

TACD

TRANS ATLANTIC
CONSUMER DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE TRANSATLANTIQUE
DES CONSOMMATEURS

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AUTO SAFETY STANDARDS

1. **Purpose of Harmonization.** The primary purposes of national motor vehicle safety and environment standards are to reduce deaths and injuries as well as the adverse environmental effects related to the use of motor vehicles. TACD opposes any harmonization that would merely integrate existing national standards or reduce the level of protection provided by any existing national standard and wishes to emphasize that it is the right of sovereign nations to adopt standards higher than prevailing international standards. Industry goals of achieving economic efficiency and cutting costs in the design and production of vehicles and in the facilitation of standards compliance are secondary considerations. Consequently, international harmonization of these standards must first and foremost further enhance such public protections through upward harmonization. Upward harmonization means individual national standards to a higher level with a newly developed standard based on best available technology. The new Global Agreement contains a commitment to continuous improvement in public protection. TACD calls upon both the US and EU governments to affirm and honor this commitment in order to avoid the need to de-harmonize. TACD is concerned that the additional levels of complexity in establishing global regulations suggests that the process may be even slower than the ones with which we are already familiar.
2. **Protection or Establishment of Democratic National Procedures.** TACD condemns any negotiations between business and industry for standards setting that take place behind closed doors. Consumers are concerned that the Global Agreement could be used to supplant in fact, if not in law, national procedures that assure transparency and citizen participation in the process of developing new standards and amending existing ones. The TACD calls upon the governments of the US and the EU to develop national policies and procedures that assure full transparency, consultation with citizen organizations and public participation in standards processes under the Agreement. These arrangements should respect all existing national obligations for citizen participation. The policy statements should fully confirm the application of all existing national requirements governing vehicular standards requirements. TACD considers openness and transparency in the standards-setting procedure to be a pre-requisite for the acceptability of the resulting standards and will address this issue again in the future.
3. **Openness and Transparency of work under the 1998 Global Agreement.** The TACD is most concerned that, in the interests of transparency, the substantive discussions within the Executive Committee should be capable of being observed by the NGOs. The procedural rules designed to apply to the existing as well as the proposed WP.29 framework will serve as

the practical interpretation of the openness and transparency principles outlined in the agreement. It is important that these rules are clear and unambiguous. TACD seeks the inclusion of NGO participation in the activities of the working parties; which includes the receipt of documents from the Executive Committee. The TACD is however concerned that the relationship between the Executive Committee and the working parties should be similar to that between AC.1 and WP.29 under the 1958 agreement. The proposed Executive Committee under the draft global agreement is composed exclusively of delegations from contracting parties. There is only a guarantee for participation of non-governmental organizations in the working party under the Executive Committee. Stronger provisions for NGO participation in substantive policy-making discussions are needed.

4. **Harmonization Priorities.** Business and governments are already identifying their priorities for global harmonization. TACD will go on to consider this in the near future. TACD has already considered the business proposals for tire regulations and makes the following comments. The Transatlantic Business Dialogue (TABD), in its Charlotte Conference report, recommends that the US and the EU “review existing passenger tire regulations to identify testing and labeling criteria that can become part of a new tire standard which will improve safety, free trade, and the environment, on a global basis.” The recommendation identifies for consideration as the new standard a proposed “Global Tire Standard (GTS-2000)”. It urges adoption of this proposal by WP-29.

The TACD agrees with the TABD on the principle of improving standards. We believe that certain outcomes of tire standards harmonization can improve safety. However, as we understand GTS-2000, it would simply compare US and EU standards and for each performance element of the standards choose the higher requirement to be an element of the new, harmonized standard. This new standard would, in the view of the TACD, be inadequate for safety purposes.

Both US and EU tire standards are based on outdated tire technology. Harmonization to achieve the goal of reducing death and injury related to motor vehicle use requires a “ground up” revision of standards based on best available tire technology and safety needs. TACD recommends that the US and EU undertake to develop new tire standards that will achieve this goal.