

## **Amendments to the publication "WP.29: How it works, how to join it"**

### **United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of the five United Nations regional commissions, administered by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It was established in 1947 with the mandate to help rebuild post-war Europe, develop economic activity and strengthen economic relations among European countries, and between Europe and the rest of the world. During the Cold War, UNECE served as a unique forum for economic dialogue and cooperation between East and West. Despite the complexity of this period, significant achievements were made, with consensus reached on numerous harmonization and standardization agreements.

In the post-Cold War era, UNECE acquired not only many new member States, but also new functions. Since the early 1990s the organization has focused on analyses of the transition process, using its harmonization experience to facilitate the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into the global markets.

UNECE is the forum where the countries of western, central and eastern Europe, central Asia and North America – 56 countries in all – come together to forge the tools of their economic cooperation. That cooperation concerns economics, statistics, environment, transport, trade, sustainable energy, timber and habitat. The Commission offers a regional framework for the elaboration and harmonization of conventions, norms and standards. The Commission's experts provide technical assistance to the countries of South-East Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. This assistance takes the form of advisory services, training seminars and workshops where countries can share their experiences and best practices.

## **Transport in UNECE**

The UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) facilitates the international movement of persons and goods by inland transport modes. It aims to improve competitiveness, safety, energy efficiency and security in the transport sector. At the same time it focuses on reducing the adverse effects of transport activities on public health, the environment and contributing effectively to sustainable development. The ITC is a:

- Centre for multilateral transport standards and agreements in Europe and beyond, e.g. regulations for dangerous goods transport and road vehicle construction at the global level
- Gateway for technical assistance and exchange of best practices
- Promoter of multi-country investment planning
- Substantive partner for transport and trade facilitation initiatives
- Historic centre for transport statistics.

For more than six decades, ITC has provided a platform for intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate and develop international transport while improving its safety and environmental performance. The main results of this persevering and important work are reflected in more than 50 international agreements and conventions which provide an international legal framework and technical regulations for the development of international road, rail, inland water and intermodal transport, as well as dangerous goods transport and vehicle construction. Considering the needs of transport sector and its regulators, UNECE offers a balanced approach to and treatment of facilitation and security issues alike.

## Foreword and Executive Summary

The third edition of the publication, the Blue Book, continues providing precise information on the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) serviced by the UNECE Transport Division: on its historical background, its administrative and legal framework with a user's guide, and the three international United Nations (UN) Agreements administered by the World Forum.

As a permanent discussion forum within the institutional framework of the Inland Transport Committee of the UNECE, the World Forum WP.29 has specific terms of reference and rules of procedure. The smooth administration of the three international UN Agreements on motor vehicles is crucial: the 1958 and 1998 Agreements on regulations for the construction of new vehicles, including performance requirements and the 1997 Agreement on rules for periodical technical inspections of vehicles in use. WP.29 ensures consistency between the regulations and rules developed in the legal frameworks of these three UN Agreements.

The World Forum is a unique worldwide forum in which nations from the entire world are participating. Any country, that is member of the United Nations, may participate in its activities and is invited to adhere to one or more of these vehicle agreements. Regional Economic Integration Organizations (REIOs) set up by countries may also participate and subject to their subsidiary arrangements may become a Contracting Party to the Agreements.

Governmental organizations (GOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are also welcome to participate in the work of the World Forum, but in their case, in a consultative capacity.

The World Forum's work is transparent: agendas, working documents, reports and informal documents are freely accessible on the WP.29 website: <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/welcwp29.html>.

The main features of the Agreements administered by WP.29 are:

The 1958 Agreement provides the legal and administrative framework for establishing international UN Regulations (annexed to the Agreement) with uniform performance oriented test provisions, administrative procedures for granting type approvals, for the conformity of production and for the mutual recognition of the type approvals granted by Contracting Parties. When acceding the Agreement, a Contracting Party is not obliged to apply all the UN Regulations annexed to the Agreement: it may choose, if any, which Regulation it would like to apply. The 1958 Agreement currently has 50 Contracting Parties and 127 UN Regulations annexed to it. The UN Regulations are continuously adapted to the technical progress, whenever

appropriate, to take into account technical and political guidance from the Contracting Parties, the evolution of scientific knowledge and technological progress.

The 1998 Agreement stipulates that Contracting Parties will establish, by consensus vote, United Nations Global Technical Regulations (UN GTRs) in a UN Global Registry. The UN GTRs contain globally harmonized performance requirements and test procedures. Each UN GTR contains extensive notes on its development. The text includes a record of the technical rationale, the research sources used, cost and benefit considerations, and references to data consulted. The Contracting Parties use their nationally established rulemaking processes when transposing UN GTRs into their national legislation. The 1998 Agreement currently has 33 Contracting Parties and 11 UN GTRs that have been established into the UN Global Registry.

The 1997 Agreement allows Contracting Parties to establish UN Rules for periodical inspections of vehicles in use. They shall reciprocally recognize the international inspection certificates granted according to the UN Rules annexed to the Agreement. The 1997 Agreement has 12 Contracting Parties and 2 UN Rules annexed to it.

For each Agreement, the final voting on new UN Regulations, UN GTRs and UN Rules and amendments to existing ones takes place, according to the internal provisions of the corresponding Agreement, in the Administrative or the Executive Committees. The Committees are exclusively composed by the governmental representatives of the Contracting Parties to the Agreements. Before taking decisions, all proposals, submitted by the subsidiaries Working Parties, are reconsidered during the sessions of the World Forum WP.29, in which representatives of all countries – being Contracting Parties or not – and experts from GOs and NGOs participate.

The World Forum WP.29, with its long experience, expertise and involvement of all interested stakeholders, has shown the ability to produce high quality UN Regulations, UN GTRs and UN Rules. Contracting Parties, such as the European Union, have decided to organize their internal legislation by direct reference to the UN Regulations annexed to the 1958 Agreement. Other countries, which are not Contracting Parties, apply on their territory the UN Regulations on a voluntary basis. More recently, Contracting Parties to the 1998 Agreement, such as Canada, the People's Republic of China, India and the United States of America, have established a number of new UN GTRs, which are being incorporated, in parallel, into the UN Regulations annexed to the 1958 Agreement.

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