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**Economic Commission for Europe**
**Inland Transport Committee**
**Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics**
**Group of Experts on cycling infrastructure module**
**Fourth session**

Geneva, 6 and 7 November 2023

**Report of the Group of Experts on cycling infrastructure  
 module at its fourth session**
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## I. Attendance

1. The Group of Experts on Cycling Infrastructure Module (hereafter called GE.5) held its fourth session on 6 and 7 November 2023. The session was chaired by Mr. M. Eder (Austria) and held as an in-person meeting with virtual participation as add-on enabled at the request of the Chair for consultation purposes on some agenda item through the Webex platform.
2. Representatives of the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) member States participated: Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
3. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Energy Efficiency and Environment Protection Association (Enverçevko), European Cyclists' Federation (ECF), Partnership for Urban Mobility, Team of Inventions and Innovation of Iran (Islamic Republic of), Velo and Territories and Confederation of the European Bicycle Industry (CONEBI)/ World Bicycle Industry Association (WBIA).

## II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

*Documentation:* ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/6

4. GE.5 adopted the agenda for the fourth session as contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/6.

## III. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe cycling network (agenda item 2)

*Documentation:* ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/2023/3, Informal document WP.5/GE.5 (2023) No. 5

5. GE.5 reviewed the data on national and regional cycling networks made available on the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO). In doing so, GE.5 was informed by Spain on the further progress made in designating the Spanish national network and the expected conclusion of this work in second quarter of 2024. Ireland reiterated that its national network awaited government's approval. Portugal told about the consultation process held with municipalities on designation of the network, hence an initial step in this process. Slovenia told GE.5 about the developments of cycle infrastructure in the Danube cycle plans project.
6. GE.5 thanked Spain, Ireland, Portugal and Slovenia for the updates. It noted then the information from the secretariat about the limited data from countries on applying the three principles agreed at the previous meeting for devising ECE network based on national networks. To this end, GE.5 invited countries to send their proposals for the ECE network by applying the three principles agreed in the previous meeting: (a) Relevant EuroVelo route or routes can serve as a backbone for ECE routes on a territory of an ECE country if and as appropriate for the country, (b) ECE network routes should be long-distance routes, and (c) ECE network routes should enable cross-border connectivity. It also suggested that, to achieve comparable density of the network in countries, an indicator of 40-100km of routes per 1000km<sup>2</sup> would be applied.
7. A representative of the secretariat of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) informed GE.5 that THE PEP Steering Committee, at its twenty-first session (Geneva, 23–25 October 2023) decided to recommend the postponement of the Sixth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, initially scheduled for 2025. GE.5 also noted the information about the creation of a Working Group under the Steering Committee on the elaboration of proposals for a legal instrument under THE PEP. The following subjects were mentioned as possible themes to be addressed by a potential legal instrument:

- (a) cycling network and minimum standards,
- (b) transport and mobility demand reduction,
- (c) transport and mobility in rural areas,
- (d) health aspect in environmental impact assessment procedures in transport,
- (e) technology development in transport.

8. THE PEP Steering Committee was also considering developing an effective process for data collection and sharing, for capacity building and education, and for training and public awareness about cycling.

9. Further to information provided, GE.5 observed that the outcomes of its work on devising the ECE cycling network and agreement of common definitions for cycling infrastructure and recommendations for cycle routes parameters would provide crucial content for a possible legal instrument on the cycle network and minimum standards. GE.5 also stressed that existing international legal frameworks regulating aspects of cycling be considered before a decision is made on the scope of the future legal instrument, in particular items (b) through (e) covered above in paragraph 7.

10. ECF presented ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/2023/3 which contains the draft guide for designating national cycling network, and which incorporates user and routes categories and routes various parameters. GE.5 welcomed the draft. In this discussion, it noted that the assessment referred to in step 3 of the guide is a preliminary assessment and should be understood as such. GE.5 also agreed that additional comments in writing on the guide can be sent to the secretariat until 15 December 2023 for further discussion at its next session in January 2024.

11. ECF also presented Informal document WP.5/GE.5 (2023) No. 5 which contains additional cycling route parameters concerning crossings, separation with pedestrians, inclination, shade as well as quality parameters regarding priority of way and accessibility of cycling infrastructure.

12. GE.5 considered this document and agreed as follows:

- (a) change the number of lanes to cross from 2 to 1 per direction for basic cycle route for uncontrolled crossings as referred to in table 1,
- (b) increase the value of the minimum visibility splay dimension along the carriageway for crossings between a carriageway and basic cycle route with right of way for cyclist,
- (c) stay general on issues where there is not enough experience or evidence and thus do not provide specific values in these cases; in this context for conditions for mixing pedestrian and cycle traffic do not recommend side of track to be used by pedestrians (side of the direction of traffic versus side opposite to the direction of traffic),
- (d) stress that mixing of pedestrian and cycle traffic be avoided in urban areas and at touristic landmarks,
- (e) stay general with regard to shade, priority of way and accessibility.

13. At the same time, experts were invited to provide additional comments on the additional parameters until 15 December 2023.

14. GE.5 also requested the secretariat and ECF to integrate these additional parameters into the guide for designating national cycling network. Crossings and inclination parameters should be referred in the guide's step seven. Accessibility should be mentioned in step two. Aspects of shade and priority of way should be addressed in step seven. In integrating the parameters, it should be considered whether all or only specific tables with parameters be provided in the main body of the guide while others be placed in annex or annexes. GE.5 requested that updated version of the guide be presented at its next session.

## IV. Cycling infrastructure definitions and standards (agenda item 3)

*Documentation:* ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/2023/2/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/2023/4, Informal documents WP.5/GE.5 (2023) No. 6

15. GE.5 had been reviewing at its previous sessions proposals for common definitions for various types of cycling and ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/2023/2/Rev.1 contains all the agreed definitions except for the cycle highway. For the latter, GE.5 wanted to discuss it further taking into account the minimum requirements/expectations with regard to priority of way, reduction of required stops at intersections, and aspects of accessibility.

16. Having considered the quality parameters as contained in Informal document WP.5/GE.5 (2023) No. 5 for priority of way, reduction of required stops at intersections, and aspects of accessibility, GE.3 agreed that they should not be incorporated into the definition. GE.5 requested then the secretariat and ECF to use the definition for cycle highway proposed in the European Union-funded Cycle Highways Innovation for smarter People Transport and Spatial Planning project (CHIPS) and adjust it on language to avoid ambiguous terms such as functional connections. The improved definition should be included in ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/2023/2/Rev.2.

17. GE.5 continued then its discussion on the definitions for cycle. To this end, it reviewed the proposals included in Informal document WP.5/GE.5 (2023) No. 6 prepared by the secretariat in collaboration with ECF and CONEBI/WBIA. These definitions have been elaborated based on the existing cycle definition in the Conventions on Road Traffic and Road Signs and Signals and taking into consideration two factors agreed at the previous meeting, namely: (a) design/electric assistance cut-off speed and (b) width of the cycle. The third factor – weight/mass of the cycle – was not considered due to the fact that it does not play a role in cycles' admission to infrastructure since cycles are lighter than other vehicles which may be permitted on the infrastructure too, e.g. maintenance vehicles.

18. GE.5 considered the proposed definitions. In the subsequent discussion the issue of weight was raised. While it was agreed that weight does not play a role in admission of cycles to infrastructure, it is an important road safety factor. Also the length of cycles was considered. On the one hand, the length of cycles was considered crucial for determining the dimension of islands at intersections which should accommodate the cycles in use. On the other hand, agreed standardized length would be important for facilitating transport of cycles in public transport vehicles, hence ensuring multimodality with use of personal cycles.

19. Following the discussion, GE.5 agreed not to include the length aspect in the definition while it would further consider the weight issue. To this end, it requested the secretariat with ECF and CONEBI/WBIA to reproduce the document on the cycle definitions and insert options for the definitions including specific cycles' weight values. GE.5 also requested that the cut-off speed for Type 1 auxiliary electric motor is changed from 32 km/h to 25 km/h and that countries may use a different cut-off speed threshold in accordance with their domestic legislation.

20. GE.5 also invited experts to send additional comments on the definitions, as appropriate, before 15 December 2023 to the secretariat.

21. GE.5 continued then its discussion on possible modifications to the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals based on proposals contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.5/2023/4 and taking into account the accepted definitions of the various types of cycle infrastructure. This discussion was undertaken jointly with experts of the informal intergovernmental road signs group of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) who joined the session.

22. The discussion raised the following issues:

(a) It was suggested that road signs for compulsory and non-compulsory cycle tracks should be proposed for inclusion in the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals. At the same time, it was stated that a cycle track definition should not include reference to track parameters, and that therefore the definition should be revisited.

(b) The definition of the cycle lane in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals leaves it open to the Contracting Parties to define in their domestic legislation whether motor vehicles are allowed to enter the lane and under which circumstances, and if so, whether in such situations the cycle lane represents what was defined in the definition for advisory cycle lane. Also the term “advisory” may be misleading as whether or not cyclists should use the lane. In this context, it might not be advisable to distinguish between cycle lane that allows motor traffic and such that does not allow it. At the same time, it should be desirable to formulate a traffic rule instructing motor traffic not to enter cycle lanes except for specific circumstances.

(c) No particular need was recognized for inclusion of 2-1 roads and sharrows in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals. Similarly, no need was recognized for a specific road sign for greenways such as on agricultural/water management roads. The Convention is providing a combination of C sign and H panel to regulate access to such infrastructure.

(d) Cycle streets are important elements of infrastructure and road signs indicating the beginning and end of a cycle street, and potentially cycle street zones should be introduced in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals.

(e) No particular need was recognized for inclusion of examples of advance direction and direction signs for cyclists in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals. Recommendations on the signage of EuroVelo cycle route is included in the Consolidated resolution on road signs and signals (R.E.2) since 2009 and is judged relevant and worth promoting as a good practice. To this end, EuroVelo cycle route signs could be considered for inclusion in the Convention.

(f) Due to different traffic rules governing cycle and pedestrian crossings, it should not be advisable to develop and introduce a sign depicting a joint pedestrian and cycle crossing in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals. There were then a number of different opinions expressed about the solution of give way sign in combination with a panel depicting a cycle symbol and arrows for directions from which cyclist can approach to the crossing. Some experts raised the point that warning drivers about bidirectional cycle traffic on a cycle crossing for safety was important and should be discussed further.

(g) Traffic light exemption for cyclists is a safety-increasing solution. A sign for this solution in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals would be desirable.

(h) Lane preselection solution for cyclists is desirable and should be provided as a solution in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals through specific road sign and road markings.

(i) Advanced stop line is a desirable solution and should be provided in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals through a specific road markings provision. The markings should depict not only the advanced stop line or box but also how to approach it by indicating entry lane especially for situations where the carriageway leading to the intersection has no markings of cycle lanes. No specific need was identified for a road sign for this solution.

(j) Two-stage turn provisions can be helpful especially for occasional and demanding groups of cyclists and can be seen as desirable to increase their safety in road traffic. A road sign and markings should therefore be developed for this solution in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals. Two-turn provision can be replaced by a traffic light solution when a separate green light is lit for cyclists only to cross an intersection/carriageway.

23. GE.5 agreed to consider all the above issues raised at the next session in the context of formulation of its recommendations for modification to the Convention on Road Signs and Signals.

24. No specific issues were raised on the proposal to amend the provisions of the Convention on Road Signs and Signals regarding light signals for cyclists. To this end, this work can be considered as completed.

25. GE.5 thanked the experts of the WP.1 informal intergovernmental road signs group for offering their valuable comments and suggestions and for joining the session.

## **V. Other business (agenda item 4)**

26. There was no issue raised under this item.

## **VI. Date and place of next meeting (agenda item 5)**

27. The secretariat informed GE.5 that its next regular meeting was scheduled to take place in Geneva on 30 and 31 January 2024.

28. Experts informed the secretariat that on the same dates a high-level meeting on cycling would take place in Belgium. To this end, the secretariat was invited to explore if the next meeting could be held back-to-back with the high-level meeting in Belgium.

29. Experts also informed the secretariat that the Velo-city conference in Ghent be held on 18–21 June 2024 and requested that a conflict of schedule be avoided for the final GE.5 meeting.

## **VII. Summary of main decisions (agenda item 6)**

30. The secretariat summarized the decisions taken by GE.5. The full report of the session, prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, would be shared electronically after the session for adoption.

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