

Policy Briefing

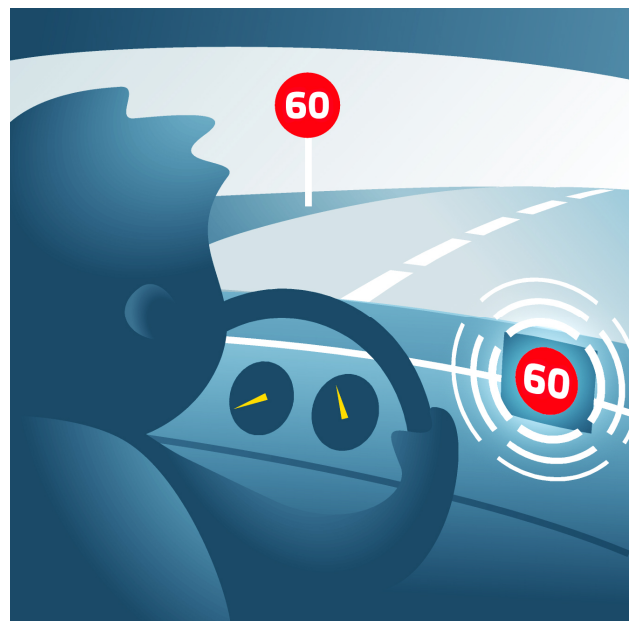
FITTING SAFETY AS STANDARD

How the latest in-vehicle safety technologies can save lives, boost innovation and reduce government spending

Dinner debate, Members' Salon, European Parliament, 3 November 2014, 18:00 – 21:00

Context: cutting road deaths in half by 2020

In 2013, at least 26,025 people were killed in the European Union as a consequence of road collisions¹. In addition, the police recorded more than 199,000 people as seriously injured². In this context, ETSC is calling upon the European Commission to introduce new vehicle safety measures that contribute to reaching the EU's target of halving road deaths by 50% by 2020. There is an opportunity to do this as the European Commission prepares to update the 'Regulation on the General Safety of Motor Vehicles' 2009/661.



Vehicle safety: benefits of new technologies do not reach everyone

At present European citizens do not benefit equally from vehicle safety improvements. Safety levels of new cars sold are notably lower in the Central and Eastern European countries³. Consolidating the internal market for safety will have to be an important cornerstone of achieving the 2020 road safety target. For safety equipment, the EU needs to promote their standard fitment across the EU 28 and address the differences observed in safety levels.

¹ ETSC (2014) 8th PIN Annual Report, Ranking EU Progress on Road Safety.

² Ibid.

³ ETSC (2009) 3rd PIN Annual Report, Chapter 2 Boosting the market for safer cars in the EU.

The European Commission has stated that if all cars were designed to provide crash protection equivalent to that of the best cars in the same class, half of all fatal and disabling injuries could be avoided⁴.

Car occupants represent 48% of road traffic deaths⁵ with car-to-car collisions as the most common crash type followed by side impacts. Different factors influence crash severity, the most important being speed of travel, seat belt use, vehicle mass and the level of crash protection provided in the vehicle⁶. New attention must also be given to improve vehicle crash design for those outside of the vehicle. Pedestrians comprise around 20% of total EU (27) road traffic deaths and around two thirds of these deaths occur in urban areas⁷. Cyclists represent around 7.2% of total EU (27) road traffic deaths but a higher share of total deaths (though often lower injury risks) in countries where cycle use is high⁸.

The European Commission is currently reviewing the Regulation on the General Safety of Motor Vehicles. The life-saving potential of the proposal will depend on which vehicle safety measures are prioritised for fitment, to which vehicle types and by when. ETSC would prioritise technologies that reduce the key risks of speed and alcohol, namely ISA, Advanced Emergency Braking and alcohol interlocks. Seat belt reminders fitment also needs to be extended to all passenger seats.

Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA)

ISA can advise drivers of speed limits using a GPS database combined with cameras that read road signs. These systems can also automatically ensure that drivers keep to speed limits and therefore avoid penalties. The information is communicated to the driver in any of the following three ways: informing the driver of the limit (advisory ISA), warning them when they are driving faster than the limit (warning ISA) or actively aiding the driver to keep to the limit (assisting ISA). Assisting ISA can take the form of increased resistance of the accelerator pedal or it can be accomplished through the same kind of speed limiter which is already common on many vehicles. With assisting ISA, drivers can be given a capability to override the system.

Since 2013 Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) has been included in the new Euro NCAP safety rating with both advisory and voluntary active systems being awarded points.

The standard fitting of Intelligent Speed Assistance in all new vehicles will help to achieve a high level of compliance with speed limits and thereby reduce road deaths substantially⁹.

⁴ European Commission (2003), 3rd Road Safety Action Programme quoted in SafetyNet (2009) Vehicle Safety, retrieved 1 April 2014.

⁵ ETSC (2014) PIN Flash Report 27 Ranking EU progress on Car Occupant Safety.

⁶ DaCoTA (2013) Vehicle Safety

⁷ ETSC (2011) PIN Annual Report Road Safety 2010 Target Outcome: 100,000 fewer deaths since 2001.

⁸ ETSC (2012) Pedalling Towards Safety.

⁹ Carsten, O. and Tate, F. (2005) Intelligent Speed Adaptation: Accident savings and cost benefit analysis.

In November 2013, the European Commission published a study¹⁰ focusing on the safety benefits of speed limiters and ISA. The main policy recommendations included requiring all commercial vehicles to be equipped with (assisting) ISA.

ETSC stresses that the large-scale roll out of Intelligent Speed Assistance should be a priority within the revision of the General Safety Regulation.¹¹

ETSC's recommendations for the review of the General Safety Regulation

- Adopt legislation for fitting all new commercial vehicles with assisting Intelligent Speed Assistance systems in line with the recommendations of the evaluation study conducted on behalf of the European Commission¹². The system should be overridable up to 100km/h for buses and 90km/h for lorries, in line with existing EU legislation on speed limiters.
- Adopt legislation for fitting all new passenger cars with an overridable assisting Intelligent Speed Assistance system.
- Extend the mandatory fitment of advanced seat belt reminders as standard equipment to all seats.
- Introduce uniform standards for alcohol interlocks in Europe, including a standardised method for connecting them to all new passenger vehicles. Legislate for a consistently high level of reliability of alcohol interlock devices. As a first step towards wider use of alcohol interlocks, legislate their use by professional drivers.
- Extend fitment of Advanced Emergency Braking to all new passenger cars and light trucks and vans.

iSAFER

This month sees the launch of ETSC's new iSAFER project. The goal is to contribute to reducing speed-related road deaths and injuries across Europe and includes a special focus on Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA), promoting its use at European and national level. The project receives financial support from the Flemish Government, Fundación MAPFRE and 3M.

etsc.eu/isafer/

For further information

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¹⁰ The study is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/vehicles/speed_limitation_evaluation_en.pdf

¹¹ ETSC (2014) 8th PIN Annual Report Ranking EU Progress on Road Safety.

¹² EC study is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/vehicles/speed_limitation_evaluation_en.pdf