



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

TRANS/WP.29/1998/65
19 August 1998

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles
(One hundred and sixteenth session,
10-13 November 1998, agenda item 9.2)

INFORMAL DOCUMENTS

Transmitted by the representative of Italy to WP.29

Note: A note concerning the problem of informal documents, a long-term problem which has never been resolved, has been received from the Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations and is hereby transmitted to the Working Party for consideration.

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It has been noted for several years now that many delegations have acquired the habit of submitting "informal" documents - in large numbers - concerning matters strictly relating to the subject matter of the meetings, at the start of the sessions of the Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles (WP.29).

Such documents can be classified in three categories:

- (a) information documents on the activity of research centres, national laboratories, initiatives on the part of Administrations, etc. They are not the subject of analysis or discussion, but represent useful information for colleagues from other countries.
- (b) documents proposing "single" corrigenda or brief drafting amendments to official documents under study or already adopted (regulations, resolutions, recommendations). This is useful information which is generally favourably received by the Working Party and is subsequently adopted.
- (c) long documents containing "substantive" proposals for amendments to official documents already distributed which are the subject of Working Party meetings, or quite simply replacing such official documents.

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While we have no comments to make on documents in categories (a) and (b), we should like to stress the difficulties caused by category (c) documents, due to the fact that:

they are submitted in only one of ECE's three working languages (French, English, Russian) and give rise to difficulties of comprehension for delegates working in the other two languages;

lack of time makes it impossible to give rapid and detailed consideration to the proposals contained in these documents;

there are often too few copies (only two or three) for all the persons concerned, involving the secretariat in onerous and expensive photocopying.

It should also be borne in mind that a delegate to an international meeting must obtain the necessary instructions from his country's Government, on the basis of an adequate knowledge of the official documents normally distributed in good time for his perusal. He may therefore find it impossible to adopt a position with regard to proposals received at the last minute.

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In some cases there are more than 20, or even 30, category (c) documents. At some meetings the discussion is exclusively based on (c) type informal documents, entirely - or almost entirely - disregarding the official documents distributed by the secretariat and listed in the agenda.

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Conclusion

The above situation may, in some cases, have adverse effects on the output of the Working Parties.

Proposal

This situation has been denounced on several occasions but no decision has been taken and there has been no change. It might therefore be useful to propose a modus operandi taking the following criteria into account:

the delegation submitting an informal document has the right only to give a brief presentation during the meeting;

it is for the Chairman of the Working Party to decide how best to use the document.
