

Distr.: General
4 September 2018

Original: English only

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety

Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals

Sixteenth session

Geneva, 4 and 5 September 2018

**Visually impaired or blind pedestrians Proposal for
introduction of a symbol into the Convention on Road Signs
and Signals**

Submitted by Forschungsgesellschaft Strasse-Schiene-Verkehr (FSV)

Visually impaired or blind pedestrians

Proposal for introduction of a symbol into the Convention on Road Signs and Signals

Date	2018-08-08
Author:	Stefan Egger, IILDre, Vienna, Austria

Table of contents

0	CURRENT SYMBOL USE AND RELATED ISSUES.....	1
1	RE2¹⁾ SYMBOL “BLIND PEDESTRIANS”	2
2	CONCLUSION.....	2

0 Current symbol use and related issues

In several countries, such as Austria, road users are notified of the heightened possibility of encountering pedestrians suffering of low vision or without sufficient eyesight, in that sense being "blind". Such notification may occur on additional panels below danger warning sign A, 32, or below pedestrian crossing E, 12.

Quite often, this group of road users is identified by a symbol of the following image content: A walking person, seen from the side, bearing a cane. This implies several problems:

- a) The Symbol is only distinguished by a relatively small (thin) element, the cane to constitute the intended meaning.
- b) If comprehended wrongly, that symbol may be confused as meaning "mobility impaired persons"
- c) If comprehended (the cane was not overlooked), it is highly likely that drivers would relate the symbol to a blind person- This leads to the expectance of encountering a person using a cane, while the vast majority of visually impaired people do not use a cane, since they do not need one. (In addition, in this group, it becomes less popular to wear a mark on the person to identify as being visually impaired).

As a result, drivers may have misled expectations towards how this group of road users are identified, and how they may behave, possibly leading to dangerous situations.

1 RE2¹⁾ Symbol “Blind pedestrians”

In contrast to the above, the symbol of RE2¹⁾, Annex V, 4. better relates to the issue at hand: bad eyesight, leaving open if a person is actually blind or only visually impaired. It is expected that this allows drivers to better identify persons and estimate how they may behave (without providing wrong assumptions). Still, the symbol needs to be renamed (in any case) from "Blind pedestrians" to "Visually impaired or blind pedestrians" to allow for proper use.

Despite of the RE2¹⁾ symbol being more suitable for the cause, it is not self-explanatory, and it's meaning needs to be learned as required for many symbols and signs in the Convention. Therefore it is necessary to transfer the symbol into the main body of the convention in order to enable countries to introduce it into national codes, being taught to aspirants of driving licenses and the public.

The following example resembles the RE2¹⁾ symbol's by image content, but was modified to have thin areas (in this case the glasses temple an earpiece) adjusted to a more wide strokewidth in order to counter the effect of irradiation, where light reflected from light areas of a symbol make enclosed black areas look "thinner" as they are. Very thin elements such as temple an earpiece of the glasses may even disappear. That effect is amplified if retroreflective sheeting material is used.



Symbol of RE2¹⁾, Annex V, 4, “Visually impaired or blind pedestrians”

2 Conclusion

Considering the above,

– it is requested to introduce symbol of RE2¹⁾, Annex V, 4. into the Convention on Road Signs and Signals.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the decision of the Expert Group on Road Signs and Signals on the matter above, in any case,

– it is requested to change the symbol's denomination (and therefore meaning) from "Blind pedestrians" to "Visually impaired or blind pedestrians".

Stefan Egger, IIDre, Vienna

1) Economic Commission for Europe, Inland Transport Committee. (2010). Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals (R.E.2). United Nations.