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Working Party on Road Traffic Safety

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY
ON ITS FIFTY-SIXTH SESSION**

(Geneva, 18-21 November 2008)

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I. ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) held its fifty-sixth session in Geneva from 18 to 21 November 2008, chaired by Mr. Alexander Yakimov (Russian Federation). Representatives of the following member States participated: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America.

2. The European Commission and the following non-governmental organizations were also represented: European Cyclists' Federation (ECF); European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR); European Liquefied Petroleum Gas Association (AEGPL), Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations (FEMA); FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society; International Federation of Pedestrians (IFP); International Association for Driver Education, International Road Federation (IRF), International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA), International Association for Natural Gas Vehicles (IANGV), International Organization for Standardization (ISO); International Road Transport Union (IRU) and Laser Europe.

II. INTRODUCTION

3. The chair of the session, Mr. A. Yakimov, opened the fifty-sixth session of the WP.1.

4. Mr. Michalis Adamantiadis, Chief, Transport Facilitation and Economics Section in the Transport Division, welcomed the participants and pointed out the importance of the session and of the issues to be dealt with. One issue was the Joint meeting of the WP.1 and the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC) which is expected to be a first step towards improved cooperation and in identifying synergies to the benefit of all stakeholders. He also expressed the hope that the revision of the Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1) would be finalized at the present session.

III. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (agenda item 1)

Document: ECE/TRANS/WP.1/118

5. The agenda was adopted without modifications.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION (agenda item 2)

Document: ECE/TRANS/WP.1/117

6. The report of the fifty-fifth session was adopted with the following modification, which will be reflected in the consolidated text of R.E.1: paragraph 14 (iii) of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/117 shall read "Point 2.3.3 (a) should read as follows: (a) It is recommended that Governments should take appropriate steps to ensure that drivers are adequately **warned** (in Russian- **предупреждения**) of the influence, or dangerous effects of certain medications on the driving of a vehicle."

7. In the Russian version only of the report, the same paragraph 14 (iii) will read as follows:

“Пункт 2.3.3 а) изменить следующим образом:

... iii) посредством **нанесения на упаковку лекарственного препарата соответствующей предупреждающей надписи и изображенного ниже предупреждающего условного обозначения**".

V. INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY (agenda item 3)

8. Upon a mandate from the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), the Secretary General of IMMA invited WP.1 to consider the possibilities of ensuring the correspondence between the Convention on Road Traffic, 1968, and the European Agreement supplementing it, on the one hand, and the technical regulations adopted by the WP.29, on the other. He explained that the discrepancies between the provisions of the Convention and the technical regulations were already creating obstacles to the international road traffic.

9. Different potential solutions were discussed such as excluding the technical specifications from the Convention and transferring the decision-making on this subject to the WP.29 or, alternatively, including references to the WP.29 regulations in the Convention in a way that would avoid too frequent amendments thereto but would ensure timely consistency between the two areas.

10. The Working Party decided that the matter will be studied by a small group of volunteers including representatives from France, Germany, Turkey, IMMA and Laser Europe with support from the secretariats of WP.1 and WP.29 and from the Chairmen of WP.1 and WP.29 through bilateral contacts.

11. The delegates from Luxembourg, Belgium, Turkey and France informed the Working Party about recent changes in their national legislation regarding road safety. They were invited to provide the secretariat with the official information in order to include it in the national legislations' database published on the UNECE website.

12. The delegate from Switzerland informed of a project that is carried on in his country, originating in the fact that there are a lot of level crossings in Switzerland, with a low to very low frequency in crossing traffic, which are often unprotected or only marked with a sign A, 28. By law these level crossings should be protected, but a program to protect all these crossings would be very expensive.

13. In order to enhance safety on the whole network, a group of experts identified a solution, called MICRO, which consists of marking low frequency level crossings with a three-color (red-amber-green) traffic light in combination with a sign A, 28. The traffic light is steered by the train, but in contrast to the classic flashing red lights (with or without gates) there is no double-check-loop back to the train.

14. In order to protect road users from system failure the traffic light would blink (amber) in case of system disturbance, meaning that it is the responsibility of the road user to ascertain that

no train is approaching. In fact, at the moment the road user has the same responsibility all the time (only at unprotected crossings, of course). In future, users would have this responsibility only in case of a system breakdown.

15. This solution would be applicable to level crossings with good overview, with no more than 2 PA (person equivalent) an hour on average and a train speed of no more than 100 km/h. There are some situations where MICRO would not be accepted i.e. in front of schools or stadiums.

16. MICRO was tested with good results in a few places. The new signaling is clear and there should be no misunderstanding, even in cross-border traffic.

VI. FUTURE ROLE OF THE WORKING PARTY (agenda item 4)

Document: ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2008/5

17. The Working Party discussed its future role and the reshaping of its scope and activities to adapt to the fast changing situation in road safety and better contribute to solving the Global Road Safety Crisis. The Working Party considered the document in detail and made a number of amendments to it.

18. The Working Party agreed that its activities needed to be re-shaped within a global vision for the future and that WP.1 should develop a role in helping developing countries define their needs and formulate requests for technical and legal assistance in road safety issues. The Working Party also agreed that better communication would improve significantly the visibility of its work.

19. Participants expressed valuable opinions on strategic directions to be followed by WP.1 or specific activities to be undertaken such as, but not limited to:

- (a) WP.1 should have a global vision not just a regional direct coverage. It ought to assist the interested regions and countries that ask for assistance;
- (b) The results of WP.1's work ought to be disseminated globally and in a much more effective way which was the case in the past. The regional commissions need to be involved in spreading the legal instruments of WP.1 within their respective regions;
- (c) Developing synergies with other Working Parties dealing with road safety-related aspects (e.g. infrastructure or vehicles). More specifically, a joint WP.1-SC.1 project could be envisaged to introduce road safety audits in the Consolidated Resolution on the Facilitation of International Road Transport (R.E.4);
- (d) The need to include post-crash investigation in its activities and to develop the role of WP.1 as a global road safety platform.

20. The amendments and the suggestions will be reflected in a revised document to be submitted by the secretariat for approval at the fifty-seventh session of WP.1.

VII. JOINT MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTY ON ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY (WP.1) AND THE UNITED NATIONS ROAD SAFETY COLLABORATION (UNRSC) (agenda item 5)

21. The first joint meeting of the WP.1 and the UNRSC took place on 18 November 2008 in the afternoon, with a wide participation that included representatives of three other UN regional commissions: the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

22. This joint meeting was dedicated to mutual information sharing on ongoing activities, with a view to identifying and developing synergies. To this end, the secretariats of WP.1 and World Health Organization (WHO) gave an overview of their road safety activities. Representatives from the other United Nations regional commissions also presented their activities linked to road safety.

23. The Director of the Transport Division, Mrs. Eva Molnar, took the opportunity to introduce the new UNECE Transport Review launched on the occasion of the joint meeting. This first edition, as well as the UNECE Weekly, was dedicated to road safety, while subsequent issues (the Review will be published electronically three times a year) will deal with other transport topics of interest.

24. Based on a common institutional mandate to proactively develop solutions to the transport, economic and social facets of the road traffic safety crisis, WP.1 and UNRSC agreed:

- (a) To pursue broader collaborative efforts to the benefit of the community at large. First steps could be the UNDA funded project “Improving Global Road Safety: setting regional and national road traffic casualty reduction targets” and the use of TEM and EATL for pilot actions (iRAP);
- (b) To make efforts in complementing each other’s work and promoting each other’s products (combining “what to do” and “how to do” and bridging gaps between theory and practice);
- (c) To build on existing instruments and best practices, and not re-invent the wheel; such an approach would save time and money to the benefit of those in need of improved road safety.

25. The representative of Belarus offered to host in Belarus the seminar on setting road safety targets in May or June 2009. This seminar is the UNECE part of the global UNDA funded project “Improving Global Road Safety: setting regional and national road traffic casualty reduction targets”.

26. Mr. Baluja, observer from India, praised the Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals, 1968, as the best gift for developing countries and offered to host a road safety capacity-building event for a number (to be determined) of developing countries in Asia. The workshop would focus on the Convention on Road Signs and Signals, 1968.

27. Delegates were encouraged to study the possibilities of giving more significance, at national level, to the Remembrance Day for Victims of Accidents.

28. The representative of the Russian Federation informed the participants about the progress in the preparation of the Global Ministerial Meeting on road safety that will take place in Moscow on 19 and 20 November 2009 in the Kremlin. Either the President or the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation would open the meeting, while the Minister of Interior would be the keynote speaker. The organizers intend to invite the relevant representatives from governments; international organizations which include WHO, UNECE, UNICEF and the World Bank, NGOs, as well as representatives of the private sector (vehicle manufacturers). Side events, that may include exhibitions of equipment, devices and apparatuses, especially for the safety of children are also planned. Organizers of the Global Ministerial Meeting welcome ideas and suggestions regarding the organization and topics of the meeting.

29. During a lively debate, the following ideas were developed:

- (a) The Moscow declaration ought to be forward looking;
- (b) Assistance from developed to developing countries and funding of road safety activities need to be among the topics of the conference;
- (c) A multisectoral (transport, health, police, education) approach ought to be included. A balanced mix of representatives from the four areas should participate in the meeting;
- (d) Publicity for the event and its topics must be secured, including through short films. The FIA Foundation offered to contribute to this type of publicity.

VIII. REVISION OF THE CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTIONS ON ROAD TRAFFIC (R.E.1) AND ON ROAD SIGNS AND SIGNALS (R.E.2) (agenda item 6)

A. Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1)

1. Restructuring of R.E.1

Document: ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2005/15/Rev. 8

30. The Working Party took note of the document, which was provided for reference only as it maintains an indication of previous documents/sub-chapters, to reflect the evolution of R.E.1 revision work.

2. Use of substances that affect the capacity of driving vehicles

Document: ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2008/6

31. The Working Party approved the document for inclusion in the revised consolidated resolution as reproduced in Addendum 1 to the present report (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/120/Add.1).

3. Safety at level-crossings

Document: ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2008/7

32. The Working Party approved the document for inclusion in the revised consolidated resolution as reproduced in Addendum 2 to the present report (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/120/Add.2).

4. Motor car insurance

Document: ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2008/2/Rev.1

33. The Working Party approved the document for inclusion in the revised consolidated resolution as reproduced in Addendum 3 to the present report (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/120/Add.3).

B. Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals (R.E.2)

34. The Working Party was informed that the updated text of the Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals (R.E.2) including the most recent amendment on Variable Message Signs has been published under the symbol ECE/TRANS/WP.1/119.

IX. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (agenda item 7)

35. According to Rule 12 of its Terms of Reference, the Working Party elected unanimously its officers for the term 2009-2011: Mrs. Luciana Iorio (Italy) as Chairperson and Mrs. Isabel Brites (Portugal) and Mr. Dmitry Mitroshin (Russian Federation) as Vice-Chairpersons.

36. The Working Party expressed its high appreciation and profound gratitude to Mr. Alexander Yakimov (Russian Federation) who chaired WP.1 with professionalism in difficult times. The Working Party also expressed the hope that Mr. Yakimov would continue to contribute with his wisdom and expertise to its work.

37. The Working Party thanked Dr. Dan Link (Israel) for his Vice-Chairmanship and for the knowledge he shared with the Group during the years he was in office.

X. OTHER BUSINESS (agenda item 8)

38. The representative of Spain informed of the organization, by her country, of the Road Safety Forum for Latin America and the Caribbean, in Madrid, on 23 and 24 February 2009, to which the members of WP.1 will be invited.

39. The secretariat was criticized for late availability of documents in all the official languages, some of the documents in Russian being only available on the day of the meeting. The criticism was particularly severe on the quality of the translation in Russian of document ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2008/6.

XI. DATE OF NEXT SESSION (agenda item 9)

40. The 57th session of the Working Party is scheduled to take place from 23 to 25 March 2009 in Geneva. Participants wishing to submit proposals for that session are invited to do so by 30 December 2008 at the latest, in order to allow the secretariat to process the documents according to the internal procedures.

XII. ADOPTION OF DECISIONS (agenda item 10)

41. The Working Party adopted a brief list of decisions, based on which the secretariat drafted the present report.
