European road safety 2011-2020

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The European Parliament adopted a resolution in response to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020’.

Firstly, the resolution highlights that in 2009 more than 35 000 people were killed and more than 1 500 000 injured in road accidents in the European Union. The social cost of road accidents is estimated at EUR 130 billion per year. Parliament wholeheartedly endorses the objective of **halving by 2020 the total number of road deaths in the EU** by comparison with 2010, and calls for further **clear and measurable targets** to be set for the same period. In particular:

- a 60 % reduction in the number of children under the age of 14 killed in road accidents;
- a 50 % reduction in the number of pedestrians and cyclists killed in road collisions;
- a 40 % reduction in the number of people suffering critical injuries, on the basis of a **uniform EU definition to be developed quickly**.

Fully fledged action programme: overall, Parliament welcomes the abovementioned Commission communication, but calls on the Commission, **by the end of 2011**, to develop its proposals into a fully fledged action programme incorporating a detailed set of measures with clear timetables for their implementation and monitoring instruments.

Parliament also proposes, as a matter of priority, that an **EU Road Safety Coordinator** should be appointed, as part of the European Commission, **by 2014**, who should, *inter alia*:

- promote – as a recognised personality in the field of road transport safety – current, and initiate innovative new, road safety projects with his experience, expertise and skills;
- coordinate road safety measures within the Commission and between the Member States;
- facilitate at a high political level the preparation, implementation and enforcement of effective and coherent road safety policies in line with the EU objectives;
- oversee particular projects such as the harmonisation of indicators, data and, as far as possible, national road safety plans;
- promote the exchange of best practice and the implementation of road safety provisions in cooperation with all stakeholders, Member States and their regional and local authorities;
- liaise between the relevant political and academic levels in order to allow scope for a multidisciplinary approach.

A **cooperation forum** should be set up where prosecutors, law enforcement authorities, victims’ associations and road safety monitoring centres can exchange information on best practices and cooperate more closely on improving implementation of road safety legislation, at both national and transnational levels.

Parliament regrets that the **EU budget for road safety measures has been cut significantly** in recent years and calls on the Commission to reverse this trend.

The resolution considers that the public authorities and the EU have a **moral and political obligation** to adopt measures and actions to tackle this social problem. A complementary, long-term strategy is needed which goes beyond the period covered by the communication under consideration here and has the objective of preventing all road deaths (‘**Vision Zero**’). Being aware that this is not feasible without the **extensive use of technology in road vehicles** and the development of proper networks for ITS, Members

call on the Commission to develop the central features of such a strategy and to present them within the **next three years**.

Catalogue of proposals: Members present a catalogue of 103 measures to improve road safety. Amongst these, one notes the following: (i) improving road users' training and behaviour; (ii) harmonising and enforcing road traffic rules; (iii) making road transport infrastructure safer; (iv) putting safer vehicles on the road; (v) using modern technologies for vehicles, infrastructure and the emergency services; (vi) protecting vulnerable road users (motorcyclists, pedestrians, road maintenance workers, cyclists, children, elderly people and people with disabilities).

Parliament calls on the Member States to:

- make compulsory fitting of **alcolocks** – with a small, scientifically-based range of tolerance for measurement – to all new types of commercial passenger and goods transport vehicles;
- introduce a **European-wide ban on the manufacture, import and distribution of systems that warn drivers of traffic checks** (e.g. radar warning and laser jamming devices, or navigation systems that automatically signal traffic checks);
- **introduce speed limits of 30 km/h in residential areas** and on all one-lane roads in urban areas which have no separate cycle lane, with a view to protecting vulnerable road users more effectively;
- introduce a EU-wide ban on the practice of **texting, emailing or web browsing** while driving a motorised vehicle, which should be enforced by Member States using the best available technology;
- establish an **obligatory medical check** for drivers at a certain age, to identify the physical, mental and psychological ability required to continue driving on the basis of their statistical accident data for the respective age group;
- take steps to ensure that the requirements imposed on commercial vehicles are stepped up in line with technical conditions, e.g. regarding tiredness- and distraction-warning devices;
- make the carrying of **warning jackets** for all vehicle occupants compulsory;
- encourage cyclists, especially at night outside built-up areas, to use crash helmets and wear warning jackets or comparable clothing as a means of improving their visibility;
- introduce monitoring equipment by means of which speeding offences by motorcyclists can be systematically detected and punished.

Members also call on the Commission, by the end of 2013, to apply as part of the SafetyNet project a set of additional, harmonised indicators on the basis of which monitoring can be improved and meaningful comparisons of the progress made by individual Member States drawn up. Parliament calls for an EU-wide harmonised blood alcohol limit; recommends a **0 ‰**, scientifically based range of tolerance for measurement for newly qualified drivers in the first 2 years and for professional drivers at all time.

The Commission is called upon to:

- draw up by 2012 a proposal to improve the data available concerning the causes of accidents and injuries;
- prepare by 2013 a proposal for a Directive for the fitting of alcolocks, including the relevant specifications for its technical implementation;
- submit by 2013 a proposal designed to ensure that every new vehicle is fitted as standard equipment with an improved seat-belt reminder system for the front and rear seats which gives both auditory and visual warnings;
- submit a legislative proposal, including a timetable and a detailed approval procedure, by the end of 2012 providing for the phased introduction, initially in rented vehicles and subsequently also in commercial and private vehicles, of an integrated accident recorder system with a standardised readout which records relevant data before, during and after accidents ('Event Data Recording');

- draw up within two years definitions of the terms ‘critically injured’, ‘seriously injured’ and ‘slightly injured’ with a view to making comparisons of measures and their impact in the Member States possible.

Lastly, Parliament calls for the development of a genuine **EU road safety monitoring centre** whose task it would be to prepare a summary of existing initiatives on data collection, to make a proposal aimed at improving exchanges of data, as well as to collate data from existing databases and the knowledge gained through the implementation of EU projects.