Road safety: priorities, progress report and ranking of actions

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The committee adopted the report by Ewa HEDKVIST PETERSEN (PES, S) on the Commission communication. It felt that an EU recommendation on blood alcohol limits was not the best way of reducing the wide differences between Member States in this area, and reconfirmed its support for the existing proposal for a maximum common limit of 0.5 parts per thousand. The report added that Member States should enforce compliance with blood alcohol limits more strictly. The committee also recommended: - a legislative proposal requiring the fitting of speed limiters to vehicles weighing more than 3.5 tonnes; - further support for the European New Car Assessment Programme (EuroNCAP); - support for seat belt campaigns; - EU best practice guidelines on low cost measures, safer roadside designs and policies for eliminating accident black spots; - support for the further development of the EU road accident database. The report said that the next road safety programme for the years 2002-2010 should clearly define the main priorities and employ a systematic approach to the problem of road safety. The programme should also address the main road safety issues common to all Member States, such as excessive speed, consumption of alcohol and other substances which can impair driving ability, the high accident risk of young novice drivers and the failure to use seat belts and crash helmets. Special attention should be given to vulnerable road users like pedestrians and cyclists. Given the large number of road deaths among young people, the committee urged the Commission, in its forthcoming proposal on driving licences, to consider further measures including a graduated licensing scheme involving stage-by-stage access to a full licence.