



**Economic and Social  
Council**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ECE/TRANS/WP.1/2006/1  
9 January 2006

ENGLISH  
Original: FRENCH

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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety  
(Forty-eighth session, 20-22 March 2006,  
agenda item 5 (a))

**REVISION OF THE CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTION  
ON ROAD TRAFFIC (R.E.1)**

**Introduction**

**Note by the secretariat**

The members of WP.1 will find below a draft introduction to the new R.E.1 which Mr. Périsset had prepared. The secretariat has added section II on international road safety to the draft.

## **Draft introduction to R.E.1.**

Road traffic accidents are a global problem affecting all sectors of society. Every year nearly 1.2 million people throughout the world are killed on the roads, over half of them young adults aged 15 to 44. Those injured number around 50 million. Added to this is the suffering endured by accident victims and their families and the enormous cost incurred by these accidents, estimated at several hundred billion dollars annually.

It is the duty of all those concerned to mobilize since the road safety crisis is a multifaceted problem that requires the collaboration of the various actors at all levels and demands every effort to put an end to the massacre; accidents are not inevitable.

### **I. *Road safety: a challenge long faced by UNECE***

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe has since 1947 made road safety one of its major concerns, in particular through the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety, known as WP.1. Under its auspices several international legal instruments were drawn up, including the 1949 Geneva Convention on Road Traffic and its Protocol on Road Signs and Signals, succeeded by the two Vienna Conventions of 1968 on Road Traffic and Road Signs and Signals, respectively, and the European Agreements supplementing them (Geneva, 1971). These legal instruments and the Vienna Conventions in particular are important points of reference not only for the international harmonization of regulations for traffic, signs and signals and driving behaviour but also for drawing up national highway codes. Indeed, in its resolution A/60/L8 of 21 October 2005 the United Nations General Assembly encouraged Member States to adhere to these Conventions in order to ensure a high level of road safety in their countries.

In addition to these legal instruments, WP.1 has issued several Consolidated Resolutions, including R.E.1 on road traffic and R.E.2 on road signs and signals, to reinforce the Vienna Conventions and the European Agreements supplementing them. While these Resolutions do not have the binding force of the Conventions, they go into more detail and furnish a catalogue of measures and practices that States are called on to implement on a voluntary basis.

In addition, WP.1 was behind the launch of the Road Safety Weeks in the UNECE region, of which there have been four since they began in 1990. It is also behind the launch of the First Global Road Safety Week scheduled to take place from 23 to 29 April 2007.

### **II. *Road safety: awareness worldwide***

Confronted with the growing absence of road safety worldwide, the highest echelons of the United Nations system have mobilized to support efforts to resolve the international road safety crisis.

The United Nations General Assembly considered this question for the first time in 2003 when it adopted two resolutions, the first, 57/309, on 22 May 2003, and the second, 58/9, adopted pursuant to the report A/58/228 on the subject by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on 5 November 2003.

On World Health Day (7 April 2004), WHO and the World Bank jointly launched the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention, stressing the urgent need for Governments and other key sectors to redouble their efforts to prevent accidents.

The political authorities took advantage of the report and the events organized around World Health Day to adopt two historic resolutions on road safety. On 14 April 2004, the United Nations General Assembly, in a special plenary meeting aimed at a better high-level understanding of the extent of the problem of injuries resulting from road traffic accidents, adopted a new resolution (58/289), entitled "Improving global road safety". Road safety also benefited from unprecedented attention at the World Health Assembly in May 2004 which adopted resolution WHA 57.10 - its first resolution on road safety for 30 years.

In the follow-up to its resolutions, the United Nations General Assembly once again addressed road safety when, following the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/181), it adopted a fourth resolution A/Res/60/5 on 26 October 2005, in which it welcomed the progress made in advancing road safety throughout the world and the initiatives taken by the competent United Nation agencies and their international partners in this domain.

These resolutions, which gave a powerful impetus to road safety throughout the world, are tools which should enable Member States to adopt strategic priorities and defend the cause of road safety.

### **III. *Road safety: a national priority***

Road safety, as a domain that is chiefly the responsibility of local, municipal and domestic authorities, has not always received sufficient attention. This is particularly so in a number of developing countries or countries in transition. There are various reasons for this, for example, a lack of information on the extent of the problem and possibilities for preventing it, a fatalistic attitude towards road accidents, a lack of political commitment and multidisciplinary collaboration, etc.

Much may nevertheless be done to reduce the number of traffic accidents, as has been proved in numerous high-income countries where the number of road accidents in recent years has been cut sometimes by as much as 50%. In order therefore to ensure success in the fight against the absence of road safety, all Governments must set up a genuine road safety policy that goes well beyond merely incidental measures; such a policy should incorporate the following aspects:

- Assertion of a firm political will to make road safety an issue of national importance;
- Incorporation of road safety in policies relating to mobility, accessibility, health and the environment;
- Identification of problems as a result of serious evidence-based analysis and interpretation;

- Definition of realistic but ambitious quantitative objectives;
- Elaboration of a national strategy and action plan:
  - Taking account of the various components of road safety: human beings, vehicles, the infrastructure and emergency assistance. Although it is true that human error is the main cause of accidents, this should not lead to the conclusion that all prevention efforts should concentrate solely on means of directly influencing human behaviour (e.g. road education classes, awareness campaigns, regulations, inspections, sanctions, etc.). Behaviour may also be influenced by indirect means (for example, through action to modify the layout of a road or its environment, by improving vehicle ergonomics, etc.) that may minimize the consequences of errors of behaviour, and even stop a user from committing them;
  - Setting up or developing the institutional, legal and financial framework conditions needed to pursue the objectives;
  - Adopting the required legislation and ensuring compliance with it, organizing the necessary awareness-raising campaigns and introducing appropriate methods for monitoring and evaluating the actions taken.
- Association - each according to his responsibilities and competences - of all the key participants, nationally and locally, elected representatives, private bodies, industry, health professionals and professionals in other disciplines - and establishment of the appropriate structures for coordinating the activities;
- Comparison of the cost-efficiency ratio of the various specific measures to prevent accidents and lessen their consequences.

#### **IV. *The new R.E.1, a reference tool for improving road safety***

The aim of the Consolidated Resolution on Road Traffic (R.E.1) is to give Member States some indication of measures to take and practices to follow with regard to traffic rules, rules of behaviour, user communication and education and the safety of road infrastructures and vehicles. It includes special recommendations to ensure the safety of target groups such as pedestrians, persons with reduced mobility, cyclists, motorcyclists and children, etc.

Since it was first published in March 1978 under the symbol TRANS/SC.1/294, R.E.1 has been added to and amended on several occasions so as to take into account innovations and new developments and the successive amendments to the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic since 1968. Since this first edition there have been five consolidated revisions, the latest with the symbol TRANS/SC.1/294/Rev.5.

The UNECE Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) has undertaken the revision of this Resolution in depth in a concern to update it, modernize the presentation and circulate it as widely as possible throughout the world as a reference tool providing guidelines to be implemented by the national authorities on a voluntary basis.

The new Resolution presented below is the result of this work. It has three aims:

- To increase the awareness of decision-makers at all levels and furnish them with a catalogue of tested and efficient measures to combat the absence of road safety;
- To recommend to the Contracting Parties to the Vienna Conventions and the European Agreements supplementing them the adoption in their domestic legislation of provisions in keeping with the principles of the Resolution, in order as far as possible to eliminate the country divergences that have been allowed to persist in these instruments;
- To recommend to States that have not yet ratified the Vienna Conventions, and in particular the Convention on Road Traffic, or that are not yet in a position to do so, nevertheless to apply from now on, as fully as possible, the principles of this Resolution.

**It is hoped that this Resolution will be followed by good results in the interests of road safety and in the interests of everyone.**

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