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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety  
(Thirty-seventh session, 10-14 September 2001,  
agenda item 4 (b) (ii))

**AMENDMENTS TO AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 1968 CONVENTIONS ON  
ROAD TRAFFIC AND ON ROAD SIGNS AND SIGNALS AND THE  
1971 EUROPEAN AGREEMENTS SUPPLEMENTING THEM**

Mobile phones

Note by the small group

At its thirty-sixth session, the Working Party requested the small group (Germany, Romania and Spain, chaired by Israel) to prepare a proposal to amend R.E.1 focusing on the problem of mobile phones and a proposal to amend the Vienna Convention targeting the problem more generally and taking into account the variety of equipment which could distract drivers.

The proposal appears below.

## **Installation and Use of Driver Distracting Equipment (DDE) in Vehicles**

### 1. Nature of the Issue

It is generally accepted and beyond reasonable doubt, that it is beneficial to traffic safety to minimize the stimuli to drivers which distract them from their task. The driving activity is often a technical, semi-automatic task, but frequently the **total** attention of the driver is necessary in order to travel safely. Laws in virtually every country state that drivers may not engage in activities distracting them from the driving task and that their full attention be devoted to the driving task.

Several types of equipment and instruments have been introduced in recent years, which are designed to be installed in vehicles and to be used primarily by drivers. Among them: navigation systems, portable computers, internet displays and more notably – cellular telephones (mobile phones – MPs). The widespread use of these instruments, especially MPs takes away some, most, or all of the driver's attention to the road. The ramifications of this reality on traffic safety are alarming, although it is not easy to prove and quantify their exact and immediate effect.

### 2. WP.1's Treatment of the Subject

WP.1 discussed the subject, in particular the issue of MPs in its 34<sup>th</sup>, 35<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> sessions. Details are given in TRANS/WP.1/2000/20, chapter 2.

In its 36<sup>th</sup> session (April 2001), based on the above-numbered document, the Working Party requested the small group to prepare for the 37<sup>th</sup> session a proposal on the subject of mobile phones for inclusion in the Consolidated Resolution R.E.1, as well as an amendment proposal for the Vienna Convention, which would take a more general approach and also include other equipment which can distract the attention of the driver (TRANS/WP.1/76, para. 17).

The requested proposal is detailed below.

### 3. Driver Distracting Equipment (DDE)

The following classification can be made for the "Driver Distracting Equipment" group:

- 3.1 Audio equipment
- 3.2 Visual equipment
- 3.3 Equipment requiring response
- 3.4 Equipment requiring hand use to operate

The following table details these instruments and technology promises to extend the list shortly.

Driver Distracting Equipment (DDE)

Type	Audio 3.1	Video 3.2	Continuous response 3.3	Hands 3.4	Vital communication
Radio				?	?
Mobile phone					?
Navigation systems	?				?
Portable computer	?				
TV screen					
2-way radio				( )	?

It is clear that most types require the continuous attention and intermittent response of the driver. Nevertheless, steps are being taken by the manufacturers themselves to minimize the need and the effort needed by the driver for such response.

4. Options for Steps that can be taken (for each type of equipment)

- 4.1 Total ban on installation of DDE in vehicle;
- 4.2 Installation of DDE only in position to be operated by person other than driver;
- 4.3 Technological arrangements in DDE to minimize need for human response.
- 4.4 Technological arrangements in DDE to simplify operation of equipment and reduce need for hands.
- 4.5 Request /Law to abstain from operating DDE while driving;
- 4.6 Request to minimize use of DDE while driving, including options;
- 4.7 Facilitating safer use of DDE by providing turnouts on roads for drivers using DDE;
- 4.8 Total ban on the use of DDE while driving;
- 4.9 Total ban on the use of HAND-HELD DDE while driving.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that the subject be included in R.E.1 in order to amend the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic.
- 5.2 It is recommended that WP.1 should take a realistic approach, which recognizes the reality of DDE, its widespread usage and its technological characteristics.
- 5.3 It is recommended that an amendment to the Vienna Convention on Road Traffic be worded in a way that would facilitate reasonable enforcement. Thus it seems that options 4.1, 4.2 and 4.8 are not realistic.
- 5.4 It is recommended that options 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.9 be taken as a basis for inclusion in R.E.1 and later for Vienna Convention amendment.
- 5.5 It is recommended that WP.1 adopts a proposal that
  - (a) bans the use of hand-held DDE;
  - (b) requires drivers to abstain from any non-vital use of DDE while driving;
  - (c) recommends that other people in vehicles operate DDE to the extent necessary instead of the driver;

(d) encourages the use of DDE while vehicle is **not** in motion and **not** in traffic.

5.6 It is recommended that WP.1 proposal to amend the Vienna Convention be worded as follows:

Article 8, paraf. 5 extended

"... guide his animals. While driving, the driver will not engage in any activity which is not essential to the driving task, will devote his full attention to the driving task and will abstain from the operation of any hand-held equipment. The driver will at all times minimize any activity other than driving, including the operation of on-board equipment or instruments."

5.7 It is recommended that national legislation will include laws in line with this proposal as soon as possible, without waiting for the amendment to the Vienna Convention.

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