

Mr Eamon Ryan, TD
Minister of Transport
Dublin
Ireland

20 September 2023

Dear Mr Ryan,

I am writing to congratulate you on the initiative your government is taking to review speed limits in Ireland. The recommendation in the Speed Limit Review to move from 100 km/h to 80 km/h on national secondary roads, from 80 km/h to 60 km/h on local and rural roads, and to 30 km/h on urban roads is sensible, cost-effective and will save lives. The move will also reduce fuel bills for Irish families, lower the impact of noise and air pollution and cut carbon dioxide emissions.

There are several precedents for action on speed in the EU. Three years ago, the Netherlands reduced the speed limit on motorways to 100 km/h during the daytime in order to reduce pollutant emissions. A car driving at 120 km/h uses about 20 percent more fuel than at 100 km/h.

Lower speeds on rural and urban roads can achieve similar benefits. When Sweden reclassified the speed limits on its rural road network to address safety, the environment, and other goals, full compliance was estimated by the Swedish Transport Administration to save around 150 lives annually and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 700,000 tonnes (equivalent to emissions from 240,000 passenger cars).

Brussels and Paris have recently reduced the urban speed limit to 30 km/h. Analysis by the Brussels region showed toxic emissions, noise and crashes all declined since the lower limit was introduced, and journey times were largely unaffected. Spain and Wales now apply a default 30 km/h in urban areas.

Safety remains a compelling justification for reducing speed. It is a contributing factor in most crashes; reducing average speeds across the EU by just 1 percent could save 2100 lives a year.

We encourage your government to pass the necessary legislation to implement these changes as soon as possible. This will be a significant step forward to reaching the goals set out in Ireland's Road Safety Strategy.

Yours sincerely,



Antonio Avenoso
Executive Director
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