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Report of the sixty-ninth session of the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) held its sixty-ninth session in Geneva from 22 to 24 September 2014, chaired by Ms. L. Iorio (Italy). Representatives of the following member States participated: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and Turkey.
2. The representatives of non-ECE member States also participated: India and Japan.
3. The European Union (EU) and the following non-governmental organizations were also represented: Federation of International Motorcycling (FIM), Greek Road Safety Institute RSI “Panos Mylonas”, International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA), International Road Transport Union (IRU), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Touring Alliance & International Automobile Federation (AIT & FIA) International Union of Railways (UIC) and Laser Europe. Ms. Monica Pronin, an independent consultant from United States of America and the University of Wuerzburg, (Germany) also participated as Observers.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

4. WP.1 adopted the session’s agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/146).

III. Activities of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 2)

5. The Working Party was informed about recent road safety related developments. National delegations and international organizations presented national or international road safety activities and initiatives, including recent and coming changes to their traffic legislation.
6. Belgium reported on a new legal framework that makes it possible for municipalities to create and use an administrative procedure for parking infringements. If a municipality chooses to do so, administrative sanctions are set with a maximum of the (judicial) traffic fines for this kind of infringement; however an agreement between the municipality and the public prosecutor is first required. Belgium also informed WP.1 about the organization, together with UNECE, of a round table on Intelligent Transport Systems (17-18 November 2014 Brussels). The overall objectives are to explore how UNECE can reach a harmonized approach for the development and evaluation of cooperative systems and autonomous driving and to discuss and address the role of UNECE in harmonizing the messages that are conveyed in variable message signs.
7. In France in 2013, the number of road fatalities decreased to 3,268 persons (decrease of 11 per cent year-on-year). These data represent 5 persons killed per 100,000 inhabitants whereas Sweden’s ratio is 2.8 and the United Kingdom’s is 2.9. In the first 6 months of 2014, France and other EU members experienced increases in the number of road fatalities. That trend stopped in France in July and August. France announced it would co-organize a conference on distracted driving in Quebec City (Canada) on 7-8 of October 2014. Also, the French delegation will participate in a high level conference on “Youth and Road Safety” in Dakar (Senegal) taking place on 6-7 November 2014.
8. Italy announced that under the Italian EU presidency, a conference on transport safety societal challenges, research solutions will be held on 4-5 December 2014 in Genoa in collaboration with the European Commission.

9. The Russian Federation reported about recent changes in the implementation of mandatory car insurance, which includes a possibility of filling-in accident report forms without the on-site presence of the police. WP.1 delegates were invited to participate in the International Road Safety Conference in St. Petersburg, Russian Federation taking place on 25 September 2014.
10. In Sweden, 260 persons were killed in road accidents in 2013. This was the lowest figure since the 1940s. However, from January to August 2014 there was a slight increase in fatalities. What is worrisome is that the number of fatalities and disabling injuries is increasing rapidly among pedestrians and bicyclists. Sweden encouraged WP.1 to include this issue on the agenda.
11. Sweden will organize a high level conference on road and rail safety (“Towards Zero Conference”) aimed at decision makers around the world. The conference will be held on 9-10 June in Gothenburg (more information is available at www.trafikverket.se/towardszero/). Moreover, Sweden will be hosting the International Technical Conference on the Enhanced Safety of Vehicles (ESV) on 8-11 June 2015 also in Gothenburg. More information about the conference can be found at <http://esv2015.com/>.
12. Turkey reported on progress it has made establishing vehicle inspection stations, removing old vehicles from traffic and undertaking road safety media campaigns. A representative of Dogus Automotive made a presentation informing WP.1 about a Turkish road safety platform “Traffic is life” which aims at raising road safety awareness.
13. EU informed the Working Party that the first preliminary EU-wide statistical reports for 2014 indicate that the road fatalities are on the rise. The re-launched process to adopt the cross-border enforcement directive is under way and aims to be completed this year. Proposals are also forthcoming on the reviews of the infrastructure safety management directive and the directive on the initial qualifications and periodic training of professional drivers. Studies on so called "event data recorders" will be published on the Commission website as soon as they are finalised.
14. IMMA introduced its recent policy paper “The Shared Road to Safety-A Global Approach for Safer Motorcycling” (available at www.immamotorcycles.org), which provides an overview of the global trends in road safety for powered two-wheelers and listing more than 70 best practices collected worldwide. IMMA also reported on the dedicated side event on motorcycle safety, held during the International Transport Forum Summit in Leipzig, Germany May 2014 emphasizing the need to mainstream motorcycling in transport policies.
15. FIM informed WP.1 about a basic motorcycle training manual which is publicly available, in 12 languages and free of charge at www.initialridertraining.eu.
16. Laser Europe informed that Laser International Foundation will organize the first European road safety film festival in early May in Brussels. This festival will be open to all UNECE countries.
17. Panos Mylonas made a presentation on the organization’s recent work in the area of road safety.
18. UIC delivered a presentation describing the ILCAD 2014 campaign which promoted enhanced safety at level crossings.
19. The secretariat briefed WP.1 about the Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment of 14-16 April 2014 and the related Ministerial (Paris) Declaration - City in Motion: People First!, in particular its paragraph 12 which invites WP.1 to consider amending the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals.

20. As a follow-up to the request made by the Inland Transport Committee (para. 15, Informal document ITC (2014) No.11), the secretariat explained that there are “no old conventions that are still not in force” under WP.1 responsibility. The secretariat also reported on a “Treaty day” event it organized in cooperation with the UN Office of Legal Affairs, Treaty Section on 5 June 2014 to promote accession to and more effective implementation of the UN road safety conventions (as requested in para. 15, Informal document ITC (2014) No.11).

21. Finally, the secretariat informed WP.1 on two forthcoming road safety events it is organizing with the Government of Serbia and Regional Cooperation Council (15-16 October 2014, Belgrade) and with the International Centre for Alcohol Policies (12-13 November 2014, Addis Ababa). Information about events is available on WP.1 website.

IV. Convention on Road Traffic (1968) (agenda item 3)

A. Consistency between the Convention on Road Traffic (1968) and Vehicle Technical Regulations

22. The secretariat provided an update on the status of proposal amendments related to Article 8, paragraph 5bis, and Article 39, paragraph 1. The Secretary-General issued depositary notification (C.N.569.2014) on 23 September 2014.

23. WP.1 discussed ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/7 submitted by the Government of Sweden, which highlights the importance for WP.1 to pursue the issues related to autonomous driving. WP.1 agreed on the importance of the topic. WP.1 decided to issue a document (to be prepared by Belgium, Finland, France, Italy, Spain and Sweden) for the next session in which the role of the driver in a vehicle with more advanced level of automation within the context of the Convention will be analysed and studied. At the same time, WP.1 envisaged having expert and stakeholder’s views in the next session so as to have a sound view exchange and to receive guidance and additional elements to proceed in the study and legal address of the topic above-mentioned.

24. WP.1 continued considering the amendment proposals to Annex 5 as originally proposed in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2011/4. To assist discussions, the secretariat prepared ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2011/4/Rev.3 which contains the original amendment proposals (with deletions identified in strikethrough and additions in bold) which are still to be discussed by WP.1 and the tentatively agreed (based on the discussions at previous sessions) “remainder” of the text. WP.1 considered some of the remaining amendment proposals. The secretariat was requested to prepare ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2011/4/Rev.4 which would reflect the changes agreed at this session.

25. WP.1 decided to postpone considering ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/2 by IMMA and Informal document No. 6 submitted in track changes as requested at the previous WP.1 session. IMMA was invited to submit a formal document on the basis of Informal document No. 6 for the next session in order to have it available in the three official UNECE languages.

26. WP.1 decided to postpone considering Informal documents Nos. 1 and 2 and invited Laser Europe to revise the documents – to the extent it is necessary – and submit them for the next session as formal documents in order to have it available in the three official UNECE languages.

B. Driving Permits

27. The Working Party considered a proposal on suitable solutions for the mutual recognition of driving permits prepared by the informal expert group consisting of representatives of France, Luxembourg, FIA and ISO (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/8). The document was adopted and it was decided that the document be formatted in such a way as to be distributed by the secretariat to governments and entities responsible for issuing of international driving permits (IDPs).

28. WP.1 thanked the secretariat, ISO and FIA for their preparation of Informal document No. 3, and endorsed Option 1 which recommended parallel work plans for amendment proposals and other work related to IDPs and domestic driving permits (DDPs) as outlined in the informal document. It also requested the secretariat to give a presentation with options on the scope of accessibility of the proposed electronic database of IDPs at the next session.

29. Due to time constraints, the partnering Contracting Party as per paragraphs 13b and 22b of Informal document No. 3 has yet to be identified. WP.1 will consider this aspect as a priority at the next session.

C. Registration Plates

30. WP.1 discussed and adopted Belgium's proposal to amend paragraph 1 of Annex 2 (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/9) to allow the issuance of (personalized) registration plates containing only letters. The adopted proposal and its justification is attached to the annex of this report. WP.1 requested the secretariat to notify the Secretary General of this amendment proposal.

V. European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic (1971) (agenda item 4)

31. WP.1 discussed ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/3 and decided it was superfluous in view of the amendment proposal to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic adopted at the March 2014 session of WP.1 (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/145 and Corr.1). The governments of Austria, Belgium, France and Germany agreed to withdraw their proposal.

32. The secretariat did not seek WP.1 agreement to distribute a questionnaire to all Contracting Parties to obtain a measure of the level of implementation of provisions related to international technical inspection certificates (point 26bis, Annex) as this agenda item was postponed until the next session.

VI. Convention on Road Traffic (1949) (agenda item 5)

33. WP.1 considered ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/4 which proposes amending Article 8 of the Convention. After discussion, the proponents agreed to revise the proposal by suggesting concurrent amendments to Article 22 as well as re-drafting the justification. The governments of Austria, Belgium, France and Italy were invited to re-submit the revised document for the next session.

VII. Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968) (agenda item 6)

A. Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals

34. The secretariat provided an overview of the first session of the Group of Experts on Road signs and Signals. WP.1 welcomed the progress made by the Group of Experts and requested the secretariat to prepare the final report (as soon as the Group has completed its work), print it and to make it publicly available.

35. Due to time constraints, WP.1 did not discuss a Ministerial invitation to consider amendments to the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals related to signs and signals for cyclists and pedestrians as stipulated in the Paris Declaration (paragraph 12) signed at the Fourth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment as this agenda item was postponed until the next session.

B. Amendment Proposals on Variable Message Signs (VMS)

36. WP.1 did not discuss this agenda item as ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/5/Rev.1 was not submitted. The subject will be retained for the next session.

VIII. Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1) (agenda item 7)

A. A Safe System Approach

37. Due to time constraints, WP.1 did not discuss ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/6/Rev.1 which incorporates Sweden's amendment proposals to include a safe system approach into the Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1). WP.1 agreed to defer discussion on this item to the next session. Sweden expressed its concern that WP.1 was unable to consider this document at the session.

B. Multidisciplinary crash investigation (MDCI)

38. Due to time constraints, WP.1 did not consider ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2013/6/Rev.1 submitted by Sweden, which now includes an additional chapter submitted by the Government of Finland. WP.1 agreed to defer discussion on this item to the next session. Sweden expressed its concern that WP.1 was unable to consider this document at this session and at the past three sessions.

C. Amendment proposals on distracted driving

39. Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was postponed until the next session. Informal document No. 4 was not submitted.

IX. Consolidated Resolution on Road Signs and Signals (R.E.2) (agenda item 8)

A. Secure Parking Areas

40. Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was postponed until the next session.

B. Automatic section speed control

41. Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was postponed until the next session.

X. Group of Experts on improving safety at level crossings (agenda item 9)

42. The secretariat provided an overview of the outcomes of the second session of the Group of Experts on improving safety at level crossings which met on 12-13 May 2014. WP.1 welcomed the progress made and requested the secretariat to prepare the final report (as soon as the Group has completed its work), print it and to make it publicly available.

43. The secretariat also showed a film promoting enhanced safety at level crossings created in partnership with the Government of Switzerland and International Union of Railways on the occasion of the International Level Crossing Awareness Day 2014 (www.unece.org/trans/main/welcwp1.html).

XI. Decade of Action for Road Safety (agenda item 10)

A. Revision of WP.1 terms of reference and rules of procedure

44. Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was postponed until the next session.

B. WP.1 and Decade of Action for Road Safety

45. Due to time constraints, discussion on this item was postponed until the next session.

C. Round table on selected global best practices in traffic safety

46. WP.1 welcomed the proposal to organize a round table as part of the March 2015 session (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/10). On the basis of the drafted proposal, WP.1 requested the secretariat to consult with other regional commissions, particularly UNESCAP, to seek their interest in participating in the event. The WP.1 Chair requested to be timely briefed on the outcome of the consultations by the UNECE secretariat.

XII. Other Business (agenda item 11)

47. WP.1 did not discuss any other issues.

XIII. Date of next session (agenda item 12)

48. The seventieth session of WP.1 will be held from 23-26 March 2015 in Geneva.

XIV. Election of officers (agenda item 13)

49. The Working Party elected its officers for the period March 2015 – September 2016. Ms. L. Iorio (Italy) was elected as Chair; Mr. D. Mitroshin (Russian Federation) and Mr. J. Valmain (France) were elected as Vice-Chairs.

XV. Adoption of the report of the sixty-ninth session (agenda item 14)

50. The Working Party adopted the report of its sixty-ninth session.

Annex

Amendment to paragraph 1 of Annex 2 of 1968 Convention on Road Traffic

Paragraph 1 currently reads:

“1. The registration number referred to in Articles 35 and 36 of this Convention shall be composed either of numerals or of numerals and letters. The numerals shall be Arabic numerals and the letters shall be in capital Latin characters. Other numerals or characters may, however, be used, but if so the registration number shall be repeated in Arabic numerals and in capital Latin characters.”

Amend Paragraph 1 as follows (additional text indicated in bold):

“1. The registration number referred to in Articles 35 and 36 of this Convention shall be composed either of numerals **or of letters** or of numerals and letters. The numerals shall be Arabic numerals and the letters shall be in capital Latin characters. Other numerals or characters may, however, be used, but if so the registration number shall be repeated in Arabic numerals and in capital Latin characters.”

Amended Paragraph 1 shall read as follows:

“1. The registration number referred to in Articles 35 and 36 of this Convention shall be composed either of numerals or of letters or of numerals and letters. The numerals shall be Arabic numerals and the letters shall be in capital Latin characters. Other numerals or characters may, however, be used, but if so the registration number shall be repeated in Arabic numerals and in capital Latin characters.”

Explanatory note by the Government of Belgium

1. The purpose of the amendment is to allow — in international traffic — registration numbers containing only letters (as it is already the case for numerals). According to the current wording of paragraph 1 of Annex 2, a vehicle with the registration number with only letters would not be allowed in international traffic.

2. If a registration number contains only numerals or only letters or a combination of numerals and letters, it appears — from the enforcement perspective, for example, by means of identification by speed cameras — to be equally effective as long as the number is unique in order to allow identification of the vehicle owner.
