



European Transport Safety Council

BRIEFING | Road Safety Priorities for the EU in 2019

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

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Summary

In 2010, the European Union renewed its commitment to improve road safety by setting a target of reducing road deaths by 50% by 2020, compared to 2010 levels. This target followed an earlier target set in 2001 to halve road deaths by 2010. A new target to halve road deaths by 2030 compared to 2020 levels was announced by the European Commission on 17 May 2018, alongside a target to reduce serious injuries for the first time by 50% between 2020 and 2030.

Road deaths in the EU fell by just 2% in 2017 compared to 2016: 25,300 people lost their lives on the EU roads in 2017, a figure that has hardly changed in four years. The EU28 reduced the number of road deaths by 20% between 2010 and 2017 (Fig.1).¹

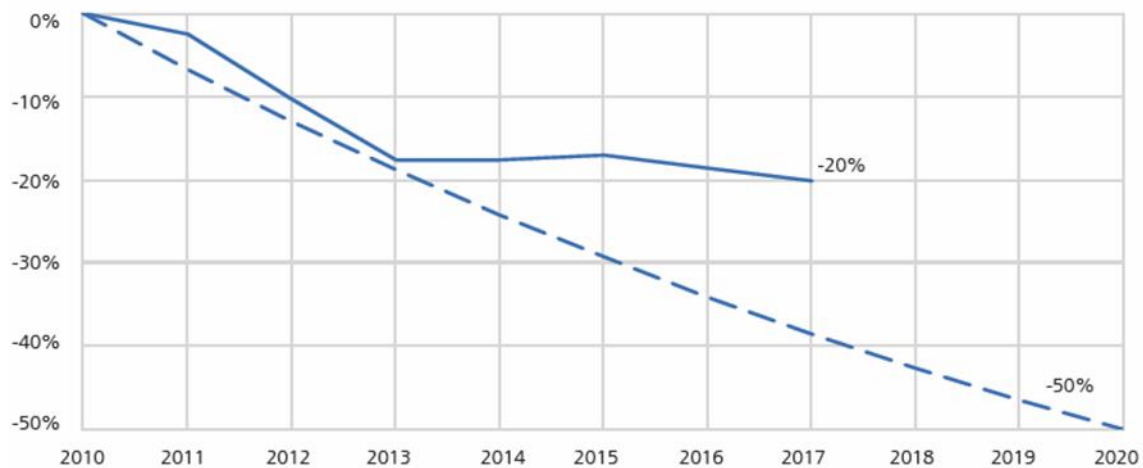


Fig.1: Reduction in the number of road deaths since 2010 for the EU28 taken together (blue line) plotted against the EU target for 2020 (blue dotted line).

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 Romanian Presidency of the European Union in the first part of 2019.

The EU published four road safety measures on 17 May 2018 as part of its so-called third mobility package. They included an overall outline of the road safety strategy for the decade

¹ ETSC (2018) 12th PIN Annual Report, Ranking Progress in Road Safety.

to 2030; new vehicle safety standards; updated rules on road infrastructure safety management and a strategy for automated driving.

ETSC still hopes that the long-awaited impetus of the third mobility package could 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.

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 until 2020 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.

We urge the Romanian Presidency to finalise conclusions on the infrastructure safety management directive and the driving and resting hours regulation as well as the budget instruments before European parliamentary elections.

Due to the end of the current mandate of the European Parliament and European Commission, the Presidency will be under even greater pressure to deliver results within a very tight timeframe. Moreover, it will be dealing with finalising a backlog of proposals issued by the European Commission very late into this term. Road safety benefits must be prioritised when deciding how to juggle this busy workload.

The Romanian 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 themselves. 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 of infrastructure.
3. **Encourage EU Member States to stay tough on enforcement** both in terms of budgets and showing political leadership.

Further reading:

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

Key Priorities for the Romanian Presidency

Road safety initiatives for 2019

Infrastructure safety

ETSC welcomed the EC proposal for a revision of the Infrastructure Safety Directive 2008/96, published as part of the third mobility package on 17 May 2018.² The original proposal mandated extending the scope beyond the trans-European transport network roads (TEN-T) to all primary roads, more transparency, network-wide risk assessment and strengthening the requirements to protect vulnerable road users. The proposal also included general performance standards for road markings and road signs.

The Transport Council adopted its general approach on 3 December, favouring a weaker text than the Commission proposal, notably in the area of the scope.³ ETSC and other organisations have been calling for main urban and main rural roads to be covered by the directive, as many more people die in collisions on these types of roads than on motorways.

ETSC supports the European Commission's proposal to extend the mandatory application of the directive's procedures to motorways and all "primary roads". The findings of the 2014 TML study state that the directive would have the highest potential if extended to the non-TEN-T network where the majority of severe and fatal collisions occur. According to the European Commission, only 8% of deaths occur on the motorway, 37% in urban areas and

² European Commission (2018) Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management <https://goo.gl/EkRnsh>

³ETSC (2018) Transport Ministers Aiming to Weaken New Infrastructure Safety Rules
<https://bit.ly/2QGDoaj>

55% on rural non-motorways.

But it is feared that the current Council agreement will allow each individual Member State to choose which of its primary roads are subject to the rules (beyond the TEN-T and the motorway network as well as EU funded roads outside of urban areas). This could leave EU Member States the possibility to propose the bare minimum, or only roads that already meet high safety standards.

Transport ministers have already endorsed the extension of the principles of infrastructure safety management beyond the TEN-T.⁴ More than half of EU countries already require the application of the rules on some other parts of their national road networks.⁵ Moreover, the ex-post evaluation has shown that those Member States that have been applying RISM procedures to their national roads for some time achieve much better road safety performance than Member States that do not do so.⁶

ETSC supports the introduction of network-wide risk assessment and common EU performance requirements for road markings and road signs. The European Commission had proposed to develop general performance standards for road signs and road markings across Europe. ETSC urged for these to take the form of legally-binding minimum performance standards. But the Council agreement effectively dismissed this proposal by calling for the Commission to produce a report on the issue instead. A high standard and consistency of road signs and road markings across Europe could be an important issue for higher levels of automation, when cars increasingly take away control from the driver under certain circumstances. ETSC hopes that minimum performance standards could come as a proposal from the European Parliament and be considered in the trilogue sessions with the Romanian Presidency.

ETSC supports the renewed emphasis on VRU safety and calls for common EU curricula for auditors and inspectors, including specific training on the needs of VRUs: pedestrians, cyclists, PTWs, the elderly and road users with reduced mobility. Further EU-level guidance is also needed on safe infrastructure covering, for example, harmonised management of high-risk sites and should be foreseen by the directive if proposed by the Parliament.

⁴ Valletta Declaration on Improving Road Safety. (2017) <https://goo.gl/JsX7gS>

⁵ ETSC (2015) Ranking EU Progress on Improving Motorway Safety (PIN Flash 28). <https://goo.gl/ioJmFJ>

⁶ Ex-Post Evaluation Study on the effectiveness and on the improvement of the EU legislative framework on road infrastructure safety management <https://bit.ly/2GuTqe7>

If adopted in the original form, the proposed measures would save over 3,200 lives and avoid more than 20,700 serious injuries over the decade 2020-2030.⁷

The text agreed by the Council would still need to be negotiated with members of the European Parliament following a vote in the institution's transport committee which is due to take place on 10 January. ETSC calls on the Romanian Presidency to be more ambitious in adopting a stronger text especially in the area of extending and defining the scope of primary roads.

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/>

Professional drivers and training

Up to 40% of all road deaths in the EU are work-related, although the exact number is unknown.⁸ 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 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

⁷ *ibid*

ETSC (2018) ETSC Position on the Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management <https://bit.ly/2xIQ5co>

⁸ 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>.

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 also welcomes the proposed changes for the use of tachographs and introduction of smart tachographs. Obtaining more detailed and accurate information on drivers 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 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 3rd 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.

ETSC calls upon the Romanian Presidency to recognise the importance this file has for road safety when it is negotiating with the European Parliament 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/>

EU budget

Both deaths and serious injuries carry a huge cost to society. A recent study estimated the value to society of preventing all reported collisions in the EU to be about 270 billion Euros in 2015.⁹ The EC's 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.¹⁰

ETSC welcomes the new proposal for the 'common provisions' regulation of the European Social Fund (ESF), European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the cohesion funds including a 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".¹¹ ETSC also welcomes 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 9.¹² ETSC recommends that regional funds for roads be conditional on improving infrastructure safety.

ETSC calls on the Romanian Presidency to maintain these parts in the text during the triologue negotiations between Council and the European Parliament.

Further reading:

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

⁹ About 40% of 270 billion EURO represents a saving of GDP wasted in collisions and their consequences, and the other 60% represents a monetary valuation of the saving in human costs to close associates of those who are killed, and to the injured and their close associates.

Reported costs show wide variations, mainly due to: 1) methodological differences, especially concerning the method applied for the calculation of human costs, 2) differences regarding the cost components that are taken into account, 3) differences in the definitions of a serious and a slight injury, and 4) differences in levels of underreporting. These issues are taken into account in the corrected estimates. In Wijnen, W., et al.. (2017), Crash cost estimates for European countries, Deliverable 3.2 of the H2020 project SafetyCube. <https://goo.gl/Ff6jYo>

¹⁰ European Commission (2018) EU Strategic Action Plan on Road Safety. <https://bit.ly/2xHGu5w>

¹¹ 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>

¹² 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>

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

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 strongly 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.¹³

According to analysis carried out for the European Commission by TRL, the UK transport research laboratory, the proposed vehicle safety measures could prevent 24,794 deaths across all vehicle categories between 2022 and 2037.¹⁴

The Competitiveness Council adopted its General Approach on 29 November with a text supporting the package of new minimum safety standards¹⁵. The final proposals will now need to be agreed in negotiations between the EU institutions after formal votes in the European Parliament’s Internal Market (IMCO) and Transport (TRAN) committees.

ETSC strongly recommends that the Romanian presidency continue to promote and support this file given its critical and long-lasting importance for road safety in Europe.

¹³ 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://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018PC0286>

¹⁴ 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>

¹⁵ETSC (2018) Member States Agree on New Vehicle Safety Standards <https://bit.ly/2QooQMV>

Further reading:

ETSC (2017) Position Paper: Revision of the General Safety Regulation

<https://etsc.eu/position-paper-revision-of-the-general-safety-regulation/>

ETSC (2017) Position Paper: Revision of the Pedestrian Safety Regulation

<https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017-03-pedestrian-protection-position-final.pdf>

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.