

CARS 21: a competitive automotive regulatory framework

2007/2120(INI) - 24/03/2009 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents a Commission Staff Working Document on progress during 2008 at the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

In accordance with the CARS 21 Communication of 7 February 2007, this Commission staff working document sets out the major automotive-related developments that have occurred during 2008 at the UNECE with a view to informing the European Parliament, the Council and the public about progress achieved at UNECE and of the respect observed by the Commission with the political orientations set out in the relevant Community legislation. The 2008 staff working document is the second annual report on these activities.

UNECE was established in 1947 with a view to setting out norms, standards and conventions to facilitate international cooperation for various sectors both within and outside the European region.

2008 was a very productive year at the UNECE. The establishment of four new global technical regulations (GTRs) represents considerable progress towards international harmonisation of vehicle test requirements. Furthermore, the adoption of 95 technical amendments to UNECE Regulations under the 1958 Agreement will contribute towards the construction of vehicles meeting the latest technological progress in terms of vehicle safety and environmental performance.

Where it is appropriate, the technical changes that have been made at a UNECE level (e.g. Electronic Stability Control) will be incorporated into EC legislation. Furthermore, and as demonstrated by the proposed General Safety Regulation, compliance with the requirements in one or more UNECE Regulations can become the only option for type-approval.

The resultant close links between EC legislation and UNECE Regulations will enable European vehicles that have been manufactured in accordance with UNECE standards to be accepted in many other countries. As highlighted by the CARS 21 mid-term report, this regulatory simplification and international harmonisation is broadly welcomed by all stakeholders and will ensure that the European automotive industry will remain competitive around the world.