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Eightieth session

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Report of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety on its eightieth session

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I. Attendance

1. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) held its eightieth session in Geneva from 9 to 13 March 2020, chaired by Ms. L. Iorio (Italy). Representatives of the following ECE member States participated: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Russian Federation, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.
2. The representatives of non-ECE member States also participated: Australia, Brazil, Japan and Nigeria.
3. The following non-governmental organizations were also represented: European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), EuroMed Transport Project, European Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), Federation of International Motorcycling (FIM), International Federation of Pedestrians, International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA), International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Road Safety Institute (RSI) "Panos Mylonas" and World Bicycle Industry Association (WBIA).
4. Representatives from Taxi Development Public Council and the University of South Carolina and participated as observers.

II. Adoption of the Agenda (agenda item 1)

5. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/170). The WP.1 Chair noted the absence of many delegates due to the Covid-19 situation while the secretariat provided basic information on the coronavirus for meeting participants at the Palais des Nations (<http://www.unece.org/covid-19.html>).

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

6. Due to time constraints, national delegations and international organizations had the opportunity to submit, in writing, information on national and international road safety activities and initiatives, including recent and forthcoming changes to their traffic legislation as well as any information on the events taking place prior to the next WP.1 session. No written submissions were received.

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

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

7. WP.1 briefly resumed discussions of points (i), (j), (r), (t), 34, 35 and 36 in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2017/1/Rev.1. As a tentative conclusion, WP.1 decided to delete points (i) and (j) as well as corresponding points 35 and 36. However, due to the absence of key proponents (Slovakia and Laser Europe) of the changes contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2017/1/Rev.1, the Working Party decided to continue discussions on this document at the next session. Discussion will take into account ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/10 (submitted by Slovakia) and ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/11 (submitted by Laser Europe). WP.1 took note of Germany's withdrawal of Informal document No. 8 (March 2019) from this agenda item.

B. Driving permits

1. Amendment proposal

8. WP.1 discussed Informal document No. 15/Rev.1, submitted by the informal group of experts on driving permits, and reiterated its request that the informal group of experts submit ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.3 for the next session. As per WP.1 request at its seventy-ninth session, the revised formal document should contain an amendment proposal with necessary changes (tracked) in relation to the 1968 Convention based on the informal group's proposed amalgamated approach combining elements of the three options (a), (b) and (c) in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.1 (paras 14 and 15, ECE/TRANS/WP.1/169). The document should also elaborate on minimum security features for driving permits recommended by the Informal Group of Experts (para 16, *ibid*). WP.1 took note of Informal document No. 15 but did not consider it.

9. Given the question raised by some Contracting Parties on the international driving permits issued pursuant to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic, and noting that the primary focus of the above document is on driving permits issued pursuant to the 1968 Convention, the secretariat invited WP.1 to consider at its next session endorsing the "Set of Principles concerning the IDPs issued under the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic" (found in Section VIII of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.1) and to make them available as guidelines or an information document on the webpage of WP.1.

2. Mobile driving permits

10. At the last session, the Chair requested that "mobile driving permits" and their associated databases be introduced on the agenda as a separate item. Given the Covid-19 situation, WP.1 deferred its discussion on this topic until the next session.

C. Automated driving

1. Vehicles with automated driving systems: The concept of activities other than driving

11. At the last session, WP.1 considered ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/3, made some changes, and agreed to resume discussing the document at the current session. For this session, several countries had provided proposals for changes (contained in Informal document no. 7) to be considered for incorporation into ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/3. As a result, WP.1 discussed Informal document No. 7 and ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/3 simultaneously, agreed on some changes, and decided to resume this work from "Preamble" of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/3 at the next session.

2. Situations when a driver operates a vehicle from the outside of the vehicle

12. At the last session, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland submitted a discussion document for a proposed draft resolution on remote driving (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/2). At this session, the Working Party did not begin discussing this document, but instead focused on considering how to properly address the complex issues related to operating a vehicle from the outside of the vehicle. WP.1 invited the authors to review the initial approach and to draft ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/2/Rev.1 for the next session.

3. Amendment proposal to Article 8 in the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic

13. Given progress made on the amendment proposal contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2020/1 under agenda item 3 (c) (iv), WP.1 agreed to discontinue discussion on this agenda item.

4. Amendment proposal to Article 34 in the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic

14. WP.1 considered the amendment proposal to Article 34 contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2020/1 and agreed in principle to add two new definitions to Article 1 and insert a new Article 34bis. The text agreed at this session is provided below:

Article 1 – Definitions

Add new paragraphs (ab) and (ac), to read:

(ab) “Automated driving system” refers to a vehicle system that uses both hardware and software to exercise dynamic control of a vehicle on a sustained basis.

(ac) “Dynamic control” refers to carrying out all the real-time operational and tactical functions required to move the vehicle. These functions include controlling the vehicle’s lateral and longitudinal motion, monitoring the road, responding to events in road traffic, and planning and signalling for manoeuvres.”

“Article 34bis

Automated driving

The requirement that every moving vehicle or combination of vehicles shall have a driver is deemed to be satisfied while the vehicle is using an automated driving system which complies with:

(a) domestic technical regulations, and any applicable international legal instrument, concerning wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted and/or be used on wheeled vehicles, and

(b) domestic legislation governing operation.

The effect of this article is limited to the territory of the contracting party where the relevant domestic technical regulations and legislation governing operation apply.”

15. WP.1 invited the proponents of this proposal to submit ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2020/1/Rev.1 for the next session for possible adoption. The revised document should contain the agreed text as well as a revised explanatory memorandum.

5. Establishment of Group of Experts on drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in traffic

16. At the last session, the Chair suggested and WP.1 agreed to begin developing a new convention on the use of automated vehicles in road traffic. At this session, the Chair explained that terms of reference for a new Group of Experts had been prepared by the Bureau together with the secretariat and subsequently revised to take into account “in-between sessions” consultations with WP.1 government delegates. After completion of these consultations, the secretariat submitted ECE/TRANS/2020/7 to the Inland Transport Committee in February 2020 (one week prior to the WP.1 March session which would have likely formally adopted the text contained in ECE/TRANS/2020/7) requesting that ITC approve the establishment of this Group. The ITC discussed this issue and “decided not to approve at this stage the establishment of a new Group of Experts” (para 35, Informal document No. 10/Rev.6) and requested WP.1 “to reconsider the proposed TOR” in close cooperation with all relevant working parties. WP.1 took note that it was not possible for the secretariat to submit ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2020/2 as its exact copy (ECE/TRANS/2020/7) had already been issued.

17. WP.1 discussed how to proceed and decided to delegate this process to the WP.1 Chair who will consult “all relevant working parties”, prepare a revised draft of the TOR taking into account the suggestions received, and table the document at the next WP.1 session for discussion and possible adoption (as per the above ITC decision). The WP.1 Chair pointed out the procedural steps indicated in the ITC decision and invited the Working Party to consider them in light of “Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of teams of specialists within UNECE” issued by the UNECE Executive Committee (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1).

18. Finland informed WP.1 (Informal document No. 8) about its approach to automated driving. WP.1 took note of Finland’s observations and, in general, expressed broad support for considering the indicated topics such as artificial intelligence, ethics, social benefits of vehicle automation as relevant for the work program of the future Group of Experts on drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in traffic, when it becomes operational.

V. Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968) (agenda item 4)

Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals

19. At the last session, WP.1 requested national delegates to provide comments on ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/4 which contains the Group's final report and ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/5 on the proposals to amend Annexes 1-3 of the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals. At this session, the Working Party considered Informal document No. 12 (the Group of Experts' final report with comments) up to sign C, 46. At the next session, WP.1 will resume discussion of the document, starting from C, 46 (and including A,14).

20. Informal documents No. 5 and 6 from Slovakia were not discussed as the information provided in them is contained in Informal document Nos. 10 and 12 which consolidated all comments received. Informal document No. 12 (the Group of Experts' final report with comments) is expected to be discussed at the next session.

21. The secretariat informed WP.1 about the progress in developing e-CoRSS (electronic version of the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals). The secretariat expects to finalize the formatting of hundreds of road sign images imminently and believes that e-CoRSS will be available on UNECE website in 2020. The secretariat also informed WP.1 about the status of the required approvals by ITC and EXCOM to allow the Group of Experts to resume its work in 2020. The ITC at its last session approved the extension of the mandate until 31 December 2020 to make it possible for the Group to complete the work on the road signs which could in the future be incorporated into the 1968 Convention (para 36, Informal document No. 10/Rev.6). EXCOM is expected to make a decision at its session in mid-May 2020.

VI. Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1) (agenda item 5)

A. A Safe System Approach and amendment proposals on distracted driving

22. WP.1 discussed Informal document No. 9 and incorporated changes into ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2017/2/Rev.3. At the next session, WP.1 is expected to discuss the last pending proposal related to access to mobile phone data in case of accidents.

B. Policies for Vulnerable Road Users (VRU) and Powered Two Wheelers (PTW)

23. The International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association on behalf the informal group of experts (Canada, Italy, United Kingdom, Institute of Road Traffic Education, University of Birmingham, and Johns Hopkins University) created to investigate and assess VRUs as well as PTW policies and their impact in South-East Asia explained that it could not meet due to the Covid-19 situation. However, it fully expects progress to be made and will report on it at the next session. Therefore, WP.1 did not have the opportunity to discuss ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/6.

24. The WP.1 Chair pointed out the relevance of expanding policy analysis to regional capacity building process on the basis of best practice examples such as the Road Safety Living Lab which the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE) has established in Pondicherry, India. In this context, the Chair invited WP.1 to reflect on informal transport modes, which play an important role in the social mobility in the South East Asia. In this vein, the Chair will also explore together with the Informal Group of Expert a possibility of holding a dedicated special event on these topics to celebrate in 2021 the 30th anniversary of IRTE Foundation.

C. Personal mobility devices

25. Due to Covid-19 and travel restrictions invoked in many countries, Informal document No. 1 was not submitted or presented. WP.1 invited John Hopkins University to speak about various micro-mobility issues and challenges at the next session. Panos Mylonas made a presentation on the safe use of e-scooters. After discussion on the relationship between the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic and emerging personal mobility devices issues, the Working Party decided to continue exploring this topic and invited Lithuania to gather legislative information on personal mobility devices such as e-scooters from WP.1 national delegates and table a document at the next session.

VII. Revision of the terms of reference and rules of procedure for WP.1 (agenda item 6)

26. The secretariat - as requested - made ECE/TRANS/WP.1/100/Add.1/Rev.4 (with track changes to date) available at this session (Informal document No. 2) to assist in revising ECE/TRANS/WP.1/100/Add.1/Rev.4 (Terms of Reference of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety). The Working Party made some measured progress on this document, but decided to accelerate the completion of this document at the next session.

VIII. Sustainable Development Goals: Potential contribution by WP.1 (agenda item 7)

27. At the last session, Sweden, Brazil, and Road Safety Institute (RSI) “Panos Mylonas” volunteered to prepare an informal document proposing a framework for an impact analysis of potential contribution by WP.1. At this session, Informal document No. 3 presented an impact assessment process which could be used to evaluate WP.1 contribution to the ITC strategy or its contribution to Sustainable Development Goals 3.6 and 11.2. WP.1 welcomed this approach and encouraged the proponents to continue its work and to present preliminary observations at the next session.

IX. Definition of a serious injury (agenda item 8)

28. At the last session, the Chair invited WP.1 to partner with Sweden to further develop the WP.1 work in this area. Due to time constraints, Sweden could not provide an update on the use, in the context of road safety, of Abbreviated Injury Scale (AIS) in combination with the “Risk of Permanent Medical Impairment” (RPMI) as indicators. However, Sweden will endeavour to table an informal document at the next session. Italy, also at the next session, will be invited to provide information on its work on quality of life after life changing injury (Quality Adjusted Life Years – Disability Adjusted Life Years).

X. Other Business (agenda item 9)

29. At the last session, WP.1 – following the request “to take follow-up actions to align its work with the strategy” - discussed its activities in the framework of Table 1 in ECE/TRANS/288/Add.2. It also requested the secretariat to prepare an informal document containing the comments made. As a result, Informal document No.4 was submitted, discussed, revised, and adopted at this session. WP.1 requested the secretariat to share the revised and adopted Informal document No.4 with the ITC secretariat.

30. The secretariat informed WP.1 about comments on the draft ITC recommendations for Enhancing National Road Safety Systems sent to ITC Secretariat as requested in the communication to the Chairs of Working Parties dated 24 April 2019. In this context, WP.1 took note of relevant ITC decisions paras. 39 and 40 in Informal document no.10/Rev.6.

31. WP.1 took note of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/ 2020/3 which describes a framework for collaboration and common approaches between WP.1 and the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29). In this context, WP.1 and WP.29 held a joint session (Informal document Nos. 11 and 14) where several Bureau members from both Working Parties provided information on ongoing activities. It was concluded that regular exchanges of information on vehicle automation between the two Working Parties were important and beneficial. This should include participation of Chairs in the sessions of respective bodies. In addition, both Working Parties expressed interest of holding a joint event annually.

32. The secretariat informed WP.1 about the work of the United Nations Road Safety Fund while the secretariat to the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety provided an update on the recent activities of the Special Envoy in promoting road safety and United Nations legal instruments (comprehensive presentations on both topics are available at WP.1 web page).

33. The Chair provided information about the Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety (19-20 February 2020, Stockholm) as well as on the outcomes and conclusions of the successful WP.1 pre-event organized in partnership with the Russian Federation (18 February 2020). The event aimed at raising attention to the recent work of the Global Forum, including a legal framework to govern the internationally harmonized application of emerging automotive technologies benefitting road safety at a global level (presentations made at the pre-event are available on the WP.1 web page). WP.1 expressed its appreciation to the Russian Federation for providing the financing necessary for this event.

34. The secretariat informed WP.1 about a recent evaluation of "gender mainstreaming in UNECE". In particular, the secretariat raised attention of member States of desirability to increase the number of women participants in delegations and encouraged inclusion of gender mainstreaming in WP.1 decisions, where appropriate and relevant. The secretariat also encouraged member States to improve member State capacity building by using examples from role model member States who are implementing good practices in gender mainstreaming to inspire other member States with applied examples of gender equality in road safety or other closely related areas. WP.1 discussed gender mainstreaming, stressed the need for merit based management practices, and decided it may follow up – as necessary and time permitting – in the future.

35. Germany introduced Informal document No. 13 on the possible need to require an automated vehicle to indicate – by either an optical or audible signal or both – its mode of operation ("automated vs manual"). After discussion – with observations including the interaction with law enforcement, other road users and possible undesirable incentives to use fake signals – WP.1 agreed to consider this topic at the next session under agenda item 3(c).

36. The Chair informed WP.1 about the interest of the United States National Safety Council in sharing its expertise in workplace road safety practices which could be replicable at a global level.

XI. Date of next session (agenda item 10)

37. The next session of WP.1 is scheduled for 21-25 September 2020 in Geneva. The deadline for submission of formal documents is 1 July 2020. WP.1 requested the secretariat to ensure five-day sessions are held in September 2020 as well as in March and September 2021.

XII. Adoption of the report of the eightieth session (agenda item 11)

38. The Working Party adopted the report of its eightieth session.