

GRE Informal Working Group
“Conspicuity Markings”
Preliminary Meeting
Bonn, 25 November 2004

1. Appointment of Chairman

Neil Bowerman was appointed as the Chairman of the Informal Working Group.

2. Presentations/Papers

2.1. European Commission - Discussion Document

The Chairman presented the discussion document, emphasising that if Contracting Parties wished to mandate conspicuity markings there were two basic options for doing so.

First, conspicuity markings could be mandated as a constructional requirement through Regulation 48. However, this would need the agreement of the contracting parties on the installation requirements and might cause enforcement problems as these markings are the last devices to be fitted to a vehicle. In addition, Contracting Parties would still have to introduce use requirements if they wished to require the fitting of conspicuity markings to the existing fleet.

Second, conspicuity markings could be specifically excluded from the scope of Regulation 48. In this case Contracting Parties would be free to introduce use requirements for vehicles registered in their territory as they considered appropriate. However, it would be possible for neighbouring countries to have differing requirements. This might be able to be minimised if recommendations for the installation were included in RE3, although the legal status of this document was not certain.

2.2. OICA – presentation

OICA emphasised their commitment to improving road safety, but questioned whether the fitting of contour markings was necessarily the best solution, and that further improvements could be achieved by mandating existing devices, e.g. side marker lamps (currently ~30% of the vehicle fleet are not fitted with them) and R70 rear marker plates. They noted that some countries already have additional requirements for the use of certain groups of vehicles (e.g. red-white warning markings in DE & FR). They commented that some vehicle manufacturers have difficulties applying the R104 markings in conformity with R48. In particular they highlighted the problem of how the application of the markings will be approved, when a vehicle is built in a number of stages, and how ‘combined vehicles’ would be regarded. They demonstrated a number of cases where they considered that it would be extremely difficult for the current R48 requirements to be fulfilled (e.g. concrete mixer, car transporter, timber truck, container truck, tanker, etc.). they expressed concern about the durability of conspicuity markings, and bend resistance for when mounted on curtain-siders, and felt that these issues should be addressed in R104. They considered that conspicuity markings would be duplicating existing devices (e.g. side retro-reflectors, R70 marker plates) which could be deleted to save costs.

2.3. CLEPA – presentation

On the preceding evening, CLEPA had very kindly organised a demonstration of various commercial vehicle types to show that it was possible to fit them with conspicuity markings.

At the meeting CLEPA presented a series of pictures of examples of ‘unusual’ vehicles to further illustrate that line markings, at least, could be fitted, even though at first appearance it might have appeared difficult to do so.

CLEPA stated that much experience had already been achieved with conspicuity markings, as they had been in use in various countries for the last 11 years - as such the benefits had been proven. With regards to the durability/longevity of these markings, the warranty provided by the manufactures was typically 7 and 3 year, when mounted on a rigid surface and curtain-side, respectively, although in practice they could be expected to last for double these periods. With regard to the curtain-side mounted markings, the warranty period compares favourably with that for the actual curtain-sides, which is typically 2 years. Based on the warranted life of the conspicuity markings, the cost of such markings would be in the order of tens of Euros year.

2.4. European Commission – Study

The Commission gave a short presentation on the EC sponsored study into “Conspicuity of HGV’s” lead by TÜV Rheinland in a consortium with the Universities of Cologne and of Darmstadt. It was explained that the draft final report had just been received and was currently being reviewed by the Commission, with the hope that it could be published early 2005. The principle aim of the study had been to carry out a cost-benefit analysis for the mandatory fitting of conspicuity markings to HGV’s, taking into account the existing legislative situation and the supplier market.

The study found that within the EU and its 10 neighbouring countries, only 1 mandated conspicuity markings on certain categories of vehicles (ADR), while 3 others were planning to introduce provisions. From a literature review, published cost-benefit ratios ranged from 0.5 to 4.5. The contractors made their own estimates of benefits based on data from the CARE accident database for markings fitted to commercial vehicles above 3.5t. They estimated that 165 fatalities; 867 serious injuries and 1836 slight injuries would be prevented. Depending upon the type of marking applied (i.e. contour or line) and the surface they are applied to (i.e. rigid or flexible) the cost benefit ratio was estimated to range from 1.4 to 3.6. Currently this overall estimate is being reviewed to determine values for different sizes of vehicles, e.g. vehicles >12t. At the present time, there are three major suppliers of retro-reflective material (3M, Avery and Reflexite), so a monopolistic situation is not anticipated if legislation to mandate the markings was to be brought forward.

The general conclusion of the study (to be confirmed) is to recommend that conspicuity marking be mandated, although it is not certain yet what form the markings should take, or which categories and ages of vehicles should be fitted with them.

IRU questioned the objectivity of the study if the University of Darmstadt was involved. The EC commented that the position of this institute was well known, and will be taken into account, but that other institutes had been involved and data from other studies has

been considered. OICA requested the estimate for fatalities reductions be broken down by accident type. The EC commented that it might be too late in the study to produce such a breakdown. IT questioned whether vehicles not fitted with conspicuity markings would be detrimentally affect. CLEPA commented that the fitting of conspicuity markings had not shown any detrimental effect to those vehicles not fitted, as shown by the US/CAN experience.

3. Discussion

A tour-de-table was conducted where each delegation was invited to provide their personal comments, as an independent rather than national expert, relating to the following issues:

- 3.1. Mandatory vs Optional
- 3.2. Construction vs Use
- 3.3. Categories of vehicles
- 3.4. types of markings
- 3.5. Compromises

US – Line markings are mandated on vehicles greater than 10000lbs in weight or over 2m wide, with contour markings being permitted.

IRU – Support improvements in road safety, but foresee many practical problems in mandating conspicuity markings. They do think that they should not be required for buses, and should not be required to be retro-fitted.

BGL (German Road Haulage Association) – Support improvement of RS but foresee many practical problems in mandating conspicuity markings (much alike IRU). Need to sort out these practical problems before making markings mandatory.

JP – They mandate R70 rear marking plates, but have no requirements for conspicuity markings. They have some concerns about the durability of the materials and questioned how the ‘80% of the length’ was to be measured/enforced. They asked for more time to study the issues of conspicuity markings being made mandatory in R48.

UK – Although conspicuity markings are optional in the UK, they did not wish to prevent other from mandating their use, therefore national use provisions might be a better solution to mandating, rather than international constructional requirements. They did not consider them necessary on buses as they usually have interior lighting, and consideration should be taken of heavier trucks which are already required to be fitted R70 markings. Consideration also ought to be given to how derogations might be applied for ‘difficult’ vehicles. They were not in favour of retro-fitting, and would like the issue of side retro-reflectors/marker lamps to be considered. Truck-tractors should be exempt from any requirements.

NL – They support at national and European level measures to mandate conspicuity markings, as such are supportive of the DE proposal.

IT – Have national requirements from 04/05 for new, and 12/05 for all, commercial vehicles over 3.5t. The requirement is for line markings, although contour markings are permitted.

They are studying the issue of derogations for practical problems. They considered that if side retro-reflectors were not to be required, this would need to be reflected at international level.

FR – Conspicuity markings are optional in FR. They considered that only line markings should be mandated. If conspicuity markings are mandatory, then the fitting of side retro-reflectors and R70 rear marker plates should not be required. Chassis-cabs and buses should be excluded from any requirements.

4. Terms of Reference

The Chairman presented a draft terms of reference based closely on the issues identified in agenda item 3 and invited the delegates to provide written comments.

5. Next steps

5.1. Provide comments

Delegates were invited to provide written comments to the Chairman by end-January on the terms of reference, the options raised in the discussion document prepared by the EC, and particular to take specific account of the discussion items under agenda item 3, when commenting. The Chairman will consolidate the comments and circulate them to the delegates by the end of February in time for the next meeting (see below).

5.2. Date of next meeting

Thursday 3 March 2005, Brussels

Venue: to be confirmed

Neil Bowerman, ENTR/F/5 AN88, 02/47 Tel: 57680 7 January 2005

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Conspicuity Marking

25 November 2004
(Bonn)

AGENDA

1. Appointment of Chairman
2. Presentations/Papers
 - 2.1. European Commission - Discussion Document
 - 2.2. OICA - presentation
 - 2.3. CLEPA - presentation
 - 2.4. European Commission – Study
3. Discussion
 - 3.1. Mandatory vs Optional
 - 3.2. Construction vs Use
 - 3.3. Categories of vehicles
 - 3.4. types of markings
 - 3.5. Compromises
4. Terms of Reference
5. Next steps
 - 5.1. Provide comments
 - 5.2. Date of next meeting

Attendance List

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