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Working Party on Road Traffic Safety

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY
ON ITS FORTIETH SESSION**

(27-29 November 2002)

ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party on Road Traffic Safety held its fortieth session in Geneva from 27 to 29 November 2002. Representatives of the following member States of the Economic Commission for Europe participated: Austria; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; France; Germany; Hungary; Iceland; Italy; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Russian Federation; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland; Yugoslavia. The European Commission (EC) was represented, as was the World Health Organization (WHO). The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) was represented along with the following non-governmental organizations: European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR); International Federation of Motorcyclists (IFM); International Touring Alliance/International Automobile Federation (AIT/FIA); International Road Federation (IRF); International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA); Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations (FEMA); International Road Safety Organization (PRI); International Driving Tests Committee (CIECA). The Institute for Traffic Care (ITC) also took part as an observer.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (agenda item 1)

Document: TRANS/WP.1/84

2. The agenda was adopted without amendments.

AMENDMENTS TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1968 CONVENTIONS ON ROAD TRAFFIC AND ON ROAD SIGNS AND SIGNALS AND THE 1971 EUROPEAN AGREEMENTS SUPPLEMENTING THEM (agenda item 2)

(a) Consolidated amendments proposals

Documents: TRANS/WP.1/2002/23; TRANS/WP.1/2002/23/Rev.1

3. Following the discussion at the thirty-ninth session of WP.1 and the comments made by the Ad hoc Group of Legal Experts, the secretariat had prepared a new consolidated document, with the symbol TRANS/WP.1/2002/23/Rev.1, which provided a basis for the Working Party's discussions.

4. The Chairman of the Legal Group explained the new amendment proposals appearing in the above-mentioned document. It was decided that five new documents dealing with each of the Conventions or Agreements separately would be prepared for the Working Party's forty-first session in April 2003. Country representatives were asked to submit written comments on the consolidated proposals for amendments contained in document TRANS/WP.1/2002/23/Rev.1.

5. With reference to the incorporation of the distinguishing sign into the registration plate, the Working Party approved the following amendment (in bold) proposed by the Russian Federation to Annex 3, paragraph 3.2 (b), of the Convention on Road Traffic:

*“(b) When, in addition to the distinguishing sign, a regional or local **non-numerical** symbol, and/or flag and/or emblem is displayed on the registration plate, the distinguishing sign of the State of registration shall obligatorily be placed on the far left of the plate.”*

6. The representative of the Russian Federation also asked the secretariat to ensure that the Russian version of the amendment proposals used the correct terminology for “registration plate” and “registration number”.

(b) Definition of mopeds and motorcycles

Documents: TRANS/WP.1/2002/4; TRANS/WP.1/2002/27 and Add.1 and Add.2;
TRANS/WP.29/2002/68

7. As an introduction, the Chairman of WP.1 reminded the meeting that proposals for amendments concerning the definitions of motorcycles, mopeds, tricycles and motorized quadricycles, as submitted by the small group, had been transmitted to WP.29 for a prior opinion before being considered by the Working Party.

8. The WP.29 secretariat confirmed that the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) had reached agreement on the proposed definitions after making some minor corrections to them.

9. The Working Party considered that it was now necessary to consider carefully, on the basis of the document prepared by IMMA (TRANS/WP.1/2002/4), the consequences of the new definitions on different provisions in the Conventions and the European Agreements supplementing them. It was agreed that Switzerland and IMMA would prepare a document for the forty-first session of WP.1, containing specific proposals in that regard.

10. In view of the volume and complexity of the work to be done, and in order not to delay the submission to New York of the package of amendments scheduled for 2003, it was decided to proceed in two stages, the first restricted to motorcycles and mopeds and if possible to tricycles, and the second to motorized quadricycles and if necessary to tricycles (if not dealt with in the first stage).

(c) Driving permits

Documents: TRANS/WP.1/2002/22 and Add.1; TRANS/WP.1/2002/CRP.2/Add.4

11. The Working Party based its discussion on the above documents and on the new proposal (distributed as informal document No. 3) prepared by Mr. Yakimov (Russian Federation), Chairman of the small group on driving permits.

12. The representative of the European Commission, who was participating in the work of WP.1 for the first time, expressed support for ECE's activities with reference to driving permits and welcomed the results obtained in seeking greater harmonization in this area.

13. The Working Party gave particular attention to issues on which agreement had not been reached at the thirty-ninth session. It took the following decisions based on informal document No. 3 which was distributed during the meeting:

Article 41.3: The first two sentences were accepted. With reference to the third sentence, several delegations proposed that it should be deleted in that it could conflict with the existing provisions of Article 41, paragraph 7. The Chairman of the small group on driving permits, however, proposed to try to find an alternative wording which might be acceptable to WP.1.

Article 41.6 (existing): WP.1 took note of the proposal submitted by the delegate of Norway to the effect that Contracting Parties could also issue international driving permits to citizens of other States who were not required to change their domestic permits when they took up normal residence in one of those States. It considered that the question should be studied and asked that a suitable form of wording should be submitted.

Article 42: WP.1 decided to delete the new paragraph 4 which had originally been proposed in document TRANS/WP.1/2002/22.

Article 43.1: WP.1 decided to establish a transitional period of 5 years instead of the 10 years initially proposed. With reference to the second sentence of the paragraph, WP.1 agreed to the principle of recognizing the validity of driving permits issued in accordance with the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic and earlier corrections of the 1968 Convention. A new form of wording would be proposed to take this principle into account.

Article 43.2: WP.1 also decided to maintain a transitional period of five years.

Annex 6, paragraph 2: The representative of the European Commission stressed the importance of seeking harmonization on the formats for model domestic driving permits and questioned the use of the word “preferred” in the context of the sentence.

The Working Party agreed to the following wording: *“The permits may be made of plastic or paper. The preferred format of the plastic permits shall be 54 x 86 mm in size. The preferred colour of the permit shall be pink, the print and spaces for the entries to be made shall be defined by domestic legislation.”*

Annex 6, paragraph 4: With reference to item 9 (categories/subcategories) of this paragraph, the representative of Norway said that was necessary to specify that the letters and characters used for national categories should appear in a type different from that used for the harmonized categories. The Chairman of the small group proposed that the subject should be covered in Annex 6, paragraph 10. The representative of the European Commission said that he would submit written comments on the numbering of the items.

Annex 6, paragraph 7: The representative of the European Commission drew WP.1’s attention to the problems which could emerge from the lack of harmonization regarding electronic storage of data on driving permits and referred in this context to the work of ISO.

Annex 6, paragraph 8: The words “with or without sidecar” were deleted in category “A” since they had already been included in the definition of motorcycles in the Convention.

Annex 6, paragraph 9: WP.1 agreed to add the words: “(light motorcycles)” at the end of category “A1”.

Annex 6, paragraph 10: As specified in paragraph 4, a sentence on national categories would be added.

14. In order to prepare a single consolidated proposal on driving permits for the forty-first session of WP.1, the Chairman of the Working Party proposed that a meeting of the Ad hoc Legal Expert Group should be organized in Bern from 3 to 5 February 2003 and said that the European Commission and IMMA would be invited to participate in the discussion on driving permits.

(d) **Safety in road tunnels**

Documents: TRANS/WP.1/2002/28; TRANS/WP.1/2002/39;
TRANS/WP.1/2002/CRP.5/Add.5 and informal document No. 2
(comments by Germany)

15. As an introduction, the Chairman of WP.1 reminded the meeting of the context of the proposals for amendments relating to safety in tunnels. The representative of the European Commission for his part informed the Working Party that the Commission was in the process of adopting a proposed directive on the subject of safety in tunnels.

16. After considering document TRANS/WP.1/2002/39, submitted by Switzerland, and the comments made by Germany in informal document No. 2, the Working Party took the following decisions, on the basis of which the Swiss delegation said that it would submit a new document for consideration to WP.1 at its forty-first session:

- The Swiss delegation said that it was withdrawing its proposed amendments on passing places in Article 11, paragraph 10 of the Convention on Road Traffic and in Annex 1, section E, chapter II, new paragraph 14 (b) of the Convention on Road Signs and Signals. The corresponding sign E, 17^c, presented in Annex III, was therefore also deleted.
- The amendments proposed in Article 25 bis were adopted as a matter of principle. The Working Party considered the possibility, however, of including in Article 25 bis provisions requiring drivers of vehicles immediately to switch on their hazard warning lights when in an emergency situation in a tunnel. The representative of France said that she would submit written comments.
- After discussion, the opinion of WP.1 was that the length of tunnels where the special rules referred to in Article 25 bis applied should be determined by national legislation.
- The proposals submitted regarding the name of the tunnel, the distance between the “Tunnel” sign and the tunnel entrance, the length of the tunnel and the obligation to use the sign E, 11^b to indicate the end of the tunnel should be reviewed.
- Following the deletion of new paragraph 14 (b), the wording of paragraph 14 comprised the content of (a) only; the letter should therefore be deleted. An addition was made to the description of sign E, 17^b, which became E, 17 (following the deletion of E, 17^a and E, 17^c referred to in Annex III) as follows: “*Emergency stopping place in case of **emergency or danger (lay-by)**.*” In the last sentence (“SOS” symbol), “*must*” was replaced by “*may*”.
- WP.1 approved the new symbol F, 14 “EXTINGUISHER” and recommended that it should be red in colour.

- The wording of the signs included in the new paragraph 11 (emergency exits) of the Convention on Road Signs and Signals was amended to read:

“(a) *The signs G, 23^a and G, 23^b indicate the location of emergency exits.*

(b) *The signs G, 24^a and G, 24^b, which are placed at a maximum distance of 50 m at a height of 1 to 1.5 m on the side walls of tunnels in particular, serve to indicate the direction of the nearest emergency exit.*

(c) *The signs G, 23 and G, 24 are green in colour and the symbols, arrows and distance indications are white or of a light colour.”*

- WP.1 decided to reconsider the following questions:

(a) The relevance or otherwise of creating a new symbol F, 15 “SOS” and if so, of its definition;

(b) The choice between the possibility of associating the symbol with the (existing) symbol F, 3 (telephone) and that of creating a separate symbol comprising the letters “SOS” and a telephone to indicate the concept of “emergency telephone”;

(c) The possibility of using the symbol “SOS” in the new sign, E, 17 “EMERGENCY LAY-BY”;

- WP.1 must also reconsider:

(a) The colour of sign E, 17. In its proposal, Switzerland provides for blue. The Commission has specified that in the draft directive currently being finalized, the colours blue and green are authorized.

(b) The possibility of combining signs G, 24^a and G, 24^b in a single sign, G, 24^c (proposal by Germany).

(e) Visibility and legibility of road signs

Documents: TRANS/WP.1/2001/41; TRANS/WP.1/2002/11 and Add.1 and Add.2;
TRANS/WP.1/2002/34

17. The Working Party reconsidered the proposed amendment to Article 7 of the Convention on Road Signs and Signals drafted at its thirty-ninth session, the wording of which had been included in the agenda for the current session (TRANS/WP.1/84). As a result of the concerns expressed about the use of the word “panels” in paragraph 1 of the proposal, WP.1 decided to replace the word “panels” by “signs” in the second line of the text. It also confirmed the possibility of using fluorescent materials for certain road signs but considered that it was for

domestic legislation to define the conditions for their use. The Swiss delegation said that it would submit a new proposal for the forty-first session taking into account the guidelines given by the Working Party.

18. It was also decided that the question of the visibility and legibility of road signs should be developed in Consolidated Resolution R.E.2 and that it could be raised on the occasion of the discussions on signing issues, scheduled for WP.1's autumn 2003 session.

(f) Alcohol

Documents: TRANS/WP.1/2002/38; informal document No. 1 (observations by Italy)

19. The Working Party adopted the proposal submitted by Hungary to amend the European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Traffic by reducing the blood alcohol level established in the additional paragraph following paragraph 5 concerning the section Ad Article 8 of the Convention, namely: 0.5 g per litre of pure alcohol in the blood instead of 0.8 g and 0.25 mg per litre in the air expelled instead of 0.40 mg.

20. It was decided that this proposal would be included in the package of amendments to be submitted to the Secretary-General. The representative of Luxembourg entered a reservation on behalf of his country regarding this proposal.

PREPARATION OF THE FOURTH ROAD SAFETY WEEK IN THE UN/ECE REGION
(agenda item 3)

Documents: TRANS/WP.1/2002/26 and Rev.1

21. The Working Party approved the draft resolution on the Fourth Road Safety Week (5-11 April 2004) which had been drafted by a small group (France, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the secretariat) and of the three proposals submitted by the small group, adopted the slogan: "Respect is safety". It requested that the draft resolution, the text of which is annexed to this report, should be submitted to the Inland Transport Committee for adoption at its sixty-fifth session (February 2003). It was decided that the small group would meet again early in 2003 so as to help the secretariat to prepare the relevant UN/ECE activities to be undertaken or organized for the Fourth Road Safety Week. The activities envisaged included the organization of a seminar.

OTHER BUSINESS (agenda item 4)

Documents: TRANS/WP.1/2002/26 and Rev.1

22. The representative of FEVR informed WP.1 about developments in the sphere of assistance to victims of road accidents since the last session of the Working Party. In particular, he said that WP.6 had agreed to address the problem of the unreliability of the figures for the number of victims of road accidents and said that a questionnaire would be issued in that connection. Lastly, he referred to ongoing work to modernize the contents of the first aid kit on board vehicles.

23. The Chairman of WP.1 drew delegates' attention to the Working Party's future programme of work. He said that once work on the amendments to the Conventions and Agreements, which took priority, was finalized, stress would be placed on revising and updating Resolutions R.E.1 and R.E.2, which were to be supplemented by provisions concerning safety in road tunnels in order to include the recommendations considered by the "tunnel" small group in July 2002, and provisions on the problems of roadside checks and assistance to victims.

24. The secretariat informed delegates of the dates of the forthcoming meetings of WP.1 as follows:

- forty-first session: 31 March-4 April 2003
- forty-second session: (possibly 7-9 July 2003)
- forty-second (or forty-third) session: 22-26 September 2003

ADOPTION OF DECISIONS (agenda item 5)

25. The list of decisions taken by WP.1 at its fortieth session, prepared by the secretariat, was adopted.

Annex

“Draft resolution concerning the Fourth Road Safety Week in the UN/ECE region

Resolution No. ...

adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its sixty-fifth session

The Inland Transport Committee,

Concerned that the number of persons injured or killed in road accidents each year in the UN/ECE region is still too high despite all efforts made by the public authorities, national and international organizations, the private sector and users' associations,

Also concerned by the serious consequences which all road accidents entail in human, social and economic terms,

Aware that improvement of the situation requires greater awareness on the part of users of the risks they incur on the roads and when they change their behaviour,

Noting that the first three Road Safety Weeks organized in 1990, 1995 and 2000 respectively, helped to raise awareness of the importance of measures to prevent traffic accidents, as a result of the joint efforts of Governments and national and international organizations,

Recalling the decision taken at its sixty-fourth session to organize the next international campaign on road safety in the ECE region in 2004 on the basis of the conclusions of the special one-day session on the subject on 10 September 2001 in the context of the work of the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1),

Considering that:

- more and more drivers have an aggressive behaviour on the roads,
- this may have, as origin, different causes linked to personal situations (emotions, time pressures, telephone, etc.), to the consumption of alcohol and/or drugs, or to the attitude of other road users,
- the effects of this behaviour may be manifested in particular by dangerous driving, inattentiveness of the driver or non respect for rules related to, for example, distance between vehicles, speed, right of way and overtaking;

1. **Decides** to designate the week of 5 to 11 April 2004 ‘Fourth Road Safety Week’ during which road safety campaigns aimed at making drivers of motor vehicles aware of the vital importance of adopting a calm behaviour behind the wheel, respectful of others and polite, will be organized in ECE member States. The latter may wish to focus their campaigns on the causes and effects of this aggressive behaviour.

2. **Invites** the Governments of member countries to take the necessary steps to prepare this Road Safety Week and to implement road safety programmes in their own countries in the context of the Week under the common slogan: '**Respect is safety**'.
3. **Recommends** in particular that Governments should:
 - (a) Ensure, when they set up their national campaigns and other activities, that they conform as far as possible to the objectives of the Fourth Road Safety Week;
 - (b) Define and develop, drawing on all possible sources of expertise, national activities to be carried out within the framework of the Fourth Road Safety Week in terms of the road safety problems encountered in their respective countries;
 - (c) Ensure participation and/or association of governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with road safety, local communities and information bodies in the preparation and implementation of the activities which are part of the Road Safety Week;
 - (d) Make every effort to publicize the Fourth Road Safety Week through the mass media and by creating Internet links between national road safety web sites and the ECE road safety web page which will be created for the purpose;
 - (e) Share their ideas and points of view regarding the organization of the Fourth Road Safety Week through the Inland Transport Committee and the subsidiary body with responsibility for this question, i.e. the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety, thereby maximizing the potential benefits for all;
 - (f) Ensure a continuing follow-up of the implementation of the activities carried out in the context of Road Safety Week and furnish the secretariat with a report on the results obtained;
4. **Invites** the relevant international organizations to provide support and advice to ECE in the organization of the Fourth Road Safety Week;
5. **Requests** the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety to prepare a programme defining the objectives and modalities for the Fourth Road Safety Week, paying particular attention to activities to be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels;
6. **Requests** the Economic Commission for Europe and its secretariat to provide all necessary support and publicity to the preparation, organization and follow-up to the Fourth Road Safety Week."
