international certificate and an ATP plate affixed to the vehicle facilitating easy identification of ATP transport and mutual recognition and avoiding repetitive controls. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 48 States, of which 2 EuroMed (Morocco and Tunisia).

**ATP** APPROVED FOR TRANSPORT  
OF PERISHABLE FOODSTUFFS  
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# VEHICLE REGULATIONS

**The Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or be used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals granted on the basis of these Prescriptions, of 1958**, provides the legal framework for the development of the safety and emission regulations for all types of

motor vehicles manufactured in Europe and in many other parts of the world. The legal document comprises 131 United Nations Regulations and has contributed considerably to technical progress, increased vehicle safety, and drastically reduced vehicle emissions. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 48 States, including the European Union and 2 EuroMed (Egypt and Tunisia).



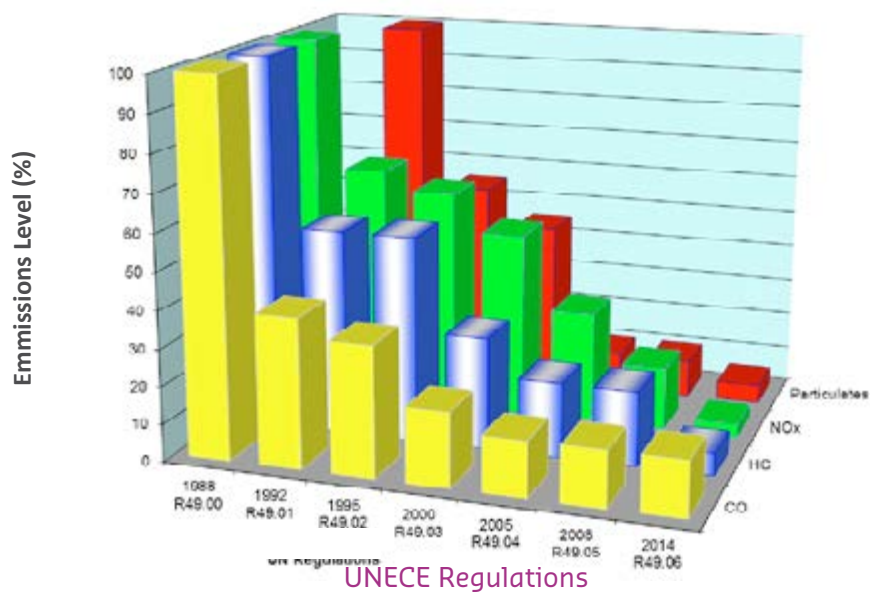
**The Agreement concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and/or be used on Wheeled Vehicles, of 1998**, provides the framework for the development of global technical regulations for vehicles. 12 UN Global Technical Regulations have already been adopted. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 33 Parties, including the European Union and 1 EuroMed (Tunisia).

**The Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of such Inspections, of 1997** provides the legal framework for the technical inspections of vehicles. It has annexed to it 2 UN Rules, which are aimed at maintaining safety all through a vehicle's life-cycle. The agreement has proved to be especially useful in countries that so far have not managed to set up a national

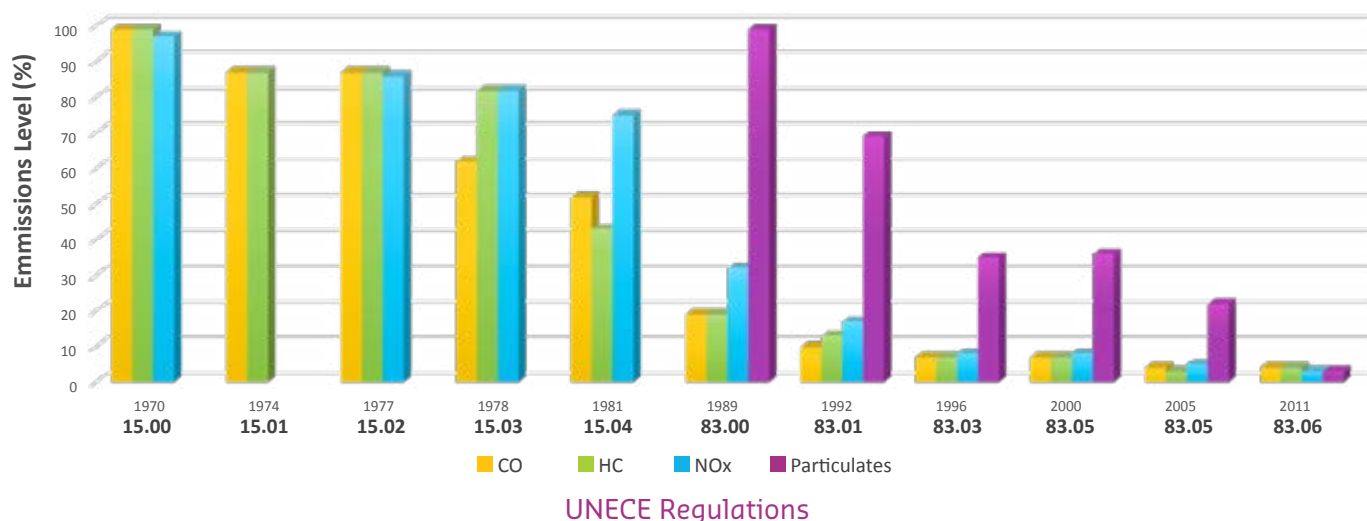
periodical technical inspection system for registered vehicles. Contracting Parties on 31 March 2013: 12 States and 17 signatories pending ratification.



Evolution of Emission Limits of Trucks



Evolution of Emission Limits of Passenger Car



### Accession to and implementation of UN vehicle regulations is of equal importance to car and non-car producing countries

as through them they ensure vehicle safety, environmental protection and energy efficiency. The Agreements on the construction of vehicles (1958 and 1998 Agreements) in particular provide business opportunities for vehicle and vehicle part manufacturers due to the mutual recognition principle of the type-approvals granted in the framework of the 1958 Agreement.

Most United Nations Conventions and Agreements are open to all United Nations Member States. Thus, unless specified otherwise, any United Nations Member State may deposit with the Secretary-General an instrument of accession, acceptance or approval to become a Contracting Party to any of these Conventions or Agreements, indicating its intention to implement the provisions of the Convention or Agreement. Becoming a Contracting Party does not involve any financial obligation or fee.





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