

CLEPA AND THE 1958 AGREEMENT

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a pleasure and an honour to be here in the Palais des Nations today together with representatives of more than 50 nations and experts from all fields of the automotive industry under the umbrella of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29). For CLEPA, the 1958 Agreement has a great significance since it was the main reason for the creation of CLEPA which took place here in Geneva in 1959 when the 1958 Agreement was signed by Belgium, France and Sweden. This means that CLEPA is celebrating its 50th anniversary next year and this will be done here in Geneva in June when we hold our General Assembly. Today CLEPA has 3,000 member companies, 3 million employees and sales of more than 300 billion Euros.

We have heard about the history of the 1958 Agreement and the excellent work carried out by WP.29 and I think it is appropriate to try and look ahead at the challenges that we are facing and what role the World Forum can and should play.

There are more vehicles being produced every year and last year we passed the 70 million mark and those vehicles are being produced and sold all over the world, improving the mobility even in the most remote parts. In order to reduce negative impacts of this development, new regulations are created and introduced all the time covering safety and environmental aspects affecting our industry and sometimes making our life complicated. Since 75% of the average European car today comes from the suppliers and 50% of the total spending on R and D comes from the suppliers, we are very much dependent on these regulations and that is the reason why we, together with our American and Japanese colleagues, are so interested and active in WP.29. Since most of our members are globally active, it is very important for them that we have global regulations and standards so that we can compete on a level playing field. It is further important that these global technical regulations are good regulations that have been created after thorough consultation with all stakeholders making sure that the full impact of a regulation is assessed and understood and that enough lead-time is provided so that the industry can plan its investments and utilize its resources in an optimal way. This is more important now than ever before when the existence of the automotive industry is being challenged because of the impact of motor vehicles on CO₂ emissions and the role of CO₂ in global warming process. This will generate a lot of new regulations and it is of vital importance that these be harmonized on a global scale in order not to waste valuable resources or create unfair competition. If we fail to agree on necessary global regulations, the automotive industry could be viewed as being part of the problem rather than being part of the solution for a sustainable future society with maintained mobility. This puts a lot of pressure on all of us who are involved in this work and sometimes I feel that this is not recognized enough in the various countries around the world and perhaps we should make an effort to communicate our work and the role of WP.29 more actively both in governmental circles and in the industry. CLEPA, JAPIA and MEMA are all prepared to do our bit of this job as well as continuing to assist the important work being done by the World Forum WP.29 under the 1958 Agreement as well as the 1998 Agreement here in the Palais des Nations which gives a historic setting for work that affects our future.

Finally, I would like to underline the importance of having an effective, professional administrative support as we have in the Vehicle Regulations & Transport Innovations Section of the UNECE Transport Division.