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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety
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agenda item 2 (a))

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

Questionnaire on the implementation of the Vienna Conventions and the
1971 European Agreements supplementing them

Transmitted by the small group

Background

1. At its thirty-second session (13-16 April 1999), the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) adopted a questionnaire on the implementation of the Vienna Conventions and the 1971 European Agreements, and requested the secretariat to disseminate it to Governments (TRANS/WP.1/64, paras. 4-7).
2. At its thirty-third session (28 September-1 October 1999), the Working Party decided to establish a small group (Israel, Netherlands, Russian Federation under the chairmanship of Israel), to analyse and summarize the answers to the questionnaire and to make proposals on how to proceed with the outcome.
3. The analysis which follows is based on 21 responses received from the following countries: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

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Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire on the Vienna Conventions and the European Agreements supplementing them.

4. Q1. In your country, are the Vienna Conventions and the 1971 European Agreements supplementing them, the basis for national rules and regulations? Please circle one of the following:

Yes, always 10 Yes, mostly 10 Yes, to some extent 1 No 0

5. Q2. Are there important differences in national rules and regulations in your country in comparison with the Conventions and the 1971 Agreements?

Yes 4 No 17

6. Q3. Could you give the reason for these specific national rules and regulations?

The main comments were:

- Lack of synchronization between the results of international harmonization work and the management of concrete traffic problems that is constantly evolving.
- General exception on the priority rules for cyclists and moped drivers at intersections.
- Tendency to stricter discipline.
- Effect of traditions and special symbols.

7. Q4. How long does it normally take to implement national amendments or additions to the Conventions/Agreements?

6 months – 1; 12-18 months – 4; several years – 4; 3 years or more – 2;
5-7 years – 2; depends/varies – 7; difficult to say – 1.

8. Q5. Please list any problems you may have with national implementation.

- Ministry of Transport not directly competent for all legal provisions.
- Certain provisions encounter “hostility” on the part of the Administration.
- Problems with securing agreement due to the responsibility of various departments.
- National legislation sometimes in conflict with level of details of amendments; specific situation of national road traffic.
- Due to compromises sometimes lack of precision of definition and lack of harmony with other traffic rules.
- Lack of financial resources for necessary translation.
- Necessity of too many approvals for amendments.

9. Q6. In your opinion, would it be useful to work on additions to the Convention/ Agreements?

Yes (on which areas?) 18 No 3

- Driving permits; variable message signs; speed control; enforcement; graphic aspects of signs.
- Restructuring Convention; overall and total revision; update; adapt to technical progress; better coherence terminology.

- Too early/no: 5
- Administrative conditions for drivers and vehicles to be admitted to international traffic: 2

10. Q7. Do you consider it necessary to modify the decision-making process in ECE to amendments or additions of the Convention/Agreements? Please answer as follows (on a scale of 1 to 5).

Is it necessary to raise the quality of the end result/product?

1 (no, not at all).....5 (yes, considerably)

(1) 3, (2) 7, (3) 7, (4) 2, (5) 2

Is it necessary to speed up the process of decision making?

1 (no, not at all).....5 (yes, considerably)

(1) 1, (2) 0, (3) 9, (4) 6, (5) 5

Is it necessary to increase the level of usefulness of the end product?

1 (no, not at all).....5 (yes, considerably)

(1) 3, (2) 7, (3) 6, (4) 4, (5) 1

Would you support the idea of establishing a permanent working group which would be entrusted with the task of undertaking an in-depth analysis of this issue?

1 (no, not at all).....5 (yes, considerably)

(1) 0, (2) 3, (3) 3 (4) 6 (5) 9

11. Q8. If it is necessary to discuss modifications of the decision-making process, do you have suggestions for such modifications? Please elaborate.

- Process more transparent; speed up process
- Only principles to be discussed; revision every 10 years
- Permanent working group
- Decision making on the basis of voiced support instead of "silence is consent".

12. Q9. In your opinion, at what frequency should the Conventions and the Agreement be amended? Circle one option.

One year 0, 5 years 11, 10 years 6, Other 4.

13. Conclusions

- The Vienna Conventions and the European Agreements are the basis for national legislation for all member States (with a few exceptions for specific elements due to the national traffic situation).
- The time needed for implementation differs from 1 or 2 years to 6 or 7 years.
- The problems encountered with the implementation are basically two-fold. Partly national due to division of responsibilities. Partly due to lack of precise terminology/definitions or due to difficulties of linking the terminology with the nationally used terminology.

- No Governments think it is necessary to elaborate and adopt new conventions. At the same time the majority of them think that there is the necessity to introduce amendments or additions to the 1968 Conventions and 1971 European Agreements periodically.
- New work to be undertaken: a few specific topics are mentioned. There seems to be support for a revision, or update, although to do the revision does not necessarily mean to exclude work on specific topics.
- Decision-making process: majority in favour of raising the quality and speeding up the process. To raise the usefulness is also supported but only to a certain extent (maybe this has to do with the answer to question 1 and 2 that confirms the usefulness of the Conventions).
- 11 out of the 21 replies prefer a frequency of 5 years for introducing amendments to the Conventions. Six others would prefer 10 years, and four countries vary in time.

14. One clear recommendation is the establishment of a permanent Working Group (of WP.1 member States) which would be entrusted with an in-depth analysis of apparent problems. This would help update the Conventions on a regular basis without the necessity of creating new, cumbersome, documents.

15. This analysis was made through good cooperation among the representatives of Israel, the Netherlands, and the Russian Federation.
