THE PEP Proposed changes for road signs and signals in the Vienna Convention to make it easier to increase walking and cycling

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Considering that many countries want to develop active mode practices with public health and environment aims, it is proposed some amendments related to road signs and signals.

2 subjects are proposed
- no through traffic except pedestrians, cyclists or pedestrians and cyclists
- give the way for cyclist at traffic light signals during red and amber phases

For an easiest understanding, in the followings colour codes are used : in blue the abstract of the Vienna Convention, in yellow the proposed changes incorporated in the Vienna convention articles.

1) **No through traffic except for pedestrians, cyclists or pedestrian and cyclists.**

No through traffic for vehicles is a way to create calm areas where local life can express itself. But it also creates a large disadvantage for pedestrians and cyclists as they will have to use a longer route, using traffic orientated infrastructures that are generally less safe. Giving the opportunity for pedestrians and cyclists to shortcut will increase the efficiency of walking and cycling for short distance with benefit on safety, health and environment.

*What does the Vienna Convention tells us :*

article 8 point 3

Nothing in this Convention shall prohibit the addition, in order to facilitate the interpretation of signs, of an inscription in a rectangular panel below the sign or in a rectangular panel containing the sign; such an inscription may also be placed on the sign itself, if this does not make the sign more difficult to understand for drivers who cannot understand the inscription.

This means inscription can be added if it helps understanding, point 4 open it to symbol

Article 8 point 4

Where the competent authorities consider it advisable to make the meaning of a sign or symbol more explicit or to limit the application of a sign to certain periods, this can be done by inscriptions on the sign as provided in Annex 1 to this Convention or on an additional panel. If regulatory signs are to be restricted to certain road-users or if certain roa-
users are to be exempt from the regulation, this is done through additional panels according to Annex 1, section H, paragraph 4 (panels H, 5a; H, 5b; and H, 6).

But also expresses clearly that if a dead end is not applied to all categories of users it should be expressed with an additional panel.

We found this with some old signs in Basel, considering the ” no through traffic was restricted to motorised users, adding almost an additional panel.

This solution is aimed at motorised drivers expressing they stay on one side of the dead end, but this is more difficult to understand for cyclist and pedestrian who have to understand that this sign dedicated for motorised vehicles drivers also give the information that it is not a dead end for pedestrians and cyclists. In an objective to spur walking and cycling practice, this sign is not the right message.

As far as Italy is concerned they consider No through traffic is a restriction except for cyclist and pedestrians, so they add a additional sign “except + symbol”, using a double negation.

Using a double negation make it difficult to understand for users, a strait message is more self explanatory. Not all road users can read (therefore it discriminate part of the pedestrians and cyclists), and understanding is uneasy.

Therefore many European countries (Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, France, Norway, Denmark…) have adopted the following type of signs
Those signs are well understood and therefore it is proposed to change the convention to get them in the convention principles

Therefore the proposition could be (abstract of the current convention in blue, changes in yellow):

**Article 8**

3. Nothing in this Convention shall prohibit the addition, in order to facilitate the interpretation of signs, of an inscription or a symbol in a rectangular panel below the sign or in a rectangular panel containing the sign, such an inscription may also be placed on the sign itself, if this does not make the sign more difficult to understand for drivers who cannot understand the inscription.

4. Where the competent authorities consider it advisable to make the meaning of a sign or symbol more explicit or to limit the application of a sign to certain periods, this can be done by inscriptions on the sign as provided in Annex 1 to this Convention or on an additional panel. If regulatory signs are to be restricted to certain road-users or if certain road-users are to be exempt from the regulation, this is done through additional panels, or if it is easier to understand it can be incorporated in the the sign according to Annex 1, section H, paragraph 4 (panels H, 5a; H, 5b; and H, 6), section G (panels G13a and G13b).

**Annexe 1 section G**

G13a no through traffic except pedestrian
G13b no through traffic except pedestrian and cyclists

2) Give the way for cyclists at traffic light signals during red and amber phases

Dead angle at traffic lights are a real problem for cyclists safety. When a HGV and a cyclist are stopped at a junction, it happened that the cyclist is not seen by the truck and this might end up with the death of the cyclist if both vehicles go at the same time at the start of the green phase.
The fact that the cyclist has already escaped from the junction, practising a careful give the way to pedestrians and other vehicles avoid to get a crash with any HGV turning, who would have not seen the cyclist.

Some countries are allowing cars to turn right during red phase (USA except New York, Canada except Montreal, part of Australia). A car has a larger width than a cyclist, therefore it is not the same risk turning right for a cyclist compared with cars.

Netherland has introduced for a long time the possibility to turn right for cyclist, with a sign that allows cyclists to go carefully during the green phase. As it is written in the national language it is somewhat hard to understand for those who don’t speak Dutch.

Inspired from this Dutch practice, considering there might be an interest regards to cyclist safety, France started to experiment a dedicated cyclist traffic signal, with 2 years of evaluation in Strasbourg and Bordeaux (following behaviour of all users, accidents…).

From those evaluations it was shown that there exists a low risk of misunderstanding with the special traffic signal for motorised drivers.

What does the Vienna Convention tells us ?

Article 23,
13. In cases where traffic light signals apply to cyclists only, this restriction may be clarified, if to do so is necessary in order to avoid confusion, by including the silhouette of a cycle in the signal itself or by using a signal of small size supplemented by a rectangular plate showing a cycle.

The sign for Netherland was not in agreement with the Vienna convention, neither does the sign designed for France and Belgium. They have chosen to include the cyclist symbol, but as
France and Belgium have introduced “give the way” for cyclist at traffic light signs for right turn. This way blind spot exposure can be limited, having cyclist leaving before cars and HGVs, and identifying where cyclist should stop. Over 4500 signs have been set in France (1500 for Paris City) with no accidents related to those new signs reported by local observatories and a good understanding by users (better than dedicated cyclist traffic light, who sometimes create confusion for drivers). With this sign it is possible to tell to cyclists where they can carefully cross the junction during red light and where they can’t.

In 2015, France extended the direction possibilities up to all directions. Paris city has realised some successful tests, Sceaux has implemented all direction for all its traffic light junction.

This possibility is not in agreement with the present convention on 3 subjects
- Give the way sign should not have any symbol inside it,
1. "GIVE WAY" sign
(a) The "GIVE WAY" sign shall be sign B, 1. It shall consist of an equilateral triangle having one side horizontal and the opposite vertex below it. The ground shall be white or yellow and the border red. The sign shall bear no symbol.

- when there is a traffic light and a posted sign, usually the traffic light rules take over the posted sign. In this case it is the sign that take over the traffic light sign.
- to a lesser extend as give the way is a priority sign it is not read in the same way as for a danger warning signs. In a danger warning sign the symbol inside a sign is what the user should take care of. In the give way sign proposed with a cyclist symbol it means who is concerned by the sign.

But as it has been proved in France, with better results for safety and a lower costs than dedicated cyclist traffic light, we propose the following propositions (abstract of the current convention in blue, changes in yellow):

Section B
1. "GIVE WAY" sign
(a) The "GIVE WAY" sign shall be sign B, 1. It shall consist of an equilateral triangle having one side horizontal and the opposite vertex below it. The ground shall be white or yellow and the border red. The sign shall bear no symbol except when the give the way sign is restricted to a category of users, in this case the symbol should not be black or dark blue and can be included in the give the way sign with if necessary the concerned direction.

Article 23,
13. In cases where traffic light signals apply to cyclists only, this restriction may be clarified, if to do so is necessary in order to avoid confusion, by including the silhouette of a cycle in the signal itself or by using a signal of small size supplemented by a rectangular plate showing a cycle.

In cases traffic light signals do not apply to cyclists during red and amber phases for some directions, an additional panel type give the way with the cyclist symbol and the direction in it if restricted can be used.

Proposed as an additional panel of give the way for cyclist at traffic light signals

![B1a](image)