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ROAD TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Proposed amendment to annex II to the European Agreement on Main
International Traffic Arteries**

Transmitted by the delegation of France

In response to the request made by the ad hoc group on Implementation of the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) at its meeting on 10 and 11 June 2002, the delegation of France has transmitted to the secretariat a proposal for a revised chapter V of annex II of the AGR, on the environment. The text, which is reproduced below, could supplement and/or replace some of the current provisions.

Introduction

Roads are a tool for road-users, designed within the framework of town and country planning. They make possible the movement and transport of people and goods and offer access to work, rest and leisure areas. However, in some circumstances they can give rise to pollution and other harmful effects.

All administrators should therefore acquaint themselves with the environmental features involved and should subsequently take appropriate measures to inform users of the presence of these features and the regulations protecting them, or should take steps to protect them physically.

1. ROADS AND POLLUTION

There are four types of pollution caused by roads. As conventional drainage systems can remove only a small fraction of the pollution deposited on the roadway, specific solutions need to be devised for each type of pollution.

1.1 Pollution during roadworks

On the one hand, there is the erosion by rainwater of the bare soil and embankments, which carries off fine materials. To avoid this, it is important to clear and strip only the surfaces necessary for the work. The temporary installation of desilting or infiltration basins makes it possible to reduce and hold back the waste materials in the most susceptible places. On the other hand, the works vehicles leave behind traces of oil and suspended solids. The same basins equipped with an oil separator can also reduce this type of pollution.

1.2 Seasonal pollution

Seasonal pollution is caused by dissolvable and abrasive de-icing products used in winter maintenance, most of which are based on sodium chloride. This type of pollution can be reduced by salting the roads less and reducing the amount of salt used. Moreover, it is strongly advised to cover stocks in order to avoid the constant discharge of brine.

1.3 Accidental pollution

Accidental pollution results from spills following road accidents involving the transport of dangerous goods. Statistics show that such accidents usually take place outside built-up areas. Hydrocarbons are the main cause of this type of pollution. Solutions to this problem involve both measures to adapt the infrastructure and operational measures. Susceptible environments can be protected by installing crash barriers or embankments or by building a watertight drainage system (ditches, desilting and oil-separator tanks, grassing of ditches, etc.). The operational measures concern the design of an early-warning plan and action at all levels of responsibility.

1.4 Chronic pollution

Chronic pollution describes all the forms of pollution associated with road traffic: wear of the roadway, metal corrosion, tyre wear and exhaust emissions. It should be noted that only a small proportion of the amounts emitted is carried off by rainwater to discharge points. However, a rainstorm or mini flood can drain a sizeable area and thus cause more widespread pollution. The cleansing capacities of ditches and soil should therefore be maximized by installing more outlets and creating slightly-sloping grass-covered ditches to allow the water to infiltrate, taking into account the cleansing qualities of the surface soil.

2. ROADS AND NOISE

Road noise is typically a combination of unpleasant and undesirable sounds caused by the passage of light and/or heavy vehicles. The noise level, measured in [A-weighted] decibels (dBA), can cause disturbances in people's daily lives and sleeping habits.

The relationship between the noise level experienced and disturbances allows us to define the thresholds above which noise-reduction measures should be taken. These thresholds, which should be set nationally or, failing that, by administrators, vary from country to country. They may depend on the type of built-up area through which the road passes.

The following factors should be taken into account in noise estimate studies:

- Information on the estimated daytime and night-time traffic and on the traffic observed at particular times, including the percentage of heavy goods vehicles;
- Locations of habitat and activities, where necessary;
- Information on relief and topography;
- Nature of the project (new, existing or modified);
- Information on the road surface;
- Nature and type of buildings to be protected (measures differ for hospitals, housing and factories);
- Type of road and speed limit(s), etc.

The following measures should be taken:

- Avoid inhabited or sensitive areas (schools, hospitals);
- Install protective devices (screening, embankments);
- Use less noisy surfaces where possible;
- Soundproof facades;
- Take account of existing noise pollution in planning documents.
