

UNECE

World Forum For Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29)

How it works - How to join it

Fourth Edition



UNITED NATIONS

Notes

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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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 assisting the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia with their transition process and their integration into the global economy.

Today, UNECE supports its 56 member States in Europe, Central Asia and North America in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). UNECE provides a multilateral platform for policy dialogue, the development of international legal instruments, norms and standards, the exchange of best practices and economic and technical expertise, as well as technical cooperation for countries with economies in transition.

Offering practical tools to improve people's everyday lives in the areas of environment, transport, trade, statistics, energy, forestry, housing, and land management, many of the norms, standards and conventions developed in UNECE are used worldwide, and a number of countries from outside the region participate in UNECE's work.

UNECE's multisectoral approach helps countries to tackle the interconnected challenges of sustainable development in an integrated manner, with a transboundary focus that helps devise solutions to shared challenges. With its unique convening power, UNECE fosters cooperation among all stakeholders at the country and regional levels.

Transport in the Economic Commission for Europe

The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) was set up in 1947 to support the reconstruction of transport infrastructures in post-war Europe. Over the years, it has specialized in a harmonized and sustainable development of all modes of inland transport.

The ECE Sustainable Transport Division is secretariat to ITC, to the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, and to the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. ITC, 18 working parties, the ECOSOC Committee and its sub-committees are intergovernmental decision-making bodies that aim to improve the everyday lives of people and businesses. From 2015, the Division provided the secretariat for the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, Mr. Jean Todt, and from 2018, hosted the secretariat of the United Nations Road Safety Trust Fund.

The results are measurable and the actions are concrete towards infrastructure development, improved traffic safety, environmental performance, energy efficiency, security and the competitiveness of transport in general.

Today's main results are (a) 58 United Nations transport conventions and an even larger number of technical regulations that are regularly updated and which provide an international legal framework for the sustainable development of national and international road, rail, inland water and intermodal transport, and vehicle construction, (b) the Trans-European North-South Motorway, Trans-European Railway and the Euro-Asian Transport Links projects which facilitate the coordination of multi-country transport infrastructure investment programmes, (c) the global TIR system which facilitates customs transit, (d) the For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS) tool which can assist governments to monitor carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from inland transport modes or to develop climate change mitigation policies, and the Safe Future Inland Transport Systems (SafeFITS) which can facilitate knowledge for transport policies in improving road safety, (e) the international methods of collection and data types in transport statistics, and (f) the studies and reports on transport policy development. For example, ITC devotes special attention to Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) such as innovative vehicle automation technologies.

The fourth edition of the 'Blue Book' provides the foundation and methods of operation of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29).

The World Forum or WP.29 is the only global forum for harmonizing vehicle regulations and rules on vehicle performance and on vehicle parts and equipment, vehicle safety, environmental pollution, energy efficiency, anti-theft and security.

This edition coincides with and discusses the new International Whole Vehicle Type Approval (IWVTA) system, and also reviews and strengthens the current provisions to improve the certification procedures and the conditions of mutual recognition.

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Foreword

Well-developed, efficient, clean, safe and secure inland transport systems offer important access to markets, employment, education and basic services that are critical to poverty alleviation. Transportation, and road transport in particular, is simultaneously a major driving force behind a growing global demand for energy, it has a significant environmental footprint, and its impacts on public health are of major concern due to the worldwide death, injury rates and illness resulting from road traffic crashes and air pollution.

Growing global demand for goods transport and personal mobility is driving a historically unprecedented increase in road motorization rates and traffic volumes worldwide, in urban and non-urban settings alike. The deployment of motorcycles, cars and trucks on streets and roads is projected to increase in the coming decades most significantly in developing countries with strong population growth rates, particularly in Africa and South-East Asia.

Annually, 1.35 million lives are lost in road traffic. Fossil fuels account for 96% of energy consumption in road transport and the sector is responsible for 18% of global GHG emissions. A business as usual trajectory will fail to mitigate these existing negative externalities of road vehicles and compound an even greater impact in the future due to the expected growth of demand for road transport worldwide. Making sure that the vehicles deployed on roads are safe, energy efficient and environmentally friendly will be vital for achieving many of the 2030 Agenda's 17 Sustainable Development Goals and their targets. Directly linked Agenda items include targets 3.6 on reducing road traffic fatality rates and 3.9 on reducing air pollution related deaths, 7.2 and 7.3 on increasing the share of renewables in the global energy mix and improving energy efficiency, targets of SDG 9 on infrastructure, industrialization and innovation, target 11.2 on ensuring safe, environmentally sound and sustainable urban transport systems for all, and SDG 13's actions to combat climate change and its impacts.

Efforts in research, development and innovation are continuously bringing to market new technologies that incrementally improve the safety performance, and reduce energy consumption and environmental impact of road vehicles. More efficient engines, alternative fuel technologies, active and passive safety systems and automation in vehicles are promising avenues for improving the sustainability of road transport and road vehicles. However, technology represents only part of the solution and should be widespread to have a lasting impact. The participation of all stakeholders, those from governments, the industry and representatives of consumers, in a worldwide regulatory platform addressing road vehicles is a key link in ensuring sectorial sustainability for the future.

The UNECE World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) is the worldwide regulatory forum in which relevant stakeholders from the world are participating. Three UN Agreements, adopted in 1958, 1997 and 1998, provide a legal framework allowing Contracting Parties to establish internationally harmonized regulatory instruments concerning the certification of motor vehicles, their equipment and parts, and rules for technical inspections of vehicles in use. The regulatory framework developed by the World Forum allows the mass market introduction of innovative vehicle technologies, while continuously improving global vehicle safety, energy efficiency and environmental performance.

Countries joining the World Forum benefit from a global platform where state-of-the-art technical regulations are discussed and adopted, reducing the administrative burden for contracting parties, and offering harmonized technical specifications for faster deployment of vehicle technologies aiming at achieving sustainable mobility.

This publication introduces the work of the World Forum, the UN Agreements under its purview and the regulatory processes under those Agreements. I recommend this publication to stakeholders from governments, industry, NGO's and academia, and invite interested parties to participate in the World Forum and contribute to the global effort to make vehicle safer and cleaner, thus driving worldwide transport systems towards sustainability.



Olga ALGAYEROVA

Under-Secretary-General & Executive Secretary, UNECE

Executive Summary

The fourth edition of the Blue Book continues to provide precise information about the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) as serviced by the ECE Sustainable Transport Division: on its history, its administrative and legal framework as a guide for users, and on the three Agreements.

The World Forum is a permanent discussion forum in the framework of ITC. The terms of reference and rules of procedure of WP.29 allow for the smooth administration of the three major international United Nations Agreements on motor vehicles: the 1958 and 1998 Agreements on regulations for the certification 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 under the three Agreements, and also adapts them to technical progress and to the current pace of innovation. For example, in 2018, WP.29 strengthened its activities on automated/autonomous and connected vehicle developments by establishing a working party on the basis of a former working party dealing with brakes and running gear.

The World Forum is unique worldwide – all nations, all vehicle manufacturers and many intergovernmental (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) participate. Any Member State of the United Nations may participate and may adhere to any of the vehicle Agreements. Regional Economic Integration Organizations (REIOs) that are set up by countries, such as the European Union, also participate and, subject to their subsidiary arrangements, may become Contracting Parties to the Agreements.

NGOs are welcome in a consultative capacity.

The World Forum's work is fully transparent. The agendas, working documents, reports and informal documents are available online at: www.unece.org/trans/main/welcwp29.html.

The three Agreements administered by the World Forum are:

The 1958 Agreement provides the legal and administrative framework for developing harmonized technical UN Regulations on uniform performance requirements, for procedures for granting type approvals, for the conformity of production, for the assessment of technical services and their designation and notification, for the circulation of UN type approval documentation, for resolving issues of interpretation, for general conditions in virtual test methods, for exemption approvals in new technologies and for the mutual recognition of the type approvals granted by Contracting Parties. When acceding to the Agreement, a Contracting Party can choose which, if any of the UN Regulations annexed to the Agreement it would like to apply. At the time of publication, the 1958 Agreement had 56 Contracting Parties and 149 annexed UN Regulations. The regulations are continuously adapted, when appropriate, to incorporate technical and political guidance from the Contracting Parties, scientific advancement or technological innovations.

The 1998 Agreement stipulates that Contracting Parties establish, by consensus vote, United Nations Global Technical Regulations (UN GTR) in a Global Registry on globally harmonized performance requirements and test procedures. Each UN GTR contains extensive notes on its purpose and development. The technical rationale, the research sources used, the cost and benefit considerations, and the references to data that were consulted are recorded. Contracting Parties apply their national rulemaking procedures when transposing UN GTRs into national legislation. The 1998 Agreement currently has 38 Contracting Parties and 20 UN GTRs established in the Global Registry.

The 1997 Agreement allows Contracting Parties to establish UN Rules for the periodic technical inspections of vehicles in use. The Contracting Parties reciprocally recognize the international inspection certificates that were granted according to the UN Rules annexed to the Agreement. The 1997 Agreement currently, has 15 Contracting Parties and 2 [4*] annexed UN Rules.

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