



Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Transport Statistics****Seventy-first session**

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Item 6 (d) of the provisional agenda

Data collection, methodological development and harmonization of transport statistics:**Collection of statistics on trade in used vehicles, and comparability of new registration data****Used Vehicles: data comparability and international tracking****Note by the secretariat****I. Background**

1. This document follows on from that of last year (ECE/TRANS/WP.6/2019/5) which described the demand for data collection on international trade in used vehicles. The document highlights a possible comparability issue with existing data collected through the web common questionnaire (WebCoQ), and also gives an update on activities by the Global Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) secretariat and other partners in obtaining funding for a United Nations Road Safety Fund project, to better track the issue internationally. For the purposes of this document, passenger car data (rather than lorries, motorbikes, etc.) are the focus.

II. Existing Data Collection in the Common Questionnaire

2. As a reminder, the WebCoQ collects vehicle data both in terms of the number of vehicles registered and the number of new registrations on 31 December in the reference year. The Glossary for Transport Statistics¹ gives a definition for the “date of first registration of motor vehicle” as “the date of first registration of a motor vehicle is the first-time registration of the vehicle as new in a motor vehicle register, irrespective of the nationality of the register. The dating of the registration is the date on which the registration was recorded at the motor vehicle registration office. The registration of an imported second-hand vehicle is not a first-time registration but should be regarded as a reregistration.”

3. This definition seems to be ambiguous, and suggestions for improving the clarity of this definition for future editions of the Glossary are welcome. Regardless of the Glossary definition, it seems that member States are providing differing concepts for new registrations

¹https://www.unecce.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/main/wp6/pdfdocs/Glossary_for_Transport_Statistics_EN.pdf

data. Not every country provides metadata for these indicators; those countries without metadata may or may not be following the Glossary definition.

4. Only six countries have provided specific metadata for this series, namely Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal and Serbia. Greece and Hungary both state that new registrations includes both new vehicles and second-hand vehicles imported from abroad. Latvia indicates that their data only represent registrations for vehicles manufactured in the reference year or the previous year. This would seem to exclude most second-hand imports though not all, and may even include “new” domestically-produced cars that have been in storage or were slow to go to market. Lithuania states that their new registrations include re-registered vehicles, but does not specify if re-registered means second-hand imports, re-registered domestic vehicles, or a combination of these. The data for Portugal do not include imported vehicles (which would seem to agree with the glossary definition), whereas Serbia’s data refer to the number of first-time registered vehicles of the past two years.

III. Possible actions

5. As a first step, ensuring good quality metadata for all countries, to better understand what existing data actually represent, can be pursued. The secretariat, in liaison with Eurostat and the International Transport Forum, will contact countries in the coming months to improve metadata in this regard. At the same time, understanding what the data collection challenges are for countries who are not able to follow the Glossary definition would also help.

6. An additional question relates to possible additional data collection in the future. If the current definition does exclude second-hand imports from new registrations, and countries follow this rule, then there may be a need for data on re-registrations as well. As noted in ECE/TRANS/WP.6/2019/5, second-hand imports make up a majority of the vehicles in many countries, including some in the ECE region, and knowing how many are newly registered in any one year allows insights into road safety, greenhouse gas and local pollution impacts.

7. It is worth noting that in other areas of transport statistics, such as recording the journeys of non-resident trains or barges, bilateral cooperation between country statistics offices can be very useful in allowing both countries to accurately produce data for their territory. Improving cooperation with regards to vehicle registrations, either through statistics office or vehicle licensing authority cooperation, could lead to similar improvements in data coverage.

IV. Related activities

8. The ECE secretariat, together with other international institutions (United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, World Health Organization, International Transport Forum, Fédération internationale de l’automobile, International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee) have been awarded funds from the UN Road Safety Fund to work on “safer and cleaner used cars for Africa”. The project aims to engage both exporting and importing countries to find common grounds on safety and environmental performance of cross border used car transfers.

9. The project proposal includes a data collection workstream that would be led by the International Transport Forum. The activities aim to improve the data collection on used vehicles when they cross borders, in a way that captures the main safety and environmental protection elements, in order to better inform and enforce any policy aiming at the quality of second-hand cars traded across borders.

10. The project, starting in Autumn 2020, is expected to last for around three years. The data collection activities are expected to start during the second half of the project implementation. The secretariat will update the Working Party on the project as it moves forward.

V. Proposed future work

11. The Working Party is encouraged to exchange views on the importance of this topic and the feasibility of improving data collection, both on existing new registrations data and more generally on used vehicle imports/exports.
