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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety  
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agenda item 3 (b) (iv))

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

Behaviour at pedestrian crossings

Transmitted by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT)

Although the number of pedestrian road accident victims has dropped over the past twenty years, and in many cases more sharply than for other categories of users, pedestrians still account for a substantial proportion of road accident victims in a large number of ECMT Member countries. In particular, there has been no significant improvement with regard to the people most at risk - children, and especially the youngest children, and the elderly.

The inventory drawn up in Chapter 1 of the study shows, *inter alia*, that the vast majority of accidents involving pedestrians (accounting for nine-tenths of the victims) occur in built-up areas. In contrast, the risk that a pedestrian will be killed if involved in an accident is three to four times higher outside built-up areas. Accidents at night or in poor weather are especially disturbing because their frequency is on the rise and, in addition, little research has been done on them.

The actual speed in urban areas, where car traffic and pedestrians coexist, is of vital importance when it comes to road safety for pedestrians. Firstly the speed has a great impact on the car users possibility to observe pedestrians and to stop when a critical situation occur.

Secondly, the speed is the determining factor concerning severity when a pedestrian is hit by a car.

Human behaviour plays a critical role in accidents involving pedestrians- the behaviour of drivers of motor vehicles, who need to allow for the potential mistakes of pedestrians, and that of pedestrians themselves, who need to learn how to get along with other road users who are better protected and move more swiftly.

In addition, recent years have seen a change in the attitude of potential road users: today's leisure-time society, encouraged by shorter working hours, has prompted individuals to care more about their health and, for this reason, to do more walking. It has also heightened people's desire for mobility and caused the authorities to take this factor more into account when shaping land-use policies and deciding where to build infrastructure.

In view of this situation, it is imperative that work should continue at every level, both nationally and internationally, to improve pedestrian safety, because pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users of all. The need for this mobilisation is magnified by the fact that most European countries are grappling with problems caused by their ageing populations, and that the risks visible today are bound to increase in the future if nothing is done about them now.

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The Council of Ministers of the ECMT, meeting in Copenhagen on 26 and 27 May 1998, **HAVING REGARD** to the report on pedestrian safety, reproduced in document CEMT/CM(98)17;

**TAKING ACCOUNT** of the work in this area carried out by other international organisations, and in particular by the OECD, which in 1996 published the results of a study on the safety of vulnerable road users by its Programme of Co-operation in the field of Road Transport Research;

**AWARE:**

- that pedestrian safety is a serious problem that requires a comprehensive and coherent approach and a radical change in behaviour to ensure real conviviality between the various road users;
- that such safety requires assurance of a right to mobility that takes handicaps in traffic into account and touches upon a little discussed aspect of transport - health;
- of the importance of incorporating pedestrian safety into all decisions concerning locomotion-related policies at national and local levels;

**REFERS** to previous Resolutions adopted by the ECMT in this area, primarily:

- Resolution No. 34, of December 1975, on pedestrian safety;
- Resolution No. 40, of May 1979, on measures required for the improvement of road traffic at night;
- Resolution No. 50, of May 1987, on road safety of children; and

- Resolution No. 91/3, of May 1991, on the improvement of road safety for the elderly;
- Recommendation CEMT/CM(96)11/Final, of May 1996, on speed moderation with regard to speed limits in urban areas,

**NOTES** certain provisions of these Resolutions that are still relevant, including recommendations that the Member countries should:

- “give pedestrian safety an important role in their national road safety policies; ensure, to this end, that measures concerning pedestrian safety are given due weight in their legislation, regulations and national programmes of action, and that adequate resources are made available to carry out such action”;
- always encourage “the installation of facilities that would make urban roads appreciably safer for pedestrians”;
- “when constructing new roads and improving existing ones, [give] careful attention ... to other aspects of the road network at night, such as the choice of road surfacing materials, provision of public lighting, particularly in urban areas, at pedestrian crossings, heavily trafficked urban roads, rural intersections and other hazardous (high-risk) locations”;
- “[encourage] pedestrians ... to make themselves plainly visible, notably by wearing light-coloured clothing or, better still, reflective devices”;
- “in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic, [instruct pedestrians] to use the side of the road facing on-coming traffic and if this is already prescribed, [enforce] compliance ...”;
- include “as part of the [instruction given to pedestrian] road users”, especially at school, “references to accidents at night”;
- “pay special attention, outside residential areas, to the design and location of crossing facilities used by children, especially near the schools and in places where children move a lot in the traffic”;
- “inform all road users of the difficulties experienced by the elderly in traffic and to remind them of their obligations towards such persons”;
- “encourage information campaigns aimed at drawing the attention of the elderly to traffic problems and risks by means of straightforward, factual and unambiguous messages”;
- “give special consideration to the elderly when designing or improving road infrastructure...”;
- “with regard to road networks, [strive for that] speed limits in urban areas where protected road users and vulnerable ones coexist, be adapted to a level that promote a safe interplay between them,”...

**NOTES** that the formulation of principles of pedestrian safety is not only an objective of transport policy, but also a societal problem insofar as road users are all pedestrians at one point or another, and overcoming their insecurity entails a comprehensive approach with regard both to infrastructure and to vehicles and users;

**RECOMMENDS that the Member countries:**

- as a general measure:
- collect data needed to assess the safety of pedestrians in road traffic more effectively and more regularly, in order to refine knowledge of the problem;
- regarding the organisation of traffic:
- take pedestrians into account, giving them the same importance as other means of transport when travel and traffic plans are being drawn up, similarly to what was recommended in the 1997 Resolution on cyclists [CEMT/CM(97)11];
- regarding infrastructure :
- endeavour above all to create a safe environment for pedestrians whenever infrastructure is created or improved, that this concern underlie any land-use planning and, in particular, that urban speed limits be lowered in areas in which some better protected road users and other more vulnerable ones coexist, so that a safer mix of traffic is achieved; the Recommendations on speed moderation adopted in 1996 in Budapest are particularly relevant in this regard;
- ensure effective co-ordination of the units in charge of traffic design and management, incorporating pedestrian safety into all planning and ensuring consistency from the outset in infrastructure, road signs and traffic rules;
- enlist the participation of residents of the neighbourhoods involved, so that they may contribute via their suggestions, from the town planning stage, to the improvement of pedestrian safety;
- ensure that any footbridges and subways be properly maintained and accessible to all users, including those with reduced mobility, and assess cost effectiveness before considering any new infrastructure;
- pay special attention to pedestrian safety in the most highly exposed areas, and particularly in the vicinity of schools and on the way to schools, and in places where there are likely to be large numbers of pedestrians;
- regarding motor vehicles:
- make all necessary improvements when vehicles, light or heavy, are being designed, so that the impact on pedestrians is minimised in the event of an accident; in particular, ban dangerous accessories on vehicles if vehicle use does not require them;

- systematically ensure optimal traffic visibility in all vehicles involved, for both drivers and pedestrians;
- encourage organisations that set and enforce industrial standards to apply them so as to enhance pedestrian safety;
- regarding users:
- continuously raise the public's awareness of safety and the need for conviviality among road users and particularly pedestrians, who are most vulnerable;
- pay special attention in this regard to training and educational aspects, beginning when children are very young;
- raise awareness among those responsible for transport at businesses and workplaces of the importance of ensuring the safety of their transport with an impact on vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians;
- encourage people to walk as much as possible, given that it is economical, environmentally beneficial and healthy;

**INSTRUCTS** the Committee of Deputies:

- to forward the report to the relevant units of the United Nations' Economic Commission for Europe (UN/ECE), inasmuch as the report contains proposed amendments to the Convention of 1968 on Road Traffic, concerning behaviour at pedestrian crossings and work on vehicle design;
  - to keep developments concerning pedestrian safety under review and report back to the Council in due course.
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