

## **Global harmonization of marking requirements – a possible approach**

Following the presentation of informal document WP29-150-20 by OICA/IMMA/GTB at the occasion of the 150<sup>th</sup> WP.29 session in March 2010, OICA/IMMA/GTB submit the following additional document explaining the proposed concept.

### **I. The 1998 Agreement - current situation on marking requirements**

The global technical regulations (gtr's) under the 1998 Agreement, by definition, contain only purely technical requirements and do not specify anything on certification process. As a consequence, nothing can be foreseen in the 98 Agreement on the marking to administratively "certify" that the product in question meets the gtr: such certification marking is indeed an inherent part of the certification process, not covered by the 98 Agreement.

In order to enter into application, any gtr needs to be transposed into national/international law. Each country initiates the steps for national implementation, and in the case of the 1958 Agreement, this will normally occur through the development of a new UNECE Regulation or the amendment of an existing one.

This also will result in the retention, even after transposition, of the existing national/international marking requirements (UNECE marking, US DOT marking, Chinese CCC marking, etc)

While a gtr could in theory foresee a certification mark (often cited as "G" mark"), this would not be usable for a variety of reasons, e.g.:

- Incompatibility between Type Approval and Self Certification, i.e. under the self certification scheme, the G-mark would be affixed by the manufacturer, but this G-mark would not be recognized by a Type Approval authority, unless the product is subsequently type approved as well
- In some cases, gtr's may contain modules or even options. A mapping of the combination of rules and certifications by the G-mark would create a large complexity in such cases and would also prevent a uniform layout of the G-mark, valid for all gtr's.
- The G-mark would need to be systematically accepted by Contracting Parties, which is not guaranteed by the 98 Agreement
- The G-mark would need to replace all current national/international marking requirements, which again is not guaranteed by the 98 Agreement; otherwise, the G-mark would simply become an additional, redundant marking with no added value.

As a result, though technical harmonisation may be achievable globally, products sold on the global market would still need to carry different markings, even if they strictly meet the gtr requirements.

This also means that other ways must be found than strictly using the 98 Agreement and its gtr's in order to harmonize the marking requirements

### **II. Current marking types**

Typically, products may have to bear different types of marking:

#### **a) Technical marking**

Such "technical" marking may be specified in the various regulations and generally consists of:

- Name / trade mark of manufacturer
- Technical characteristics, e.g. dimension, material, function, etc.

Basically, only such marking is needed for customer's purchase decision or for service/repair, in order to ensure that the correct replacement parts are used.

**b) Administrative certification data**

Such "certification" marking generally identifies the certification system applied, the authority that granted approval, the regulation number, the approval number, etc.

Basically, such marking is only relevant for certification and homologation issues. It identifies the product as being duly certified under the regulation in question.

As noted previously, each country may have its own marking requirements; at UNECE level, these are harmonized through the Regulations under the 58 Agreement.

There is consequently a need to streamline the marking requirements, taking into account both the customers' and the approval authorities' needs.

A stepwise approach is consequently proposed, with the ultimate aim that a **single** technical marking and a **single** certification marking requirement could be achieved within the different UNECE Agreements (and possibly even beyond)

**III. Harmonization of the "technical" marking requirements: Step 1**

The gtr's developed under the 98 Agreement specify all the technical requirements that the product needs to meet, when the gtr is implemented nationally or internationally.

Consequently, the gtr's offer a suitable framework to harmonize the "technical" marking requirements, if any, in terms of:

- What technical marking should be present on the product (e.g. name / trade mark of manufacturer, technical characteristics of the component, etc)
- What should be the layout of this marking (e.g. description of the marking, font type, colour, size, location, method of affixing, etc)

This technical marking harmonisation could therefore be conducted in each affected gtr. When implementing this gtr, national and/or international regulations are then expected to fully align their current technical marking requirements with the provisions of the gtr.

At this stage, it is expected that the current national or international **administrative** certification marking requirements (ECE mark, US DOT mark, CCC mark, etc) would remain unchanged.

As gtr's are being developed, this global harmonization of the technical marking requirements can readily be implemented under the 98 Agreement.

**IV. Gradual harmonization of the certification marking requirements: Steps 2 - N**

For the global harmonization of the certification marking requirements, a new approach is needed since, as previously stated, the 98 Agreement does not provide harmonized certification tools, and therefore also no harmonized certification marking tools, except for the technical marking as explained previously.

In order to gradually define a globally harmonized certification marking system, the current full certification marking could be contained in a "global certification database". The product itself would carry a unique index number (XYZ)/identifier/code, such that the authorities could, using this XYZ code, find all the certification markings and also – if desired – the corresponding approvals in the database.

This process could be performed as follows:

1. The manufacturer specifies a unique index number "XYZ" to identify his product. The global uniqueness of the index number will be checked and secured by the global certification database.
2. The manufacturer allocates a new file with this index number "XYZ" in the global certification database and informs the authorities about the existence of this index file in his approval application documents.
3. When granting approval to that product, the authority(ies) then store(s) the respective approval numbers and – if desired – the approvals themselves in file "XYZ" of the database. The database will ensure that only

authorized users can input data with “their” approval number.

4. The manufacturer marks his product with the technical marking according to the relevant gtr (as foreseen in item III above) and with the index number “XYZ” to provide a link between the product and the global certification database.
5. Authorities wishing to verify the approvals to a specific product could obtain the needed information by accessing the global certification database, using the index number "XYZ" clearly visible on the product.

This action will likely need several steps, i.e.

- Step 2: Creation of a "global certification database", containing all administrative data / certificates of the product
- Step 3: Replace current UNECE approval marks on the product by an index (XYZ), referring to the database of the national/international approvals
- Steps 4 - N: Gradually replace national approval marks on the product by the index (XYZ), referring to the database of the national/international approvals

Possibly several steps could be performed at the same time, if several countries decide to opt for this new system at the same time. For the time being however, the new system could possibly start with the UNECE marking under the 58 Agreement, for later extension to other countries and/or regions.

#### **V. Advantages of the proposed concept**

The proposed concept in effect uses the possibilities offered by the 98 Agreement to harmonize, through the gtr's, the technical marking requirements; it also offers a possible solution to the fact that the 98 Agreement, by definition, does not offer the possibility to provide global harmonization of the certification marks.

When it comes to the global harmonization of the technical marking requirements, the 98 Agreement offers an adequate and readily available framework, provided of course all Contracting Parties to the 98 Agreement duly implement the technical marking provisions of the respective gtr's.

Looking now at the certification marking, the concept to substitute the various national/international certification marks by a unique index implies the following clear advantages:

- ✓ Allows authorities direct read access to all approval documents assigned to the product
- ✓ Smaller marking ⇒ more flexibility in locating the mark
- ✓ Future additional certifications for the same product are handled in the certification database only, i.e. later additional certifications in other countries, to other requirements, do not need adding a new mark to the existing one on the product (which today typically requires expensive and time-consuming tool modifications)

Last but not least, one of the key advantages of the proposed concept for certification marking is that it is not restricted to the 58 Agreement, nor is it related to the 98 Agreement. Depending on the number of countries that are willing to adopt this new system, it has the potential to become a truly global certification marking system.

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