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Seventy-eighth session

Geneva, 25–29 March 2019

Report of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety on its seventy-eighth session

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I. Attendance

1. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) held its seventy-eighth session in Geneva from 25 to 29 September 2019, chaired by Ms. L. Iorio (Italy). Representatives of the following ECE member States participated: Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) and United States of America.
2. The representatives of non-ECE member States also participated: Australia, Brazil, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Japan, Lebanon, Mauritius, Nigeria, Republic of Korea and Uganda.
3. The European Union and the following non-governmental organizations were also represented: Africa Transport and Environment (ATEA), American Automobile Association (AAA), Europäische Fahrlehrer Assoziation (EFA), EuroMed Transport Project, European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), Federation of International Motorcycling (FIM), Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE), International Federation of Pedestrians (IFP), International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA), International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA), International Road Federation (IRF), International Road Transport Union (IRU), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), Laser Europe, Road Safety Institute (RSI), Toyota Research Institute, and World Bicycle Industry Association (WBIA).
4. Representatives from the private sector and universities also participated, (College of Applied Technical Sciences), Guangzhou Li Zhi Network Technology, Johns Hopkins University, University of South Carolina and SINA.

II. Adoption of the Agenda (agenda item 1)

5. WP.1 adopted the session's agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/166).

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

6. The Road Safety Institute "Panos Mylonas" informed WP.1 about undertaking an educational road safety programme at the twenty-fourth World Scout Jamboree to be held from 22 July to 3 August 2019 in Virginia, United States of America. The Jamboree is expected to gather over fifty thousand participants, aged 14 to 18 from 170 countries.
7. Under this agenda item, three presentations were made: Japan on "Preparations for deployment of automated vehicles in Japan"; Johns Hopkins University on "Automated Mobility and Public Health"; and University of South Carolina on "Some Automation Distinctions".
8. Due to time constraints, national delegations and international organizations had also the opportunity to submit, in writing, information on national and international road safety activities and initiatives, including recent and forthcoming changes to their traffic legislation as well as any information on the events taking place prior to the next WP.1 session. No written submissions were received.

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 continued discussing ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2017/1/Rev.1 (France, Italy and Laser Europe) as well as Informal document No. 8 submitted by the Government of Germany.

After discussion, WP.1 decided to resume, at the next session, by first addressing points (i), (j), (r), (t), 34, 35 and 36 in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2017/1/Rev.1 while taking into account Informal document No.8.

B. Driving permits

10. At the last session, WP.1 requested the informal group of experts on driving permits to incorporate the comments provided by WP.1 into ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.2 to be tabled at the current session. Informal document No. 7 was tabled in place of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.2. Submitted by the experts of Belgium, Brazil, France, Luxembourg, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, FIA and ISO, the document summarized the background and proposed an approach of amalgamating the three options in ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.1. France and UK provided brief introductions of Informal document No.7 while FIA made a presentation on various possibilities for future International Driving Permits (IDPs). WP.1 requested that the informal group of experts incorporate the information contained in Informal document No. 7 into ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.2 for the next session. The Chair requested that ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/1/Rev.2 reflect the possibility of contracting parties exploring digital solutions for future IDPs.

11. On the issue of mutual recognition of IDPs, the delegate from Canada explained that Canadians have reported that their valid IDPs were not recognized when attempting to rent a vehicle in Viet Nam. Contracting parties experiencing similar issues were asked to contact the Canadian delegate to further discuss this issue.

C. Automated driving

(i) Vehicles with automated driving systems: The concept of activities other than driving

12. France introduced Informal document No. 4/Rev.1 (submitted by Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and UK) which addresses the issues of “activities other than driving” while UK elaborated on the assumptions listed in the document. WP.1 began discussing the document and provided general comments. The authors requested that WP.1 delegates provide feedback to the secretary of the informal group of experts on automated driving (ofontaine[at]oica.net and joel.valmain[at]interieur.gouv.fr) as soon as possible, or at the latest at the end of April, so that the document may be revised in time for the next meeting of the informal group. France anticipates that the informal document will be tabled as a formal document for further discussion at the next session.

(ii) Situations when a driver operates a vehicle from the outside of the vehicle

13. France introduced Informal document No. 5 which addresses “situations when a driver operates a vehicle from the outside of the vehicle”. The document was submitted by Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. WP.1 began discussing the document and provided general comments. The authors requested that WP.1 delegates provide feedback to the secretary of the informal group of experts on automated driving (ofontaine[at]oica.net and joel.valmain[at]interieur.gouv.fr) as soon as possible, or at the latest at the end of April, so that the document may be revised in time for the next meeting of the informal group. France anticipates that the informal document will be tabled as a formal document for further discussion at the next session.

(iii) Highly and fully automated vehicles

14. The secretariat tabled ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/4/Rev.3 for information only. It contains the final adopted text of the “Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) resolution on the deployment of highly and fully automated vehicles in road traffic” which was adopted at the last session. WP.1 took note of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/4/Rev.3 and considered how it might promote the resolution. WP.1 delegates suggested that the secretariat could contact the ECE Information Unit to explore possibilities of a communications strategy

to promote the resolution including social media. The Russian Federation suggested that WP.1 could organize a side event at the 2020 Ministerial Conference on Road Safety that will take place in Stockholm. The Chair suggested that the resolution is referred to in the 2020 General Assembly resolution “On improving road safety”.

(iv) Amendment proposal to Article 8 in the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic

15. France tabled ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/1 which contains an amendment proposal to Article 8 in the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic. A more comprehensive set of amendment proposals for automated vehicles (including to Article 8) were also submitted by the United Kingdom in Informal document No. 2. France introduced its document and invited government delegates to share their views with WP.1.

16. In the following discussions, delegates expressed opinions on whether an amendment was necessary and/or desirable; if it is so, should it go beyond amending Article 8 of the 1968 Convention; and whether the amendment to the 1968 Convention needed to be accompanied by a corresponding amendment to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic.

17. France stressed that its proposal to amend Article 8 was linked to the need to provide more clarity and stability both for its domestic legal framework and the private sector. The delegate from OICA agreed with France on the need to provide more certainty to vehicle manufacturers. Belgium agreed with France on the need to amend and highlighted the impossibility of revising its domestic traffic code to accommodate the deployment of autonomous shuttles. Belgium favoured amendments that would go beyond Article 8 as suggested in Informal document No. 2. Finland, Sweden and Switzerland stated that amendments to the 1968 Convention were needed and preferred a more comprehensive approach. Switzerland stressed that amending the 1968 Convention was necessary not only for substantive, legal reasons, but also due to different interpretations by the contracting parties. It deemed these differences to be detrimental to ensuring uniform traffic rules as envisaged by the traffic conventions. The Russian Federation called for amending the 1968 Convention in steps, with the initial focus on Article 8. Luxembourg stated that amending the 1968 Convention was necessary and so did Mauritius. Belarus favoured amending both conventions. Denmark and Slovakia stated that if amendments were to be undertaken, they favoured the approach proposed in Informal document No. 2. Denmark also stated that the fact that there is no agreement at WP.1 on whether the amendment is or is not necessary proves that an amendment is in fact needed.

18. The UK recalled its long-standing position that both the 1949 Convention and the 1968 Convention already allow for any level of technology. Thus, amending the Conventions was not needed, and UK highlighted the risk of divergence between the two Conventions. However, UK recognized that some contracting parties felt that an amendment was needed, and that UK was prepared to work on clarificatory amendments. It stressed that a simple amendment focusing on Article 8 was not appropriate, and a more comprehensive line by line analysis of all of the articles of both conventions was needed. Furthermore, the resolution on the safe deployment of highly and fully automated vehicles in traffic (hereafter the “resolution”), should be the basis of any automated vehicle amendments to both Conventions. The UK stated that its proposal for an amendment to the 1968 Convention was an attempt to start this comprehensive, resolution-based, analysis.

19. Austria did not believe amending the 1968 Convention was necessary and it did not believe that the alleged existing or future “divergence” between the two traffic conventions was a significant issue. However, should WP.1 decide to amend the traffic conventions, Austria would support this work and favour the more comprehensive approach.

20. Currently, Germany is of the opinion that amendments are neither necessary for the 1968 nor the 1949 Convention and it made reference to the “resolution” as an additional suitable framework. Germany outlined that in the long term, if necessary, a clarificatory amendment of the Conventions could be appropriate with regard to the highest level of automation within the meaning of the “resolution” after appropriate review taking into account in depth knowledge of the latest systems and initial experience of its deployment. It further stated that the Conventions should be developed in a way that is as harmonized as possible to avoid deepening of the divergence between them.

21. Canada emphasized the importance of harmonization between both Conventions. Furthermore, Canada underscored the importance of engaging the 1949 Convention contracting parties in the discussion of automated driving. Japan emphasized the importance of harmonizing both conventions and considering the need for amendment before deciding which option to take. India also highlighted that there should not be any divergence between the two Conventions.

22. The United States did not think the amendments were needed, however, if any amendments are to be worked on, they should be done to both Conventions simultaneously to ensure that contracting parties from both Conventions are not excluded from discussions regarding autonomous vehicles during the respective amendment processes. Spain believed that the 1949 and 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic already allow for the deployment of automated (level 5) vehicles, therefore it did not believe that amendments were necessary. However, the country would not oppose developing a separate “vehicle automation protocol” to accompany the 1949 Convention.

23. WP.1 carefully considered the potential risk for divergence between the 1949 and 1968 Conventions due to amending only the latter.

24. In the context of differing views, the Chair suggested developing a new convention to provide an international framework for vehicle automation. Belarus and France fully supported this suggestion. Belgium, Portugal, Slovakia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom – while generally supportive in principle – expressed a variety of concerns, such as the time needed, a risk of possible further fragmentation of international traffic rules, and the need to consult their capitals. The UK confirmed that it was willing to support this initiative if the majority of WP.1 wished to proceed on this basis.

25. The secretariat explained different options on how possible amendments to both traffic conventions can be undertaken without triggering Article 31 of the 1949 Convention. It also noted that the fundamental reasons for amending the 1968 Convention was to address the differences in interpretation in order to avoid multiplication of non-uniform rules of the road as well as to ensure continued harmonization of the admission to international traffic (as provided in the convention’s preamble).

26. Portugal stated that at this stage of technological development, and due to the interpretative differences between contracting parties, the legal issues related to regulating vehicle automation should be preferably left to domestic legislation, in a way that it can be taken in consideration the particular infrastructural, cultural and economic reality of every contracting party. It was suggested that an interpretative amendment or an exemption amendment should be considered. In this vein, Belgium, France and Portugal were willing to begin work on amending Article 34 of the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic, should it prove impossible to amend Article 8 (and perhaps other related provisions of the 1968 Convention). The UK recalled that a single amendment including one based on exemptions may not be sufficient, but recognized the attraction of this approach, and was willing to work with others to explore this.

27. WP.1 considered whether to seek the advice of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs on the interpretation of the 1949 and the 1968 Conventions on Road Traffic with reference to the deployment of automated vehicles.

28. The delegate of France regretted that despite the submission of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2019/1, WP.1 did not discuss its contents.

(v) Joint event of Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety and World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicle Regulation “Automation in Transport: Safe deployment of automated vehicles in traffic”

29. The Chair updated WP.1 on the outcomes of its special WP.1 session, held on 18 February 2019, as a joint event in coordination with the World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29). WP.1 adopted the report of the special session, ECE/TRANS/WP.1/S/167, with one change: “tasks” replaces “activities” in paragraph 8. Acknowledging the success of the event, WP.1 will explore possibilities for future cooperation and joint events with WP.29.

V. Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968) (agenda item 4)

Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals

30. The Chair of the Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals made a presentation on the progress of the draft final report of the Group (as per the terms of reference of the Group). The Chair also explained the Group's desire to assess the non Convention road signs. To this end, the Chair conveyed the Group's request to extend its mandate until the end of 2019 (para. 13, ECE/TRANS/WP.1/GE.2/36). WP.1 took note of an informal expression of interest sent to the WP.1 Chair.

31. The secretariat updated WP.1 on the progress in developing e-CoRSS (electronic version of the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals). WP.1 was also informed about the imminent completion of work to finalize Informal document No. 1 (i.e. draft final report) which was not submitted at this WP.1 session.

32. After discussion, WP.1 instructed the Group to complete its work on the 1968 Convention signs by June and submit the final report (on the Convention's signs) to WP.1 in September 2019. By the end of 2020, the Group is requested to complete its assessment of non Convention signs.

33. To make this possible, WP.1 decided to extend the Group's mandate until 31 December 2020. The extension is subject to the required approvals by the next session of the Inland Transport Committee and Executive Committee (expected to be received by March/April 2020).

VI. Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (agenda item 5)

A. A Safe System Approach

34. WP.1 completed its discussions on ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2014/6/Rev.1 which incorporates the amendment proposals of Sweden to include a safe system approach into the Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1).

WP.1 also finished discussing ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/5/Rev.1 prepared by Italy, Spain, and the United States of America (Role of penalties and other restrictive measures).

B. Amendment proposals on distracted driving

35. WP.1 continued its discussion of ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2017/2/Rev.1 starting from section 1.5.2.1 and agreed on proposed text to sections 1.5.2.1 and 1.5.2.2. For the next session, WP.1 will resume its discussion with the proposed additions under Section 1.5 "Context".

C. Amendment proposals on policies for Powered Two Wheelers

36. The Institute of Road Traffic Education and the University of Birmingham tabled Informal document No. 5 containing consolidated comments on ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2018/6 made at the previous session including the collection of case studies and best regional practices. After presentation and discussion, WP.1 delegates were invited to provide comments on Informal document No. 5 to the authors.

D. Amendment proposals on Vulnerable Road Users

37. The delegate of IRTE invited WP.1 delegates to participate in formulating a draft policy on safety transportation of school children in all modes of transport in India and SEA workshop to be held on 29 and 30 April 2019, in New Delhi, India.

38. The Canadian delegate noted that a dedicated informal group of experts with a mandate to look at the issue for low- and middle-income countries is a good idea. In Canada, a similar approach was taken to improve safety for vulnerable road users. Following the establishment of a Task Force on Vulnerable Road Users, on October 4, 2018, the Council of Ministers Responsible for Transportation and Highway Safety published the Safety Measures for Cyclists and Pedestrians Around Heavy Vehicles - Summary Report (<https://comt.ca/reports/safetymeasures.pdf>). This report is intended to create a springboard for action to support all jurisdictions as they address safety challenges within their communities. The report describes a series of 57 safety measures to better protect vulnerable road users (e.g. roadway and cycling infrastructure, visibility and awareness measures, automated enforcement technologies).

39. WP.1 also agreed to create an informal group of experts (Canada, Italy, UK, IMMA, IRTE, and Johns Hopkins University) to further investigate and assess VRUs as well as PTW policies and their impact in South-East Asia. The objective of this initiative is to develop a model to be replicated also in other regions of the world.

VII. Revision of the terms of reference and rules of procedure for the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (agenda item 6)

40. WP.1 continued discussing ECE/TRANS/WP.1/100/Add.1/Rev.4 and revised the Terms of Reference of the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety up to paragraph (i) of the preamble. WP.1 will resume discussions on this topic at the next session.

VIII. Sustainable Development Goals: Potential contribution by the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (agenda item 7)

41. The WP.1 Chair made a presentation indicating some possible scenarios where promoting road safety principles and safe mobility policies could lead to improved access to health care, educational and working opportunities as a catalyst for social growth, inclusiveness and equity. WP.1 continued its discussion from the last session on how it could enhance its role and involvement in meeting the road-safety related Sustainable Development Goals. As a result, WP.1 confirmed its interest in contributing to road safety-related sustainable development goals. Sweden volunteered to submit an informal paper for the next session on road safety-related sustainable development goals outcome measures.

IX. Definition of a serious injury (agenda item 8)

42. At the last session, WP.1 took note of information on progress in producing a new version of the Glossary for Transport Statistics, including introducing a new definition for a serious injury based on the Maximum Abbreviated Injury Scale (MAIS). Sweden provided information about the use of Abbreviated Injury Scale (AIS) in combination with the “risk of permanent medical impairment” (RPMI) concept in Sweden and explained how Sweden has been using this indicator to refine its road safety action plan and prioritize its target groups for road safety interventions. India shared its experience with using Injury Severity Scale (ISS) and supported the idea of having a common standard of severity of injuries. The Chair requested that this item be retained on WP.1 agenda for continued discussion and invited WP.1 to partner with Sweden to further develop the WP.1 work in this area.

X. Other Business (agenda item 9)

43. In collaboration with the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety, WP.1 commemorated the recent fiftieth anniversary of the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic and 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals on 25 March 2019 with a special address by the Special Envoy and Mr. F. Massa, FIA Road Safety Ambassador and Formula 1 driver, and the sharing of national experiences and perspectives on road safety from Brazil,

Cameroon, Lebanon, Mauritius, Uganda, FIA, ISO, SINA, and Guangzhou Li Zhi Network Technology. WP.1 expressed its appreciation to the Special Envoy and all speakers for their participation and interest in both 1968 Conventions.

44. The secretariat of the newly established United Nations Road Safety Trust Fund updated WP.1 on the latest developments and immediate plans in 2019. The presentation given is available on the WP.1 website while other information can be found at the UNRSTF website (www.unece.org/unrstf/home.html).

45. WP.1 was informed about the forthcoming Global Road Safety Week in May 2019 with the theme of “Leadership”. WP.1 indicated its support for the week and its objectives and encouraged its members to contribute as relevant.

46. The WP.1 Chair provided an update on the November 2018 meeting of the “WP.1/WP.29 Executive Task Force”. WP.1 commented on the relevance of having a hub for information exchange and coordination as the Executive Task Force.

47. After discussion, the Chair invited WP.1 to:

(a) work closely with their counterparts from WP.29 particularly on issues related to automated driving and to get acquainted with the relevant WP.29 documents (e.g. WP.29-177-19, Proposal for a framework document on automated/autonomous vehicles);

(b) to begin the work on developing a common methodological approach of how WP.1 and WP.29 could cooperate. To this end, Canada and the United States volunteered to draft an informal document for the next session; and

(c) to exchange information on topics and available documents of common interest through the WP.1/WP.29 secretariats; and d. to endeavour to invite the Chair of the Working Party on Automated/Autonomous and Connected Vehicles (GRVA) to attend WP.1 sessions.

48. WP.1 acknowledged and thanked Mr. G. Heintz, the delegate of Luxembourg, for his many contributions to WP.1 over the years and wished him the best in his retirement.

49. WP.1 did not discuss other issues.

XI. Date of next session (agenda item 10)

50. The next session of WP.1 is scheduled to take place from 17 to 20 September 2019 in Geneva. The deadline for the submission of formal documents is 24 June 2019.

XII. Adoption of the report of the seventy-eighth session (agenda item 11)

51. The Working Party adopted the report of its seventy-eighth session
