

# Transport Corridor Europe-the Caucasus-Asia



## Draft Agreement on the Application of Electronic Documents along the International Transport Corridor TRACECA

UNCITRAL Colloquium on Digital Payments and Paperless Trade

*Vienna and online, 19-22 January 2026*

# TRACECA

Rotating Chairmanship

## KEY DATES

**May 1993**

Initiating of the TRACECA Programme

**September 8, 1998**

Signature of the Basic Multilateral Agreement on International Transport for Development of the Europe-the Caucasus-Asia corridor (MLA)

**March 10, 2000**

The First Annual Meeting (Conference) of the Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA on the transport corridor "Europe-the Caucasus-Asia"

**February 21, 2001**

Official opening of the office of the Permanent Secretariat of the IGC TRACECA in Baku (Azerbaijan)

The development of economic relations, trade and transport communication in the regions of Europe, the Black Sea, the Caucasus, the Caspian Sea and Asia – one of the main objectives

### Intergovernmental Commission

Decision-making structure – Competent Ministries

### Permanent Secretariat

Executive structure – Implementation and Monitoring



An official opening ceremony of the office in Baku

### Permanent Representatives (National Secretaries) in 14 member states

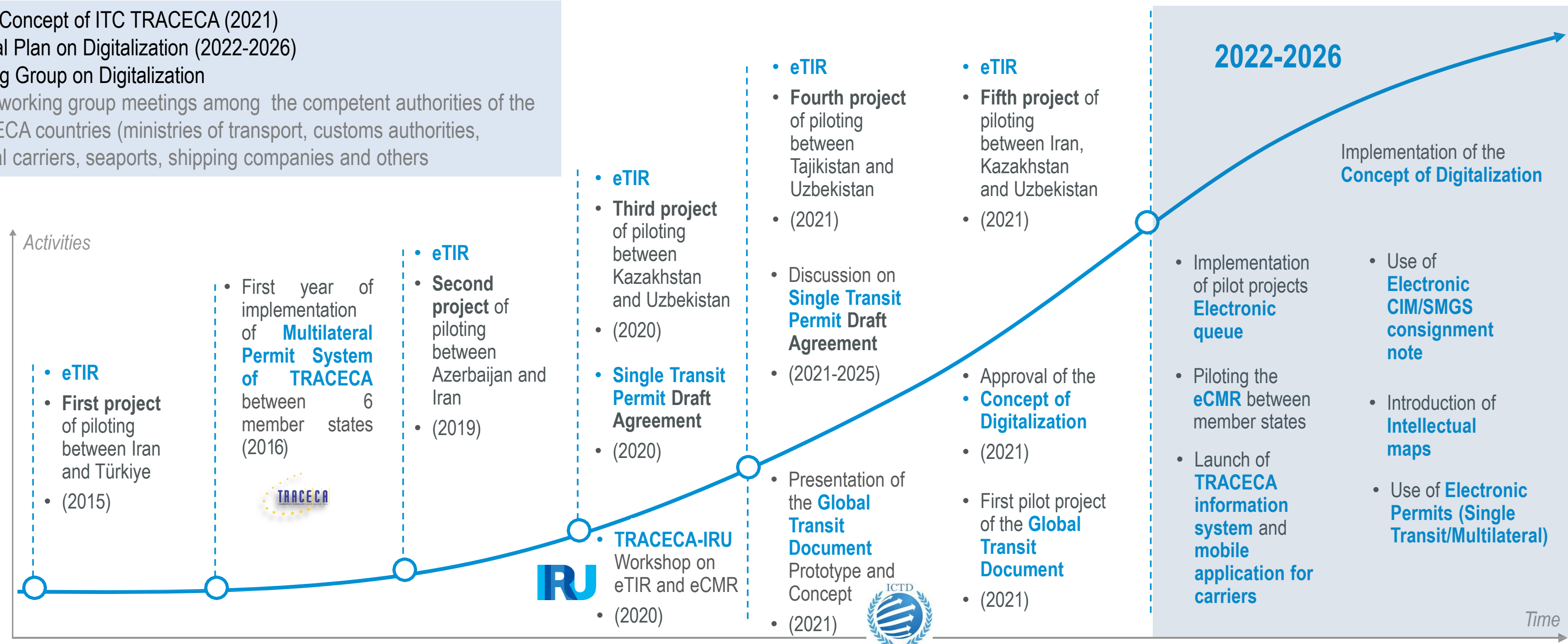
National structure – Focal and Coordinating point between national competent authorities/organizations and the Permanent Secretariat



# TRACECA Projects and Initiatives towards Digitalization

Permanent Secretariat is currently working on initiatives aiming to introduce digital solutions on transport

Digital Concept of ITC TRACECA (2021)  
 Actional Plan on Digitalization (2022-2026)  
 Working Group on Digitalization  
 Yearly working group meetings among the competent authorities of the TRACECA countries (ministries of transport, customs authorities, national carriers, seaports, shipping companies and others)



# LEGAL ASPECTS OF DIGITALIZATION

- Draft Agreement on use of e-CIM/SMGC CN between interested railway operators (2024\_2025) (develop and discussed under e-CIM/SMGS CN pilot project)
- Analysis of the legal framework regarding applicability of electronic transport documents by national experts along Middle Corridor (2024)
- Report on Legal Position of Digital Transport Documents in the Middle Corridor (by international expert) (2024-2025)  
Annex: Draft Agreement on Digitalization of Transport Documents
- Draft Agreement on the Application of electronic documents along ITC TRACECA (2024 – 2025)

## Main Principles for Digitalization of Transport

- Digital legal infrastructure (based on UNCITRAL Model laws and other relevant international conventions)
- Use of common standards (e.g. UN CEFAC Standards and MMT RDM)
- Digital operations (authorized parties, valid evidence at courts and regulatory procedures)
- Management of digital communications facilitated by national digital hubs;
- Creation of multiple digital service platforms that may interact via digital hubs;
- Standards of cybersecurity, protection of the integrity of data;
- Respect of the laws of the Party concerning personal privacy, data protection and commercial confidentiality;
- Principles for reliability of digital documents and data;
- Use of electronic signatures and their mutual recognition;
- Use of digitally exchanged documents and data to identify high risk consignments and for other consignments to simplify border crossing controls and expedite release



**TRACECA  
Draft  
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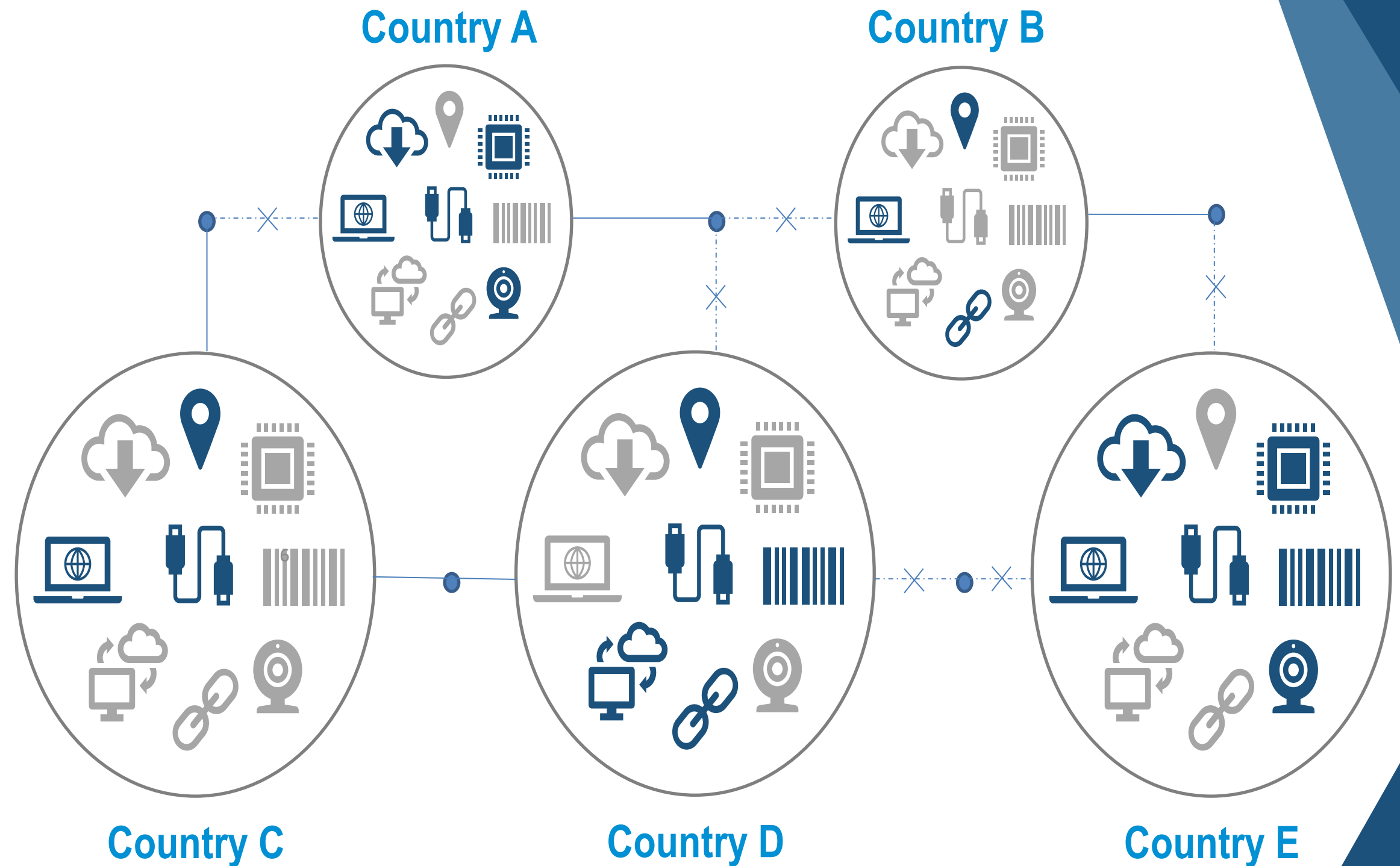
Between the Governments of interested TRACECA countries

Builds on the 1998 Basic Multilateral Agreement

Aim: Paperless, digital, efficient cross-border transport

# OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

- Promote paperless communication in road, rail, and maritime transport
- Cross-border exchange of electronic data & documents
- Involves: **Customs**, other competent authorities, and participants in foreign economic activities

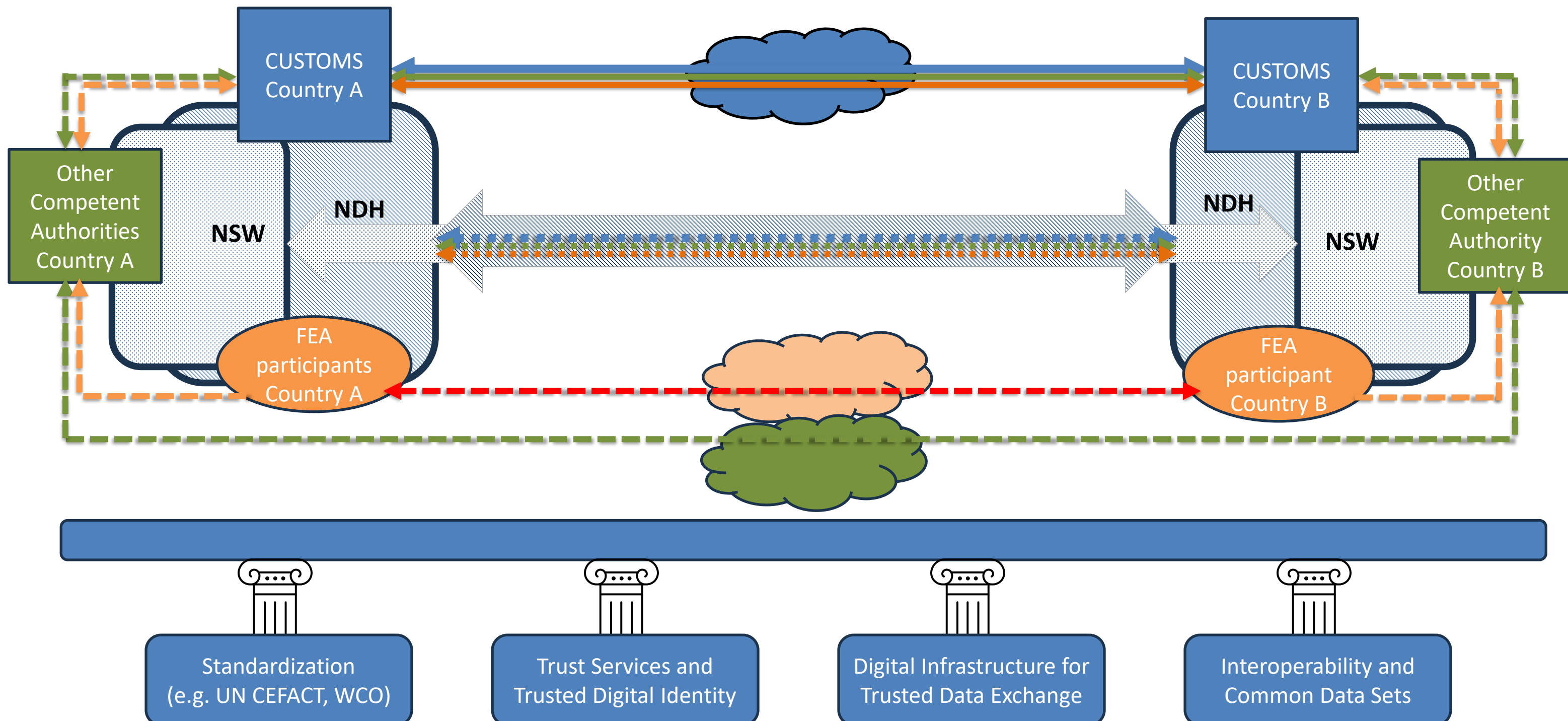


## KEY DEFINITIONS

- **“mutual recognition”** - the mutual recognition of data and documents in electronic form,...;
- **“qualified electronic signature”** - data in electronic form that is contained in electronic document or attached to or logically associated with it and that can be used to identify the signatory and indicate that the signatory agrees with the information contained in the data message, ...created by a qualified electronic signature creation device, which is based on a certificate for qualified electronic signature
- **“trusted third party”** - a legal entity that provides services for the creation, management or verification of electronic signatures, ...;
- **“interoperability”** - the ability of two or more systems or components to exchange information and to use the information that has been exchanged;

# EXCHANGE of DATA & DOCUMENTS

- Cross-border **G2G and B2G** electronic communications
- Umbrella Legal Framework (TRACECA Agreement on Digitalization)
  - based on UNCITRAL Model Laws, other best practices,
  - intention to cover wide range of options (existing and future)



# **Annex 1: Minimum set of data and documents in electronic form related to cross-border transport communication**

## **A. Customs Clearance Data and Documents**

1. Export Customs Declaration
2. Transit Customs Declaration (if not under same international Customs Transit regime)
3. TIR Carnet (if there is no TIR-EPD system – only for paper-based TIR Carnets)
4. Movement of empty transport means

## **B. Transport Data and Documents**

1. CMR Consignment note
2. Road Transport Permit
3. SMGS, CIM, and CIM/SMGS consignment note
4. Bill of lading

## **C. Other Permits and Certificates**

1. Veterinary health certificate
2. Phytosanitary certificate for export (re-export)
3. Certificate on pharmaceutical products
4. Export authorization for groups of medicines containing control substances

# Mutual Recognition

- Qualified electronic signature recognized as equivalent to a handwritten signature
- Qualified electronic signature, based on a qualified certificate issued in one of the Parties, recognized as a qualified electronic signature in all other Parties
- Certificate for qualified electronic signature issued by a trust service provider authorized /certified in accordance with the national legislation of any Party
- For G2G exchange, Parties may establish on a bilateral level other minimal requirements (lower than a qualified electronic signature)
- Annex 2 of the draft Agreement:
  - A) Authorities of the Parties empowered to authorize/certify qualified trust service providers in accordance with national legislation of the Parties
  - B) Qualified trust service providers of the Parties

# TECHNICAL & SECURITY PROVISIONS



Secure internet with VPNs



Standards: XML, WSDL, API



Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) with ESB



Encryption & certification ensure data security



Real-time exchange



## Simplification

- Priority and simplified procedures where applicable (e.g. dedicated fast lanes)
- Not required: paper-based copies of foreign Customs declarations, transport documents, permits, ... (if they are available in electronic form);
- Implementation of "single window" principle (delegating powers e.g. to Customs)
- Application of risk analysis to reduce controls and avoid unnecessary delays

## Coordination

- Permanent Working Group with representatives from each Party
- Support from PS IGC TRACECA with Secretariate function
- Action Plan and Pilot projects

# Implementing and Final provisions

- Conditions for electronic exchange to be ensured in period of 12 months from the date of entry into force;
- Step by step implementation based on developed Action Plan
- Agreement enters into force 30 days after 4 Parties notify ratification
- Open for accession by other countries
- Amendments via protocols/annexes

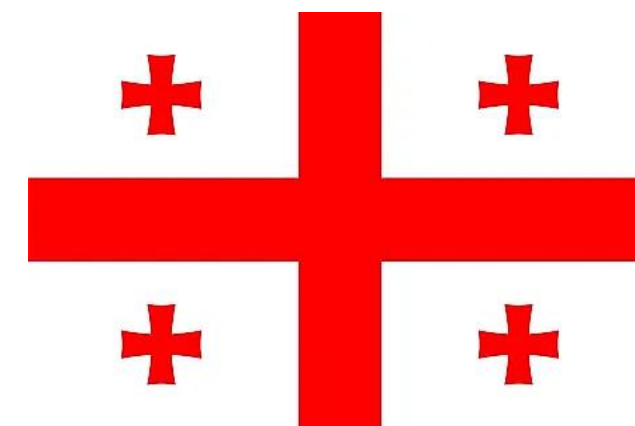
# Comments on the Draft Agreement from Türkiye



- Principles vs technical details (potential needs for changes in legislation and practice)
- Mutual recognition of electronic signatures (acceptance of electronic documents signed in other countries – national standards / international agreements / position of EU)
- Short implementing period 12 months / no common platform
- Different categories of documents covered / Role of Customs / relation to NCTS
- Exchange of data from national Customs transit declaration (not to be used for customs transit in other country)
- Exchange of TIR Carnet data (not required if TIR-EPD, eTIR is implemented)
- Recognition of e-transport documents (eCMR, eCIM/SMGS, eBL,..) (by Customs and other stakeholders)
- Other international agreements on digital documents, actual digitalization, gradual implementation
- E-permits - to avoid duplication of existing systems
- Other similar initiatives (e.g. e-CMR UN ECE to assure alignment, ...)
- Priority to support national digitalization, other regional initiatives rather than having new TRACECA Agreement

*(PS IGC TRACECA position: Working in both directions is not mutually exclusive, and it will only improve alignment and support interoperability of different national / regional initiatives)*

# Comments on the Draft Agreement from Georgia



- Eliminate coexistence of overlapping definitions (Article 1) (UNICTRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records – MLETR and EU Regulation on Electronic Identification and Trust Services eIDAS);
- Add provisions to regulate cooperation between supervisory bodies to provide list of services that qualified trust service providers offer (trust list), and set procedure for reporting incidents;
- Distinguish between electronic signature (for natural persons) and electronic seal (for legal entities); Add provisions on electronic seal in the Draft Agreement; specify where needed in the Agreement the terms “qualified” electronic signature & ”qualified” electronic seal;
- Clarify the term “electronic document” – exclude the content where a tangible original is necessary for electronic document
- Clarify electronic exchange of documents vs exchange of data in electronic form (Article 3) (add new definition and provisions);
- Clarify the role of national qualified certification centres (Article 5.5.e) (certificates for encryption or verification with qualified electronic signature / seal)
- No assessment on alignment of national regulations of protection of personal data – to conduct personal data exchange based on internationally recognized standards (*to be identified and noted*); to reconsider prohibition of storage of personal data (to consider setting principles for storage of personal data with minim storage period and amount of data)
- LEPL “Public Service Development Agency” to be indicated as authorized body and the qualified trust service provider for Georgia (Annex 2)

# Comments on the Draft Agreement from Ukraine



- Minimum data set regarding electronic bill of lading (e-B/L) ( Annex 1 – B.4.) to be determined considering recommendations of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) – IMO EGDH 11/6 of 16 September 2024

## PS IGC TRACECA position:

- *To make distinction between:*
  - *introduction of e-B/L in general (e.g. organization of maritime transport – proof of contract – B2B exchange (not covered by TRACECA draft agreement) vs*
  - *exchange of data elements of B/L or e-B/L for the need of Customs and other authorities B2G (not all data elements may be needed, and different set of data elements may be needed by Customs and other authorities;*
- *to compare data elements suggested by TRACECA vs IMO (more detailed) and ask Customs and other authorities to identify which data elements could be considered as minimum data set for them;*

### CARGO INFORMATION

#### IMO Data Set Related To "Electronic Bill Of Lading"

Submitted by BIMCO, UNECE, and ISO

#### SUMMARY

**Executive summary:** This document proposes to include a data set related to electronic Bills of Lading (eB/L) into the IMO Compendium. The eB/L reference number is often used in various mandatory reporting schemes, and thus, such a data set is important to accelerate the digital transition of the shipping industry in general.

**Strategic direction, if applicable:**

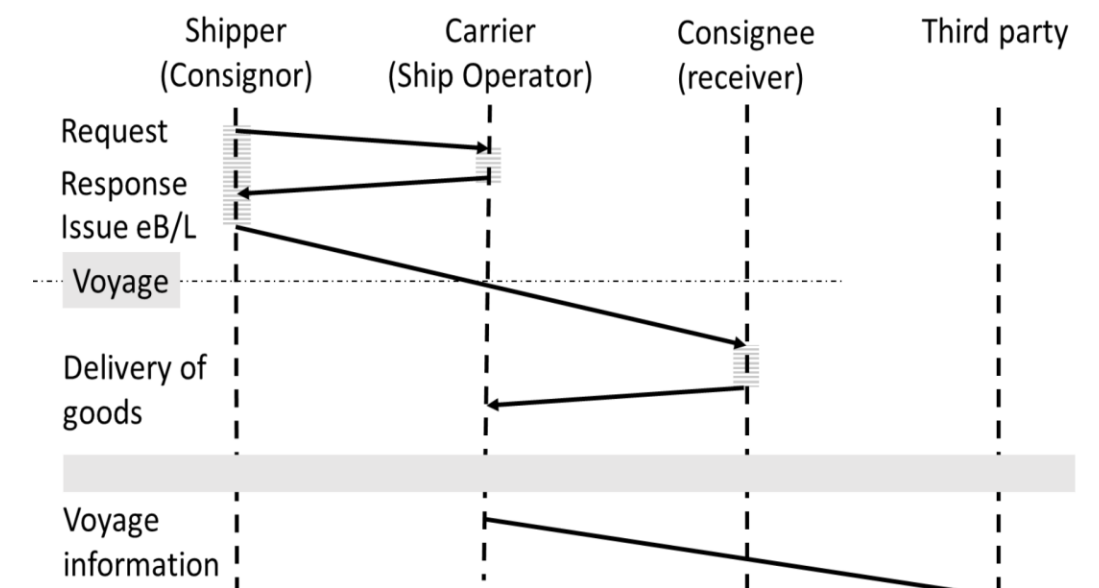
**Output:**

**Action to be taken:** Paragraph 10

**Related documents:** EGDH 4/18 and FAL 46/6/5

#### ANNEX 2

#### SEQUENCE DIAGRAM RELATED TO ELECTRONIC BILL OF LADING



# Ongoing Activities and Next Steps

- Draft Agreement first presented on WG on Digitalization (24.09.2025)
- Initial online consultations between interested countries (25.11.2025)
- 6 MLA expressed/indicated interest (AZE, ARM, GEO, TAJ, TUR, UKR); other MLA invited to join
- January 2026:
  - Nomination of experts for sub-working group to support drafting and amending the text of the draft Agreement
  - Detailed article-based comments / amendments
- January / February 2026 - PS IGC to compile all comments and amendments and share them with the Sub-working group members
- Next online consultations are tentatively scheduled for 24 February 2026
- Follow up discussions every 2-3 months until finalizing the draft Agreement that will be submitted to IGC for consideration

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