

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

Executive summary

With more than 50 years of existence and participants from all the main motor vehicle producing countries, the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) offers a unique framework for globally harmonized regulations on vehicles. The benefits of such harmonized regulations are tangible for road safety, environmental protection and trade.

WP.29 is a permanent working party created more than 50 years ago in the institutional framework of the United Nations with a specific mandate and rules of procedures. It works as a global forum¹ allowing open discussions on motor vehicle regulations. Any country member of the United Nations, and any regional economic integration organization set up by country members of the United Nations, may participate fully in the activities of the World Forum and may become a contracting party to the Agreements administered by WP.29. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may also participate in a consultative capacity in WP.29 or in its working groups. The work of WP.29 is transparent: all agendas, working documents and reports are accessible to everybody on the Internet website of the World Forum.²

The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) administers three international agreements on motor vehicles: the 1958 Agreement³ and the 1998 Agreement⁴ on the construction of vehicles, and the 1997 Agreement⁵ on periodical technical inspections. WP.29 ensures the consistency between the three types of regulations or rules produced by the three agreements.

The 1958 Agreement on vehicle construction provides that Contracting Parties applying one Regulation annexed to the agreement shall issue approvals according to this Regulation and mutually recognize the approvals granted by the other Contracting Parties applying such a Regulation. This Agreement has currently 48 Contracting Parties⁶ and 127 Regulations annexed to it. Vehicle regulations are adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Contracting Parties. The Regulations are updated regularly to take into account technical progress. In 2008, WP.29 adopted 95 amendments to the technical regulations, in particular on plug-in hybrid vehicles, Electronic Stability Control (ESC) and particulate measurement.

Contracting Parties are not obliged to adopt all the Regulations annexed to the Agreement and may decide to apply all, some or any of the Regulations. When depositing its instrument of accession, any

¹ The March 2008 session brought together some 120 delegates representing 28 European countries, 12 non-European countries, 2 inter-governmental organizations including the IEA and 26 NGOs.

² <http://www.unece.org/trans/main/welcwp29.htm>.

³ Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescriptions for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and /or be used on Wheeled Vehicles and the Conditions for Reciprocal Recognition of Approvals Granted on the Basis of these Prescriptions, of 20 March 1958.

⁴ Agreement concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts which can be fitted and / or be used on Wheeled Vehicles, of 25 June 1998.

⁵ Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of Such Inspections, of 13 November 1997.

⁶ The European Community and its 27 Member States, Australia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Republic of Korea, Japan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malaysia, Montenegro, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Serbia, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey, Tunisia, Ukraine and Thailand.

new Contracting Party to the Agreement may declare that it is not bound by certain regulations annexed to this Agreement or that it is not bound by any of them.

The 1998 Agreement on vehicle construction provides that Contracting Parties will establish by consensus vote global technical regulations (gtrs) in a registry. Unlike under the 1958 Agreement, the provisions are only technical (test procedure) and there is no provision on the mutual recognition of approvals. This Agreement brings together 33 Contracting Parties⁷ and 9 global technical regulations have been established in the registry. In 2008, four new GTRs were established: gtrs No.6 (safety glazing materials), No.7 (head restraints), No.8 (Electronic Stability Control systems) and No.9 (pedestrian safety) were included in the Global Registry of global technical regulations.

The 1997 Agreement on periodical technical inspection provides that Contracting Parties applying one Rule annexed to the agreement shall reciprocally recognize the international technical inspection certificate issued by the inspection authority of another Contracting Party. The Agreement has currently one Rule on pollutant emissions and 11 Contracting parties.⁸ A draft Rule on safety is under consideration by WP.29.

The Transport Division of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations offers logistical support to WP.29 for organizing meetings, preparing documents and monitoring decisions. Furthermore, six Working Parties (also known as Groups of Rapporteurs or "GRs") assist WP.29 in researching, analyzing and developing requirements for technical regulations in their respective areas of expertise: Pollution and Energy (GRPE), General Safety Provisions (GRSG), Brakes and Running Gear (GRRF), Lighting and Light-Signaling (GRE), Passive Safety (GRSP) and Noise (GRB). WP.29 holds regular sessions three times a year and its Working Parties twice a year. More than 1,600 delegates convene in these sessions covering 54 working days per year. In addition, to deal with more technical issues requiring time or more special expertise, the World Forum has established informal groups of experts that report and propose technical solutions to the official Working Parties. Today 30 informal groups are working on specific technical matters.⁹

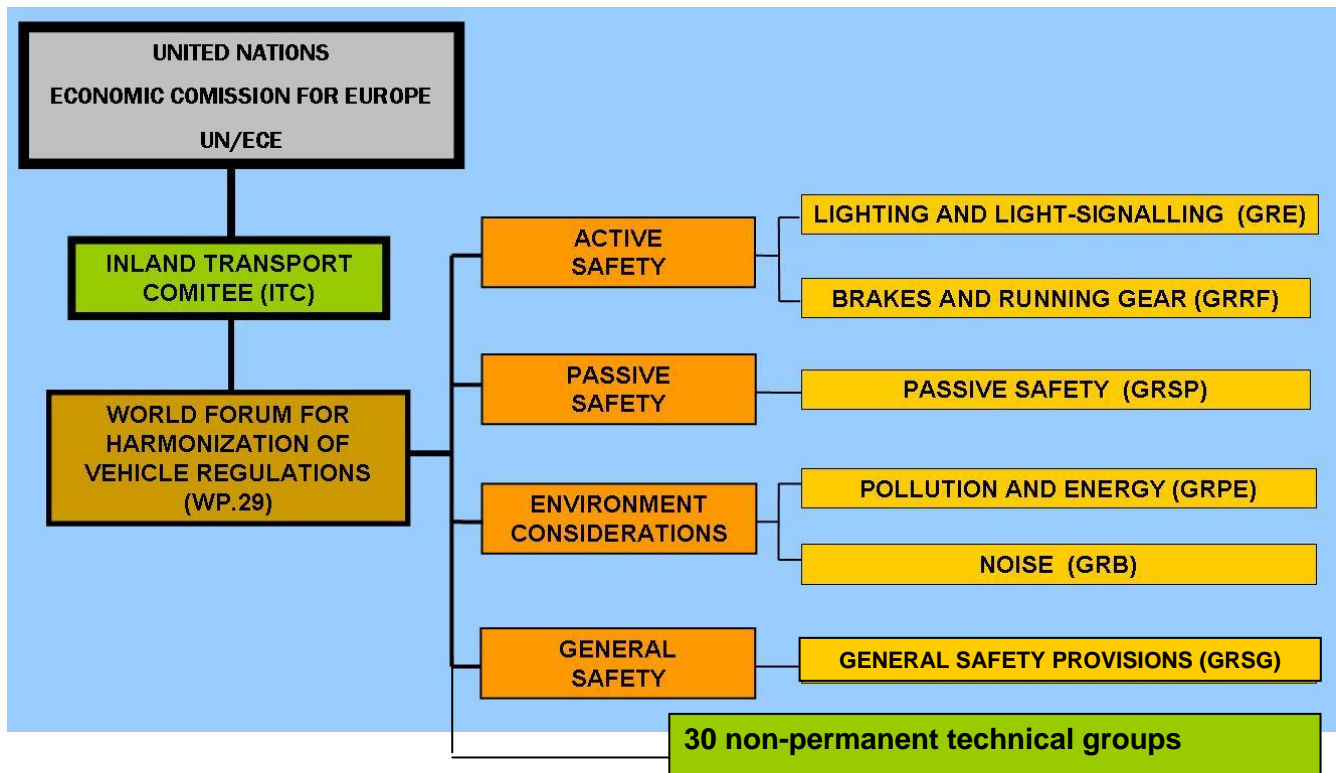
⁷ Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, China, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Tunisia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States, European Community.

⁸ Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Moldova, Netherlands, Romania, Russian Federation, Ukraine.

⁹ Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), Electronic Database for the Exchange of Type Approval documentation (DETA), Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Vehicles (HFCV), Motorcycle noise emissions (Regulation No. 41), Additional Sound Emission Provisions (ASEP), Special Tyre Definitions (STD) (GRB and GRRF ig), Fuel Quality (FQ), Worldwide harmonized Heavy-Duty Certification (WHDC), Worldwide harmonized Motorcycle emission Test Cycle (WMTC), Off-Cycle Emissions (OCE), Particulate Measurement Programme (PMP), Non-Road Mobile Machinery (NRMM), Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Vehicles – Subgroup Environment (HFCV-SGE), Worldwide harmonized Light vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP), Gaseous-Fuelled Vehicles (GFV), Environmentally Friendly Vehicles (EFV), TYRE gtr, Replacement Discs and Drums (RD&D), Special Tyre Definitions (STD) (GRB and GRRF ig), Automatic emergency braking systems and lane departure warning systems (AEBS/LDW), Strength of Bus Superstructure, Camera Monitor Systems (Regulation No. 46) , Service doors, emergency exits and windows of buses and coaches, Head Restraints (HR), Truck cab strength, Pedestrian safety (Flex-PLI subgroup), Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Vehicles – Subgroup Safety (HFCV-SGS), Child Restraints (Regulation No. 44), Electric Safety (ES), Frontal Impact Protection (Regulation No. 95).

The final decision, about any proposal, is always taken by the representatives of Governments, Contracting Parties to the corresponding Agreement at the World Forum level according to the Rules of each Agreement.

Current structure of the World Forum WP.29



Thanks to its long experience, its expertise and the involvement of all interested stakeholders, the World Forum has showed its ability to produce good quality regulations on motor vehicles in a timely manner. More and more Contracting Parties, such as the European Community, have decided to replace their national legislation by the Regulations annexed to the 1958 Agreement. Furthermore, these Regulations have been recognized beyond the Contracting Parties themselves, including, ASEAN countries and Canada. Enjoying a wide international recognition, the World Forum has been mandated to work on new subjects such as global warming and transport, fuel quality and intelligent transport systems.
