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World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations

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Item 8.4 of the provisional agenda

OTHER BUSINESS

(Fitting of safety-belts on Class II coaches)

Submitted by the Working Party on Passive Safety (GRSP) */

The text reproduced below was adopted by GRSP at its forty-third session. It is based on Annex X to the report. It is transmitted to the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) for consideration (ECE/TRANS/WP.29/GRSP/43, para. 23).

*/ In accordance with the programme of work of the Inland Transport Committee for 2006-2010 (ECE/TRANS/166/Add.1, programme activity 02.4), the World Forum will develop, harmonize and update Regulations in order to enhance performance of vehicles. The present document is submitted in conformity with that mandate.

Background

1. Several proposals have been presented by France and Italy to align Regulations Nos. 14, 16 and 17 with the new requirements of the corresponding EC Directives 2005/41/EC, 2005/40/EC and 2005/39/EC . These proposals were distributed during the thirty-ninth session of GRSP (May 2006). Among those proposals, France and Italy have proposed to make mandatory the fitting of safety-belt anchorages and safety-belts on buses belonging to Class II. (ECE/TRANS/WP.29/GRSP/2007/10 and ECE/TRANS/WP.29/GRSP/2007/11).
2. Class II buses are constructed principally for the carriage of seated passengers, and also designed to allow the carriage of standing passengers in the gangway and/or in an area which does not exceed the space provided for two double seats. These buses may be used for interurban services and can circulate at 100 km/h on motorways.
3. Research has shown that the use of safety-belts and restraint systems can contribute to a substantial reduction in the number of fatalities and the severity of injury in the event of an accident, even due to rollover.
4. A lot of fatalities occur because the passengers are violently thrown around within the confines of the vehicle or even more seriously ejected from the vehicle through the broken windows.
5. Many studies have demonstrated over time that wearing a safety belt can contribute to decrease significantly the number of people killed.
6. In cases of coaches, many fatally injured passengers would have survived accidents if they had been provided with and were wearing safety-belts.

The issue

7. In some countries, Class II buses are regarded as Class I derived vehicles (urban buses) while in other countries Class II buses are mainly based on Class III (coaches). These different vehicle designs have led to different opinions among GRSP experts.
8. GRSG was mandated to try to find a better definition of bus classes which could help GRSP solve the proposal for mandatory fitting of safety-belt anchorages and safety-belts. However, while a definition is still awaited in the future, a compromise agreement has been found for the provision of safety-belts and anchorages on Class II buses.

The compromise solution

9. In GRSP there has been discussion on the proposals made and, in the absence of a clearer definition of either Class II buses or "low-floor" buses, the two proposals have been agreed on the basis of a compromise proposed by the Netherlands; this compromise will require the fitting of safety-belt anchorages in these buses with the requirement for the fitment of the safety-belts being up to the Contracting Party.
10. GRSP wishes to make WP.29 aware of the discussions that took place on these proposals and to give due consideration to all issues raised.
