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REVISION OF THE CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTION ON ROAD TRAFFIC (R.E.1)

Communication and road safety

Note by the secretariat

The members of WP.1 will find below a draft text prepared by the Chairman of WP.1 concerning communication and road safety. On the basis of the structure proposed in document TRANS/WP.1/2005/15, this text could be included in chapter 2, section 2.2.1.

R.E.1 Point concerning communication and road safety

Chapter 2. Influencing road behaviour

2.2 Awareness-raising/communication

2.2.1 Communication and road safety

In view of the fact that 90 per cent of road accidents are due to bad or inappropriate behaviour on the part of road users, every effort should be made to change it and stop accidents from being a commonplace occurrence. One of these efforts involves making road users aware of the dangers of the road and the risks they incur by not observing the rules. A tool exists for the purpose and is indispensable for road safety today: communication. Communication is carried through the press, radio and television, the use of which is indispensable for launching road safety campaigns. In order for these campaigns to be effective and achieve the goal they have been given, it is important to establish communication strategies.

It should nevertheless be noted that communication alone, used in isolation, does not permit modification of behaviour in principle (unless very sporadically as part of a very specific operation). For this reason, information campaigns must be a part of more global strategies for modifying the behaviour of road users. All campaign assessments show that information obtains better results when it combines with other measures (new regulations, upgrading of the road network, reinforced police checks, etc.). In these cases, the measures are mutually reinforcing. In addition, it should be noted that communication must never be an alibi or a pretext for not adopting other safety measures which could prove far more effective.

2.2.1.1 Definition

Road safety campaigns may be taken to be a set of communication measures for the purpose of obtaining good behaviour from road users or the modification of behaviour that has been incorrect until now.

2.2.1.2 Communication strategies

If communication is to have some chance of success, it is recommended that:

- Sufficient time and finance should be devoted to analysing problems and to preparation;
- Work should continue on the same topic for a long period;
- Work should concentrate on a limited number of major problems that can be addressed from a variety of different angles, e.g. alcohol, speed, seatbelt use, pedestrians, two-wheeled vehicles, etc.;
- Campaigns should target the relevant aspects of attitudes that determine a specific type of behaviour;

- The message should be transmitted in such a way that the recipient feels concerned, or motivated to reflect and ultimately to change his behaviour;
- The information should be designed in such a way as to be accessible and relevant and should indicate the recommended behaviour (or change) clearly and without ambiguity;
- Appropriate channels of information should be selected. Depending on the aim of the campaign and the extent and content of the message, the medium chosen will appear where the behaviour occurs (e.g. posters, warning signs on roadsides) and/or be in a form that practically no one can avoid (e.g. TV commercials, brochures sent directly). Means of information that lead to reflection and dialogue once the message is received have proved their worth (e.g. interactive television or radio broadcasts, competitions or discussions of brochures with parents or teachers which increase the impact of the message);
- The communication should be transmitted at various levels (the public at large and the different recipients, classified by age, profession, transport mode, etc. and the multiplying agents relaying the message).
