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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety
(Thirty-fifth session, 3-6 October 2000,
agenda item 2 (e))

**AMENDMENTS TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
1968 CONVENTIONS ON ROAD TRAFFIC AND ON ROAD SIGNS AND SIGNALS
AND THE 1971 EUROPEAN AGREEMENTS SUPPLEMENTING THEM**

Note by the secretariat

At its thirty-fourth session (4-7 April 2000), the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) considered a note prepared by the secretariat on the safety of skateboarders, in-line skaters, roller skaters, etc. (TRANS/WP.1/2000/14). The Working Party felt that this was a growing issue which could not be ignored. It decided, however, that more information was required and asked its members to make relevant national information available to the secretariat so that a document could be prepared for the next WP.1 session.

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ARMENIA

No law has been adopted in Armenia concerning children using skateboards or roller skates and no measures are being taken in this regard.

BELGIUM

This group is not considered as drivers by Belgian law since they do not drive a vehicle. They are therefore treated as pedestrians and must respect the traffic rules applicable to pedestrians, which chiefly implies using the pavement. Ordinary pedestrians should not be disturbed by their movement.

GE.00-

If there is no pavement, appropriate verge or part of the road reserved for pedestrians, roller skaters or skate boarders may use the road or a cycle track. When using a cycle track, they must let cyclists or moped riders pass.

It is difficult to envisage how this group could be required to use certain safety equipment, for example lights when vehicles are required to have their lights on. Skate boarders and roller skaters should wear clothing or accessories which make them more visible (notably armbands, belts, possibly a light helmet made of reflecting or fluorescent materials) especially when using a cycle track or the road when there is no provision for pedestrians.

BULGARIA

There are not special texts concerning the safety in traffic of skateboarders, roller skaters, etc. in the Bulgarian Law on Road Traffic due to the fact that for the time being there are few such road users. The Bulgarian Law contains general rules in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention on Road Traffic.

FRANCE

These road users are treated as pedestrians. Studies are under way to see if it is necessary to modify this existing legislation.

HUNGARY

No measures have yet been taken regarding skateboards, etc., but this problem does exist.

LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg does not have special provisions for the use of rollerblades and skateboards, but is interested in knowing what is going on in this field in other countries. In Luxembourg they are considered as toys and are not allowed on public roads.

NETHERLANDS

There are no special measures regarding the safety in traffic of roller skaters and with regard to the relation between roller skaters and other road users. Roller skaters are legally considered as pedestrians.

The Transport Research Centre of the Ministry of Transport recently made an analysis of the accident figures (year 1998) of skaters. From that analysis it was concluded that only a small minority of roller skate accidents in 1998 did relate to traffic safety (63). Most accidents of skaters that had to be treated in hospitals or medical emergency posts (9200) were single accidents that were caused by falling and likewise situations. This should thus be regarded like injuries caused in (other) sportgames. It is not a problem of traffic safety at this moment.

The legal status of a skater in the Netherlands is the same as that of a pedestrian. To change that status -as sometimes suggested - to that of a cyclist, would cause traffic safety problems for the very young skaters: they would also be obliged to skate in cycle lanes, instead of the pavement. Besides that, in general such a change of legal position would have other major consequences. To mention only one : what would be the traffic safety consequences of the

priority rules for traffic coming from the right. Skaters, with the legal status of a cyclist, would also have priority. A change of legal position is not considered at this moment.

To reduce the injuries caused by single accidents, it is considered to put more emphasis on better protection (knees, arms, etc.) of the skaters themselves.

SLOVAKIA

According to Article 2, m) of the Act No.315/1996 Coll. on road traffic - "For the purpose of this Act the following expressions have the meaning hereby assigned to them: pedestrian is a road traffic user who moves on foot; a pedestrian is also any person, who for example pushes or drags a sledge, pram, wheel-chair or cart with total width not exceeding 6000 mm, any person, who moves on skis or roller skates, or on hand-powered or engine-powered wheel-chair, who pushes a bicycle or moped, or walks a dog."

SPAIN

The relevant norm can be found in article 121.4 of the General Traffic Regulations, adopted by Royal Decree No. 13/1992, of 17 January 1992, which stipulates that users of skateboards, roller skates or other similar devices are forbidden to use the roadway, except in the case of zones, lanes or places specially reserved for them; they are required to proceed at a walking pace on pavements or in residential areas with S-28 signs; they may not be towed by a vehicle of any kind.

SWEDEN

According to the Swedish ordinance on road traffic, roller skaters, roller skiers, skaters, skiers, etc. shall comply with the rules concerning pedestrians. Accordingly, roller skaters shall use pavements or the verge when skating on the road. If there is no pavement or verge, roller skaters shall use a cycle lane or the carriageway. Furthermore, roller skaters are allowed to use a cycle lane or the carriageway if the pavement is narrow, if the space there is otherwise limited or if there are other special reasons for the roller skater not to use the pavement.

When using the verge or the carriageway, roller skaters shall keep to the side opposite to the direction of traffic, except if they are skating faster than the speed of walking. In that case, the roller skaters shall keep to the other side if appropriate.

UKRAINE

Skateboards and roller skates are not yet widespread in Ukraine, and are not as a rule used outside playgrounds, parks, and children's and sports facilities. An appropriate legal response that factors in European experience will be implemented as these leisure activities develop.
