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Programme of Work

Taking Stock of National Legislation

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Taking Stock of National Legislation

Note by the Secretariat

This document contains a number of observations made by the secretariat when reviewing road “non-Convention” signs inserted into the Road Signs Management System (RSMS) by Contracting Parties to the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals and to the 1971 European Agreement Supplementing the Convention. The Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals is invited to consider these observations.

Observations made from a review of the non-Convention signs used in Contracting Parties to the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals.

Introduction

The secretariat has reviewed the road “non-Convention” signs inserted into the Road Signs Management System (RSMS) by Contracting Parties to the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals and to the 1971 European Agreement Supplementing the Convention.

When reviewing the non-Convention signs, the secretariat made a number of observations, which may be relevant to the Group of Experts on Signs and Signals in their work assessing the inconsistencies and inadequacies in the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals and to the 1971 European Agreement Supplementing the Convention and between these legal instruments and national legislation in the Contracting Parties.

The observation can be found below. They are grouped as general or sign sub-class-specific observations. The Group of Experts is invited to consider these observations.

The secretariat will issue, latest in the second half of February, a separate informal document containing a full review of 1,435 road “non-Convention” signs inserted into RSMS. This document will contain a table listing all the non-Convention signs from RSMS and providing sign images, descriptions (in majority of cases, as it was originally provided by a Contracting Party) and comments and observations made by the secretariat to these signs.

General observations:

Observation 1

The 1968 Convention is not consistent in describing its system of signs. Article 5 identifies the classes and sub-classes of the Convention’s signs. Articles 9 to 21 provide more detailed definitions of these sign sub-classes (to be noted: the way the sub-classes are defined is not consistent). Article 31 separately defines road work signs.

Annex 1 does not provide descriptions of all signs which are identified and defined in the text of the Convention (i.e. road identification signs and place identification signs as well as road works signs). Similarly, Annex 1, section G, point I (general characteristics and symbols), para 4 refers to temporary condition signs, including road works signs, which must be other signs that those referred to in Article 31.

Furthermore, the signs, symbols and panels (referred to in Annex 1) do not always have corresponding colour reproductions (images) provided in Annex 3.

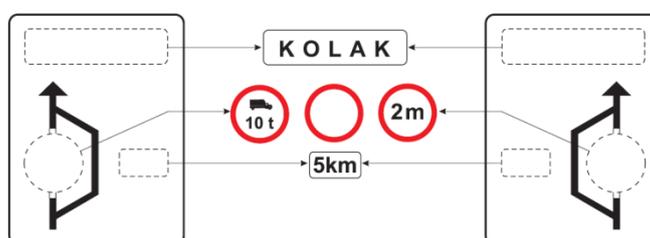
For example, images of A, 4 a and A, 4 b (Annex 3) do not illustrate all cases of narrowing of the carriageway as referred to in Annex 1 under Section A, para 4. The same applies to D, 2 sign. However, it would seem useful to illustrate with A, 4 a, A 4, b and A, 4 c and with D, 2 a, D, 2 b and D, 2 c number codes all possible cases for respectively narrowing of carriageway or passing an obstacle. Illustrations are provided below.



For some signs, such as the temporary conditions signs (Annex 1, section G, point I general characteristics and symbols, para 4), Annex 3 does not provide any examples.

This lack of consistency is probably the cause of confusion whether a particular sign is or is not a Convention's sign. It is to be noted that RSMS includes as Convention signs only those signs that are reproduced in Annex 3, i.e. not all signs that are defined in the Convention.

A possible solution for consideration: introduce a consistent way in which the Convention defines, describes and reproduces its signs. To this end, identify all Convention classes and sub-classes of signs in Article 5. Define all these classes and sub-classes in a consistent way in articles 9 to 21. Describe in Annex 1 all signs as defined in the Convention. Provide in Annex 3 all possible variations especially for A, C, D sub-class signs, with each sign having its own specific number code. For signs such as E, 1 or G, 1 incorporating other signs or symbols, reproduce them in Annex 3 as schemes of signs rather than specific signs. A good example is provided in Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals (RE.2) with a scheme for a detour sign (RE.2, page 20).

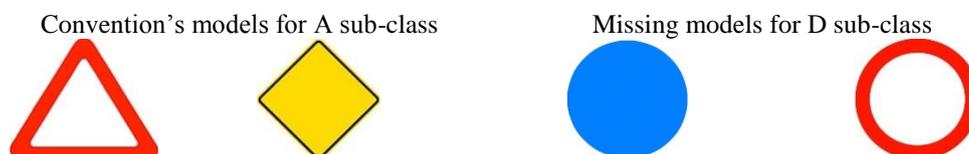


Observation 2:

The 1968 Convention does not provide a consistent approach to illustrating in Annex 3 the general characteristics of the different sign classes or sub-classes when there is more than one option provided, which again can cause questions whether a particular sign is or is not a Convention sign.

For example, in A sub-class two models are referred to and both models are reproduced in Annex 3 of the Convention (to be noted: model A b is not reproduced correctly as its ground should be yellow and not white). For D sub-class, the Convention refers to two alternative solutions: blue ground and white or light symbols or white ground with red rim and black symbols. Only the first solution is reproduced in Annex 3 of the Convention.

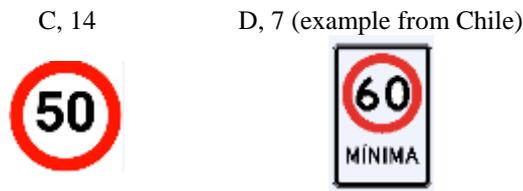
A possible solution for consideration: When there is more than one model or alternative solutions are available (e.g. for A and D sub-classes), provide reproductions for both models/alternative solutions or, otherwise, reconsider whether alternative solutions should be provided in the Convention



Observation 3:

The alternative solution for mandatory signs as referred to in Annex 1 of the Convention, section D, point I, para 2, makes the D-sub-class signs resemble the C-sub-class signs. This appears to contradict the letter of the Convention (articles 3 and 8).

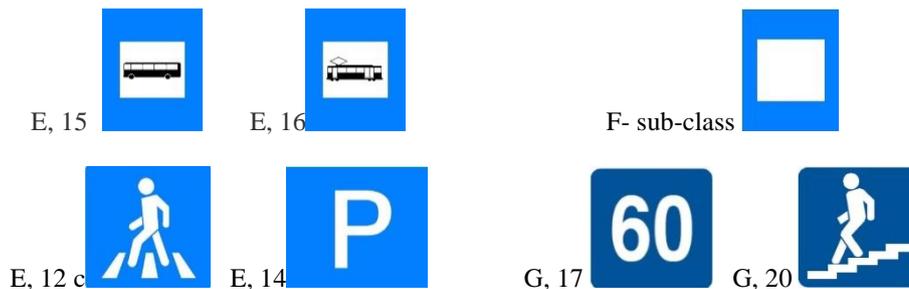
For example, the speed limit C, 14 sign and the compulsory minimum speed, D, 7 sign look the same if the latter is reproduced in accordance with the alternative solution for D sub-class signs.



Furthermore, Article 8, para 1 is not applied consistently throughout the Convention. The signs of C and D sub-classes are of different shape than sub-class E (while all three subclasses belong to the same class). The priority signs (B sub-class) are all different from one another, even though they belong to the same sub-class. There is thus a question whether Article 8 para 1 should refer to a class or sub-class with the exception of sub-class B (priority signs). In the latter case, however, the prohibitory and mandatory sub-classes shall not look the same.

In addition, some E sub-class signs (of class 2) resemble those from F or G sub-classes signs, (of class 3).

For example, the signs E, 15 and E, 16 resemble the F-section signs. The signs E, 12 c, E, 13, E, 14 resemble the G, 17 through G, 21 signs.



As a result of the above, it is quite difficult to understand why a specific E, G or F sub-class sign was classified as such.

A possible solution for consideration: Review Article 8 para 1 of the Convention as well as the general characteristics of sign sub-classes provided in Annex I to ensure sub-classes of signs can be immediately distinguished.

For example, remove/alter the alternative solution for the D section. For E, 15 and E, 16 signs, they could follow the design of E, 11 and thus be different from F-section signs (to be noted however that many countries use the kind of design of E, 11 sign as F section design, and so the problem remains). To distinguish between E and G sections, the former could be of a more rectangular shape like E, 5 or E, 6 and the G section of signs have a more square shape as they do have. Alternatively it can be considered whether not to place certain signs from E, section into F or G sections and vice-versa (to be noted that the description for some of the signs from E section does not in any way make it to be different from that used for Indicative signs (G section) of Informative signs (F section), i.e. it does not refer to any application of special traffic rules or to taking extra precaution, see E, 15 that just says: bus stop, which is more a description of F section signs).

Observation 4:

The 1968 Convention is not consistent with number-coding of signs which may also cause confusion as to whether a particular sign is or is not a Convention’s sign.

The number-coding of signs is inconsistent across sections, e.g. the way the end of regulation sign is number-coded. In C sub-class, the signs indicating the end of regulation are number-coded as a separate sign grouping (C, 17 a through d) including therein all the regulations to end (to be noted: it is not clear whether the description provided in Annex I, section C, point 8 (b) (page 41) of the Convention applies to signs C, 17 b, C. 17 c, C, 17 d or it provides a general rule).



For D and E sub-class signs, the end of regulation is introduced either as a separately number-coded sign (D, 8 linked to D, 7) or group of signs (E, 8 a through d linked to E, 7 a through d).



There is also a case where the start and end of regulation is put into the same sign group (E, 5 a and b).



For D,1 a sign there are four distinct signs reproduced under the same number-code, whereas for other signs, e.g. C, 13 sign, the number-code of a double small letter was introduced to provide a specific number-code for each distinct sign (C, 13 aa, C, 13 ab, C, 13 ba, C, 13, bb).

The way the C sub-class signs are number-coded for prohibiting of entry of specific motor vehicle or road user is different to the way used in D sub-class signs showing a mandatory track for specific motor vehicles or road users (C, 3 a through l versus D, 4 through D, 6).

A possible solution for consideration: Develop a consistent and sign specific number-coding across classes and sub-classes.

Sub-class observations

A-section (sub-class) observations:

A warning chevron sign used at a bend is commonly used in many countries, but it is not part of the Convention (A sub-class).



A possible solution for consideration: Introduce into the Convention, A sub-class warning chevron sign

C-section (sub-class) observations:

Observation 1:

Some symbols which are used in the C, 3 sign are not part of the 1968 Convention (for example “bus” symbol).

A possible solution for consideration: Expand the C, 3 sign group by adding signs with all other major symbols for motor vehicles and other road users. Alternatively, provide the symbols separately to be used in the sign C, 3 and in the sign C, 4 a or b. This alternative solution can make a lot of sense since the same symbols indicating a specific motor vehicle or other road user are used in signs of different classes (e.g. D section or H section).

Observation 2:

The Convention provides the possibility to signal the end of specific regulation with four signs reproduced in Annex 3 of the Convention and referred to in its Annex 1 (C, 17 a through d with C, 17 b, c and d ending regulations introduced respectively by C, 14 C, 13 aa and ba). Signaling the end of regulation/prohibition makes sense also for other Convention prohibitory signs, such as C, 10, C, 12 and C, 15. As already mentioned, it is unclear whether para 8, point (b) of Annex I of the Convention (page 41) refers to only C, 17 b through d or if any other symbol of prohibition of restriction can be used to indicate the end of regulation.

A possible solution for consideration: Introduce the signaling ‘end of the specific regulation’ for all C-sub-class signs (where relevant).

Observation 3:

The Convention leaves it to the Contracting Parties to use or omit the red oblique bar in the signs C, 3 a through l, while it does not give this freedom for the sign C, 4 a and b. The oblique bar is put on some C sub-class signs in the front i.e. over the sign symbol (e.g. C, 11, C, 13, C, 15) while on other signs in the back i.e. behind the sign symbol(s) (e.g. C, 3 a through l). This does not seem to be a consistent approach.

A possible solution for consideration: Introduce a consistent approach to using the red oblique bar.

Observation 4:

The Convention allows alternative design for a C, 18 sign ‘parking prohibited’ (see Section C, para 9 (a) (ii), page 42) but not for the C, 19 sign ‘standing and parking prohibited’.



A possible solution for consideration: Provide the alternative design for both C, 18 and C, 19 signs.

D-section (sub-class) observations:

Observation 1:

There is a number of symbols that are not listed in the Convention to indicate a mandatory track for a specific motor vehicle or road user. The Convention only provides three symbols (D, 4, D, 5 and D, 6).

A possible solution for consideration: As for the Observation 1 under C section (sub-class). The solution for this sub-class should be consistent with the solution for C sub-class.

Observation 2:

The Convention provides the possibility to indicate the end of specific regulation only for the D, 8 sign, whereas it would make sense to have the same end of the regulation signs for other mandatory signs too.

A possible solution for consideration: Introduce the ‘end of the specific regulation’ for all D section (sub-class) signs (where relevant).

E-section (sub-class) observations:

Observation 1:

Some signs of this sub-class are provided as examples in Annex 1 and this is not reflected in Annex 3. Further, these examples reproduced in Annex 3 illustrate only to some extent what is referred to as a sign description in Annex 1 of the Convention.

For example, for signs such as E, 1 or E, 2, it would make sense to present various combinations, including e.g. the beginning or ceasing of specific regulation, or showing the vehicle category for which the lane is open.

A possible solution for consideration: Distinguish clearly in Annex 3 of the Convention all the signs that are examples or, alternatively, introduce them as schemes of signs This is relevant for E, 1, E, 2, E, 7, E, 9 E, 10, E, 14.

Observation 2:

A number of countries uses the type of E, 15 or E, 16 sign (it is not clear why both signs are not coded E, 15 a and E, 15 b), to indicate the presence of a taxi stand. Other countries designed their own taxi stand signs, in some cases belonging to other sign class.



A possible solution for consideration: Introduce a Convention sign to inform of the presence of a taxi stand.

Observation 3:

The Convention introduces a symbol of the bus in the E, 2 b sign. At the same time, this E-type bus symbol is not reproduced in Annex 3 of the Convention or described in Annex 1. Further, that particular bus symbol is referred to in Article 26 bis, which is quite confusing. The same applies to a bus symbol used in E, 2 a sign.

A possible solution for consideration: Make sure that specific symbols or signs used in other signs or schemes are only those that are included in the Convention and reproduced in its Annex 3.

F-section (sub-class) observations:

Observation 1:

The Convention does not define or describe the “signs of importance to tourists”. They are described in RE.2.



A possible solution for consideration: Introduce tourist information signs into the Convention either into the F sub-class or a separate sub-class.

Observation 2:

Multiple services signs – relevant e.g. for motorway rest areas – are commonly used.



A possible solution for consideration: Introduce an example of such a multiservice panel as F-section sign or scheme.

Observation 3:

A sign indicating a police station is commonly used.

A possible solution for consideration: Introduce a Convention sign indicating a police station either as F or G section sign (alternatively as an inscription or symbol).

G-section (sub-class) observations:

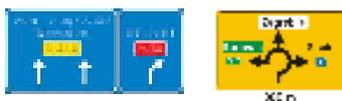
Observation 1:

Some signs of this sub-class are provided as examples in Annex 1 and this is not reflected in Annex 3. Further, these examples reproduced in Annex 3 illustrate only to some extent what is referred to as a sign description in Annex 1 of the Convention.

For example, the description of the sign G, 1 states (see a note on page 52) that the G, 1 sign may bear symbols from other signs to inform of characteristic of the route or of traffic conditions, as below.



Further, signs such as those provided below and turned into sign schemes would offer a better way to visualize variety of options for direction signs.



A possible solution for consideration: Identify clearly the signs that are Annex 3 examples or introduce them as schemes of signs. Provide the schemes showing different variations.

Observation 2:

The Convention signs G, 6 through G, 9 reproduce or provide examples of signs (directions to airfield, youth hostel and parking). There are other points of interest that are commonly used in this type of direction signs.

A possible solution for consideration: Introduce a scheme(s) of a direction sign directing to a point of interest and define separately symbols for the most commonly used point of interests that can be placed on the direction sign.

Observation 3:

The Convention includes a sign to be used to inform whether a road is open or closed (G, 15). There is no sign included to inform if a road is subject to toll.

A possible solution for consideration: Introduce a scheme(s) of a panel informing of a toll road, if possible using a universal symbol.

Observation 4:

The 1968 Convention includes the signs G, 22 a through c to indicate an exit on a motorway. There are other types of signs used to notify about the exit on a motorway which are widely used.

A possible solution for consideration: Introduce other types of motorway exit notification.

H-section (sub-class) observations:

Observation 1:

The 1968 Convention refers to additional panels (sometime naming them “plates”), e.g. for indicating directions of parking place (section E, para 12 (b)) which are not reproduced in Annex 3. As such these additional panels are included in the Convention, however, the lack of their reproduction in Annex 3 can be confusing.

A possible solution for consideration: Introduce additional panels referred to in (section E, para 12 (b)) of the Convention, to be consistent with the possible solution under general observation 1.

Observation 2:

Countries use different additional panels and sometimes different signs to notify of speed cameras.



A possible solution for consideration: Introduce an example of an additional panel to notify of speed camera.
