

Road safety priorities for the EU in 2015

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

December 2014

Summary

In 2013, nearly 26,025 people (500 a week, on average) were killed in the European Union as a consequence of road collisions. 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 Latvian Presidency of the European Union in the first half of 2015. These include securing agreements on EU legislation on safer lorry design, Cross Border Enforcement and prioritising work in new areas such as infrastructure safety.

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 for road safety work.

Context

The annual socio-economic cost of road traffic deaths and injuries is 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 1.91 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 it clear to policy-makers the potential for road safety policies to provide a sound investment.

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

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

Key priorities for the Latvian presidency

Mid Term Review of the EU's Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020

In July 2010, the European Commission published a set of 'Road Safety Policy Orientations' (RSPO), a framework with the objective of reducing road deaths by 50% by 2020⁵.

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. The annual progress since 2010 has been 6.2% on average in the EU28. 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 Latvian Presidency can also make its contribution by showing leadership in prioritising road safety topics during their half year tenureship.

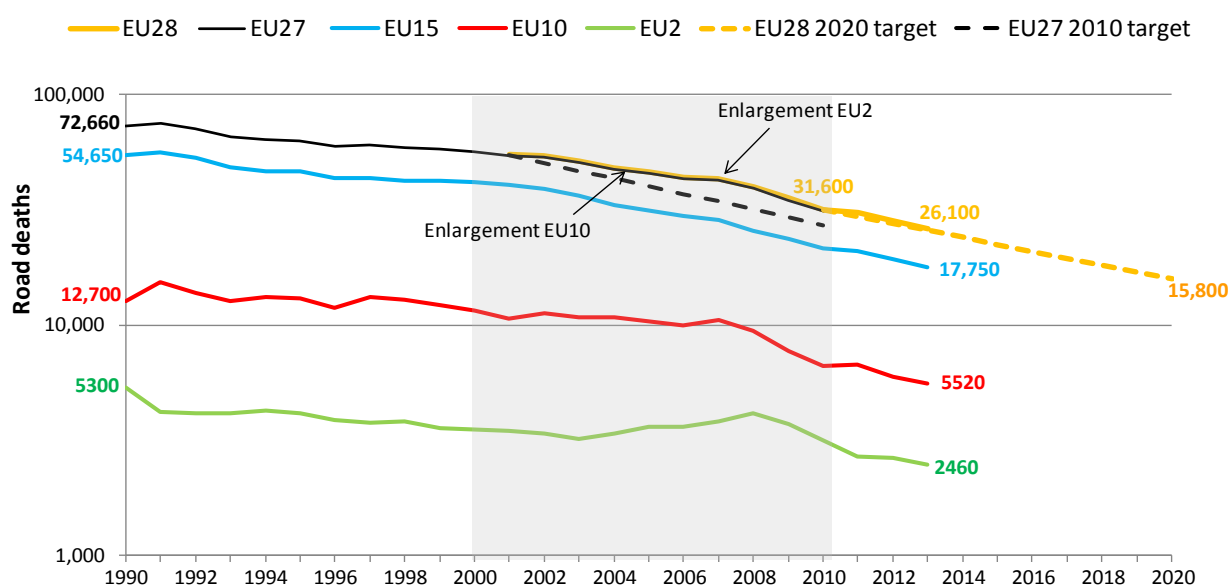


Fig. 1: Reduction in road deaths since 1990 in the EU28 (yellow line), the EU27 (black line), the EU15 (blue line), the EU10 (red line) and the EU2 (Bulgaria and Romania, green line)⁶. The logarithmic scale is used to enable the slopes of the various trend lines to be compared. Source: CARE database 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

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/com_20072010_en.pdf

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

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 and adopt a target and measures to tackle serious injury.

Safer lorry design

In 2013, the European Commission proposed new rules to improve road safety by streamlining lorry cabs, allowing a reduction of the driver's blind spots. This has the potential to save the lives of vulnerable road users (VRUs). A new cab profile could also incorporate energy absorption structures in the event of a collision and could potentially save the lives of and injuries to car occupants as well as VRUs.

ETSC^{7,8} has shown that the largest share of the 4,254 people who lost their lives in collisions involving heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) in 2011 were not the occupants of those vehicles but those outside, particularly car drivers or vulnerable road users. Car occupants amount to half of the people killed in collisions involving an HGV, pedestrians 15%, cyclists 7% and riders of powered two-wheeled vehicles 6%. The occupants of HGVs make up just 12% of the overall figure.

The Latvian Presidency should support the safety potential of this new proposal. ETSC would support a move to mandatory implementation of these changes, i.e. through the EU revision of the General Safety Regulation which is also currently under preparation.

Cross Border Enforcement – Change of Legal Basis

Following the ruling on Case C-43/12⁹ of the European Court of Justice on the 6th of May on the legal basis of the Cross Border Enforcement Directive 2011/82/EU¹⁰, ETSC calls on the Latvian Presidency to finalise the adoption of a new legal basis by the EU Member States ahead of the May 2015 deadline. The Directive aims to facilitate cross border enforcement in the field of road safety. The original Directive was adopted in November 2011 and the transposition date was November 2013. Most of the EU Member States have complied with the deadline and have set up the structures necessary for the implementation of the Directive. ETSC calls upon all EU Member States to support the revised proposal and work swiftly to reach an agreement within the 12 month deadline set by the ECJ. Strong leadership from the side of the Presidency will be needed to steer this through as swiftly as possible, especially given the short deadline.

⁷ ETSC (2013) 7th PIN Report, Back on track to reach the EU Road Safety Target?

⁸ ETSC (2013) Position on Weights and Dimensions.

⁹ ECJ Ruling 06/05/2014

<http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=151775&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=533422>

¹⁰ Directive 2011/82

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:288:0001:0015:EN:PDF>

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 EU. A proposal for revision is expected at the end of 2015. The European Commission is currently looking at the mandatory fitment of in-vehicle safety technologies such as Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA¹¹), Alcohol Interlocks and Seat Belt Reminders. These are high priorities for ETSC as they are mature technologies that are ready for deployment. They are also linked to preventing three high-risk behaviours that cause many deaths: speeding, drink driving and non 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.

The Latvian 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 over¹². 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 substitutive¹³. 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/users/pedestrians/index_en.htm

¹³ 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.

ETSC recognises that the implementation of this Directive could save many lives. But it also supports the European Commission's recognition that much more benefit could be achieved by extending the principles of this Directive to other parts of the road network. The application of the infrastructure safety Directive to the TEN-T roads has been calculated to save 600 lives and prevent 7000 serious injuries: if applied to all motorways and main roads, this rises to 1300 lives¹⁴. 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 Refit¹⁵ 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 Latvian Presidency should support and accelerate these important developments in infrastructure safety.

Serious Injury Target and Strategy

In addition to the 26,025 people killed in road collisions in the European Union, about 199,000 people are recorded as seriously injured in police reports each year. The 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 2020¹⁶.

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

¹⁴ Rosebud Project (2005)

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

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/refit/index_en.htm

¹⁶ ETSC (2014), 8th Road Safety Performance Index Report.

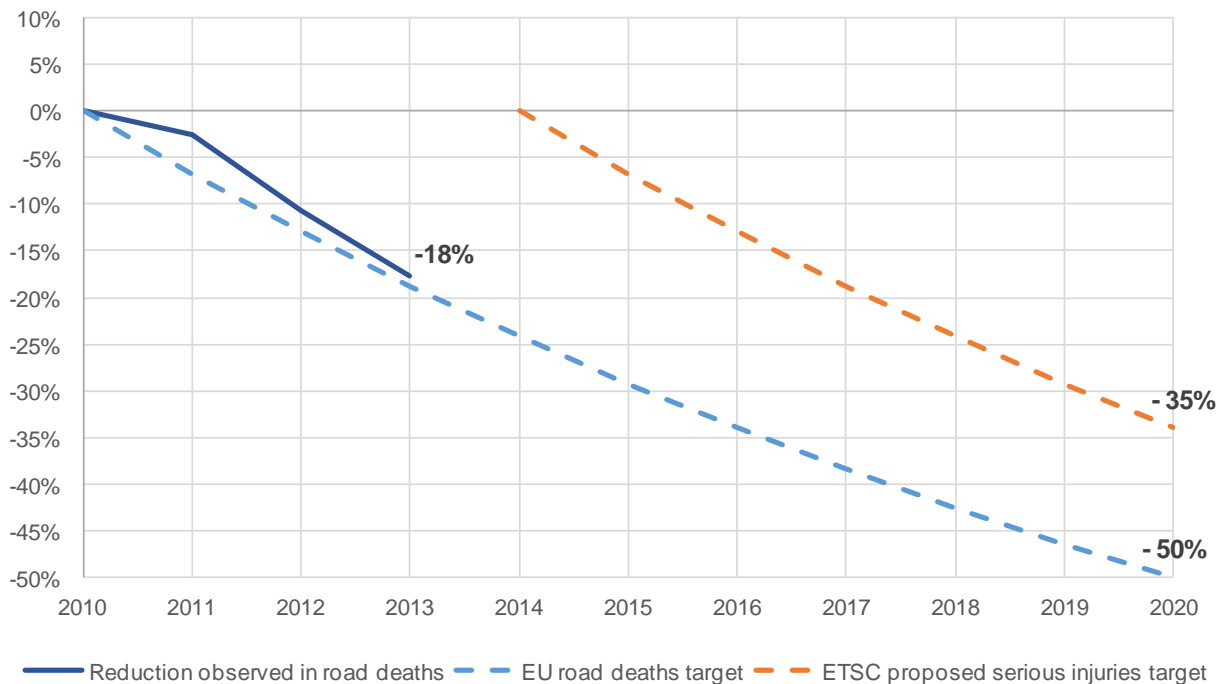


Fig. 2: Reduction in the number of road deaths (dark blue line) plotted against the EU target for 2020 (light blue dotted line), with ETSC's recommended target for reduction in the number seriously injured (orange dotted line).

Further Reading

ETSC (2014) 8th Road Safety Performance Index Report

<http://etsc.eu/8th-annual-road-safety-performance-index-pin-report/>

ETSC (2014), Frequently Asked Questions, EU Cross Border Enforcement Directive

<http://etsc.eu/faq-eu-cross-border-enforcement-directive/>

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