



UNECE Weekly

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 94 – 15-19 November 2004

FIRST GLOBAL TECHNICAL REGULATION ON CAR SAFETY

This week will see a new milestone towards the improvement of road traffic safety throughout the world. In the framework of the UNECE 1998 Agreement on global technical regulations for the construction of wheeled vehicles, the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) will decide on a vehicle regulation, which will be used by all car manufacturers around the world. This should be the first of a long series of such global regulations

➤ What is WP.29?

WP.29 is a global platform for the harmonization and improvement of existing regulations governing safety and emission standards of motor vehicles and the development of new regulations where no regulations or standards exist.

The Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles (WP.29) was originally set up in 1953 in order to implement the provisions of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic, which identified vehicle characteristics as a major cause of road traffic crashes, deaths and injuries. Working under the auspices of the UNECE, the first task of WP.29 was to develop the legal framework to facilitate the adoption of uniform conditions for the manufacturing and approval of motor vehicles, their equipment and parts. This is the 1958 Agreement, which confers to the regulations developed in its framework a mandatory character. Forty-three States, including some from other parts of the world, and the European Community, have ratified the 1958 Agreement. The first UNECE Regulation annexed to the 1958 Agreement was one on headlamps. Many others followed suit over the years and currently there are 121 UNECE Regulations. Their constant updating has improved significantly not only the active safety of vehicles, i.e. their capacity to prevent accidents, but also their passive safety, or their ability to reduce the consequences of accidents if they occur. In addition, these Regulations have reduced drastically vehicle's pollutant emissions and noise.

➤ What is new?

While the 1958 Agreement was applied in many countries around the world, it was not entirely global. This is why WP.29 adopted in 1998 a new truly global Agreement, the 1998 Agreement. Soon thereafter, in 2000, WP.29 became the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29). Working in parallel with the 1958 Agreement, the 1998 Agreement provides the legal framework for the development of global vehicle regulations. Twenty-one countries, including the United States, Canada, Japan, China, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and many European countries, as well as the European Community, have ratified the 1998 Agreement.

This week, the 22 Contracting Parties to the 1998 Agreement will have before them for adoption the first truly global technical regulation (gtr). As the Agreement works by consensus, all must vote in favour. It is expected that they all will do so.

The first gtr regulates door locks and door retention components. Inadvertent door openings are often caused by a combination of forces during a crash, which result in structural failures of the latch system and hinges. In the US alone, about 42,000 door openings or failures occur every year. Door openings present a risk of serious injury or death to vehicle occupants, particularly if they are unbelted. This gtr will avoid a large number of door openings and thus will reduce the risk of occupant ejections.

WP.29 is currently developing other global technical regulations concerning, for example, safety glazing material, pedestrian safety, and head restraint systems.

For more information contact José Capel Ferrer (jose.capel.ferrer@unece.org) or Juan Ramos García (juan.ramos.garcia@unece.org).

Not an official record - For information only

It's just happened ...

Republic of Korea accedes to the 1958 Agreement on Vehicle Regulations



On 1 November 2004, the Republic of Korea communicated to the United Nations Secretary-General its accession to the 1958 Agreement. The Agreement will enter into force for the Republic of Korea on 31 December 2004, bringing to 44 the total number of Contracting Parties to this Agreement. The 1958 Agreement is the legal framework for the development of uniform technical prescriptions for vehicles and their components, with the aim of increasing active and passive safety of motor vehicles and reducing their emissions. A total of 121 UNECE Regulations have

so far been developed under the 1958 Agreement. These Regulations are constantly updated, incorporating new technologies to make vehicles safer and more environmentally sound. In acceding to the 1958 Agreement, the Republic of Korea joins the vast majority of European countries as well as non-European countries such as Japan, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. This accession also underlines the global role of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29).

For more information contact José Capel Ferrer (jose.capel.ferrer@unece.org) or Juan Ramos García (juan.ramos.garcia@unece.org).

Malta accedes to drivers' working hours agreement

On 24 September 2004, Malta became the 43rd Contracting Party to the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR). The AETR regulates the working hours and rest periods of professional drivers, which not only helps avoid distortions in the conditions of competition between road transport operators, but also has a major impact on road safety as it



contributes to reducing the number of accidents caused by fatigue in drivers of trucks and coaches. This Agreement is being amended to introduce the digital tachograph, which cannot be easily manipulated and which will, therefore, provide a better control of driving and rest periods of professional drivers.

For more information contact Marie-Noëlle Poirier (marie-noelle.poirier@unece.org).

Facts and figures:

Membership in Municipal Councils or Local Governing Bodies

Percentage of Women and Men
Selected UNECE Countries

Country	1995		2001	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Bulgaria	...	...	79.1	20.9
Croatia	95.2 ²	4.8 ²	86.6	13.4
Cyprus ^{9,12}	85.9 ¹	14.1 ¹	81.4	18.6
Estonia	...	...	79.4	20.6
Finland	70.0	30.0	65.6	34.4
France	79.3	20.7	69.7	30.3
Georgia	...	...	98.9	1.1
Hungary	80.9 ³	19.1 ³	78.3 ⁶	21.7 ⁶
Iceland	75.2 ³	24.8 ³	71.8 ⁶	28.2 ⁶
Ireland	82.3	17.7	83.9	16.1
Latvia	...	...	58.8	41.2
Lithuania	80.6	19.4	82.4 ⁸	17.6 ⁸
Netherlands	78.6 ³	21.4 ³	77.6 ¹⁰	22.4 ¹⁰
Norway	67.3	32.7	65.9 ⁷	34.1 ⁷
Poland	86.7	13.3	84.2 ⁸	15.8 ⁸
Slovenia	89.3	10.7	88.0	12.0
Spain	...	...	90.1 ¹¹	9.6 ¹¹
United Kingdom ¹³	73.0 ⁵	27.0 ⁵	71.0	28.0

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

Notes

¹ 1991; ² 1993; ³ 1994; ⁴ 1996; ⁵ 1997; ⁶ 1998; ⁷ 1999; ⁸ 2000 ⁹ Government-controlled area only; ¹⁰ Includes councils at sub-municipal level in Amsterdam & Rotterdam, ¹¹ Mayors only; ¹² Mayors not included; ¹³ England & Wales

Coming up soon ...

November

- 15-16 Expert Group on Revision of the TIR Convention 1975
- 16-17 Joint ECE/ILO/OECD/Eurostat Meeting on Energy Statistics (OECD, Paris, France)
- 16-19 World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29)

For further information please contact:

**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

Web site: <http://www.unece.org>

Not an official record - For information only