United Nations Road Safety Conventions

Robert Nowak

ECA – ECE - IARD Workshop
7 July 2015, Addis Ababa
UNECE Transport Division

- International platform
- Regulatory
- Analytical
- Technical assistance

where global solutions are shaped for you
58 Conventions, 1702 Contracting Parties

Contracting Parties

Number of Contracting Parties to UN Legal Instruments on Transport
Contracting Parties in Africa

Benin - 1
Burkina Faso - 2
Burundi - 1
Cameroon - 1
Central African Republic - 6
Congo - 1
Democratic Republic of Congo - 3
Ivory Coast - 3
Madagascar - 1
Mali - 4
Niger - 3
Rwanda - 5
Senegal - 7
Seychelles - 2
Togo - 1
# Africa: some examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure networks</th>
<th>Road traffic and road safety</th>
<th>Vehicles</th>
<th>Other legal instruments related to road transport</th>
<th>Inland navigation</th>
<th>Border crossing facilitation</th>
<th>Dangerous goods &amp; special cargoes</th>
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<td>Botswana</td>
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<td>Iran, Islamic Republic of</td>
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Legend: 
- X = Ratification, accession, definite signature; 
- S = Signature; 
- I = Done by the Former Republic of China.
- The only inter-governmental, permanent body in the UN system that focuses on road safety

- Guardian of UN legal instruments in the area of road safety
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Legal Instrument</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Convention on Road Traffic, of 19 September 1949</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Protocol on Road Signs and Signals, of 19 September 1949</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>European Agreement on the Application of Article 23 of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic concerning the Dimensions and Weights of Vehicles Permitted to Travel on Certain Roads of the Contracting Parties, of 16 September 1950</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Convention on Road Traffic, of 8 November 1968</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Convention on Road Signs and Signals, of 8 November 1968</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Traffic (1968), of 1 May 1971</td>
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<td>7.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Protocol on Road Markings, Additional to the European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals, of 1 March 1973</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Agreement on Minimum Requirements for the Issue and Validity of Driving Permits (APC), of 1 April 1975</td>
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</table>
Road Safety Forum

The UNECE pioneered road safety activities in the United Nations system with the establishment of an Ad Hoc Working Group on the prevention of road accidents in 1950. In 1988, the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) an intergovernmental body, was established.

Today, WP.1 remains the only permanent body in the United Nations system that focuses on improving road safety (see road safety film). Its primary function is to serve as guardian of the United Nations legal instruments aimed at harmonizing traffic rules. More...

Press Releases

New Ebook Highlights Africa’s Road Safety Challenges, Calls for Continued Efforts
23 March 2015

UNECE and partners raise the Road Safety flag in Africa
13 November 2014

UNECE and partners raise the Road Safety flag in South Eastern Europe
16 October 2014

News

Depositary notification A-: proposal of amendments to articles 38 and 39 of the Convention on Road Traffic, Vienna, 8 November 1968.
The Regional road safety capacity building workshop was held on 15-16 October in Belgrade, Republic of Serbia. More information here.
The Road Safety Treaty Day was held on 5 June 2014, at the United Nations Headquarters, New York City. More information here.

Upcoming Events

(WP.1) Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (71th session, Geneva)
05 to 07 October 2015

(WP. 1) Group of Experts on Safety at Level Crossing (6th session)
05 to 06 November 2015

(WP.1) Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals (5th session)
12 to 13 November 2015

All news
UNECE – a 360 degree approach to road safety

- Traffic rules
- Signs and signals
- Road infrastructure
- Construction and periodic inspection of vehicles
- Driving times and rest periods for professional drivers
- Dangerous goods
UNECE – a 360 degree approach to road safety

- Traffic rules
- Road signs and signals

- Driving times and rest periods for professional drivers
12. Also reaffirms the role and importance of the United Nations legal instruments on road safety, such as the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic, the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic, the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals and the 1958 and 1998 agreements of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations, in facilitating road safety at the global, regional and national levels, and encourages Member States that have not yet done so to consider becoming contracting parties and, beyond accession, applying, implementing and promoting their provisions or safety regulations, as well as adhering to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

13. Requests the World Health Organization and the United Nations regional commissions, in cooperation with other partners in the United Nations Road Safety Collaboration and other stakeholders, to continue the activities aimed at supporting the implementation of the objectives of the Decade of Action;

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7 Ibid., vol. 1042, No. 15705.
8 Ibid., vol. 1091, No. 16743.
9 Ibid., vol. 2515, No. 44910.
History

1909 Model T Ford

2014 Google car
History


1926 International Convention relating to Road Traffic, Paris
1926 International Convention relating to Motor Traffic, Paris

1931 Convention concerning the Unification of Road Signs, Geneva

1943 Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic, Washington D.C.

1949 Convention on Road Traffic, Geneva
1949 Protocol on Road Signs and Signals, Geneva

1968 Convention on Road Traffic, Vienna
1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals, Vienna

1971 European Agreement Supplementing the Convention (Road Traffic), Geneva
1971 European Agreement Supplementing the Convention (Road Signs), Geneva

1973 Protocol on Road Markings, Additional to the European Agreement, Geneva
Desirous of promoting the development and safety of international road traffic by establishing certain uniform rules
1949 Convention on Road Traffic

96 Contracting Parties
Chapters:

1. General provisions
2. Rules of the road
3. Signs and signals
4. Provisions applicable to motor vehicles and trailers to international traffic
5. Drivers of motor vehicles in inter’l traffic
6. Provisions applicable to cycles in inter’l traffic
7. Final provisions
1949 Convention on Road Traffic

Annexes:

1. Additional provision concerning definitions of motor vehicles and cycle
2. Priority of passage
3. Registration number of vehicles in international traffic
4. Distinguishing signs of vehicles in international traffic
5. Identification marks of vehicles in international traffic
6. Technical conditions concerning the equipment of motor vehicles and trailers in inter’l traffic
7. Dimensions and weights of vehicles in inter’l traffic
8. Conditions to be fulfilled by drivers of motor vehicles in inter’l traffic
9. Model driving permit
10. Model international driving permit
To facilitate international road traffic and to increase road safety through the adoption of uniform traffic rules.
1968 Convention on Road Traffic

UN/ECE - Transport Division

73 Contracting Parties
Algeria, Argentina, Australia,
Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso,
Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Congo, Cyprus,
Dominican Republic,
Ecuador, Egypt,
Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala,
Haiti, Holy See, Iceland, India,
Ireland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan,
Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho,
Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia,
New Zealand, Nigeria,
Papua New Guinea, Paraguay,
Republic of Korea, Rwanda,
Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic,
Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia,
Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United
States of America,
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of),
1968 Convention on Road Traffic

Chapters:

1. General provisions
2. Rules of the road
3. Conditions for the admission of motor vehicles and trailers to international traffic
4. Drivers of motor vehicles
5. Conditions for the admission of cycles and mopeds to international traffic
6. Final provisions
Annexes:

1. Exceptions to the obligations to admit motor vehicles and trailers in international traffic

2. Registration number and plate of motor vehicles and trailers in international traffic

3. Distinguishing signs of motor vehicles and trailers in international traffic

4. Identification marks of motor vehicles in international traffic

5. Technical conditions concerning motor vehicles and trailers

6. Domestic driving permit

7. International driving permit
International uniformity of road signs, signals and symbols and of road markings is necessary in order to facilitate international road traffic and to increase road safety.
63 Contracting Parties
Chapters:
1. General provisions
2. Road signs
3. Traffic light signals
4. Road markings
5. Miscellaneous
6. Final provisions

Annexes:
1. Road signs
2. Road markings
3. Reproduction of signs, symbols and panels of Annex 1
Road sign categories

- Danger warning
- Regulatory
- Informative
1. When a sign, symbol, marking conveys certain information – cannot not use any other sign, symbol, marking to convey the same information

2. When there is no sign, symbol, marking conveying certain information - a CP can use any sign, symbol, marking provided
   a. it conforms to the system and
   b. endeavours to secure regional agreement

A new CP:
- 4 years to replace signs, symbols, markings that have a different meaning from that of the Convention
- 15 years to replace those signs, symbols, markings that do not conform to the Convention
Two of a kind
Maintenance
Placement
Audits
1968 Conventions

- Admission to international traffic,
- A set of agreed road traffic rules
- Reference for national legislation
- Mutual recognition of vehicle certificates, driving permits
- Facilitation of international traffic, trade, tourism
- Enhanced road safety

- A system of agreed sign classification
- Over 200 reference signs
- Facilitation of international road traffic, trade, tourism
- Enhanced road safety
UNECE – a 360 degree approach to road safety

- Traffic rules
- Road signs and signals

- Driving times and rest periods for professional drivers
The Contracting Parties,

Being desirous of promoting the development and improvement of the international transport of passengers and goods by road,

Convinced of the need to increase the safety of road traffic, to make regulations governing certain conditions of employment in international road transport in accordance with the principles of the International Labour Organisation, and jointly to adopt certain measures to ensure the observance of those regulations,
- To prevent professional drivers from driving excessive hours
- To reduce road accidents due to fatigue
- To avoid distortions in competitive conditions (uniform working conditions)
Digital tachograph

- Tachograph – memory of the vehicle
- Driver card – memory of the activities performed by the driver
- Four types of cards
- Outputs through printer, display or a connector
Article 14 currently restricts accession to UNECE member States

Amendment proposal re. Article 14 to allow Algeria, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia to be eligible to accede

51 Contracting Parties
Road safety at UNECE - film
UNECE international legal instruments in the area of transport:

Selected legal aspects
UNECE international legal instruments in the area of transport

- 58 international conventions and agreements
- Road, rail, inland water transport, intermodal
- UNECE Transport Division provides secretariat services
Eligible States may become parties to the treaties by expressing their consent to be bound through:

– **Ratification, acceptance or approval:**
  if a State has signed a treaty, it may become a party by depositing an instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval with the Secretary-General

or

- **Accession:**
  if a State has not signed a treaty, it may become a party by depositing an instrument of accession with the Secretary-General
Eligibility

- Treaties may be open to all States
  - International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Control of Goods, 1982

- Vienna Formula (States members of UN, its specialized agencies, members of IAEA or parties to Statute of ICJ)
  - Convention on Road Traffic, 1968

- States members of UNECE or admitted to the Commission in a consultative capacity
  - Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road, 1956
• Most protocols provide that a State wishing to become a party to a protocol must also be a party to the “parent agreement” to which that protocol relates

Requirements for a valid instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession

- Treaty must be identified

- Declaration of undertaking
  - Expression of intent of the Government to be bound by the treaty and to undertake faithfully to observe and implement its provisions

- Signature
  - Instrument must be signed by the Head of State or Government or the MFA or by a person exercising the power of one of these authorities *ad interim*

- Dated
WHEREAS the [title of treaty] was concluded [adopted, etc.] at [place] on [date],

NOW THEREFORE I, [name and title of the head of State or Government or MFA], declare that the Government of [name of State], having considered the above-mentioned [treaty], accedes to the same and undertakes faithfully to perform and carry out the stipulations therein contained.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have signed this instrument of accession at [place] on [date].

[Signature]
Reservations, Declarations and Notifications
Reservations

• A reservation is any statement – however phrased or named – which purports to exclude or modify the legal effect of a treaty provision

• Legally binding and must be included in a duly signed instrument of ratification, acceptance or, if a separate document, it must be signed in its own right

• Must be made at the time of deposit of instrument of ratification

• If made at the time of signature, it must be confirmed upon ratification, acceptance, approval or accession
Reservations

• A treaty may be silent on reservations
  – Customs Convention on Containers, 1972

• Authorized reservations
  – Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers used in International Transport, 1994 (Reservations are permitted to paragraph 2 of article 6 and 7 concerning the requirements of customs documents and security)

• Reservations may also be prohibited by the negotiating parties
• Declarations can be interpretative or can be in the nature of a binding instrument

• If binding, declarations must be signed by one of the three authorities

• Notifications typically provide information as required under a treaty. They are not legally binding and do not need to be signed by one of the three authorities
• Article 46(2)(a) of the Convention on Road Signs and Signals, 1968 provides that upon the deposit of an instrument of ratification or accession every State shall declare which of the models it chooses as a danger warning sign and which models it chooses as a stop sign.

• Article 45(4) of the Convention on Road Traffic, 1968
  – States are required to notify to the depositary a description of the sign selected for display on vehicles registered by it upon ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.
I, [name and title of the Head of State or Government, or MFA],

HEREBY DECLARE that the Government of [name of State] makes the following [reservation/declaration] in relation to article(s) [...] of the [title and date of the adoption of the treaty concerned]:

[Substance of reservation/declaration]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal.

Done at [place] on [date].

[Signature and title]
The Permanent Representative of [name of State] to the United Nations presents [his/her] compliments to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and, in accordance with the provisions of article [...] of the [name of treaty] hereby notifies the Secretary-General of the following:

[Substance of notifications]

[Date]
[Initials]
• States cannot claim that its consent to be bound is invalid due to violation of its internal law (VCLT, art. 46(1))

• Important to take measures both before and following ratification or accession to implement a treaty’s terms
• Information and documentation:

– Status of Multilateral Treaties deposited with the SG
– Texts of Multilateral and Bilateral Treaties
– Treaty Handbook
– Technical Assistance
– http://untreaty.un.org
Accessions to UN conventions may yield substantial benefits to Contracting Parties.
Potential future steps

• Consider the net benefits of acceding

• Undertake the necessary national legal steps/procedures for accession

• Deposit an instrument of accession with the UN Secretary-General

• Contact Robert.Nowak@unece.org for info and/or capacity building