



United Nations

# UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 263 – 7-11 April 2008

## New global regulations for safer vehicles

The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations, at its March 2008 session, adopted two new global technical regulations (gtrs) for safer motor vehicles; one on safety glazing and one on head restraints. This brings the total number of such regulations to seven.

The World Forum is a subsidiary body of UNECE which develops vehicle regulations aimed at increasing vehicle safety and environmental performance. Fifty countries, as well as vehicle manufacturers, consumers and road users, participate in the elaboration of these regulations, contained in the so-called "1958 and 1998 Agreements".

### More effective glazing

The new safety glazing regulation is designed to improve glazing installations in passenger and commercial vehicles.

To comply with the new prescriptions, vehicles must have a more effective glazing that will reduce the likelihood of injury in case of breakage, with better resistance versus time and atmospheric conditions and with good optical properties.



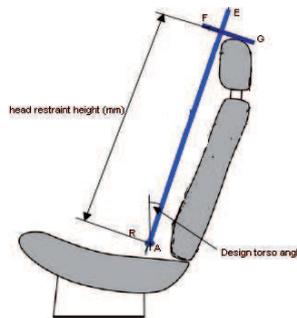
### Whiplash

The head restraints regulation will improve geometric fit specifications of head restraints, reducing the level of excessive movement of the head and neck relative to the torso, which is considered one of the main causes of whiplash injuries.

Computer model generated data suggest the new design will reduce injuries by 18 per cent.

### Amendments to increase safety

Forty-eight amendments to existing vehicle regulations annexed to the 1958 Agreement were also adopted.



They will increase vehicle safety and environmental performance, facilitating the adoption of uniform conditions for manufacturing and approval of motor vehicles, equipment and parts .

A gtr on Electronic Stability Control for passenger cars was prepared for a ballot in June 2008. "This important global technical regulation could do as much for some vehicles' safety as the safety belt does", said Ms. Eva Molnar, Director of the UNECE Transport Division.

The World Forum is also currently working on gtrs for hydrogen and fuel-cell vehicles. As a first step towards a global technical regulation on hydrogen, the Japanese standard has been selected as a potential model. ◀

For more information contact *Eva Molnar* ([eva.molnar@unece.org](mailto:eva.molnar@unece.org)) or *Juan Ramos Garcia* ([juan.ramos.garcia@unece.org](mailto:juan.ramos.garcia@unece.org))

Website: <http://www.unece.org/trans>

## Lithuania joins combined transport Agreement

On 8 February 2008 Lithuania acceded to the European Agreement on Important



International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC Agreement), bringing the total number of Contracting Parties to 31. The Agreement will enter into force for Lithuania on 8 May 2008.

The AGTC Agreement provides a legal framework for the coordinated development of international combined road/rail transport infrastructure and services at the Pan-European level, with a view to facilitating international transport in the region.



With growing international trade, international transport of goods, particularly road transport, is increasing rapidly, leading to congestion along main international road corridors and impacting on the environment.

By combining different modes of transport, using rail for the main haul and road for collection and distribution only, such impacts can be reduced and the burden on the European road network alleviated. ◀

For more information contact *Eva Molnar* ([eva.molnar@unece.org](mailto:eva.molnar@unece.org)) or *Martin Magold*, ([martin.magold@unece.org](mailto:martin.magold@unece.org))

Website: <http://www.unece.org/trans/wp24/welcome.html>

## Ratifications ... Accessions ...

European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN), of 19 January 1996

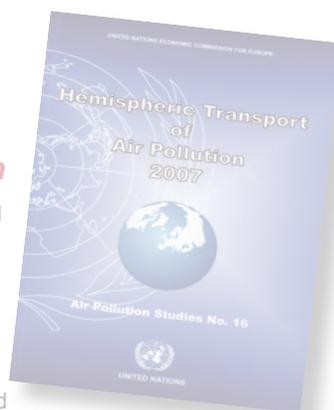
Accession: **Belarus** (26 March 2008)

## Off the Press

Available from the UN Publications, Sales and Marketing Section ([unogbookshop@unog.ch](mailto:unogbookshop@unog.ch))

### Hemispheric transport of air pollution

Current emissions create pollution levels that exceed air quality standards and other environmental objectives at many locations throughout the Northern Hemisphere. While local or regional emissions and environmental conditions are responsible for most of these problems, air quality and pollutant deposition are also influenced by emissions, transport and transformation processes at the intercontinental and global scales.



There is well-documented evidence for the intercontinental transport of ozone, fine particles, and their precursors, as well as mercury and some persistent organic pollutants (POPs). The significance of this intercontinental influence for the design of air pollution control policies, however, has not been well understood.

This interim report summarizes the current state of understanding of the significance of intercontinental transport and hemispheric pollution on ozone and fine particle concentrations and sulphur and nitrogen deposition in the Northern Hemisphere. It has been prepared in anticipation of a more comprehensive report planned for 2009 aimed at addressing in depth a number of policy-relevant science questions, including intercontinental transport of mercury and POPs. ◀



### Road signs and signals

UNECE has, since its creation in 1947, developed international regulations on the various components of road traffic: the road, the vehicle and road users. Incorporated into legally binding agreements and conventions, those regulations are regularly updated in order to keep them up to best practices and the best available technologies.

Implementation in UNECE countries of these agreements and conventions has greatly contributed to lowering the number of people killed on UNECE roads despite a sharp increase in road traffic. However figures for deaths and injuries on the roads are still high, and a basic requirement to reduce these figures drastically is to put in place appropriate road traffic legislation that is based on the relevant international conventions.

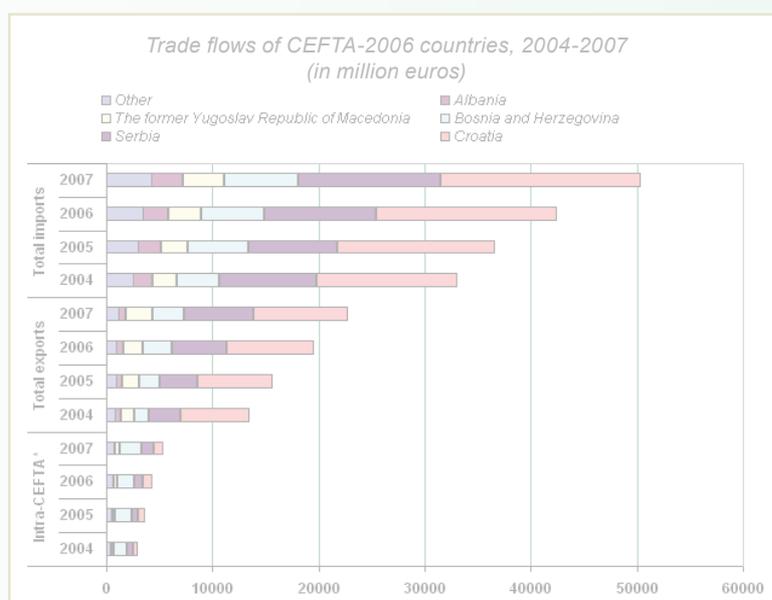
These publications contain the consolidated versions of the Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals, the European Agreement supplementing the Convention, and its additional Protocol, incorporating all the amendments that have been prepared and adopted in order to make their safety provisions more stringent. ◀

## Facts and Figures

In the face of strong external demand, South-East European foreign trade boomed in the mid-2000s. Although the bulk of trade flows was geared to the EU, intraregional trade also expanded very rapidly. In the last four years, aggregate intraregional imports (in euro terms) grew by some 22% annually, their share in total imports increasing to about 11% in 2007. The strongest reliance on intraregional trade – 35% for exports and 30% for imports - was recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This intraregional trade expansion was preceded by intense efforts to promote trade liberalization and intraregional cooperation under the Stability Pact for South East Europe, which also paved the way for a regional free trade agreement. In 2006, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, and the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo acceded to the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA-2006), after negotiating with the four then active members (Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, and The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) a number of amendments to it. These stipulated that the free trade area shall be established over a transitional period of three years following ratification of the pact by all continuing parties (Bulgaria and Romania exited CEFTA-2006 upon their accession to the EU in January 2007). ◀

### Intraregional trade in South-East Europe gains momentum



Source: UN COMTRADE database and national statistics

Note: CEFTA-6 consists of eight South-East European countries: five are listed in the legend to the chart, while Moldova, Montenegro, and UNMIK/Kosovo are grouped under the item "other"

\*Intra-CEFTA trade refers to reported imports from the eight member countries

Information Service  
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)  
CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: +41(0)22 917 44 44  
Fax: +41(0)22 917 05 05

E-mail: [info.ece@unece.org](mailto:info.ece@unece.org)  
Website: <http://www.unece.org>

Not an official record - For information only