



European Transport Safety Council

# **BRIEFING** | Road Safety Priorities for the EU in 2019

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

July 2019

# Contents

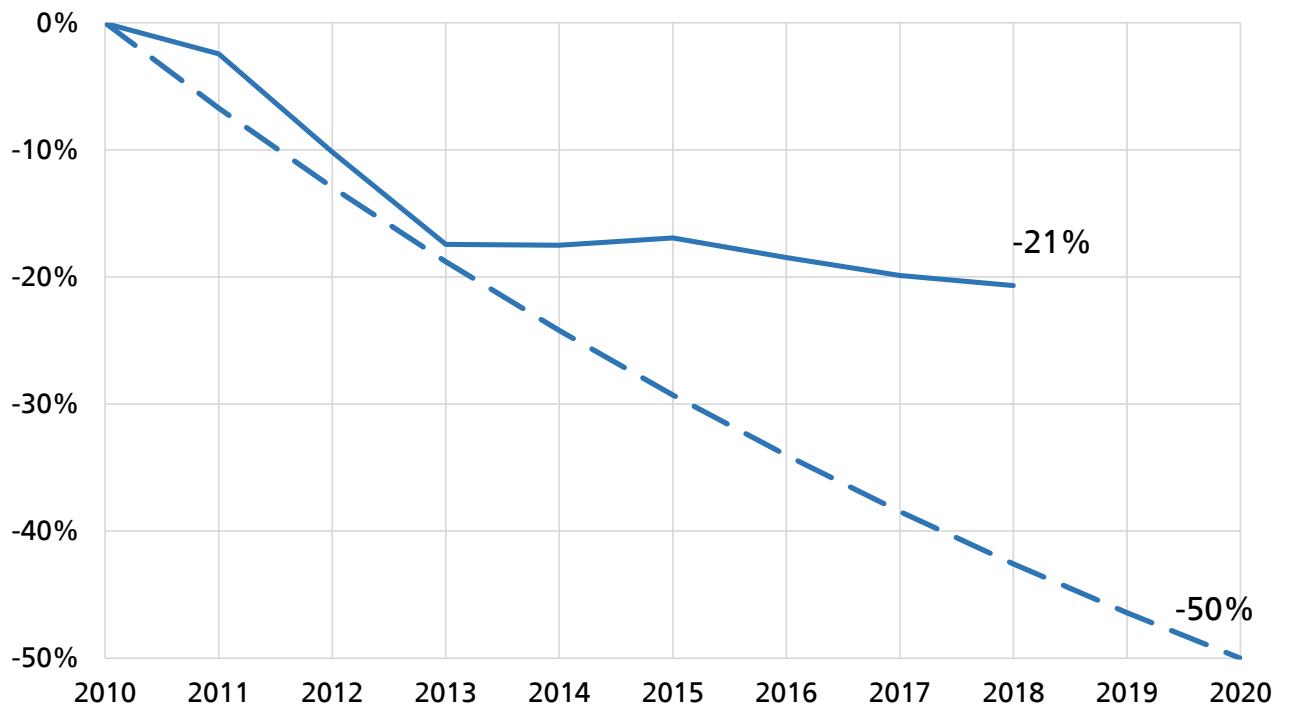
Contents .....	2
Introduction .....	3
Key Priorities for the Finnish Presidency .....	6
Agenda setting on road safety for the new Commission and European Parliament .....	6
Professional drivers and training .....	7
Infrastructure safety .....	8
Vehicle safety.....	9
EU budget .....	11

# Introduction

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 EU's 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% overall 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 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 this briefing, ETSC outlines its recommendations on the key EU road safety policy dossiers to be steered by the Finnish Presidency of the European Union in the second part of 2019.

The EU published four road safety measures last year as part of its so-called third mobility package. They included an overall outline of the road safety strategy for the decade to 2030; new vehicle safety standards; updated rules on road infrastructure safety management and a strategy for automated driving.

ETSC hopes that the long-awaited impetus of the third mobility package will contribute significantly to resuming road safety improvement soon and driving progress in the next decade.

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.

Both deaths and serious injuries carry a huge cost to society. In monetary terms alone, the yearly cost of road crashes in the EU has been estimated in a new study to be around EUR 280 billion, equivalent to about 2% of GDP.<sup>1</sup>

Given the financial difficulties that many EU countries face, 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. It should be clear to policy-makers that road safety policies are a sound investment.

The political will to improve on recent poor progress is important. The lack of it at EU member state level has contributed to a decline in levels of police enforcement, a failure to invest in safer infrastructure and limited action on tackling speed and drink driving in a number of countries.

Finland takes the helm of the EU presidency as new MEPs, and a new European Commission President and European Council President take their seats. There is a chance to put road safety high on the political agenda.

ETSC asks the presidency to progress on finalising important outstanding road safety files.

They should make a renewed attempt to progress the Driving and Resting Hours Regulation.

---

<sup>1</sup> European Commission (2019), Handbook on the External Costs of Transport ([https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/sustainable/studies/sustainable\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/sustainable/studies/sustainable_en))

The EU presidency should also work to finalise the budget instruments, maintaining the improvements for road safety. They should also work to finalise the infrastructure safety management directive and General Safety Regulation and start on the implementing and delegated acts.

The Finnish presidency should acknowledge the strong return on investment of road safety improvements and prioritise life-saving measures at EU and national level. It should use the opportunity of the presidency to pursue the following aims:

- 1. Show EU leadership** – this will spur on action at national level to adopt short-term measures. In particular, leadership is needed in adopting the new EU legislations on infrastructure safety and the EU budget.
- 2. Focus national budgetary spending** on priorities that can have an impact quickly, such as enforcement and high-risk site management.
- 3. Encourage EU Member States** to stay tough on enforcement both in terms of budgets and showing political leadership.

# Key Priorities for the Finnish Presidency

## Agenda setting on road safety for the new Commission and European Parliament

In the next few months, newly-elected MEPs will take up their posts at the European Parliament and new European Commissioners will be appointed, together with the Presidents of the three main EU institutions.

They will have a long to-do list: agreeing on the next EU budget, tackling climate change, boosting growth and negotiating Brexit. They will also take on the responsibility for improving transport safety.

On 19 June the European Commission adopted an 'EU Road Safety Framework 2021-2030' renewing targets to reduce deaths and setting a new target to reduce serious injuries as well as applying the "safe system" approach.<sup>2</sup> The documents proposes eight new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) against which EU Member State performance will be analysed, as well as the intention, in a second phase, to set outcome targets based on the indicators.

Following on from the outline presented last year, the strategy sets up a new governance framework and action within four themes including: infrastructure safety, vehicle safety, safe road use (including speed, alcohol and drugs, distraction and the use of protective equipment), emergency response as well as the two cross-cutting issues of enforcement and training.<sup>3</sup>

Action to start implementing the priorities set out in the EU's new road safety strategy is needed now. ETSC also calls upon the next Commission and MEPs, to tackle the main killers which are still speeding, drink and drug driving, distraction and the failure to wear a seatbelt. The lives of thousands of EU citizens are at stake. The Finnish EU presidency has the chance to set the tone for the decade to come.

---

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

<sup>3</sup> ibid

## Professional drivers and training

It is likely that up to 40% of all road deaths in the EU are work-related, although the exact number is unknown.<sup>4</sup> Gaining a full and detailed picture of work-related road collisions in the EU is very challenging due to differing definitions, the variety of data sources, a lack of linkages between data sources and underreporting.

The European Commission's first Mobility Package, *Europe on the Move*, published in May 2017, provided an opportunity to improve work-related road safety, in the form of a revision of the driving and resting times Regulation 2006/561 and Regulation 2014/165. While ETSC acknowledges the rationale behind the proposals, it is crucial that any changes do not compromise the safety of those working in the professional transport sector and, by extension, other people using the road network. ETSC believes that any changes must be clearly communicated to drivers and receive proper enforcement when introduced.

Fatigue is an issue of major concern in the professional transport sector and research shows it is a significant factor in approximately 20% of commercial road transport collisions. While ETSC welcomes the fact that the proposed changes do not seek to increase the amount of driving time or decrease the amount of rest time, there are concerns that the extension of the reference period for the calculation of driving and rest times may lead to drivers concentrating their driving and rest times, leading to higher levels of fatigue at certain points in the month.

These issues also affect bus and coach drivers. Despite being covered by the same regulations, they have a much greater responsibility than HGV drivers as they are carrying passengers. Therefore it is crucial that their driving is not compromised in any way.

ETSC welcomes the proposed changes for the use of tachographs and introduction of smart tachographs. Obtaining more detailed and accurate information should help to increase enforcement of and compliance with the social and cabotage rules.

However, ETSC notes that the proposed changes do not apply to Light Goods Vehicles (under 3.5 tonnes). The number of LGVs has grown quickly in recent years due to an increase in goods transport, fuelled partly by the boom in internet shopping and restrictions on HGVs in

---

<sup>4</sup> If commuting and third party deaths are included, ETSC (2017), PIN Flash 33, Tapping the Potential for reducing work-related road deaths and serious injuries.  
<https://goo.gl/A2KMQ7>.

city centres. However, they remain outside many of the restrictions and requirements that HGVs and their drivers must comply with, such as rest times, checks, training and licensing.

ETSC would like to see more regulation of LGV transport and their drivers in the future, particularly targeting fatigue, driving and resting times and the extension of the Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) to cover LGVs.

On 3 December 2018, EU transport ministers agreed their general approach on the file. ETSC welcomed the decision to rule out the taking of weekly rest in the cab, in line with the ECJ's ruling. However, concerns remain about the decision to extend the reference period for the calculation of driving and rest hours to four weeks.

On 4 April 2019, the European Parliament agreed a deal on the Mobility Package, deciding that the driving and rest time rules should stay as they currently are and the reference period should remain at four weeks. This differs from the European Council's position which states that there will be a two week reference period for domestic transport and a four week period for international transport.

ETSC calls upon the Finnish Presidency to recognise the importance this file has for road safety when it is finalising the negotiations in 2019.

### **Further reading:**

ETSC (2018) Position Paper: Proposed changes to the driving and resting time rules and tachographs

<https://etsc.eu/position-paper-proposed-changes-to-the-driving-and-resting-time-rules-and-tachographs/>

## **Infrastructure safety**

ETSC welcomed the deal struck earlier this year on the revision of the Infrastructure Safety Directive 2008/96.<sup>5</sup> The main changes agreed include: extending the scope beyond the trans-European transport network roads (TEN-T) to primary roads, more transparency, network-

---

<sup>5</sup> Text of Final Triologue Deal 21/02/2019

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/TRAN/DV/2019/03-04/20190228\\_Provisionalagreement\\_Roadinfrastructuresafetymanagement\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/TRAN/DV/2019/03-04/20190228_Provisionalagreement_Roadinfrastructuresafetymanagement_EN.pdf)



wide risk assessment and strengthening the requirements to protect vulnerable road users. Common specifications will also be drawn up for road markings and road signs.

The revised directive will cover all motorways, all “primary roads” and all non-urban roads that receive EU funding. ETSC, and other organisations, had been calling for all main urban and rural roads to be covered. Road authorities will be able to choose some low-risk roads, or roads with little traffic, to opt-out of the legislation.

According to the initial analysis, the proposed measures would save over 3,200 lives and avoid more than 20,700 serious injuries over the decade 2020-2030.<sup>6</sup>

The text agreed by the European Parliament is due to be published and enter into force in the autumn 2019. ETSC calls upon the EU Presidency of Finland to follow through on the finalisation of this directive.

### **Further reading:**

ETSC (2018) Position Paper: The Revision of the Road Infrastructure Safety Management Directive 2008/96 and Tunnel Safety Directive 2004/54  
<https://etsc.eu/position-paper-the-revision-of-the-road-infrastructure-safety-management-directive-2008-96-and-tunnel-safety-directive-2004-54/>

## **Vehicle safety**

The EU has the exclusive competence to set minimum safety standards for all new vehicles sold on the EU market. These standards were last updated in 2009. The European Commission published its proposal for a revision of the “General Safety Regulation” as part of the third mobility package published on 17 May 2018. ETSC welcomed the European Commission’s proposal to require the mandatory installation of new driver assistance technologies, as well as revise minimum crash testing standards and upgrade measures to protect pedestrians and cyclists. This regulation represents the most direct and effective measure the EU has to further reduce road deaths and injuries.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> 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

According to analysis carried out for the European Commission by TRL, the UK transport research laboratory, the proposed vehicle safety measures could prevent 25,000 deaths across all vehicle categories between 2022 and 2037.<sup>8</sup>

The Competitiveness Council adopted its General Approach on 29 November 2018 with a text supporting the package of new minimum safety standards. In April 2019 the European Parliament gave the green light to the revision of the General Safety Regulation, following a provisional agreement reached by the EU institutions in March.<sup>9</sup> New cars, vans, lorries and buses sold in Europe will be fitted as standard with a range of new vehicle safety features such as Automated Emergency Braking which can detect pedestrians and cyclists, as well as overridable Intelligent Speed Assistance. New lorries will be required to have improved levels of “direct vision” to give drivers a greater chance of seeing vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists around the vehicle.

Although negotiations have now concluded, discussions on the specifications for each technology and safety measure will continue throughout 2019 and beyond. ETSC strongly recommends that the Finnish presidency continues to promote and support this file given its critical and long-lasting importance for road safety in Europe.

### **Further reading:**

Agreed

[texthttps://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance\\_pleniere/textes\\_adoptes/provisoire/2019/04-16/0391/P8\\_TA-PROV\(2019\)0391\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2019/04-16/0391/P8_TA-PROV(2019)0391_EN.pdf)

[ETSC position paper](#)

<https://etsc.eu/european-parliament-backs-new-vehicle-safety-standards/>

---

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://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0286>

<sup>8</sup> See page 13 of TRL on behalf of the European Commission (2018), Cost-effectiveness analysis of policy options for the mandatory implementation of different sets of vehicle safety measures - Review of the General Safety and Pedestrian Safety Regulations : technical annex to GSR2 report SI2.733025 : final report <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ed4aff17-49c5-11e8-be1d-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>9</sup> Agreed text,

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance\\_pleniere/textes\\_adoptes/provisoire/2019/04-16/0391/P8\\_TA-PROV\(2019\)0391\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/seance_pleniere/textes_adoptes/provisoire/2019/04-16/0391/P8_TA-PROV(2019)0391_EN.pdf)

## EU budget

Both deaths and serious injuries carry a huge cost to society. As mentioned earlier, in monetary terms alone, the yearly cost of road crashes in the EU has been estimated in a new study to be around EUR 280 billion, equivalent to about 2% of GDP.<sup>10</sup> The EU Strategic Action Plan on Road Safety proposes a new package of funding measures which will be further backed up by the 2021-2027 budget which is currently in the last phase of finalisation.<sup>11</sup>

ETSC welcomed the EC proposal for the 'common provisions' regulation of the European Social Fund (ESF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the cohesion funds. Especially, the new possibility for financial support to "assess road safety risk in line with existing national road safety strategies, together with a mapping of the affected roads and sections and proving with a prioritisation of the corresponding investments".<sup>12</sup> ETSC recommends that regional funds for roads be conditional on improving infrastructure safety. ETSC also welcomed that "safe and secure mobility" is included in the new CEF regulation objectives under article 3 and "actions implementing safe and secure infrastructure and mobility including road safety" are included under the eligible actions under article 9.<sup>13</sup>

ETSC calls on the Finnish Presidency to maintain the prioritisation of safety in the final negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament.

### Further reading:

ETSC (2018) Position Paper: EU Funds for Road Safety in the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

<https://etsc.eu/position-paper-eu-funds-for-road-safety-in-the-multiannual-financial-framework-2021-2027/>

---

<sup>10</sup> European Commission (2019), Handbook on the External Costs of Transport ([https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/sustainable/studies/sustainable\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/sustainable/studies/sustainable_en))

<sup>11</sup> European Commission (2019) EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 Next Steps Towards Vision Zero <https://bit.ly/2XXX8Xh>

<sup>12</sup> European Commission (2018), ANNEXES to the Proposal for a REGULATION laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund[...]. <https://goo.gl/bi22JA>

<sup>13</sup> European Commission (2018), Proposal for a Regulation [...] establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014 <https://goo.gl/X57oXW>

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

**Ellen Townsend, Policy Director**  
**ellen.townsend@etsc.eu**  
**+32 2 230 41 06**

European Transport Safety Council  
20 Avenue des Celtes  
B-1040 Brussels  
[www.etsc.eu](http://www.etsc.eu)  
Follow us on twitter: [@etsc\\_eu](https://twitter.com/etsc_eu)

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.