



European Transport Safety Council

BRIEFING | Road Safety Priorities for the EU in 2018

Memorandum to the Austrian 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

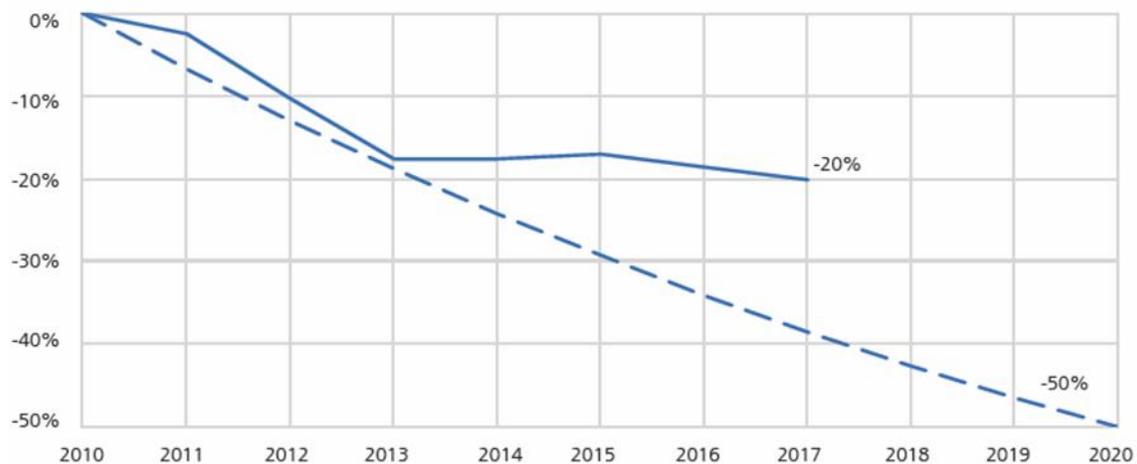


Fig.1: Reduction in the number of road deaths since 2010 for the EU28 taken together (blue line) plotted against the EU target for 2020 (blue dotted line).

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 Austrian Presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2018.

The EU published four road safety measures on 17 May as part of its so-called third mobility package. They include 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.

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

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.

The Austrian 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 vehicle and infrastructure safety. The EU institutions themselves can show leadership by adopting in-house road safety policies.
2. **Encourage EU Member States to make use of the earmarked EUR 200 Million Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) funds which have been made available to upgrade infrastructure for road safety.**
3. Focus national budgetary spending on priorities that can have an impact quickly, such as enforcement and high-risk site management of infrastructure.
4. **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 Austrian presidency

Road safety initiatives for 2018

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 welcomes 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.²

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 2037.³

In November 2017, the European Parliament backed a range of new safety measures for cars and vans, as well as new requirements for lorries, including direct vision requirements to improve visibility of pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in urban areas.

The Austrian Presidency should take the initiative to promote the safety benefits of these key measures. It should promote their uptake in the EU without delay and pave the way for their rapid adoption.

² 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>

³ 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>

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>

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.⁴ 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 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

⁴ 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>.

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.

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 EC proposal for a revision of the Infrastructure Safety Directive 2008/96, published as part of the third mobility package on 17 May 2018.⁵ The proposal mandates more transparency, network-wide risk assessment, extending the scope beyond the trans-european transport network roads (TEN-T) to all primary roads and strengthening the requirements to protect vulnerable road users. The proposal also includes general performance standards for road markings and road signs.

ETSC supports the European Commission's proposal to extend the mandatory application of the directive's procedures to motorways and "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 55% on rural non-motorways.

If adopted, the proposed measures would save over 3,200 lives and avoid more than 20,700

⁵ European Commission (2018) Proposal for a Directive amending Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management <https://goo.gl/EkRnsh>

serious injuries over the decade 2020-2030.⁶ While these are encouraging figures, ETSC argues that by extending the application of the Directive to main urban and rural roads, the life-saving potential of the directive would be even greater.

Transport ministers have already endorsed the extension of the principles of infrastructure safety management beyond the TEN-T.⁷ Almost half of EU countries already require the application of the rules on some other parts of their national road networks.⁸ 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.⁹ This has become even more of a priority given the new objective to reduce serious injuries. Serious road traffic injuries occur on all kinds of road, but, in comparison with deaths a larger proportion of them occur in urban areas and involve vulnerable road users.¹⁰

ETSC also supports the introduction of network wide risk assessment and common EU performance requirements for road markings and road signs. Common EU minimum performance requirements should also be included in the revision for safety barriers, obstacle-free roadsides and adapted intersections. 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.

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/>

⁶ *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>

⁷ Valletta Declaration on Improving Road Safety. (2017) <https://goo.gl/JsX7gS>

⁸ ETSC (2015) Ranking EU Progress on Improving Motorway Safety (PIN Flash 28). <https://goo.gl/ioJmFJ>

⁹ 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>

¹⁰ European Commission (2013) Staff Working Document On the implementation of objective 6 of the European Commission's policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020 – First milestone towards an injury strategy. <https://goo.gl/dtWB3a>

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 2015.¹¹ 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.¹² As a first step, the EC has made available EUR 200 million of the 2018 Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) to be used for road safety including infrastructure upgrades.¹³

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".¹⁴ 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 9.¹⁵ ETSC recommends that regional funds for roads be conditional on improving infrastructure safety. ETSC also recommends 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 which carry a high percentage of traffic.

Further reading:

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

¹¹ 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>

¹² European Commission (2018) EU Strategic Action Plan on Road Safety. <https://bit.ly/2xHG5w>

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ 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>

¹⁵ 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>

Automation and C-ITS

Advanced driver assist systems (ADAS) are already available on the market and are preventing collisions and deaths on the road. Electronic Stability Control (ESC) is now mandatory on all new cars sold in Europe, while Automated Emergency Braking (AEB), Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) and lane-keeping systems are increasingly commonplace.

All these systems use technology to compensate, to some extent, for human error, taking some control away from the driver under certain circumstances. Along with automation, cooperative intelligent transport systems (C-ITS) also have the potential to significantly improve road safety, as the communication between the vehicle and other vehicles as well as the infrastructure will help the driver to take the right decision and adapt to the traffic situation.

Manufacturers such as Mercedes, Tesla and Volvo and technology companies, such as Google, Uber and Apple, are now producing vehicles with increasing levels of automation. Experience with these models has shown that, while automated driving technologies clearly mitigate some risks, they also create new ones.

Despite the rapid technological advances in recent years, Europe is very far from answering the many research and regulatory questions that partly-automated and fully autonomous vehicles present.

A legislative framework dedicated to the approval of automated vehicles does not yet exist. However, a procedure exists for ADAS and automated driving systems for which no EU rules are currently set out to be exempted from the current type approval rules and thus still be allowed on the road. The new type approval framework furthermore extends these procedures to vehicles as well.

ETSC is concerned over the total lack of transparency surrounding this exemption procedure. No information is made available regarding which manufacturer and system are concerned by the exemption, nor is it disclosed which test procedures have been applied and no public statement is made that explains in detail why the system is considered safe.

ETSC would like to see the exemption process to be used as a short-term solution and furthermore made more transparent. This is needed pending a more comprehensive approach revising the current type approval standards to cover all new safety functions of

automated vehicles, to the extent that an automated vehicle will pass a comprehensive equivalent to a 'driving test'. This should take into account high risk scenarios for occupants and road users outside the vehicle.

The EU should also develop a clear strategy for safe internal and external Human Machine Interfaces, in particular information, warning and intervention strategies, to maximise clear communication and safety and minimise possible distraction especially at the lower levels.¹⁶

ETSC believes that policymakers should not merely focus their regulatory eyes on very futuristic systems, but should also ensure the adoption of life-saving technologies that are available now or that are near-to-market, through the swift adoption of the proposal revision of the General Safety Regulation.

Connectivity is another branch of technology that will help prepare for automation while improving road safety in the short term. ETSC therefore calls for the mandatory deployment of C-ITS services that enhance road safety, such as in-vehicle (dynamic) speed limits, emergency electronic braking light, road works warning and intersection safety services.

Further reading:

ETSC (2016) Position Paper: Prioritising the Safety Potential of Automated Driving in Europe
https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016_automated_driving_briefing_final.pdf

ETSC (2017) Briefing: Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS)
<https://etsc.eu/wp-content/uploads/ETSC-Briefing-on-Cooperative-Intelligent-Transport-Systems-C-ITS.pdf>

ETSC (2018) Letter: Improving the Transparency of the Exemption Procedure for the Type Approval of New Vehicle Technologies
<https://etsc.eu/letter-improving-the-transparency-of-the-exemption-procedure-for-the-type-approval-of-new-vehicle-technologies/>

ETSC (2018) Letter: Safety Concerns over Driver Overreliance on Lane Change Assist Systems
<https://etsc.eu/letter-safety-concerns-over-driver-overreliance-on-lane-change-assist-systems/>

¹⁶ ETSC (2016) Prioritising the Safety Potential of Automated Driving in Europe. <https://goo.gl/pPtg6t>

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.