



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2008/1
15 January 2008

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety

Fifty-fourth session

Geneva, 26-28 March 2008

Item 4 (i) of the provisional agenda

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

Driving under the influence of drugs and medication

Note by the secretariat

1. This document is a follow-up to the request of the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) at its 53rd session (see ECE/TRANS/WP.1/113, para. 16).
2. Members of WP.1 will find below a paper on driving under the influence of drugs and medication submitted by Italy.

1. Each year thousands of people are killed or permanently disabled because someone drove while intoxicated after consuming alcohol, drugs, or other chemical substances.
2. This working party has already been considering the problem of alcohol on driving, and so the problem of driving whilst under the influence of drugs and medication should also be considered. This is a necessary step in order to give to the central and local governments the guidelines to help preventing the thousands of injuries and deaths which every year occur on our roads.
3. It is known that driving requires concentration, skills, common sense and a concern for the safety of everyone on the road, especially for the vulnerable user. Indeed alcohol affects driving. But drugs and medication can be dangerous as well - and with lethal effects both for drivers and for road-users.
4. Alertness, perception of the dangers and reaction times make the difference in the interaction between the driver and the external environment. However, many substances can seriously impair the senses of the driver, and lessen his/her ability to interact and to be able to deal safely with unforeseen or unexpected events.
5. Despite the fact that it is not easy to identify and classify all the available types of chemical substances which may impair driving, it is suggested that this Working Party (WP.1) should do its best to follow-up on every existing and ongoing research in this field. WP.1 should provide UNECE Member States with updated information. This would serve to define specific road safety policies to raise awareness of the dangers of driving whilst under the influence of drugs and medication.
6. Prescription and non-prescription medications are easily identifiable and whether they contain substances that can affect the ability to drive safely can easily be verified.
7. Recent research asserts that some pharmaceuticals may be the reason for every fourth or fifth accident. The most dangerous medicines are those, which influence the reaction rate and coordination of movements. The danger here is that the certain effect of the evening dose may be discovered only in the next morning.
8. Drugs - whether extracted from plants or chemically-produced - can have a wide variety of effects. In many cases they are difficult to detect on the spot, without laboratory-based examination of human fluids (blood, urine or saliva).
9. The work which should be carried out by this Working Party is not meant to be an exhaustive, general classification of the substances and their consequences on drivers. Its members do not have the scientific competence to do so. But it could be seen as a spring-board to help stimulating the creation of national policies on the subject.

10. Studies and research have already and are currently being carried out by various international bodies - such as the European Commission, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Transport Forum (ITF – OECD). Consequently, WP.1 could consider the possibility of involving representatives from these organisations to help accomplishing this task.

11. This would give a much more complete overview of the principles we are recommending to state and local governments to help improving road safety.
