The 1968 Convention on Road Traffic

Robert Nowak, Transport Division, UNECE
6 May 2013, Geneva
Transport Division: a global centre for international legal instruments

- Administrator of 58 international conventions and agreements
  - Road, rail, inland waterways and combined transport
- Four “consolidated resolutions” (recommendations)
A global reach...
• Over 1,600 Contracting Parties, growing demand, global in scope
• A solid foundation for any transport system – regional or global
Infrastructure: road, railway, combined transport (AGR, AGC, AGTC, AGN)

Legal frameworks for the development of coherent international infrastructure networks
World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations
Hours and Conditions of Work (AETR)

Uniform working conditions for drivers of commercial vehicles engaged in international road transport
Transport of Dangerous Goods (ADR, RID, ADN)

Uniform requirements to ensure a high level of safety of international transport of dangerous goods
Traffic rules, road signs and signals

A set of internationally agreed:

• Road traffic regulations

• Road signs

• Signals and markings

• Safety requirements for motor vehicles
Convention on Road Traffic
of 1968
and
European Agreement
Supplementing the Convention
(2006 consolidated versions)
- traffic on the right
- driving bans on some streets
- no traffic signs

Source: T. Vanderbilt, Traffic, 2008
Ancient Rome

- Congestion: daytime ban on carts
- Externality: noise during night

Source: T. Vanderbilt, Traffic, 2008
London in 1720

- Fatalities from «furiously driven carts»: the leading cause of death

Source: T. Vanderbilt, Traffic, 2008
New York City in 1867

- Horses killing an average of four pedestrians a week (a bit higher than today’s rate of traffic fatalities)
- 5 mile per hour speed limit
- no concept of right-of-way

Source: T. Vanderbilt, Traffic, 2008
Bicycles in XIX century NYC

- Sidewalks or roads?

- Should men yield the right of way to women?

Source: T. Vanderbilt, Traffic, 2008
- Why the red and green colours?

Source: T. Vanderbilt, Traffic, 2008
Mobility

- Has been around for a long time
- Has always required solutions
- Solutions have been different (cultural differences)
- Challenges will continue
Shared space streets
Segways

Vehicles, motorcycles, pedestrians...
Driverless cars
Are completely self-driving cars feasible in the foreseeable future?

Rebuttal statements

Defending the motion
Paul Saffo
Co-founder and managing director of Foresight, Discern Analytics
Autonomous vehicles are tracing a classic innovation S-curve. Following an extended period when technologies ramp up, adoption soars and once-futuristic curiosities become everyday conveniences.

Against the motion
Andrew Bergbaum
Director, AlixPartners
This debate is not about technology of self-driving cars, but about all the factors—legal, economic and social—that permit the technology to be adopted by the mass market.

Vote now or add your view

Comments from the floor

raghuvansh1 wrote:
Dear Sir, You cannot stop invitation in science and technology. I welcome driver less cars I think it is helpful many way, to avoid the accidents, cost of driver, fuel economy.
Mobility

- Has been around for a long time
- Has always required solutions
- Solutions have been different (cultural differences)
- Challenges will continue
- International mobility requires some level of uniformity
- UN legal instruments
1968 Convention on Road Traffic

2. International Convention relating to Road Traffic, 1926, Paris


5. Convention on Road Traffic, 1949, Geneva

6. Convention on Road Traffic, 1968, Vienna

7. European Supplement to the 1968 Convention, 1971
Convention on Road Traffic, 1949

95 Contracting Parties
Convention on Road Traffic, 1968

72 Contracting Parties
Why would a country not wish to accede to the 1968 Convention?
CONVENTION ON ROAD TRAFFIC
DONE AT VIENNA ON 8 NOVEMBER 1968
(Consolidated version*)

PART I

CONVENTION ON ROAD TRAFFIC

The Contracting Parties,

Desiring to facilitate international road traffic and to increase road safety through the adoption of uniform traffic rules,

Have agreed upon the following provisions:

Chapter I

GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE 1

Definitions

For the purpose of this Convention the following expressions shall have the meanings hereby assigned to them:

(a) The “domestic legislation” of a Contracting Party means the entire body of national or local laws and regulations in force in the territory of that Contracting Party;

(b) A vehicle is said to be “in international traffic” in the territory of a State if:

(i) It is owned by a natural or legal person normally resident outside that State;

(ii) It is not registered in that State; and

(iii) It is temporarily imported into that State;

provided, however, that a Contracting Party may refuse to regard as being “in international traffic” a vehicle which has remained in its territory for more than one year without a substantial interruption, the duration of which may be fixed by that Contracting Party.

A combination of vehicles is said to be “in international traffic” if at least one of the vehicles in the combination conforms to the above definition;

(c) “Built-up area” means an area with entries and exits specially signposted as such, or otherwise defined in domestic legislation;

(d) “Road” means the entire surface of any way or street open to public traffic;

(e) “Carriageway” means the part of a road normally used by vehicular traffic; a road may comprise several carriageways clearly separated from one another by, for example, a dividing strip or a difference of level;

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* Including an amendment to the Convention which entered into force on 1 September 1999 (entered in the Annex in accordance with the amendment which entered into force on 29 March 2000 under the terms of the Annex to the present Convention).
How does the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic facilitate international traffic?

How does the 1968 «Convention» increase road safety?

Provide examples of uniform traffic rules
Chapters:

1. General provisions
2. Rules of the road
3. Conditions for the admission of motor vehicles and trailers to international traffic
4. Drivers of motor vehicles
5. Conditions for the admission of cycles and mopeds to international traffic
6. Final provisions
Annexes:

1. Exceptions to the obligations to admit motor vehicles and trailers in international traffic
2. Registration number and plate of motor vehicles and trailers in international traffic
3. Distinguishing signs of motor vehicles and trailers in international traffic
4. Identification marks of motor vehicles in international traffic
5. Technical conditions concerning motor vehicles and trailers
6. Domestic driving permit
7. International driving permit
ARTICLE 20

Rules applicable to pedestrians

1. Contracting Parties or subdivisions thereof shall be free not to enforce the provisions of this Article except in cases where pedestrian traffic on the carriageway would be dangerous or would obstruct vehicular traffic.26

2. If, at the side of the carriageway, there are pavements (sidewalks) or suitable verges for pedestrians, pedestrians shall use them. Nevertheless, if they take the necessary precautions:

   (a) Pedestrians pushing or carrying bulky objects may use the carriageway if they would seriously inconvenience other pedestrians by walking on the pavement (sidewalk) or verge;

   (b) Groups of pedestrians led by a person in charge or forming a procession may walk on the carriageway.

27 See footnote.

3. If it is not possible to use pavements (sidewalks) or verges, or if none is provided, pedestrians may walk on the carriageway; where there is a cycle track and the density of traffic so permits, they may walk on the cycle track, but shall not obstruct cycle and moped traffic in doing so.

4. Pedestrians walking on the carriageway in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 of this Article shall keep as close as possible to the edge of the carriageway.28

5. It is recommended that domestic legislation should provide as follows: pedestrians walking on the carriageway shall keep to the side opposite to that appropriate to the direction of traffic except where to do so places them in danger. However, persons pushing a cycle, a moped or a motorcycle, and groups of pedestrians led by a person in charge or forming a procession shall in all cases keep to the side of the carriageway appropriate to the direction of traffic. Unless they form a procession, pedestrians walking on the carriageway shall, by night or when visibility is poor and, by day, if the density of vehicular traffic so requires, walk in single file wherever possible.29

6. (a) Pedestrians wishing to cross a carriageway shall not step on to it without exercising care; they shall use a pedestrian crossing whenever there is one nearby:
ARTICLE 21

Behaviour of drivers towards pedestrians

1. Every driver shall avoid behaviour likely to endanger pedestrians.

2. Without prejudice to the provisions of Article 7, paragraph 1, Article 11, paragraph 9, and Article 13, paragraph 1, of this Convention, where there is on the carriageway a pedestrian crossing signposted as such or indicated by markings on the carriageway:

   (a) If vehicular traffic is regulated at that crossing by traffic light signals or by an authorized official, drivers forbidden to proceed shall stop short of the crossing or the transverse markings preceding it and, when they are permitted to proceed, shall not prevent or obstruct the passage of pedestrians who have stepped on to it; drivers turning into another road at the entrance to which there is a pedestrian crossing shall do so slowly and give way, if necessary stopping for this purpose, to pedestrians already using, or about to use, the crossing;

   (b) If vehicular traffic is not regulated at that crossing by traffic light signals or by an authorized official, drivers shall approach the crossing only at a speed low enough not to endanger pedestrians using, or about to use, it; if necessary, they shall stop to allow such pedestrians to cross.

3. No provision of this Article shall be construed as preventing Contracting Parties or subdivisions thereof from:
Are provisions (rules) of article 20 (6a) and 21.1 «optimal» from the point of view of road safety? If not, why not?

How can one revise articles 20 (6a) and 21.1 to take into account intentional violations and unintentional errors?
1. Why would a country not want to accede to the 1968 Convention?

2. How does the 1968 Convention facilitate international traffic?

3. How does the 1968 Convention increase road safety?

4. Provide examples of uniform traffic rules

5. Are provisions (rules) of article 20 (6a) and 21.1 «optimal» from the point of view of road safety? If not, why not?

6. How can one revise articles 20 (6a) and 21.1 to take into account intentional violations and unintentional errors?
Benefits:

• Admission to international traffic, a set of agreed road traffic rules, reference for national legislation
• Mutual recognition of vehicle certificates, driving permits
• Facilitation of international traffic, trade, tourism
• Enhanced road safety
Few countries have road safety laws addressing all five key risk factors

New report indicates that only one in seven countries has comprehensive laws addressing all five key risk factors for road traffic death and injury

News release

14 MARCH 2013 | GENEVA - Only 26 countries, covering 7% of the world’s population, have comprehensive road safety laws on all five key risk factors: drinking and driving, speeding, and failing to use motorcycle helmets, seat-belts, and child restraints.

The pace of legislative change needs to rapidly accelerate if the number of deaths from road traffic crashes is to be substantially reduced, according to the Global status report on road safety 2013: supporting a decade of action, published today by WHO.

In 2010, there were 1.24 million deaths worldwide from road traffic crashes, roughly the same number as in 2007. The report shows that while 88 Member States were able to reduce the number of road traffic fatalities, that number increased in 87 countries.

Legislative change key to reducing fatalities

Key to reducing road traffic mortality will be ensuring that as many Member States as possible have in place laws covering the five key risk factors listed above. The report highlights that:

Political will is needed at the highest level of government to ensure appropriate road safety legislation and stringent enforcement of laws by which we will need to abide.”

WHO Director-General Dr Margaret Chan
• Final remarks:

• Accessions to UN conventions may yield substantial benefits to Contracting Parties

• They must be fully and effectively implemented

• UNECE has neither the enforcement authority nor the financial means to verify implementation
Final remarks:

• Implementation is the responsibility of Contracting Parties – dispute settlement provisions

• Within its limited resources, UNECE:
  1. Promotes accession and full implementation
  2. Provides technical assistance/advice
  3. Monitors implementation (when appropriate)
Username: ONU

Password: united