Saving lives: boosting car safety in the EU

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The European Parliament adopted by 593 votes to 39 with 53 abstentions, a resolution entitled Saving lives: boosting car safety in the EU.

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

Road safety depends on **three factors**, these being the vehicle, the infrastructure and the driver.

General recommendations: Parliament stressed the need to conduct efficient and regular road checks on drivers, since 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.

The Commission was asked 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 (around 25 % of all annual traffic fatalities in the EU are caused by alcohol consumption;
- set common standards for the **creation of corridors for emergency vehicle access** on motorways and to launch a European awareness campaign;
- consider a proposal for **safer use of bicycles**, examine the safety requirements for e-bikes and take further Union-wide measures to enable large-scale improvements to cycling infrastructure;
- draw up an EU-wide binding list of objects that should fall under **the carrying requirement.**

Member States were asked to :

- introduce **penalties** which will act as a deterrent to offenders;
- significantly **improve the state of their road infrastructure**;
- develop **age-related** accident prevention programs;
- address the issue of **manipulation of or tampering** with odometers through effective measures and legislation.

The Commission should include **new targets** for halving the number of serious injuries on the roads in the EU in its new road safety strategy for the decade 2020-2030.

Driver assistance systems to increase road safety: around 92 % of all accidents are caused by human error. Accordingly, Members proposed that it should therefore be compulsory to incorporate only those driver assistance systems that improve road safety significantly as demonstrated by scientific evidence.

Manufacturers should ensure that that the activation status of each driver assistance system is visible to the driver, and that warnings should also be easy to perceive for elderly persons, persons with a disability, and persons with reduced mobility.

Safety measures to prevent accidents and reduce their consequences: while welcoming the fact that emergency braking is already mandatory, since November 2015, for all new trucks and buses in the EU, Parliament 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.

The resolution also called for:

- the compulsory installation of overridable intelligent speed assistant systems that indicate speed limits, stop signs and traffic lights and intervene to assist drivers to remain within speed limits;
- the installation of a **an overridable lane-keeping assistance;**
- **road signs** to be kept in excellent condition and that road markings are clearly legible;
- the mandatory introduction for trucks of ambitious differentiated direct vision standards, and **reduction of blind spots**;
- 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.