

**Note of WP 29 Special Session
ITS European Congress
Palexpo Conference Centre, Geneva**

The European ITS Congress is now an established part of the ITS landscape in Europe and attracts several hundreds of visitors to its annual conference and exhibition. Its attendees are ITS practitioners who use the congress to update their knowledge and understanding of technology innovation and applications for transport systems of the next generation.

WP 29 – as the Global Forum for harmonisation of vehicle regulations - was invited to host a special interest session, and the ITS Informal Group was tasked with managing the programme. The Special Session was held on Wednesday 4 June 2008 and titled '*Vehicle Regulations – Can they help ITS Deployment?*'.

The session was attended by approximately forty delegates. Five senior speakers were invited from the WP29 membership. These included the UNECE Transport Division (Mrs. Molnar and Mr. Ramos), the Vehicle and Component Suppliers (Mr. Holmqvist from Clepa and Dr. Reinhardt from OICA) and Mr. Andre Vits from the European Commission.

During the question and answer session the key theme to emerge was that regulations have a role to play in bringing new technologies to the broader range of new vehicle models, but vehicle manufacturers and component suppliers need to have the opportunity to recover research and development investments. There was a concern that this needed to be balanced with the societal obligation to ensure all drivers could share in the safest technologies rather than only those purchasing suitably equipped models. There is no simple solution to this conflict as the development is mostly led by commercial organisations whose strategic programmes assume an investment/ recovery/ investment/ ... plan.

It was also suggested that regulations need to be well timed: too early implementation could limit technology capability - and slow deployment of full capability - whereas too slow regulating could miss real safety benefits in the marketplace. It was recognised that a robust evidence/ dataset was essential to support any decisions on regulatory measures, and that developing the dataset required a maturity in the technology. In the case of ESC, for example, the data had not emerged until several years following its initial introduction. No solutions to this difficulty were offered during the session and so the informal group and WP 29 will need to consider how best to resolve this conflict to ensure those technologies that offer the best opportunity for safety and environmental protection are implemented at the earliest opportunity.

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