

MANDATORY FITTING OF SAFETY-BELT ANCHORAGES AND SAFETY BELTS FOR CLASS II BUSES.

Two proposals to amend Regulations Nos. 14 and 16 have been presented by France and Italy with the main purpose of making mandatory the fitting of safety-belt anchorages and safety-belts on buses belonging to Class II.

(ECE/TRANS/WP.29/GRSP/2007/10 and ECE/TRANS/WP.29/GRSP/2007/11).

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Background

Class II buses are constructed principally for the carriage of seated passengers, and designed to allow the carriage of standing passengers in the gangway and/or in an area which does not exceed the space provided for two double seat. These busses may be used for interurban services and can circulate at 100 km/h on the motorways.

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Research has shown that the use of safety-belts and restraint systems can contribute to a substantial reduction in the number of fatalities and the severity of injury in the event of an accident, even due to rollover.

A lot of fatalities occur because the passengers are violently thrown around within the confines of the vehicle or even more seriously ejected from the vehicle through the broken windows.

Many studies have demonstrated over time that wearing a safety belt can contribute to decrease significantly the number of people killed.

In cases of coaches, many fatally injured passengers would have survived accidents if they had been provided with and were wearing safety belts.

The issue

An agreement has not been reached in GRSP since in some countries Class II buses are regarded as Class I derived vehicles (urban buses) while in other countries Class II buses are mainly based on Class III (coaches). These different vehicle designs have lead to different opinions among GRSP experts.

GRSG was mandated to try to find a better definition of bus classes which could help GRSP to solve the proposal for mandatory fitting of safety-belts anchorages and safety-belts. However, while a definition is still awaited, there has been some agreement for the provision of safety-belts and anchorages on Class II busses.

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In GRSP there has been discussion on the proposals made and, in the absence of a clearer definition of either a Class II bus, or a 'low-floor' bus the proposals are proceeding on the basis of a requirement for provision of safety-belt anchorages in these busses with the requirement for the fitment of the safety-belts being up to the contracting party.

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GRSP wishes to make WP.29 aware of the discussions that took place on these proposals and to give due consideration to all issues raised.

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[The above mentioned proposals will be complemented with suitable transitional provisions which amongst others will allow for specific exemptions allowing Cps to continue to permit the non-fitment of anchorages and seat belts on folding seats if their national legislation in force at the time of acceding to these Regulations does not require them.]