Road safety: priorities, progress report and ranking of actions

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PURPOSE : to present a Communication on priorities in EU road safety progress report and ranking of actions. CONTENT : this Communication takes us beyond the Action Programme of 1997-2001, which introduced a socio-economic dimension to road safety with the "EUR 1 million principle" which for the first time sought to give an economic cost to a fatality and the associated injuries and damage. It takes up suggestions from the Council and the European Parliament to issue a report on the Action Programme. Also, as requested from the European Parliament, it gives a ranking to future measures at the Community level, and it makes a Recommendation to decision makers at all levels, to give more weight to the fact that the cost of preventing accidents is generally much less than the economic cost of casualties and damage caused by them. Furthermore, a multi-criteria analysis followed by a cost effective assessment of the actions listed in the Programme 1997-2001, has led to the definition of the following short and medium term priorities in road safety in the EU: - continue to work with and develop the European New Car Assessment Programme (EuroNCAP); - campaigns and legislation on seat belts and child restraints; - recommendation to the Member States on maximum blood/alcohol levels in traffic; - legislation on speed limiters for light commercial vehicles; - develop guidelines for "Black Spot" management and the design for "forgiving" roadsides; - legislation on safer car fronts for pedestrians and cyclists. Beyond these key points this Communication lists a further 5 measures for which more research into cost effectiveness is desirable: medical standards for driving licences; standards for driving tests; daytime running lights; effects of medicines on driver behaviour; post accident care. These supporting measures also received a high priority: the CARE accident statistics data base; an integrated information system; and, research into vehicle standards and telematics. Finally, this Communication contains a Recommendation of the Commission encouraging governments, local and regional authorities of the Member States to establishing a practice of calculating costs and effects of road safety measures, to increase investments in these measures and to develop mechanisms that will enable the benefits of road safety measures to be felt more directly by those taking the decisions and bearing the costs of their implementation.