INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The meeting was opened by Ms Magda Kopczynska, Director of DG MOVE Directorate C. Mrs Kopczynska welcomed the participants and presented the agenda of the day, mentioning the importance of sharing the best practices among Member States in order to improve the road safety. She informed the meeting participants that the first fatality figures for the first half of 2015 seem disappointing.

ROAD SAFETY ROUND-TABLES

Mr Szabolcs Schmidt, Head of Unit MOVE C.4, gave a short overview of road safety round tables that took place in four different Member States. Different road safety experts have assisted and participated in these discussions. Five main themes have been covered; speed management, seat belt use, drink-driving prevention, infrastructure engineering and evaluation of efficient road safety measures. The Commission found the meetings highly useful so far, not only as a promotion and information-sharing experience but also from the media attention that was given to the road safety. A final roundtable meeting is planned for 5 November 2015 in Riga.

Several Member States took the floor and commented on the usefulness of this exercise. PL presented a new campaign that was launched targeting young drivers. BG asked Member States to answer a set of questions in order to help improving their legislation. BE announced its national day of road safety: 15 December 2015.

VEHICLE AUTOMATION

Mr Casto Lopez Benitez, MOVE C.4, briefly presented the topic on the basis of the discussion document.

Antony Lagrange, DG GROW G.3, explained the activities developed by the Commission within the type-approval framework, including at UNECE level in relation to automation. The presentation is attached.
Joël Valmain made a presentation on behalf of UNECE WP1. Technology is advancing very fast and a quick action is required from authorities to establish the appropriate legal framework. The car industry asks for a harmonised legal framework. The amendments to the Vienna Convention allowing driver assistance technologies are adopted and will enter into force on 23 March 2016. The Geneva Convention will be amended in the same manner although the procedure is lagging behind. The discussions continue in the group concerning the possibility to allow for a fully autonomous vehicle. Japan has requested to join the work of WP1. The issue may be closer that generally accepted since for example, fully autonomous vehicles may appear in the public transport sector sooner than for cars.

NL, Marij Philippens made a presentation and pointed out that autonomous and automated vehicles are very high on the political agenda for NL, that intends to promote a declaration on this topic by the transport ministers during its EU presidency in the first half of 2016. The presentation is attached.

An exchange of views followed, where delegations raised various topics and expressed their position. The main topics raised and ideas put forward in the discussion were the following:

- **General**

  Automation brings a revolutionary change which is happening fast; there is a need to decide on the framework for this development. Industry is very active and pushing for the deployment of more automation. Regulations should not prevent progress or add complexity; problems should be identified before proposing regulations. There is a need for clear concept definitions to make sure there is a common understanding in the discussions.

  Automation has safety benefits which clearly compensate the negative aspects. Given that automation goes hand in hand with connectivity, data protection and data security are essential. Concerning user behaviour, drivers should be aware of how to use/benefit from automation systems safely.

- **Self-driving vehicles**

  Having fully vehicles on the road is a long term goal. Before it can be reached, there was a general agreement among HLG participants that much testing is required and therefore a clear framework for those tests is needed; some Member States explained they had already defined such a framework (DE, ES, UK, BE, FI). The importance of cooperation and assistance and exchange of information on work in different Member States was also emphasized.

  Self-driving vehicles may be faced with ‘moral’ dilemmas when having to decide on its action in case an emergency situation; it is not clear how that can be solved, but should be taken into account. One of the main safety concerns of fully autonomous vehicles is their interaction with vehicles driven by humans.

- **Infrastructure**

  Automated vehicles should be able to understand road signs; international cooperation is needed for this; for example exchange of signal data in the EU.

- **Role of EU**
Some Member States suggested the European Commission could provide the lead in the discussion at EU level which results in common understanding. For example a work programme of meetings could be set up for this purpose.

Within CARS 2020, a specific group has been set up to discuss automation; safety issues should be an important part of its work.

**FORTHCOMING ROAD SAFETY TOPICS**

* - **UN road safety conference in Brazil, 18-19 November**

Recently United Nations road safety activities, notably the adoption of a road safety target as one of the new Sustainable Development Goals was acknowledged. Ms Susanne Lindahl, MOVE C.4, presented the upcoming UN ministerial conference in Brazil on 18-19 November. The meeting will adopt a Declaration on road safety. Commission will participate in the conference on some level. Member States were asked about planned presence at the meeting and about the organised side events.

LU, ES, DE, BE, FI, IE and FR confirmed their presence at the meeting; LU, ES, BE on ministerial level.

IT, FR, ES, SE, IE expressed they will organise side events.

* - **Road Safety Plans**

Ms Sarolta Csajbok, MOVE C.4, presented the state of play on Commission compilation of Member States' National Road Safety Plans. Member States were asked to continue to share new information on their respective National Road Safety Strategies and Action Plans with the Commission. DE, SE, FR, LU, IT, AT and ES informed the Commission about the current status of their National Plans. The main objectives of these Plans are to reduce road fatalities and serious road injuries, as well as to fight against dangerous drivers’ behaviour, such as drink driving and speeding. Member States discussed especially proposed actions on protective equipment for motorcyclists and the implementation of the cross-border enforcement Directive.

The Commission thanked the HLG Members for their input, stressed the importance of continuity and assessed that the current trend regarding motorcycle safety is going into the right direction in the Member States.

* - **MS data collection on serious road traffic injuries**

Ms Maria Teresa Sanz Villegas, MOVE C.4, informed Member States about state of play on data collection for seriously injured with the new definition MAIS+3.

So far, data on seriously injured under the MAIS3+ definition has been submitted by 10 Member States. All the other Member States were kindly asked to send the relevant information to the Commission soonest as the data is planned to be published before the end of November 2015.
ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Information from DG RTD

Mr Alessandro Damiani, Head of Unit RTD, H.1 gave a general presentation on the H2020 Research & Innovation program and then inform about 2 road safety related calls in the Work Programme 2016-2017. The first one on “Automated Road Transport” to support transition towards automation and the second one on "Euro-African initiative on road safety and traffic management" to improve road safety in Africa by Setting up a Euro-African dialogue platform. Road Safety Agencies (or other responsible authorities) are potential partners in the initiative and all Member States were invited to participate by sending their proposals to the Research & Innovation portal.

Questions from Spain

ES raised 2 points:

1. on Google Maps which propose itineraries avoiding tolls; the idea was given by ES to provide directions based on risks avoidance factors. However, Google replied that degree of safety would not have any influence on the driver. ES warned this should be a concern of all.

2. on variable message signs; ES expressed concern about the lack of standardization for the format and symbols of variable signs, forgiven its importance for e.g. tourists.

The Commission noted that these 2 points will be on agenda for the next meeting.

CONCLUSION AND FOLLOW-UP

Meeting minutes are to be sent out shortly. Member States were encouraged to reply to the questions posed by BG.

The next meeting is tentatively planned for the middle of 2016. More information will follow.