



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/WP.1/2002/21
28 June 2002

ENGLISH
Original: ENGLISH and
FRENCH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety
(Thirty-ninth session, 23-26 September 2002,
various agenda items)

**Note from the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR)
concerning Mobile phones, Mopeds, Day time running lights and Skateboards**

The FEVR has undertaken a consultation among its member Associations in order to know their views on the following topics. The results are presented below.

Use of mobile phones while driving

The majority of Associations is against any use of mobile phones while driving, whether hand held, hand free or fixed on the vehicle. As various scientific researches have shown, the use of the phone significantly distracts the attention of the driver whatever the way it is held or fixed. This decreased attention is prejudicial to safe driving.

All Associations are opposed to the use of Navigation systems, SMS, Fax, Internet or TV while driving, which oblige the driver to divert his attention from the road to look, even for an instant, at one of these systems to understand the transmitted information. Such blind driving is highly dangerous.

Some exceptions could be made for police, firemen, ambulances etc. after an appropriate training of the driver by a special licence.

Definition of the power of mopeds

Present engine technology allows mopeds to reach velocities far above the legal 45 km/h with a cylinder volume of 50 cubic centimetres (cc). Such engines are therefore tampered by the manufacturer in order to respect maximum legal speed. Many engines are, however, designed in a way to allow an easy removal of this limitation for “sport”. Therefore, a meaningful fraction of moped run - or can run – at higher speeds than the legal 45 km/h, thus endangering themselves and others. The danger is even increased by the fact that they are often assimilated to pedal cyclists and thus use their dedicated lanes and pads.

The definition of a moped, as being driven by an engine of less than 50 cc is thus insufficient and obsolete. The Associations propose to complete this definition, as for other motor vehicles, by the indication of the real maximum power, which in this case should be 4 kW.

Day time running lights (DTRL)

It is indisputable that vehicles with lights switched on are more visible, and that this illumination may decrease the number of crashes in which they are involved. On the other hand, drivers seeing an oncoming vehicle with lights on have their attention attracted by this one, at the expense of other, non-illuminated road users, like cyclists and pedestrians. In this luminous competition, the vulnerable road users face the risk of not being seen, which might not have been the case if all road users showed the same luminous intensity.

DTRL has thus two opposite effects, on the one hand, it has the potentiality to reduce the risk of crashes between illuminated vehicles but, on the other hand, the luminous overexposure of these vehicles makes the vulnerable users less visible, increasing potentially the risk of a crash with them. Both these effects have the tendency to compensate each other. This is consistent with the non-conclusive present statistical results, as the global increase or decrease of the number of accidents is small and comparable with the statistical errors and fluctuations.

For these reasons, the majority of our Associations are opposed to DTRL. As an alternative, they propose that the drivers anticipate the moment at which they switch their lights on at the close of the day and in case of bad visibility. Moreover, simple devices are available which switch the lights on automatically below a given threshold of surrounding luminosity. The Associations also recommend to wear visible colours and to choose visible colours for car paints.

Use of skateboards and assimilated on public roads

The Associations are all against the circulation of skateboards and assimilated on public motor roads. These devices could, on the other hand, circulate on the cycle pads and cycle lanes on the condition that they bear lights during the night time.
