

Road safety priorities for the EU in 2015

Memorandum to the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council of the European Union

July 2015

Summary

In 2014, nearly 25,700 people (500 a week, on average) were killed in the European Union as a consequence of road collisions. Road deaths fell by a negligible 1% in the EU last year. The drastic slowdown in progress puts at risk the region's target of halving road deaths by 2020. As well as the unbearable human cost, road casualties cost 2% of European GDP.

In this briefing, ETSC outlines its recommendations on the key EU road safety policy dossiers to be steered by the Luxembourg Presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2015. These include preparing for the new EU roads package including the safety aspects. ETSC strongly welcomes the Luxembourg initiative to put soft forms of transport, including walking and cycling, centre stage on their Presidency agenda. Safety must be an integral part of increasing take up of these healthier forms of transport. The upcoming revision of vehicle safety legislation has the potential to improve the safety of pedestrians and cyclists.

The briefing also examines the upcoming policy initiatives from the European Commission including progress towards the 2020 target and reviewing the Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020, with recommendations for maximising the results of road safety work.

Context

The annual socio-economic cost of road traffic deaths and injuries was estimated to be equivalent to around 2% of GDP or EUR 250 billion in 2012¹. Alongside legal and moral obligations there is also a strong economic case to include the prevention of road traffic deaths and serious injuries in EU health policy as well as transport policy.

ETSC estimates the monetary value for 2013 of the human losses avoided by preventing one road fatality (VPF)² to be 1.94 million Euro.³ The total value of the reductions in road deaths in the EU28 for 2013 compared to 2010 is thus estimated at approximately 10.7 billion Euro, and the value of the reductions in the years 2011-2013 taken together compared with three years at the 2010 rate is about 18.7 billion Euro. If the EU countries had moved towards the 2020 road safety target through constant progress, the greater reductions in deaths in the years 2011-2013 would have raised the benefit to society by 4.6 billion Euro to about 23 billion Euro over those years⁴.

Given the financial difficulties that many EU countries face due to the economic slowdown, the value to society of improving road safety should be taken into account in the policy and budgetary planning process, expressing in monetary terms the moral imperative of reducing road risk. The high value of societal costs avoided during 2011-2013 shows once more that the saving potential offered by sustained road safety improvements is considerable, making clear to policy-makers the potential for road safety policies to provide a sound investment.

The Luxembourg Presidency, together with the European Commission and the European Parliament, should acknowledge the strong return on investment of road safety improvements and prioritise life saving measures at EU and national level.

¹ WHO (2004), World report on road traffic injury prevention.

² In countries where the monetary value attributed to human losses avoided by preventing one fatality (VPF) is estimated on the basis known as Willingness-To-Pay (WTP). The use of WTP valuations in transport safety has been advocated by ETSC since 1997. ETSC (1997) Transport Accident Costs and the Value of Safety.

³ ETSC (2015), 9th Road Safety Performance Index Report, Methodological Notes Under Preparation.

⁴ ETSC (2014) 8th Road Safety Performance Index Report.

Key priorities for the Luxembourg presidency

Mid Term Review of the EU's Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020 and the Transport White Paper

In 2011, the European Commission published its Transport White Paper "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area-Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system". This followed the EC's 'Road Safety Policy Orientations' (RSPO), published in July 2010, a framework with the objective of reducing road deaths by 50% by 2020.

Almost half way to 2020, the European Commission is now undertaking a review of the RSPO. The EU target remains crucial as is action to achieve it. A year-to-year reduction of at least 6.7% is needed over the 2010-2020 period to reach the target through constant progress in annual percentage terms. Across the EU28 road deaths have been cut by 18% between 2010 and 2014 an equivalent to a 4.9% average annual reduction⁵. The EU target for 2020 is therefore reachable if combined efforts at both national and EU level are stepped up. Policy makers and other stakeholders need to strengthen European efforts in the field of road safety and to strengthen and expand the scope of action needed to reach the 2020 target. The Luxembourg Presidency can also make its contribution by showing leadership in prioritising road safety topics during their half year tenureship.

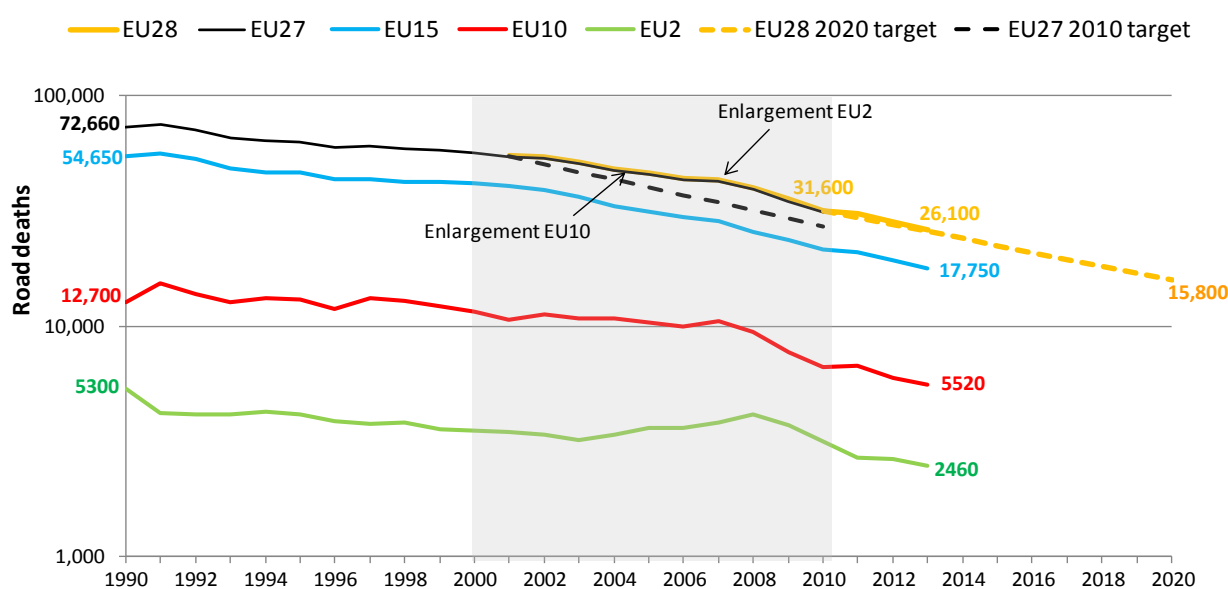


Fig. 1: Reduction in road deaths since 1990 in the EU28 (yellow line), the EU27 (black line), the EU15 (blue line), the EU10 (red line) and the EU2 (Bulgaria and Romania,

⁵ ETSC (2015), 9th Road Safety Performance Index Report, Methodological Notes Under Preparation

green line)⁶. *The logarithmic scale is used to enable the slopes of the various trend lines to be compared. Source: CARE database 1990-2000 and PIN Panellists (2001-2012).*

The seven strategic objectives of the RSPO remain relevant. Road safety policy should be priority led and evidence based. ETSC has always stressed that the EU should focus its activities on the key causes of road traffic deaths: speed, drink and drug driving, and lack of protective systems, poorly constructed roads and inadequately equipped vehicles. ETSC calls upon the EU to take action in these priority areas.

While ETSC welcomed the adoption of the 2020 target, ETSC's response to the RSPO was that it was a significant step backwards compared to the three previous European Road Safety Action Programmes. In 2010, the road safety community had hoped for, and expected, a new EU 10-year action programme providing a vision, priorities and a detailed road map against which performance could be measured and delivery made accountable. The RSPO fell short of those expectations.

The 2011 White Paper was welcomed by ETSC, primarily for including a 'Vision Zero' complementing the "Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020" target of halving road deaths by 2020. ETSC also welcomed the ambition "to be the best in the world". The White Paper also reiterated the priorities set out in the 'Road Safety Policy Orientations'. However, the White Paper fell short of integrating road safety in all policies that have an impact on road users' risk levels, including for example, land use planning, public procurement, enterprise, environment or taxation.

Almost half way to 2020, the European Commission is now undertaking a review of the RSPO and the Transport White Paper, with the European Parliament undertaking an Own Initiative Report on the White Paper. Following last year's slowdown the Luxembourg Presidency must call on all stakeholders to redouble their efforts to prioritise action on road safety.

2015 is also half way through the UN Decade of Action on Road Safety. The EU has a role to include road safety in its relations with its neighbours when it comes to co-operating on transport policy. EU member states supported UN resolution on improving the global road safety crisis, which proclaims 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety. Globally, each year nearly 1.3 million people die as a result of a road traffic collision. Ninety percent of road deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, which claim less than half the world's registered vehicle fleet. As the world's biggest aid donor, the EU should ensure that EU road safety policy objectives also apply to external programming so as to create consistency in approach and stress the importance of road safety as a priority for the EU in all relevant policy areas.

Serious Injury Target and Strategy

In addition to the 25,700 people killed in road collisions in the European Union, about 199,000 people are recorded as seriously injured in police reports each year. The

⁶ ETSC (2014), 8th Road Safety Performance Index Report.

Commission has committed to setting in 2015 a common EU target for the reduction in the number of seriously injured people by 2020. ETSC recommends to the EU to adopt a target of 35% reduction between 2014 and 2020 in the number of people seriously injured on the roads. As indicated in Fig. 2, a 35% reduction in the number of seriously injured over the period 2014-2020 would be similarly challenging and achievable for the Member States to the target to halve road deaths between 2010 and 2020⁷.

The Luxembourg EU Presidency should encourage the EU to prioritise action in the area of serious injury.

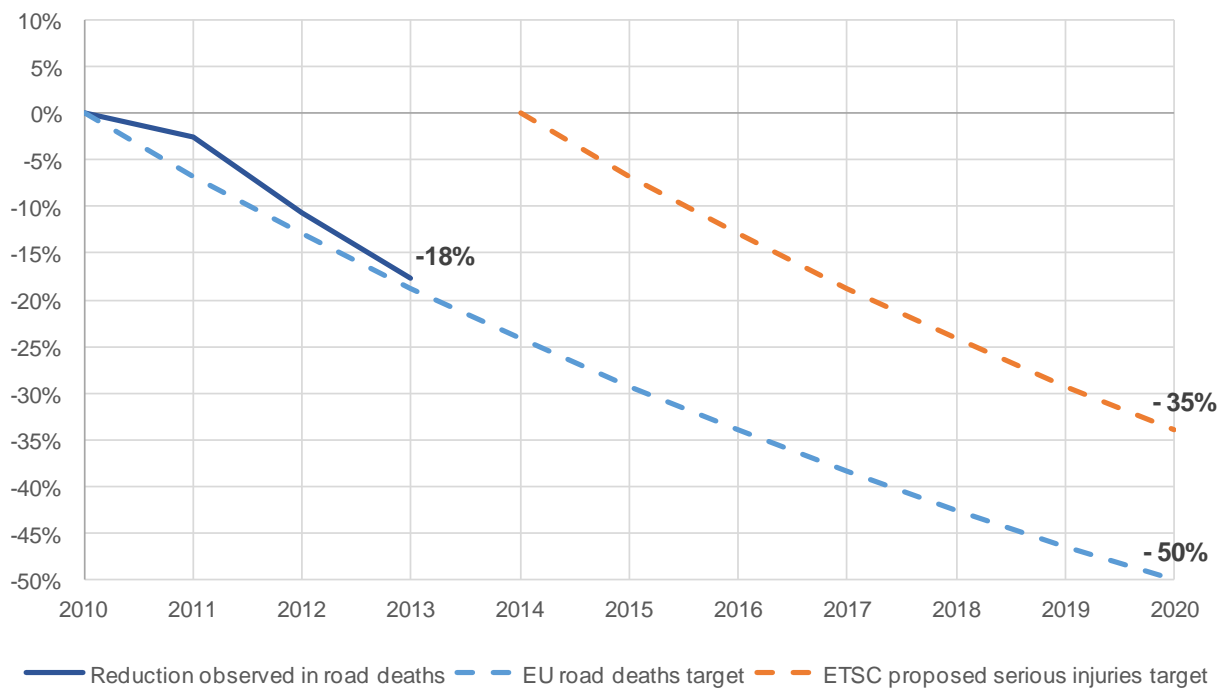


Fig. 2: Reduction in the number of road deaths (dark blue line) plotted against the EU target for 2020 (light blue dotted line), with ETSC's recommended target for reduction in the number seriously injured (orange dotted line).

Pedestrian and Cycle Safety

The Luxembourg Presidency of the EU is due to prioritise walking and cycling during their EU Presidency. They will organise their informal EU Transport Council meeting on cycling policy. This is much welcomed by ETSC. A recent report published by ETSC showed that safety must form an integral part of promoting healthier and more sustainable forms of transport⁸. ETSC reports that around 138,400 pedestrians and cyclists lost their lives on EU roads between 2001 and 2013; 7,600 were killed in 2013 alone. Deaths among pedestrians and cyclists account for 29% of all road deaths across

⁷ ETSC (2014), 8th Road Safety Performance Index Report.

⁸ ETSC (2015) Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety PIN Flash 29.

the EU. But big disparities exist between countries. Moreover, deaths of unprotected road users have been decreasing at a slower rate than vehicle occupants. In the last ten years deaths among pedestrians decreased by 41%, those among cyclists by 37% and those among PTW users by 34% compared to a 53% decrease for vehicle occupants. It is crucial that unprotected road users should receive special attention from policymakers at the national and European levels. As active travel becomes more popular, the safety of walking and cycling in particular must be addressed urgently at EU level. This means adopting new vehicle safety standards to improve safety of those outside of the vehicle. Tackling speeding by introducing Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA⁹) and investing in safe urban infrastructure must also be prioritised in upcoming reviews of relevant EU legislation¹⁰.

New Road Safety Initiatives from the European Commission in 2015

Vehicle Safety

The European Commission is currently preparing a review of the General Safety Regulation 661/2009, a piece of legislation regulating vehicle safety and in-vehicle technology in the EU¹¹. A major new study for the European Commission has identified a range of new vehicle safety technologies that are suitable for mandatory fitting as part of a review of EU vehicle safety legislation. The report, carried out by consultants TRL, names technologies including Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA), Automated Emergency Braking (AEB) and seat belt reminder systems in passenger seats as 'feasible in terms of the technology required', already available on the market and offering a positive benefit-cost ratio¹². These represent the high priorities for ETSC as they are mature technologies that are ready for deployment. ETSC would also like to see uniform standards for alcohol interlocks in Europe which ensure that vehicle interfaces make it possible to fit an alcohol interlock. With this addition, the three high-risk behaviours that cause many deaths can be addressed: speeding, drink driving and non

⁹ ISA is the general term for advanced systems in which the vehicle "knows" the speed limit for any given location using a GPS database combined with cameras that read road signs. Drivers are then informed of the speed limit (advisory ISA), warned when they exceed the limit (supportive ISA), or actively aided to abide by the limit (intervening ISA) by an increased resistance of the accelerator pedal.

¹⁰ See sections of the Memorandum on General Safety Regulation Review and Infrastructure Safety Directive Review.

¹¹ ETSC (2015) ETSC Position on the GSR Revision

http://etsc.eu/wpcontent/uploads/2015_03_gsr_review_pp.pdf

¹²<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/benefit-and-feasibility-of-a-range-of-new-technologies-and-unregulated-measures-in-the-field-of-vehicle-occupant-safety-and-protection-of-vulnerable-road-users-pbNB0714108/?pgid=lq1Ekni0.1ISR00OK4MycO9B0000U5evn6Lv;sid=si2VJU9NoR-VBhpX6xQLgi1oEO7pde2Ozn0=?CatalogCategoryID=frMKABstzjYAAAEjvZAY4e5L>

use of seat belts. To mitigate pedestrian and cyclist deaths, ETSC also recommends mandating Advanced Emergency Braking (AEB) for all new vehicles. The General Safety Regulation includes the opportunity to mandate safety improvements to HGV fronts and their underrun protection, measures that ETSC fully supports for swift introduction and uptake and also received a green light in the report. A European Commission communication on the review of the 'General Safety Regulation' (GSR) is expected later this year during the Luxembourg Presidency, with a legislative proposal to follow.

The Luxembourg Presidency should take the initiative to promote the safety benefits of these in-vehicle technologies and promote their uptake in the EU with the context of the Review of the General Safety Regulation.

Pedestrian Protection

The European Commission is currently reviewing the Pedestrian Safety Regulation adopted in 2009. In the European Union, some 21% of all road deaths are pedestrians. The largest share of these are 65 or over¹³. The current Regulation 78/2009 lays down type approval requirements with respect to the protection of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. It provides for the mandatory installation of Brake Assist Systems on N1 and M1 vehicles in an attempt to compensate for the relaxation of certain parameters on passive safety performance tests. ETSC fought hard against the relaxation of the tests arguing that the benefits accident avoidance technologies offer should have been additional rather than substitutive¹⁴. There is now scope for further improving the current tests covering pedestrian upper leg and pelvis to bonnet leading edge tests and the adult head to windscreen test.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/users/pedestrians/index_en.htm

¹⁴ ETSC, 2013, CARS2020 Position http://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/CARS_2020_ETSC-Contribution_May_2013.pdf

Infrastructure safety

The European Commission is reviewing the Infrastructure Safety Directive adopted in 2008. A new study commissioned by the European Commission has found that the impact has been positive for road safety in a number of key areas¹⁵.

ETSC supports the European Commission's recognition and findings of the study that much more benefit could be achieved by extending the principles of Directive 2008/96 to other parts of the road network, in particular rural roads, where many more road users are killed. Almost half of EU countries already apply the rules on some other parts of their national road networks¹⁶. The application of the infrastructure safety Directive to the TEN-T roads has been calculated to potentially save 600 lives and prevent 7000 serious injuries: if applied to all motorways and main roads, this rises to 1300 lives¹⁷. In the EC Policy Orientations 2011-2020, the EC recommended to EU Member States to extend these requirements to the secondary road network (i.e. beyond the main motorways). This has become even more of a priority given the new objective to reduce serious injuries. Investment should also be continued to be made in road maintenance, even in times of financial hardship.

Within the context of the EU Refit¹⁸ programme to cut red tape, the tunnel safety Directive 2004/54 on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the trans-European road network will be evaluated with a possible view to revise or repeal it. ETSC strongly supports the upholding of this important piece of EU road safety legislation and is looking forward to inputting its expert knowledge to this review process.

Ahead of the adoption of a new proposal the Luxembourg Presidency should support and accelerate these important developments in infrastructure safety.

Further Reading

ETSC (2014) 8th Road Safety Performance Index Report
<http://etsc.eu/8th-annual-road-safety-performance-index-pin-report/>

For further information

Ellen Townsend, Policy Director

ellen.townsend@etsc.eu +32 2 230 41 06

¹⁵ <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/facts-fundings/evaluations/doc/2014-12-ex-post-evaluation-study-road-infra-safety-mgmt.pdf>

¹⁶ ETSC (2015) Ranking EU Progress on Improving Motorway Safety (PIN Flash 28).

¹⁷ Rosebud Project (2005).

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/projects/rosebud.pdf

¹⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/refit/index_en.htm

European Transport Safety Council
20 Avenue des Celtes
B-1040 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 230 4106
information@etsc.eu
www.etsc.eu

Follow us on twitter: @etsc_eu