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

2006/2112(INI) - 18/01/2007 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Ewa **HEDKVIST PETERSEN** (PES, SE) in response to the Commission's mid-term review of the EU Road Safety Action Programme. It called for a higher level of political commitment to road safety across the EU by all Member States, by regional and local authorities and EU institutions and by industry, organisations and individuals. Only an integrated systems approach involving all road users and stakeholders, on the basis of efforts to promote public transport and more effective lawmaking in the Member States, combined with adequate monitoring of road users in the Member States (driving licence checks, breathalyser tests, etc.), could lead to significant and sustainable reductions in the number of serious road accidents.

With a view to combating cross-border driving offences, it should be possible to enforce the law on speeding, failure to wear a seat belt and drink-driving in an effective manner so that significant penalties were imposed irrespective of whether the offence is committed in the offender's own country or in another Member State .

Parliament made a number of recommendations:

- since unclear or inconsistent road signs cause unnecessary risks for road safety, the Commission should put forward a study on harmonisation of road signs in Europe as a means to improve road safety;

- considering the high number of accidents and deaths at roadwork zones, common guidelines should be developed on the requirements for safe roadwork zones based on identification and exchange of best practices;

- the Commission should evaluate the European Road Safety Charter;

- Member States should consider introducing a zero alcohol limit for new drivers and professional commercial vehicle and bus drivers involved in passenger transport and, for example, in the transport of hazardous goods;

- driving under the influence of drugs is a serious problem which needs to be combated and Member States and the Commission should invest more resources in researching and combating such offences;

- the Commission should investigate the influence of the use of communication devices in vehicles on driver behaviour and road safety;

- efforts to ensure that the use of seat belts is increased in all vehicles, especially buses must be increased;

- Member States should extend – as far as possible – the ban on overtaking for vehicles weighing in excess of 12 tonnes to all one- and two-lane roads;

- insurance companies could play a crucial role in the observance of road safety legislation and labour legislation in the road transport sector, e.g. by setting differential premiums;

- incentives must not confined to the latest technologies for reducing emissions, but also cover significant safety features (emergency brake assistants, lane departure warning systems, adaptive cruise control systems, shock absorber control systems, etc.);

- out of the vast selection of technologies available, the following solutions should receive particular attention: seat belt reminders and advanced restraint systems, Electronic Stability Control (ESC), speed limiters, alcohol interlocks, predictive safety systems (emergency brake assistant, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning system, ultrasound blind-spot monitor, shock absorber control system) and eCall;

- the Commission and the Member States must encourage EuroNCAP to introduce tests for whiplash protection and for active technical systems such as ESP/ESC emergency braking, driver support (e.g. alcohol interlocks), adaptive cruise control and lane departure warning;

- measures might be proposed based on an evaluation of the awareness of the single European emergency call number 112 and implementation of E112 by all Member States in order to improve the situation in the European Union;

- the Commission and, in particular, the Member States should investigate the road safety situation for people with disabilities; it was important for professional passenger drivers, taxi drivers for example, to be properly trained in securing wheelchairs, etc.