

United Nations Global Road Safety Week, 6-12 May 2013
Palais de Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

General Assembly resolution A/RES/66/260 requested the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and other Regional Commissions to organize activities during the UN Global Road Safety Week to raise awareness about road safety issues, with particular attention to vulnerable road users (VRUs). The UN Global Road Safety Week is on 6 to 12 May 2013.

UNECE will commemorate the week in Geneva, Switzerland, with four key events and a number of supporting side events, only on 6 to 7 May 2013, in the Palais des Nations. The key events include a symposium on regional perspectives on drinking and driving, an interactive youth and young leaders session “Scouting for Global Road Safety”, a roundtable on 2013 International Level Crossing Awareness Day (7 May 2013) to emphasize the importance of road safety at level crossings, and a discussion forum on insurance and road safety.

The supporting side events include two poster signing ceremonies, an exhibition showcasing the top entries from the third international children’s drawing contest on safety at level crossings organized by the International Union of Railways, and testing for driver fatigue using top of the line testing equipment. Local participants as well as participants from around the world are expected to travel to Geneva to attend the events.

In addition, in Italy, UNECE is partnering with the Italian Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, ASTM-SIAS, QN-II Giorno and leStrade, to publicize the Week through feature articles in a widely distributed local newspaper and magazine. The partners will also raise awareness of road safety amongst school children and the general public through the distribution of 230,000 specially commissioned bookmarks at local schools and motorway toll booths along approximately 1,300 km of motorways in Lombardia, Piemonte, Liguria, Valle d'Aosta, Emilia Romagna and Toscana.

Further details on and registration for the events in Geneva may be found at http://www.unece.org/trans/roadsafe/2nd_grs_week/programme.html or by contacting Robert Nowak (+41 22 917 1267) and Rebecca Huang (+41 22 917 1286).

1. Regional Perspectives on Drinking and Driving Symposium, Monday 6 May, Salle VIII, 10.00 to 13.00

To mark the launch of the UN Global Road Safety Week in Geneva, Switzerland, UNECE and the International Center for Alcohol Policies (ICAP) are partnering to organize a symposium on “Regional Perspectives on Drinking and Driving”. Experts from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East will present and discuss the main issues influencing alcohol-related accidents involving vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists from their regional perspectives. The lesser explored topic of drunken VRUs will also be canvassed in addition to that of drunken drivers. The presentations and proceedings will be summarized into an e-book which will be published after the event. The symposium will conclude with a poster signing ceremony during which attendees have the opportunity to express a personal commitment to improving road safety by autographing a large, custom-made “We don’t drink and drive” poster.

2. Scouting for Global Road Safety, Monday 6 May, Salle V, 10.00 to 18.00

In parallel with the symposium, UNECE will be partnering with the World Organization of the Scout Movement, Scouting Ireland and the Hellenic Road Safety Institute “Panos Mylonas” to give 50 young leaders from its global Rover Scouts Programme the rare opportunity to participate in an interactive lecture by Professor Claes Tingvall, one of the key creators of the “Vision Zero” concept, and Robert Nowak, UNECE’s road safety specialist. The Rover Scouts will be empowered to develop, and present at the end of the session, their plans to modernize the pedestrian related aspects of the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic from a young person’s perspective.

Going beyond the week, the Rover Scouts will further develop and implement their plan through online coaching and group work, with the ultimate aim of selected representatives returning to Geneva in September 2013 to present the final outcomes of their work at the sixty-sixth session of the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1).

3. ILCAD 2013 roundtable, Tuesday 7 May, Salle VIII, 10.00 to 13.00

Now in its fifth year, the International Level Crossing Awareness Day (ILCAD) is spearheaded by the International Union of Railways (UIC) with the support of the railway community around the world and a growing number of road sector organizations to raise awareness among road users and pedestrians of the risks at level crossings and to change their behaviour to “act safely at level crossings”.

The highlight of ILCAD 2013 will be a press conference followed by two roundtable discussions on the three E’s of safe level crossings – that is, education, engineering and enforcement. National experts and advocates from Estonia, Greece, India, Italy Switzerland and the UK will debate and discuss how behaviour at level crossings can be positively changed, and how infrastructure and enforcement can reinforce and facilitate safe behaviour. The event will conclude with a poster signing ceremony affirming participants’ commitment to safe level crossing behaviour as well as the opening of the ILCAD exhibition in the Passerelle featuring the top entries from the third UIC international children’s drawing contest on safety at level crossings.

4. Discussion forum on insurance and road safety, Tuesday 7 May, Salle VIII, 15.00 to 18.00

Victim rights and insurance are also important road safety issues. This is particularly so in an international context. UNECE in co-operation with the Council of Bureaux (COB) is organizing an insurance and road safety session. COB is the key organization that administers the Green card system by handling and settling claims arising from accidents caused by visiting motorists. This event, in addition to tackling insurance questions, will propose solutions on how to cross roads safer and will demonstrate top of the line testing equipment for driver fatigue.