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Seventy-second session

Geneva, 29 March – 1 April 2016

Report of the Seventy-second 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 seventy-second session in Geneva from 29 March to 1 April 2016, chaired by Ms. L. Iorio (Italy). Representatives of the following ECE member States participated: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America.
2. The representatives of non-ECE member States also participated: Algeria, Brazil, India, Japan, Jordan, Republic of Korea and Tunisia.
3. The Following non-governmental organizations were also represented: Federation of Alliance Internationale de Tourism, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), Federation of International Motorcycling (FIM), Institute of Road Traffic Education India, International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Laser Europe, International Road Transport Union (IRU), Road Safety Institute (RSI) "Panos Mylonas" and Google Inc.

II. Adoption of the Agenda (agenda item 1)

4. The Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/152). WP.1 welcomed the participation of delegates from Algeria, Brazil, India, Jordan, Republic of Korea and Tunisia as well as expressed hope that these countries will continue attending the future sessions.

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

5. The Chair and secretariat informed WP.1 about relevant outcomes of the latest session of the Inland Transport Committee (23-26 February 2016), in particular those related to processing of pre-session and post-session documents for meetings of Working Parties. WP.1 took note of these outcomes.
6. The United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Mr. Jean Todt, addressed WP.1. He spoke about a draft resolution on road safety to be debated during the General Assembly session on 15 April 2016 and requested active support for its adoption. He reported on his efforts in many low income countries to bring road safety higher on the political agenda and to persuade these countries to consider acceding to and better implementing the United Nations road safety conventions. WP.1 reiterated its appreciation for the Special Envoy's efforts to improve road safety and for promoting the United Nations road safety legal instruments across the world.
7. The Director of the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division presented Informal document No. 4 which lists various options for the establishment of a United Nations Road Safety Fund. WP.1 took note of the information provided and agreed that while the discussions on the fund are being held in New York City (as part of the negotiations on the draft resolution on improving road safety) no parallel discussion should be pursued. Should the United Nations Road Safety Fund be established, WP.1 agreed to consider its role vis-à-vis the fund at a later date.
8. Laser Europe provided the following information in writing. In March 2016, on the International Day of Francophonie, the Laser International Foundation created the "Alliance Francophone pour la sécurité routière" to promote cooperation among individuals and organizations who use the French language. The purpose of the Alliance is to help reduce by 2020 road deaths on the roads of the francophone countries by supporting,

participating and developing road safety projects. The First Road Safety Film Festival of Wallonie (Belgium) will be held on 16-22 September 2016 in Namur during the European Mobility Week.

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

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

9. WP.1 began considering ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2015/2/Rev.2 submitted by France, Italy and Laser Europe. ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2015/2/Rev.2 is based on ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2011/4/Rev.5 as revised during the last session (currently ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2011/4/Rev.6) and it also contains additional proposals for examination.

10. WP.1 requested France, Italy and Laser Europe to revise ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2015/2/Rev.2 for the next session based on decisions taken at the current session and to table it as ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2015/2/Rev.3.

B. Driving permits

11. The secretariat informed WP.1 that the Inland Transport Committee at its last session had provided a mandate for an official translation of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/8/Rev.1 into Arabic, Chinese and Spanish. WP.1 took note of this information and requested the secretariat to report on the status of the translation at the next session.

12. The ISO presented Informal document No. 5 containing amendment proposals related to domestic and International Driving Permits (IDPs) to the 1968 Convention. FIA reported its findings on drivers' perception of IDPs and confusion related to using IDPs for international travel. FIA informed WP.1 that it intended to establish an IDP project to find solutions that could help change drivers' perceptions of IDP and limit any confusion about their use. The secretariat informed WP.1 that it was working with FIA on creating an IDP image bank.

13. WP.1 took note of the information provided. It invited ISO to work with France and Luxembourg to further refine the amendment proposal and to table it as an official document at the next session. It requested FIA and the secretariat to provide updates on the development of the IDP image bank. FIA was also invited to share any possible solutions to changing drivers' perception of IDPs.

C. Autonomous driving

14. WP.1 had recently decided to establish an informal Group of Experts on automated driving to work on the human factors issues (especially human-machine interaction and role of the driver). The Chair of this informal Group of Experts (France) provided information to WP.1 on the Group's progress. The Group has already met three times and at the first meeting, had elected a Deputy Chair (the Netherlands) and OICA to provide secretariat services. The Group has considered a number of critical issues and will continue doing so.

15. The Group focuses on the areas such as road safety, driver's behaviour and coexistence of automated vehicles, conventional vehicles and other road users on the road.

16. The Group discussed the issue of testing of driverless vehicle on public roads. The Group was of the opinion that there was no need for amendments to the 1949 and 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic for foreseeable types of experiments (i.e. “where there is a person who is ready, and able to take control of the experimental vehicle(s); this person may or may not be inside the vehicle”).

17. The Chair also informed WP.1 that G7 had created a subgroup on automated vehicles, connected vehicles and ITS. A Ministerial declaration on those three items is expected to be issued by the end of 2016 by Ministers of Transport of G7 countries. Separately, the Netherlands as well as President of the Council of Ministers of EU will issue a declaration on automated driving on 14 April 2016 during an informal meeting of EU Ministers of Transport.

18. WP.1 took note of the information provided. It agreed with the Group’s opinion that amendments to the 1949 and 1968 Conventions are not necessary for public testing of driverless vehicles under the above-stated conditions. It also set out the following near-term guidance for the informal Group: (i) to discontinue considering possible amendments to facilitate testing of driverless vehicles on public roads; (ii) to continue considering possible amendments to the 1949 and 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic which would accommodate highly automated vehicles and to explore different possibilities to that end; and (iii) to commence work on automated systems such as remote parking where the definitions of “driving” and “operating” may be needed in order to provide guidance to WP.1 delegates.

19. The Government of Belgium did not table a proposal to amend the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic (ie. ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2016/2 was not submitted) given that the informal Group of Experts already addressed the issue of testing driverless vehicles on public roads (see above).

20. The Deputy Chair of WP.1 (France) reported on developments in the area of autonomous driving arising from the 13 October 2015 meeting of the European Union’s Road Safety High Level Group in Brussels. WP.1 took note that the next meeting of High Level Group is scheduled for 13 April 2016.

21. Spain made a presentation on the country’s policies on automated vehicles as well provided additional information on Spanish regulations on the conduct of tests or research trials of automated vehicles on roads open to general traffic (Informal document No. 8) and the use of parking assist systems on roads open to general traffic (Informal document No. 9).

22. Google X delivered a presentation on its progress in developing a safe driverless vehicle. The presentation provided information on the general principles behind Google technology, the way it operates and how it may be deployed in the future to supply additional mobility options for road users. WP.1 welcomed the presentation and requested Google X to continue informing WP.1 about the technology progress and explore ways for establishing channels to exchange information.

D. Loading of vehicles

23. WP.1 considered ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2015/5/Rev.1 submitted by the IRU and Laser Europe. After discussion, WP.1 invited IRU and Laser Europe to revise the document and submit it at the next session. WP.1 again requested both proponents to identify a Contracting Party to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic to formally propose this amendment.

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

24. The secretariat – due to heavy workload - requested that the questionnaire to be distributed to Contracting Parties on the level of implementation of provisions related to international technical inspection certificates (in particular, Annex, point 26bis, paragraph 5(c)) be postponed until further notice. WP.1 agreed to this request.

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

A. Consistency between the Convention on Road Traffic (1949) and Vehicle Technical Regulations

25. The secretariat informed WP.1 about the rejection of the amendment proposal (Annex II of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/149) by Contracting Parties (C.N.91.2016.TREATIES-XI.B.1 dated 22 March 2016). ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/4/Rev.1 was originally submitted by Austria, Belgium, France and Italy and proposed amending Articles 8 and 22 of the Convention.

B. Registration plates

26. The secretariat informed WP.1 about the rejection of the amendment proposal (Annex II of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/149) by Contracting Parties (C.N.95.2016.TREATIES-XI.B.1 dated 22 March 2016). The proposal by Belgium aimed to amend paragraph 1 of Annex 3 of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic to allow the issuance of (personalized) registration plates containing only letters.

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

A. Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals

27. The Chair of the Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals reported on the Group's progress to-date. WP.1 was informed that after six sessions, experts have reviewed about two-thirds of the Convention signs. The review is based on the evaluation of the Convention signs vis-à-vis the signs used in Contracting Parties (which had been uploaded into the Road Signs Management System (RSMS) by 30 Contracting Parties to the Convention). The experts also initiated discussion on the non-Convention signs on the basis of a preliminary review of some 1,500 signs input into RSMS undertaken by the secretariat.

28. The secretariat invited representatives of Contracting Parties present at the meeting who so far have not provided their national signs for RSMS to do so. The secretariat explained that a more complete RSMS data base will help the experts better understand what kind of changes are needed. After all, the goal of the Group of Experts is to make the Convention better serve the current and future signage needs while continuing the necessary harmonization among Contracting Parties.

29. WP.1 appreciated the progress made by the Group of Experts. It reiterated the request to Contracting Parties that have not done so yet to input their signs into RSMS.

B. Amendment Proposals on Variable Message Signs (VMS)

30. Given the fact that the Convention seemingly does not require amendments to effectively use variable message signs (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/151 para. 24), WP.1 agreed to discontinue this agenda item.

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

A. A Safe System Approach

31. WP.1 discussed ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/6 which incorporates Sweden's amendment proposals to include a safe system approach into R.E.1. WP.1 will continue discussing the document at the next session beginning with section 1.5.1 (Use of mobile phones).

B. Multi-Disciplinary Crash Investigation (MDCI)

32. WP.1 considered ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2013/6/Rev.2 submitted by Finland and Sweden. While the document has been revised to follow the R.E.1 format, WP.1 believed that further changes are still needed. It invited Finland and Sweden to submit a revised version for the next session and it welcomed Laser Europe's willingness to assist in this regard.

C Amendment proposals on distracted driving

33. The WP.1 agreed to continue the discussion on this item at the next session (Informal document No. 1 was not submitted). It agreed that the discussion should go beyond the use of mobile phones and address "infotainment" and distraction in a wider context. The European Commission submitted Informal document No. 7 which contains a copy of the latest "distracted driving" study which summarizes research to-date.

D. Amendment proposals on policies for Powered Two Wheelers (PTW)

34. In the follow-up to the conclusions of the PTW round table (Annex I, ECE/TRANS/WP.1/149), WP.1 was informed by the representative of the Indian Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE) about a "Conference on safety of powered two wheelers" held on 18-19 February 2016 in New Delhi in consultation with WP.1 (Informal document No. 2 was not submitted.). The Conference brought together government officials and academia from South-East Asia as well as international experts, among them representatives of UN ESCAP. It formulated a number of tailor-made recommendations to improve PTW safety in the region and it also identified five areas for further research. The next PTW Conference is scheduled to take place on 5-7 December 2016 in New Delhi and be held in consultation with WP.1.

35. WP.1 welcomed the outcome of the February 2016 Conference. This type of conference helps to introduce change in how road safety is perceived in low income countries. WP.1 underlined the importance of participation of international experts, among them the representatives of the United Nations Regional Commissions in the conferences for the South-East Asia region and invited them to attend also the future event. WP.1

thanked the host institution (IRTE) and conference sponsors, among them NHTSA and FIA Foundation.

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

Secure Parking Areas

36. WP.1 considered and subsequently revised ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2012/9/Rev.1. It invited Austria and Spain in cooperation with the Chair to table the revised version as ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2012/9/Rev.2 for further discussion and possible adoption at the next session.

X. Group of Experts on Improving Safety at Level Crossings (agenda item 9)

37. The secretariat, on behalf of the Chair of the Group of Experts, reported on the Group's progress to-date. The Group has concluded its substantive work detailed in its terms of reference. The Group also agreed on the structure of its final report, which is to consist of two parts. Part I is to describe the Group's findings and assessment: (i) safety performance at level crossings in UNECE member countries and some other selected countries, (ii) country experiences with quantification of economic costs of level crossings accidents, (iii) country's prevailing legislation to addressing safety at level crossings, and (iv) country experiences with addressing risk factors contributing to unsafe conditions in areas such as technology, human behaviour, education or enforcement. Part II, which is to be a strategic part of the final report, is to be structured along the elements of the safe system approach and the effective application of risk management at level crossings. It is to provide recommendations for improving safety at level crossings in the context of the application of the safe system approach. The Group expects to finalize its final report during the next three sessions to be held before the end of 2016.

38. WP.1 welcomed the progress achieved by the Group of Experts. It requested the Group, based on its final report, to offer input to a review of Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic pertaining to level crossings.

39. The representative of IRU informed WP.1 about an IRU-UIC joint project to prepare and distribute flyers for professional drivers to explain safe behaviour at level crossings, including what to do in emergency situations. WP.1 took note of this information.

XI. Programme of work and biennial evaluation, 2016-2017 (agenda item 10)

40. WP.1 formally approved ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2015/9/Rev.1 and ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2015/10/Rev.1, which incorporated the changes made to both documents at the previous session.

XII. Revision of the terms of reference and rules of procedure for WP.1 (agenda item 11)

41. At the last session, WP.1 decided to establish an informal group of experts to revise WP.1 Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure (TRANS/WP.1/100/Add.1). Austria, France and Laser Europe, which volunteered to become members of this group, presented preliminary results of the Group's work (TRANS/WP.1/100/Add.1/Rev.1 and Informal document No. 3). WP.1 discussed both documents and invited the informal group of experts to make a proposal on WP.1 participation options (i.e. full versus consultative status) for consideration at the next session.

XIII. Decade of Action – Time for Results (agenda item 12)

42. The secretariat informed WP.1 about the Second Global High-Level Conference on Road Safety held on 18-19 November 2015 in Brasilia and about activities organized by UNECE during the conference. The activities included: (i) organization in cooperation with the Government of France of a side-event on the role of WP.1 and United Nations road safety conventions in improving road safety, (ii) promotion through a joint UNECE-Secretary-General Special Envoy's for Road Safety exhibition booth of the UNECE 360° approach to road safety and of the United Nations road safety conventions, and (iii) presentation of a publication "Together with UNECE on the road to safety".

43. In the context of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, the project managers of a European Union-sponsored EUROMED project reported on the project's achievements in the field of improving road safety. Delegations of Algeria, Jordan and Tunisia – representing country beneficiaries of the project – provided WP.1 with more detailed insight about the road safety status in their countries, activities resulting from the project, in particular legislative improvements, as well as remaining challenges and needs for support. WP.1 expressed its satisfaction about the project delivering tangible results. It urged the countries participating in the project to accede to the United Nations road safety conventions, if not done so yet.

44. The representative of RSI "Panos Mylonas" briefed WP.1 on its road safety initiatives for youth and other citizens. In particular, the results of a global survey related to road safety attitudes among youth and focusing on underage drinking and driving were presented.

XIV. Other Business (agenda item 13)

45. The Chair invited WP.1 to reflect on a possibility of changing the current name (Road Safety Forum) to better reflect the global scope of United Nations road safety conventions.

XV. Date of next session (agenda item 14)

46. The next session of WP.1 is scheduled for 19-22 September 2016 in Geneva. The deadline for submitting formal documents is 24 June 2016.

XVI. Adoption of the report of the seventy-second session (agenda item 15)

47. The Working Party adopted the report of its seventy-second session.