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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Ad Hoc Multidisciplinary Group of Experts  
on Safety in Tunnels

**Joint declaration on the improvement of road safety,  
in particular in Alpine region tunnels**

**(30 November 2001)**

**Transmitted by Switzerland**

**Ministers of transport**

- Republic of Austria
- Republic of France
- Federal Republic of Germany
- Republic of Italy
- Swiss Confederation

## Preamble

In the presence of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of Transport of the European Union and the Vice-President of the European Commission, the Ministers of Transport of the Republic of Austria, the Republic of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Italy and the Swiss Confederation (or their representatives),

considering that transport is a capital element in the lives of the citizens of Europe and of the European economy and that it is important to place Europe's citizens firmly at the heart of transport policy, inter alia, ensuring a high level of safety for them, while recognizing the primordial role of transport infrastructures for transalpine services with a view to achieving the completion of the internal market and establishing an efficient trans-European transport network,

stressing the need for balance in the development of the various transport modes, particularly in the area of the Alps, while bearing in mind the specific features of that environment, in particular the fragility of the balance between the economy, society, man and his natural environment,

conscious of the increasing risks of the transalpine transport of goods by road through tunnels, which mean that additional efforts must be made to ensure safety both in terms of infrastructure and vehicles and in terms of the efficiency of emergency and management services, driver training and compliance with regulations, the establishment of effective and concerted checks to ensure that compliance, information for users, means of communicating with them in the event of an accident and the definition of appropriate rules for traffic in tunnels,

deploring the tragic accidents that have occurred recently in Alpine road tunnels, which demonstrate the need for immediate action to improve user safety, particularly in tunnels,

noting that high-quality rail transport has undeniable advantages for society compared with road transport on long-distance services or services through areas where transit is difficult such as major mountain massifs,

desirous of undertaking all possible measures to control the carriage of goods by road through these areas where transit is difficult, while at the same time encouraging the transfer of goods from the roads to less polluting transport modes, particularly the railways, to the benefit of the environment and the economy,

considering that a clear improvement in transport in the Alpine region, leading to sustainable development as recommended by the Göteborg Council in June 2001, requires a number of deliberate and coordinated decisions to be taken which will have short, medium and long-term effects and that these measures are described in the programme contained in the annex to the White Paper on European transport policy to the year 2010: time to decide,

have agreed to achieve the above objectives and to implement the measures described below.

### **1. Ensuring the efficiency and safety of road infrastructures**

In order to make existing road infrastructures safer and more efficient and prevent them from becoming dangerously saturated, the transport ministers present in Zurich are committed to taking adequate measures to ensure safety in tunnels in terms of infrastructure, equipment and the organization of emergency assistance. Steps should also be taken to encourage the transfer of long-distance traffic to more appropriate transport modes than the road thus decongesting existing road infrastructures.

### **2. Strict application of the legislation in force and reinforcement of monitoring**

The transport ministers are committed to the strict application of existing road traffic regulations and suitable monitoring and, if necessary, to appropriate prosecution of those in breach of the regulations, so as to guarantee greater traffic safety, particularly in tunnels, and fair conditions of competition.

The monitoring of compliance with existing law will concern in particular:

- licences and authorizations of transport companies;
- vehicles, including fuel quantities;
- regulations concerning dangerous goods;
- social regulations, in particular concerning driving and rest times for drivers;
- regulations concerning weights, dimensions and speeds;
- rules concerning traffic prohibitions.

### **3. Development of legislation concerning the safety equipment of vehicles and infrastructures**

With a view to the development of the draft European Union directive on safety in tunnels in accordance with the state of technology, the transport ministers undertake to develop and implement legal instruments in order to increase the level of safety of vehicles and road infrastructures presenting particular risks, such as tunnels.

They are following closely the work of the Ad Hoc Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Safety in Tunnels, established under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE). Once these recommendations have been adopted by the Inland Transport Committee, they are committed to a detailed consideration of their implementation; the main elements of the recommendations include:

- measures concerning road-users;
- measures concerning operation;
- measures concerning infrastructures;
- measures concerning vehicles;
- measures concerning signs and signals.

The full list and details of the measures referred to in the above chapters can be found in the attached report (annex 1).

In addition, without delaying the implementation of the measures referred to in annex 1, the transport ministers are considering the adoption or promotion of other specific measures, examples of which are given in annex 2.

#### **4. Development of traffic regulations for the Alpine region and improvement of traffic control**

The transport ministers are committed to implementing traffic regulations adapted to the situation and to the aims of this declaration and, when necessary, to reinforce them so as to ensure greater safety in road transport on routes through the region of the Alps.

In so doing they reassert their intention of implementing the Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention and of considering the introduction of all or part of the following measures which will be put into practice depending on the situation of existing or planned infrastructures and equipment in tunnels or their access roads:

- measures for the regulation of heavy vehicle traffic on hazardous sections/tunnels (alternating single-direction heavy vehicle traffic, speed limits, etc.);
- measures to permit compliance with rules for vehicle spacing in tunnels;
- mandatory winter equipment when weather conditions so require.

With a view to standardizing traffic flows and preventing congestion, traffic management systems need to be generalized for the roads or structures carrying the heaviest traffic. Traffic monitoring, comprising assistance in detecting and sanctioning offences, should be developed as a parallel activity.

The planning of relief or alternative routes in the event of congestion or accidents on certain routes and the provision of relevant information need to be systematized. States could establish joint mapping of relief routes so as to facilitate the exchange of information.

## **5. Adoption of measures for the transfer of goods traffic to the railways**

The transport ministers encourage all measures for the transfer of road traffic to the railways in a spirit of sustainable development, with the aim of increasing road safety for all users and ensuring optimum traffic flow through the Alps.

They will therefore furnish possibilities for the development of rail freight and road-rail transport (accompanied or unaccompanied combined transport):

- by improving railway infrastructures, including tightening of safety in railway tunnels (elimination of bottlenecks) and in particular terminal installations for transalpine combined transport;
- by improving the quality and attractiveness of offers by the railways (guaranteed access to the network, timetable, number of trains, travel time, equipment of wagons for drivers, priority train-paths for freight trains, quality of service, etc.);
- by granting financial support while ensuring that there is no market distortion, thus enabling combined transport to be competitive compared with road transport;
- by supporting the development of new technologies or innovations in combined transport;
- by means of increased domestic and international cooperation (public authorities, combined transport operators, railway companies);
- by studying possibilities for States or regions to establish funds placing the income and financing of the infrastructures of the transalpine corridors on a mutual benefits basis.

## **6. Follow-up**

The transport ministers undertake to work towards the rapid implementation, both domestic and international, of the measures recommended in this declaration.

In order to do so:

- they will ensure that the particular measures recommended are incorporated as far as possible in the work and developments in progress in the international organizations (in particular, OECD, UN/ECE and EU);

- the ministers have decided to prepare an integrated study on road and rail mobility through the Alps, with an assessment of how far existing infrastructures are in keeping with the development of present and future demand.

The study will also include a short-term, medium-term and long-term impact assessment of the new infrastructures, improvements to existing infrastructures and possibly proposals for regulatory measures, in the context of the Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention;

- they will establish a permanent body for the implementation and monitoring of the measures recommended;
- particular attention will be paid, in the context of the budgetary priorities of the trans-European networks, to the major transalpine routes (e.g. Brenner, Lyon-Turin), also with a view to the development of innovative projects for the railways (e.g. rolling road).

The transport ministers have agreed to meet again as from mid-2002 in order to evaluate the progress made and to decide on the follow-up to be given to the declaration.

Done at Zurich, on 30 November 2001

Annex 1: “Recommendations of the group of experts on safety in road tunnels - Draft final report,” 18 October 2001

Ad Hoc Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Safety in Tunnels

United Nations, Economic Commission for Europe, Inland Transport Committee

Annex 2: Other proposed measures

#### Users

- lowering of the alcohol level limit for professional drivers (0.2%);
- reinforcement of requirements relating to working conditions and training for professional drivers;
- harmonization of requirements for employee drivers and owner drivers;
- centralized register of safety offences.

#### Infrastructure

- limits on access for certain categories of vehicles, depending on equipment or structures already in tunnels and other technical parameters (e.g. dimensions/weight, steep gradients and/or inadequate turning radii on Alpine roads, etc.).

#### Vehicles

- underrun protection in the event of rear collision;
- underrun protection in the event of frontal collision;
- lateral protection (including protection of fuel tank(s));
- speed governor;
- existence of a fire-extinguisher on board heavy vehicles;
- minimum standard for gas emissions (e.g. Euro 2 or 3);
- minimum power per tonne (total weight);
- tyre pressure indicator;
- air-conditioner;
- unlimited third party insurance;
- research on adequate standards for synthetic components used in vehicle construction.