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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

Strategic questions of a modal and thematic nature:

Harmonization of vehicle regulations

Draft Revision 3 to the 1958 Agreement

Note by the secretariat

Summary

During its 2014 sessions, the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) resolved most of the remaining issues on draft Revision 3 to the 1958 Agreement except those on the majority voting threshold and a proposed clarification to Article 3 on the principles of the mutual recognition of type approvals. WP.29 is expected to resume consideration of these subjects at its March 2015 session.

The Committee may wish to take note of the work progress made by WP.29.



I. Background and mandate

1. In 1995, Revision 2 to the 1958 Agreement entered into force and made it possible for regional economic integrations organizations set up by countries that are members of the UNECE and also for other countries of the United Nations to adhere to the Agreement. To date, 51 countries have become Contracting Parties to the 1958 Agreement and apply most of the 134 UN Regulations annexed to the Agreement. The provisions of these UN Regulations provide the basis of technical requirements necessary for the construction of new vehicles with respect to their safety and environmental performances. Furthermore, the World Forum managed to establish an efficient procedure to continuously adapt these requirements to the technical progress. The technical requirements for vehicles, equipment and parts listed in the UN Regulations, thus set the highest levels of stringency worldwide.

II. Main objectives of Revision 3 of the 1958 Agreement

2. In March 2011, the World Forum established an informal group to develop the International Whole Vehicle Type Approval (IWVTA) system. The IWVTA system consists of a single type approval covering the whole vehicle. On the basis of a road map, presented by the informal group on IWVTA in November 2011, the World Forum agreed on the need to amend the 1958 Agreement. The amendment would also aim at fostering the broader participation of countries from emerging economies and regional economic integration organizations in the activities of the World Forum and at increasing the number of Contracting Parties to the Agreement.

3. Thus, the main objectives of Revision 3 to the 1958 Agreement consist of:
- (a) adding new provisions for the IWVTA system;
 - (b) allowing the Contracting Parties to grant type approvals according to former versions of UN Regulations annexed to the 1958 Agreement;
 - (c) establishing, at UNECE, an electronic Database for the Exchange of Type Approval documentation (DETA) between all the Contracting Parties to the Agreement,
 - (d) modifying the voting conditions for the adoption of new UN Regulations or their amendments to existing UN Regulations (i.e. currently, the two-thirds majority); and
 - (e) reviewing and strengthening the current provisions with the aim to improve the functioning and reliability of the type approval procedures and the conditions for their mutual recognition (i.e. quality assurance assessment, certification and conformity of production procedures, the tasks, responsibilities and competences of involved parties and aspects related to enforcement such as ensuring market surveillance and safeguard measures).

III. Work progress

4. At its November 2014 session, WP.29 considered the draft Revision 3 and agreed on the following issues:

- (a) to reinsert the provisions in force on the equal authenticity of English, French and Russian languages;
- (b) to clarify Articles 1 and 12 on the term of "versions of UN Regulations" respective to the obligations of Contracting Parties to accept type approvals;

(c) to withdraw the new Article 9 in the appendix on the possibility of a Contracting Party to delegate its voting rights to another Contracting Party (proxy-voting).

5. WP.29 could not agree at that session on either the majority threshold vote or on a proposed clarification to Article 3 on the principles of the mutual recognition of type approvals. WP.29 agreed to resume consideration of these subjects at its March 2015 session.

IV. Time schedule

6. The timetable for the completion and entry into force of Revision 3 to the 1958 Agreement is currently March 2016: the remaining issues were to be resolved at its November 2014 session. As the final text of Revision 3 was not agreed upon at that session, WP.29 noted that the adoption of the revised agreement could be delayed.

V. Follow-up

7. The scope of the new IWVTA provisions is limited, in a first step, to passenger cars. In a further step, the World Forum expected to enlarge, the scope to other categories of vehicles. The most recent draft Revision 3 to the 1958 Agreement is in ECE/TRANS/WP.29/2015/40 and ECE/TRANS/WP.29/2015/41, which are listed on the agenda of the World Forum WP.29 for a detailed consideration at its March 2015 session.

8. The Committee may wish to be informed, at its next session, about the final outcome of WP.29 in the development of the revised Agreement.
