

Validity of international driving permits (IDPs)

Note by the secretariat

1. A number of countries which are not Contracting Parties to the 1949 or 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic issue IDPs. These include Andorra, Bolivia, Colombia, Indonesia, Kenya, Panama, Saudi Arabia, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Yemen and Zambia and there may be others.

2. This raises the following questions: Are Contracting Parties aware that the above-mentioned countries are not Contracting Parties to either of the Conventions? Do Contracting Parties to the Conventions accept these IDPs for use on their territories? .Are Contracting Parties prepared to accept these IDPs even though there is no guarantee that the provisions of the Conventions were followed before issuance?

3. Contracting Parties have no obligation to recognize these IDPs. Article 41.2 of the Vienna Convention states that:

“Contracting Parties shall recognize:

....

(c) Any international permit conforming to the provisions of Annex 7 to this Convention;

as valid for driving in their territories a vehicle coming within the categories covered by the permit, provided that the permit is still valid and that it was issued by another Contracting Party or subdivision thereof or by an association duly empowered thereto by such other Contracting Party.

4. Article 41.2 also raises the question of IDPs which do not conform to the provisions of Annex 7 which are fairly strict. For example, paragraph 1 of Annex 7 states that “The permit shall be a booklet in format A 6 (148 x 105 mm). The cover shall be grey and the inside pages white.” What about IDPs which are in another colour or size and what about IDPs in credit card format? Do Contracting Parties recognise IDPs which do not follow the provisions of Annex 7 to the letter?

5. This issue came to the attention of the WP.1 secretariat because an Automobile Club in one of the above-mentioned countries complained to the UNECE Transport Division that another Automobile Club in the same country had the right to issue IDPs but it did not. It also pointed out that the IDPs issued were blue in colour and questioned their validity. It further mentioned that there was confusion in the country in question about whether the IDPs issued would actually be accepted in other countries.

6. Despite the stated long-term goal of WP.1 of phasing out the use of IDPs, inter alia, by promoting greater harmonization and recognition of domestic driving permits, it would seem to be necessary for WP.1 and/or its Legal Group to discuss the questions raised in this document.
