Road infrastructure safety management: improving the safety performance of road infrastructure

2018/0129(COD) - 04/04/2019 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 534 votes to 37 with 11 abstentions, legislative resolution on the proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management.

As a reminder, the proposal makes amendments to Directive 2008/96 / EC to reduce the number of people who are killed or seriously injured on the road networks of the European Union by improving road safety performance.

Parliament's position adopted at first reading in the framework of the ordinary legislative procedure amended the Commission proposal as follows:

Scope

The amended text states that the directive should apply to roads which are part of the trans-European network, motorways and primary roads, including sections of road built on bridges and sections of road that pass through tunnels, with the exception of tunnels covered by Directive 2004/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network.

The directive also covers entries and exits to parking areas along the network, in particular motorways and primary roads.

Member States may exempt from the scope of the Directive primary roads that have a low risk for safety, based on duly justified grounds connected to traffic volumes and accident statistics. They shall notify to the Commission the list of motorways and primary roads on its territory and, thereafter, any subsequent changes to that list.

Road safety audits

The Commission shall provide guidance for the design of "forgiving roadsides" and "self-explaining and self-enforcing roads" in the initial audit of the design phase as well as on quality requirements regarding vulnerable road users. That guidance shall be developed in close cooperation with Member State experts.

Network-wide road safety assessment

Member States shall ensure that a network-wide road safety assessment is carried out on the entire road network in operation covered by the Directive, evaluating accident and impact severity risk, based on:

- primarily, a visual examination, either on site or by electronic means, of the design characteristics of the road (in-built safety); and

- an analysis of sections of the road network which have been in operation for more than three years and upon which a large number of serious accidents in proportion to the traffic flow have occurred.

The first network-wide road safety assessment shall be carried out by 2024 at the latest and subsequent network-wide road safety assessments shall be carried out at least every five years.

The Commission shall provide guidance on the methodology for carrying out systematic network-wide road safety assessments and safety ratings.

Periodic road safety inspections

Periodic road safety inspections must be undertaken with sufficient frequency to safeguard adequate safety levels for the road infrastructure in question. The joint road safety inspections shall be sufficiently frequent to safeguard adequate safety levels, but in any case shall be carried out at least every six years.

Targeted road safety inspections shall be carried out by expert teams.

Road markings and road signs

Existing and future procedures for road markings and road signs must pay special attention to readability and detectability for human drivers and automated driver assistance systems. A group of experts established by the Commission shall, at the latest by June 2021, assess the opportunity to establish common specifications in this regard.

The assessment shall take into consideration in particular the following elements:

- the interaction between various driver assistance technologies and infrastructure;

- the effect of the weather and atmospheric phenomena as well as traffic on road markings and road signs present on the Union territory;

- the type and frequency of maintenance efforts necessary for various technologies, including an estimate of costs.

Information and transparency

The Commission shall publish a European map of the road network within the scope of the directive, accessible online, highlighting different categories according to their level of safety.

Member States shall endeavour to establish a national system for the purpose of voluntary reporting, accessible online to all road users, to facilitate the collection of details of occurrences transmitted by road users and vehicles, and of any other safety-related information which is perceived by the reporter as an actual or potential hazard to road infrastructure safety.

Reports

Member States shall provide a report to the Commission by 31 October 2025 on the safety classification of the entire network assessed in accordance with the directive. The report shall also cover the improvements in terms of technological progress and of protection of vulnerable road users. From 31 October 2025, such reports shall be provided every five years.