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Driving permits:

Use of domestic and international driving permits

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At the seventy-seventh session, WP1 discussed and commented on ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.1 which considered three options on the use of domestic and international driving permits. This informal document has been prepared in response to the discussion. It summarises the background and considers an approach of amalgamating the three options which WP1 members are invited to discuss.

I. Background history

1. The informal group of experts on driving permits, initially comprised of representatives of France, Luxembourg and ISO, began their work at the request of WP.1 during its sixty-fourth session. The initial request by WP.1 was for the group to propose suitable solutions on the mutual recognition of driving permits issued under the 1968 Convention and the EU third Driving Licence Directive. This work has now been concluded and the brochure, entitled “International Driving Permit Categories”, has been published.

2. Since the sixty-ninth session of WP.1, the group has been considering broader issues related to DDPs and IDPs. These include the following:

(a) Only a small number of contracting parties are fully compliant with the requirements of Annex 7 of the 1968 Convention relating to IDPs;

(b) A number of 1949 contracting parties are incorrectly issuing IDPs. For example, they are issuing IDPs pursuant to the 1968 Convention when that contracting party is party to the 1949 Convention only;

(c) The model IDP (as prescribed in Annex 10 in the 1949 Convention) has not been updated in the same manner as its corresponding Annex 7 in the 1968 Convention – that is, Annex 10 in the 1949 Convention contains only text without any pictograms; and

(d) The specifications for the mandatory languages into which Model 3 left hand page have to be translated differ:

(i) for the 1968 Convention, they are English, French, Russian and Spanish; and

(ii) for the 1949 Convention, they are the official languages of the UN (i.e. English, French, Russian, Spanish, Arabic and Chinese).

(e) There is inconsistent standing/status of IDPs depending on whether it is issued under the 1949 or 1968 Convention. For example:

(i) for the 1968 Convention, the IDP must be accompanied by a valid DDP;¹ and

(ii) for the 1949 Convention, the IDP is a standalone document (ie does not need to be accompanied by a valid DDP).²

3. Besides the inconsistencies in the model DDPs and IDPs issued under the 1949 and 1968 Conventions mentioned above, as a rule, when IDPs are issued by non-governmental bodies, IDPs to date (whether they are issued under the 1949 or 1968 Convention) contain the following identical limitations:

(a) The documents contain no security features and can be easily copied or altered. The lack of security features makes it difficult for law enforcement authorities to detect fraudulent permits from genuine permits;

(b) In most cases, there is no central register or directory of national motor vehicle agency contact details (telephone, email or postal addresses) for the enquiry and exchange of

¹ Article 41, paras 2(a)(ii) and 5: “2(a) Contracting Parties shall recognize: ... (ii) any international permit conforming to the provisions of Annex 7 to this Convention, on condition that it is presented with the corresponding domestic driving permit... 5. An international driving permit shall be issued only to the holder of a domestic permit for the issue of which the minimum conditions laid down in this Convention have been fulfilled.”

² Article 24, para 2: “A Contracting State may however require that any driver admitted to its territory shall carry an international driving permit conforming to the model contained in Annex 10, especially in the case of a driver coming from a country where a domestic driving permit is not required or where the domestic permit issued to him does not conform to the model contained in Annex 9.”

information between national traffic police and licensing authorities to verify the validity of a presented IDP; and

(c) The issue of paper style IDPs under both the 1968 and 1949 Conventions makes it difficult to automatically cancel or suspend an IDP when a driver's DDP has been suspended or cancelled. This is mitigated to some extent under the 1968 Convention.

4. At the seventy-fifth session of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1), the secretariat delivered a presentation summarizing the discussions of the group of experts, initially comprised of Belgium, Canada, France, Luxembourg, Russian Federation and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) and International Standards Organizations (ISO). Japan, Spain and United States of America were new additions at that time to the informal group.

5. The presentation included a list of six options related to possible future changes to domestic driving permits ("DDPs") and international driving permits ("IDPs") pursuant to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic ("1968 Convention").

6. WP.1 invited the informal group, supported by the secretariat, to prepare a document with background and information on options 1, 2 and 6 as well as a preliminary set of principles to accommodate the international driving permits issued by contracting parties to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic ("1949 Convention"). The intention was to facilitate discussions at this session, and to reach consensus on a preferred option.

7. The group of experts prepared ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1 which was presented at the seventy-sixth session of WP.1. The document covered the background, description of the options, and a set of principles to accommodate the international driving permits issued by contracting parties to the 1949 Convention. The set of principles guiding the options were harmonization, security, and acceptability to contracting parties. WP.1 expressed support for the document and requested that it be updated with a more detailed comparison, and with the benefits and costs of the three options.

8. Accordingly, the group of experts prepared ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev1 which was presented and discussed at the seventy-seventh session of WP.1. WP.1 discussed the pros and cons of the three options and asked the informal group to consider the comments made.

II. Options for the way forward for driving permits under the 1968 Convention

9. For ease of reference, the three options described in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev1 are set out below.

Option (a) One driving permit for both international and domestic travel

10. Under this option, only one type of driving permit, a DDP compliant with Annex 6, would be issued and used by Contracting Parties to the 1968 Convention. As the 1968 Convention already/currently provides, a DDP would be valid for both domestic and international traffic.

Option (b) Two alternative forms of driving permits for international and domestic travel: (1) DDPs compliant with Annex 6 and (2) IDPs accompanied by DDPs not compliant with Annex 6

11. Under this option a DDP compliant with Annex 6 would be issued and used by Contracting Parties to the 1968 Convention (as described in option (a)). If the DDP is not compliant with Annex 6 it must be accompanied by an IDP

Option (c) IDPs valid as a standalone document for international travel, with a system of (1) DDPs compliant with Annex 6 valid for international and domestic travel and (2) DDPs (not necessarily compliant with Annex 6) for domestic use only (i.e. three types of driving permits for international and domestic travel, international travel only and domestic travel only)

12. Under this option, there would be three types of driving permits: (1) a DDP compliant with Annex 6 that would be valid for both domestic and international travel; (2) a DDP for domestic use only which would not have to be compliant with Annex 6; and (3) a standalone IDP that is compliant with Annex 7, and which is valid for international travel (i.e. it does not have to be accompanied by a valid DDP).

III. Consideration of an amalgamated approach

17. Options (a), (b), and (c) as set out in Section II were discussed at the seventy-seventh session of WP1. The informal working group was tasked to take into account comments made by WP1. This could be achieved by combining elements of all three options into an amalgamated approach and which must at the same time respect the principles of harmonisation, security and acceptability to contracting parties.

18. In summary, an amalgamated option may be:

- A DDP compliant with Annex 6 (of the 1968 Convention) and with minimum security features which are recognised at international level, **or**
- An IDP compliant with Annex 7 (of the 1968 Convention) and with minimum security features recognised at international level.
- A DDP not compliant with Annex 6 could only be used domestically. However, this would mean that there would be no requirement for enhanced security features to be included in the DDP for national use.
- Countries who wish to retain a DDP not compliant with Annex 6 would have to issue an IDP compliant with Annex 7 to drivers who wish to travel internationally.
- To facilitate this approach, a change in the 1968 Convention is needed. At the moment drivers need a compliant DDP and a compliant IDP at the same time when travelling internationally; this would need to be removed.

19. This approach would require agreement on the minimum-security features required at international level. It allows contracting parties who have a DDP which is not compliant with Annex 6 and do not wish to change to continue to use the DDP domestically.

20. The 1949 Convention CPs would need to recognise compliant DDPs (through voluntary agreement) in order to achieve greater global harmonisation of driving permits. If they do not recognise compliant DDPs under the 1968 Convention they would need to recognise a compliant IDP under the 1968 Convention (again through voluntary agreement). The need for an IDP (and no requirement to present a DDP) is closer in spirit to the 1949 Convention which only requires drivers to have an IDP when driving internationally.

21. The next logical step is to decide what the minimum-security features should be. The minimum-security features needed will determine the format of a DDP or an IDP and help countries understand how close their current security features/formats are to a global standard. Harmonisation of the security features at international level may also nudge contracting parties to adopt a new format domestically.

22. Many countries are contracting parties to both the 1949 and 1968 Conventions. However, countries who are only contracting parties to the 1968 Convention need to be willing to

recognise compliant DDPs or IDPs from 1949 Contracting Party countries to ensure a harmonised approach.

Annex A

“Travelling” Scenarios

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|--|--|
| 1949 Convention Contracting Party travelling to 1949 Convention Contracting Party Eg. Canada to US | Potential future scenario |
| Now Annex 10 IDP (no secure features) | Future Annex 10 IDP (no secure features) unless it decides to opt into: Annex 6 Compliant DDP (with internationally recognised security features) or Annex 7 Compliant IDP (with new/enhanced secure features) |

| | |
|---|--|
| 1949 Convention Contracting Party travelling to 1949 and 1968 Convention Contracting Party eg. US to France | Potential future scenario |
| Now Annex 10 IDP (no secure features) | Future Annex 10 IDP (no secure features) unless it decides to opt into: Annex 6 Compliant DDP (with internationally recognised security features) or Annex 7 Compliant IDP (with new/enhanced secure features) |

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|--|--|
| 1968 Convention Contracting Party travelling to 1968 Convention Contracting Party eg. France to Sweden | Potential future scenario |
| Now Annex 6 Compliant DDP (with current minimum security features) together with Annex 7 Compliant IDP (with currently low secure features) | Future Annex 6 Compliant DDP (with internationally recognised security features) or Annex 7 Compliant IDP (with new /enhanced internationally recognised security features) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1949 and 1968 Convention Contracting Party travelling to 1949 Convention Contracting Party eg. UK to Canada | Potential future scenario |
| Now Annex 10 IDP (no secure features) | Future Annex 10 IDP (no secure features) unless 1949 Contracting party decides to opt into: Annex 6 Compliant DDP (with internationally recognised security features) or Annex 7 Compliant IDP (with new/enhanced internationally recognised security features) |

| | |
|---|---|
| 1949 Convention Contracting Party travelling to 1968 Convention Contracting Party eg. US to Germany | Potential future scenario |
| Now No legal obligation to recognise. In example given DDP must be presented together with an IDP with German translation | Future Annex 6 Compliant DDP (with internationally recognised security features) or Annex 7 Compliant IDP (with new/enhanced internationally recognised security features) |

| | |
|---|--|
| 1968 Convention Contracting Party or a 1949 Convention Contracting Party travelling to a country which is not party to either Convention | Potential future scenario |
| Now No international agreement in place but local arrangements may apply or use of Annex 10 IDP or Annex 6 DDP with Annex 7 IDP (as a default) | Future No international agreement in place but local arrangements may apply or use of new enhanced internationally recognised IDP could act as the default. |

There are other scenarios for example:

- Spain and Ireland are contracting parties to the 1949 Convention but able to travel within the EU using their DDP as they have a EU Community driving permit.
- Other countries may have local treaties in place which allow them to recognise each other's driving permits when crossing borders.