



European Transport Safety Council

Road Safety Priorities for the EU 2020-2030

Briefing for the new European Parliament

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Summary

Europe is in need of strong leadership and action on road safety.

Since 2010, the average annual progress in reducing the number of road deaths in the EU has been 2.8%, equivalent to a 21% reduction between 2010 and 2018 (Fig.1). Most of that progress was made in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

A 6.7% year-to-year reduction was needed over the 2010-2020 period to reach the 2020 target through consistent annual progress. Since 2013, the EU as a whole has been struggling to reach a breakthrough. The number of road deaths in the EU declined by only 4% since 2013. For the EU to reach the 2020 target, road deaths now need to be reduced by around 20.6% annually in 2019 and 2020 – an unprecedented and highly unlikely possibility.

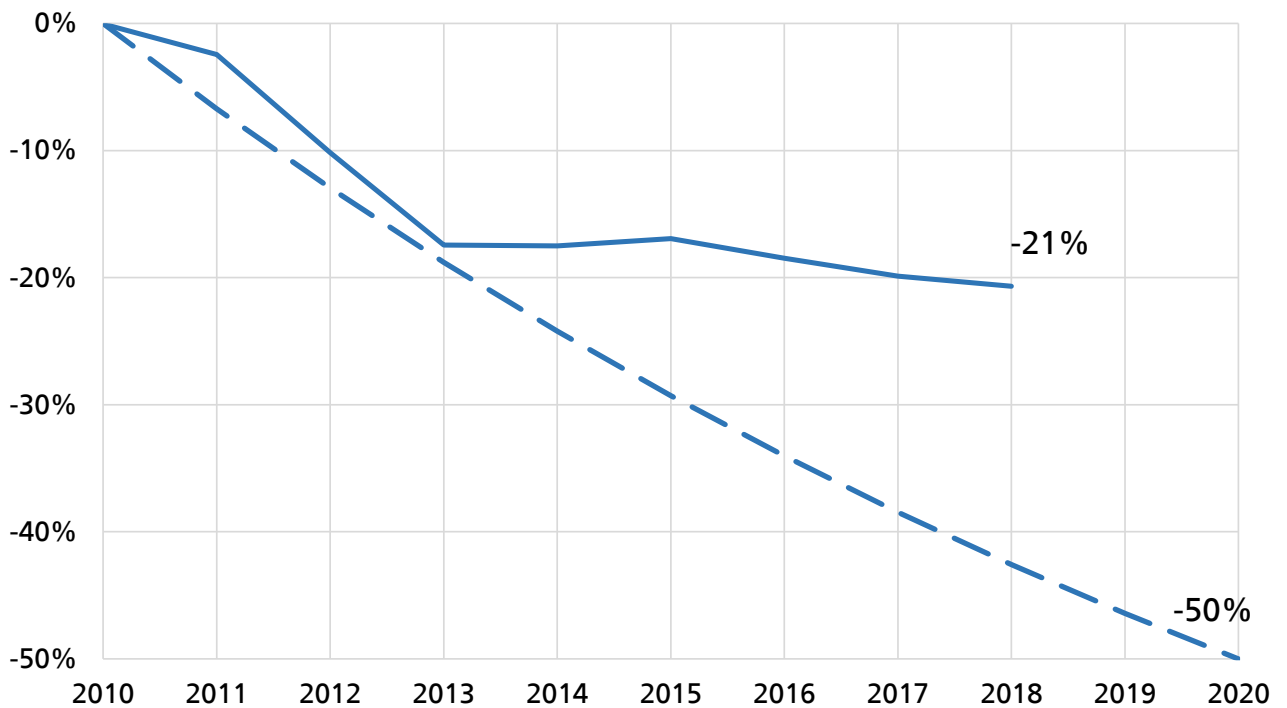


Figure 1. Reduction in the number of road deaths since 2010 (blue line) plotted against the EU target for 2020 (blue dotted line).

The EU28 reduced the number of road deaths by 21% between 2010 and 2018 (Fig.1). The

EU15¹ reduced the number of road deaths by 19% in the same period, the EU10² by 26% and the EU3³ by 22%.

The weekly number of road deaths in the EU is equivalent to two typical passenger airliners crashing and killing everyone on board. In addition, around 130,000 people were seriously injured on European roads in 2014 according to European Commission estimates based on the MAIS3+ standard definition of a serious injury.

In June 2019, the Commission published a new Strategic Action Plan on Road Safety that includes a new long-term target to halve road deaths by 2030 as well as, for the first time, a target to reduce serious injuries by the same amount.⁴

The EU must implement this new policy framework so that it ensures both the highest practicable level of safety and a fair distribution of safety across the European Union. Building political commitment and leadership at the highest level are prerequisites for preventing road traffic deaths and injuries.

The decisions of the European Parliament matter. New legislative proposals on improving both infrastructure and vehicle safety are currently being finalised.⁵ Their further implementation and the development of new legislation in other areas will be in the hands of newly elected MEPs over the period 2019-2024.

¹The EU15 were the first fifteen countries to join the EU: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

²The EU10 were the group of countries that joined the enlarged EU in 2004: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

³ The EU3 includes the latest three countries to join the EU: Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 and Croatia in 2013.

⁴ European Commission (2019) EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030- Next Steps towards "Vision Zero". <https://bit.ly/2XXX8Xh>

⁵ ETSC (2018) Briefing on the EU Mobility Package III <https://etsc.eu/briefing-eu-mobility-package-iii-including-new-vehicle-safety-standards/>

Key Priorities for the 2019-2024 European Parliamentary Term

Improving the safety of cyclists, pedestrians and powered two wheelers (PTWs)

The share of unprotected road users in road deaths is increasing as car occupants have been the main beneficiaries of improved vehicle safety in recent years.

Cyclists and pedestrians are generally unprotected and are vulnerable in traffic. As active travel is being encouraged for health, environmental, congestion and other reasons, the safety of walking and cycling in particular must be addressed urgently.

Pedestrians killed represented 21% of all road deaths in 2014, the figure for cyclists stood at 8%. Powered two wheelers (PTWs) represent 17% of the total number of road deaths while accounting for only 2% of the total kilometres driven. There are big disparities between EU Member States.

Alongside bicycles and PTWs there are new modes of transports emerging. In the last few years the use of pedelecs in Europe has been increasing and is expected to continue growing especially for use on longer journeys and by older riders. The road safety consequences of the potentially higher average speed that pedelecs can achieve are not clear. There are more powerful Speed Pedelecs (S-Pedelecs) and power-on-demand eBikes (those whose motors can provide assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedalling or not) as well as quadricycles, unicycles, cargo bikes used for carrying children and scooters using public roads.

New MEPs should support:

- Earmarking dedicated funds for cycling, walking and powered two wheeler infrastructure under the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) to support increasing the safety of VRUs.
- Creating an EU fund to support priority measures such as for cities to introduce 30 km/h zones (particularly in residential areas and where there are a high number of VRUs) and to invest in high risk roads that carry a large volume of traffic.

- Encouraging EU Member States to adopt maximum 30km/h speed limits in residential areas and areas where there are large numbers of cyclists and pedestrians, or where there could be potential to increase cycling and walking by investing in infrastructure.
- Maintaining the current definition of pedelecs – with a designed speed of 25km/h and a pedal-assisted maximum continuous output of 250W which is cut when the vehicle reaches its designed speed.
- Considering the benefit of specific training and testing for S-Pedelec use.
- Introducing a regular mandatory roadworthiness test for PTWs.
- Making theoretical and practical training as well as a practical test mandatory to obtain an AM driving licence and establish minimum standards for theoretical and practical training for the AM license.

Automated and connected mobility

Automated driving has the potential to significantly improve road safety. However, recent collisions involving vehicles with automated technology on board demonstrate that automated driving may also pose new risks to road safety, and that the technology is not yet mature. The European Union must aim for the highest standard of safety for automated vehicles, that they drive at least as well as the safest drivers on today's roads. There is no independent scientific evidence that shows automated cars are at that level today.

At present there is an urgent need for a new, harmonised regulatory framework for automated driving at EU level. Setting this up would be an essential precursor to the deployment of automated driving. The EU type approval regime should be expanded to ensure that automated vehicles comply with all the specific obligations and safety considerations of traffic law in different member states. The Commission indicates that it will start work on a new approach for certifying the safety of automated vehicles in its new Strategy on Automation⁶. The General Safety Regulation⁷ for motor vehicles proposal already

⁶ European Commission (2018) On the road to automated mobility: An EU strategy for mobility of the future <https://bit.ly/2Lysy0s>

⁷ European Commission (2018) Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on type-approval requirements for motor vehicles and their trailers, and systems, components and separate technical units intended for such vehicles, as regards their general safety and the protection of vehicle occupants and vulnerable road users, amending Regulation (EU) 2018/... and repealing Regulations (EC) No 78/2009, (EC) No 79/2009 and (EC) No 661/2009, <https://bit.ly/2JbVNZL>

includes a provision which would allow the Commission to set out the specific test procedures and technical requirements for the type approval of automated vehicles.

These detailed rules should ensure that all new safety functions of automated vehicles are covered, to the extent that an automated vehicle will pass a comprehensive test equivalent to a 'driving test' and be shown to be equivalent to a level at least as high as the best human drivers on the road.

New MEPs should support:

- Development of a coherent and comprehensive EU regulatory framework for the safe deployment of automated vehicles.
- Expand the EU type approval regime to ensure that automated vehicles comply with all specific obligations and safety considerations of traffic laws in different EU Member States.
- Expand type approval standards to cover all the new functions of automated vehicles, to the extent that an automated vehicle will pass a comprehensive equivalent to a 'driving test' and be shown to be equivalent to a level at least as high as the best human drivers on the road.

Reducing serious injuries on our roads

The EU has adopted a new target to halve serious injuries by 2030. This focus is welcome, as since 2010 the number of people seriously injured, based on national definitions of serious injury, was reduced by just 0.5%, compared to a 19% decrease in the number of deaths in the same group of countries. In 2014, around 135,000 people were seriously injured in the EU based on the common EU definition MAIS3+ according to estimates by the European Commission.

Priority measures for reducing serious injuries include action in urban areas as here they occur frequently. This could include adopting EU guidelines for promoting best practice in traffic calming measures.

One other priority area for action is post-collision care. All European Member States should offer equally high standards of rescue, hospital care and long-term rehabilitation following a road collision. Measures include involving health professionals in developing good practices and guidelines on essential trauma care and emergency services.

New MEPs should support:

- Set EU guidelines for promoting best practice in traffic calming measures, based upon physical measures such as roundabouts, road narrowing, chicanes, road humps and techniques of space-sharing, to support area-wide urban safety management, for example when 30 km/h zones are introduced.
- Adoption of a new joint EU strategy to tackle serious injuries involving all directorate generals in particular DG Health and Food Safety.
- Encourage EU Member States to develop effective emergency notification and collaboration between dispatch centres, fast transport of qualified medical and fire/rescue staff, liaison between services on scene, treatment and stabilisation of the casualty, and prompt rescue and removal to an appropriate health care facility.

Enforcement

Increased and well-publicised enforcement targeting the main risks of speeding, drinking and drug driving, distraction and non-use of seat belts on the road forms a fundamental part of achieving the new EU 2030 targets.

At EU level the Cross-Border Enforcement Directive 2015/413 is up for revision in 2019/2020. It covers the main offences causing death and serious injury in the EU: speeding, drink/drug driving, non-use of seat belts and mobile phone use at the wheel.⁸

ETSC has identified a number of barriers which need to be addressed in the upcoming revision. These include; the need to update camera specifications, overcoming the lack of human resources in case of manual follow up. Finally there is a need to push following up these offences higher up the political agenda.⁹

As well as addressing the cross-border aspects of enforcement the revision should also prioritise action to improve and align the enforcement of the main offences at a national level. A common approach is needed to allow for equal treatment of connected and automated vehicles across Europe.¹⁰ Joint enforcement actions on the key priorities, such as the Europe-wide day without a road death (Project EDWARD) and “Speed Marathon,” should also be encouraged as this helps foster political will and helps exchange best practice.

Specific recommendations for the priority areas have also been developed by ETSC.¹¹

⁸ Directive 413/2015 facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offences, <https://goo.gl/WnFrtQ>

⁹ ETSC PIN Flash on Enforcement Can Contribute to Safer Roads (2016) P. 42, <https://goo.gl/GVwmf5>

¹⁰ ETSC (2015), Enforcement in the EU – Vision 2020, <http://goo.gl/5NFGNW>

¹¹ ETSC PIN Flash on Enforcement Can Contribute to Safer Roads (2016) P. 42, <https://goo.gl/GVwmf5>

New MEPs should support:

- Creating an EU fund to enable enforcement of speeding and drink driving using recognised best practices.¹²
- Revising the Directive 2015/413 to strengthen the enforcement chain, including mandatory notification by the State of Offence in accordance with their national legislation.
- Adapting existing EU mutual assistance procedures to deal with cross border road traffic offences.¹³
- Recasting the Framework Decision 2005/214 to include civil/administrative offences as this would provide an important final part in the enforcement chain.
- Investigating avenues for EU revision of existing legislation to cover the mutual recognition of non-financial penalties such as driving disqualifications and demerit point systems.
- Encouraging Member States to set up and implement a demerit point system which includes a set of fixed penalties for at least the eight major road safety related offences included in the CBE Directive 2015/413.

Drug driving

The range of psychoactive substances available for illicit use is widening in the EU and this is further proven by the increased prevalence of illicit drugs in drivers killed in traffic collisions. The DRUID study estimated that illicit and medicinal psychoactive drugs were found in 15.2% and 15.6% respectively of road deaths.

New MEPs should consider:

- Introducing an EU zero tolerance system for illicit psychoactive drugs using the lowest limit of quantification that takes account of passive or accidental exposure.
- Adopting common standards for roadside drug driving enforcement and ensure that police forces are properly trained in when and how to perform drug screening, field impairment tests and use of roadside screening devices.

¹² Several EU Member States have already successfully used EU funds to introduce safety camera networks.

¹³ Grimaldi (2016) Evaluation Study of the CBE Directive 2011/82, <https://goo.gl/2xSXH2>

- Moving to adopting a common standard for roadside drug driving enforcement, this could be in the form of a new EC recommendation.

Education and training: revision of the European Driving License Directive

Part of the solution for reducing deaths and serious injury of novice drivers and young road users is training and education. The European Driving Licence Directive 2006/126 is due for revision in the near future. The EU should aim to improve the quality of licensing and training systems, with a focus on young novice drivers.

Within the European Driving Licence Directive, ETSC would prioritise hazard perception, demonstration of defensive or social driving (via self-assessment questionnaires or using situational awareness questioning during the test) and updating for new in-vehicle technologies and automated vehicles. Post-licence training for professional drivers can also be an important tool in improving work related road safety.

New MEPs should support

Within the context of a revision of EU Directive 2006/126 on driving licences:

- A graduated licensing system that encourages young people to gain more experience while limiting certain high-risk activities such as driving at night and with passengers.¹⁴
- Introduce hazard perception training, expand formal training to cover driving and riding style as well as skills and encourage more accompanied driving to help gain experience.
- Develop minimum standards for driver training and traffic safety education with gradual alignment in the form, content and outcomes of driving courses across the EU.
- Lower the BAC limit for all young drivers including novice drivers.

¹⁴ ibid

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries in transport in Europe.