Saving lives: boosting car safety in the EU

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The Committee on Transport and Tourism adopted the own-initiative report by Dieter-Lebrecht KOCH (EPP, DE) on saving lives: boosting car safety in the EU.

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, exercising its prerogative as an associated committee in accordance with Article 54 of the Rules of Procedure, also gave its opinion on the report.

The report stated that every year on Europe's roads around 25 500 people die and some 135 000 are seriously injured. More effective measures need to be taken if the vision zero goal of 'no fatalities' is to be achieved.

Given that road safety depends on the vehicle, the infrastructure and the driver, efficient active and passive safety measures are needed at all three levels.

General requests: the report stressed that Member States should conduct efficient and regular road checks on drivers, as the **main causes of accidents** are speed levels that are inappropriate and excessive speed for the driving conditions concerned, distraction, driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and excessive fatigue.

They called on the Commission to:

- set a **percentage** for the numbers of vehicles in classes M1 and N1 to be checked;
- introduce **stricter controls** for the proper enforcement of compulsory working-time limits and rest periods for drivers who are professional road users;
- assess the possible added value of **harmonising the EU blood alcohol concentration limit at 0.0%** for new drivers in their first two years and for professional drivers;
- set common standards for the **creation of corridors for emergency vehicle access** on motorways and to launch a European awareness campaign;
- examine the safety requirements for **e-bikes** and other electric mobility devices;

Member States are called upon to:

- introduce **penalties** which will act as a deterrent to offenders;
- significantly **improve the state of their road infrastructure**;

Driver assistance systems to increase road safety: around 95 % of all accidents are caused by human error. This leads to the conclusion that a **legislative obligation** to install safety-related driver assistance systems is urgently needed.

Members proposed that it should therefore be **compulsory** to incorporate only those driver assistance systems which improve road safety significantly as demonstrated by scientific evidence.

Safety measures to prevent accidents: while welcoming the fact that emergency braking is already mandatory, since November 2015, for all new trucks and buses in the EU, Members called on the Commission to make it **compulsory to install automatic emergency braking assistants** with detection

of pedestrians, cyclists, light powered two-wheelers and motorcyclists in cars, light commercial vehicles, buses, coaches and, especially, heavy goods vehicles, as these have a strong potential to prevent road accidents by means of autonomous powerful braking and a resulting shorter stopping distance.

They also called for:

- the compulsory installation of over ridable intelligent speed assistant systems that indicate speed limits, stop signs and traffic lights and intervene to assist drivers to remain within speed limits;
- **road signs** to be kept in excellent condition and that road markings are clearly legible;
- the need to provide preconditions for installing **alcohol interlock devices** and systems to detect driver distraction and drowsiness;
- it to be made compulsory to install direct tyre pressure monitoring systems;
- the installation of intelligent seatbelt reminder systems for all front seats for all vehicles and for rear seats for M1 and N1 vehicles;
- improved energy-absorbing front underrun protection for all new trucks;
- the extension of the eCall installation requirement to motorcycles, heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches.