European road safety action programme, 2003. Mid-term review

2006/2112(INI) - 08/06/2006

In the light of the mid-term review of the Commission's road safety action programme, the results of an informal meeting of Ministers of Transport on "Crossing Borders in Road Safety", which took place in Bregenz on 2 and 3 March, 2006 as well as the debate held at the TTE Council of 27 March, 2006 the Council adopted the following conclusions:

The Council noted that the number of fatalities on European roads has fallen by 17.5 % between 2001 and 2005. The number of accidents which had been on the rise until 2000 fell by an average of 4% a year between 2001 and 2005 and 5% between 2003 and 2004, which shows that additional measures are already beginning to bear fruit. This decrease, while significant, is not yet satisfactory as it will not allow the Community to reach its goal of reducing road accident victims by 50 % until 2010. These results confirm that Member States are on the right track, but are still moving too slowly.

In this context, the Council agrees on the need to strengthen road safety measures and initiatives on Community or Member States' level in particular in the following areas:

- devising practical and concrete measures addressing the accident situation, especially prevalent where the age and experience of drivers are an issue;

- additional attention and protective measures should be directed towards motorcyclists and extremely vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists;

- measures concerning road infrastructure safety should be further improved taking into account the best practices and the need to meet the specificities of each situation. Intelligent infrastructure features, such as variable speed signing linked to active traffic monitoring systems, should be used when appropriate;

- measures concerning cross-border enforcement of offences committed by non-resident drivers should be pursued in the appropriate fora with a view to providing improvement of road safety in an increasingly integrated and enlarged European Union. Measures to combat drink/drug driving, excessive speeding and the promotion of the use of seat belts are particularly relevant.

- new initiatives on vehicle safety, as set out in the Report "CARS 21", such as Electronic Stability Control, Seatbelt Reminders, Brake Assistant Systems, Heavy Duty Vehicles, rear view vision and conspicuity and Daytime Running Lights should be subject to special attention. In addition, advanced technologies such as collision avoidance systems, the introduction of speed limiters and speed management systems together with alcolocks to combat drink driving may warrant further political and scientific evaluation;

- a joint European awareness-raising campaign fighting accident risks, such as drivers' fatigue or drink driving, could acquire synergetic effects and show higher efficiency;

- the positive effect of committing non-governmental stakeholders to additional road safety measures in the sense of a shared responsibility for fighting the suffering on European roads should be further supported, especially via the European Road Safety Charter;

- finally, raising road users' awareness towards possible risks, through the European Commission's initiative for a road safety day, preferably in cooperation with other such initiatives of the United Nations.

The Council invited the European Commission to take the necessary actions, including, where appropriate, legislative proposals, as intensive work on road safety needs to be continued.