

European Commission Interim evaluation of the Policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020

Briefing - July 2015

Context

In June 2015, half way to 2020, the European Commission published its review of the 'Road Safety Policy Orientations' (RSPO), a framework with the objective of reducing road deaths by 50% by 2020 published in 2010¹.

The review consists of a set of three documents: a European Commission Staff Working Document², a European Commission Interim Evaluation Report³ and a Study commissioned to independent expert Jeanne Breen⁴.

In 2010 the road safety community had hoped for, and expected, a new EU 10-year action programme providing a vision, priorities and a detailed road map against which performance could be measured and delivery made accountable. The RSPO fell short of those expectations⁵. This mid-term review of the Road Safety Policy Orientations is still lacking a timetable, which is sorely needed to structure and prioritise the main measures for adoption and implementation.

This short briefing reflects ETSC's analysis of the Commission's review and urges the European Union to redouble efforts in the field of road safety and to strengthen and expand the scope of action needed to reach the 2020 target.

An earlier briefing, published last November as input to the Commission's review process, contains ETSC's detailed analysis of the implementation of the Road Safety Policy Orientations so far⁶.

Our assessment

- ✓ Priorities on infrastructure safety, vulnerable road users, vehicle safety and traffic law enforcement welcomed
- ⊗ No serious injury target or strategy, despite earlier commitments
- ⊗ No timetable for implementing different actions
- ⊗ Key issues for action missing including addressing drink and drug driving

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/com_20072010_en.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/interim_eval_2011_2020/staff_working_document.pdf

³ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/interim_eval_2011_2020/interim_eval.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/study_final_report_february_2015_final.pdf

⁵ ETSC (2010) Response to the Road Safety Policy Orientations.

⁶ ETSC Briefing: Mid Term Review of the European Commission's Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020, November 2014.

Progress 2010-2014

The European Commission Staff Working document on EU road safety policy 2011-2020 recognises that the EU is the safest region world-wide, thanks also to the added value of EU action⁷. The EU targets for road deaths were an important driver for the dramatic reductions in countries such as Spain, Portugal, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and Estonia, all of which have cut deaths by more than 60% since 2001. The EC interim evaluation report also draws the conclusion that EU membership has a positive effect on road safety.

However ETSC's latest report reveals that 25,845 people were killed in 2014 in the EU28 as a consequence of road collisions, representing a decrease of only 0.6% since 2013⁸.

Across the EU28 road deaths have been cut by 18% between 2010 and 2014, equivalent to a 4.9% average annual reduction. The number of road deaths now has to be reduced by about 8% each year until 2020 for the EU to reach its 2020 target.

Moreover, in 2014, more than 203,500 people were recorded by the police as seriously injured and the number of seriously injured grew by almost 3% in 2014 compared to 2013. Since 2010 the number of people seriously injured⁹ in the EU was reduced by just 1.6%, compared to an 18% decrease in the number of road deaths in the same group of countries.¹⁰

EC Priorities for the future and ETSC's Analysis (2015-2020)

The EC concludes in its Mid Term Review that the seven strategic objectives of the RSPO remain relevant.

However, the independent study commissioned by the EC suggested a number of improvements which have not been taken up¹¹.

Many of the safety problems addressed by the Road Safety Policy Orientations are not measured and the EU performance indicators set for the strategy are very limited.

The EC priorities for the next five years which have been chosen are listed below, with ETSC's analysis and recommendations.

1. Reducing the number of people seriously injured

The European Commission Staff Working document says the Commission will "work on serious injuries including monitoring of progress...and by further activities aimed at supporting Member States and local communities" – but makes no mention of the

⁷ EC (2015) Interim Evaluation of the Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/study_final_report_february_2015_final.pdf

⁸ ETSC (2015) 9th PIN Annual Report, Ranking EU progress in Road Safety .

⁹ Using current national definitions of people seriously injured. See data and national definitions of people seriously injured in ETSC (2015) 9th PIN Annual Report, Tables 7 and 8.

¹⁰ In the 23 countries distinguishing between seriously and slightly injured in their data.

¹¹ Jeanne Breen (2015) [Road safety study for the interim evaluation of Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020](#),

strategic target promised 'shortly' in a Commission press release of 24 March¹². However, the EC interim evaluation report says the "definition and methodology on serious road injuries is in place: prerequisites for setting a strategic target are fulfilled." The interim evaluation recognises under the category "what remains to be done" that a target on reducing the number of people seriously injured remains to be set, that "possible actions" still have to be identified and that a study is being prepared to identify those targeted measures¹³.

A common EU definition of seriously injured casualties was adopted in 2013 and the EU had already missed a chance to adopt a target and measures to achieve it then¹⁴. This chance seems to have been missed a second time. ETSC recommends the EU to adopt a target of 35% reduction between 2014 and 2020 in the number of people seriously injured on the roads. A 35% reduction in the number of seriously injured between 2014 and 2020 would be similarly challenging and achievable for the Member States to the target to halve road deaths between 2010 and 2020¹⁵.

This target should be aspirational, especially as any target set in this decade can only be aspirational. This is in line with the very first, and highly successful, target to halve road deaths by 50% in 2001. At the EU level, a quantitative serious injury target would provide a stimulus for EU actions in areas where the EU has exclusive responsibilities for road safety, such as vehicle safety standards. An EU target would also inspire healthy competition and knowledge sharing between member states, as it has done for the prevention of deaths.

At least 14 EU Member States have adopted national targets to reduce the number of people seriously injured.¹⁶

ETSC Recommendations:

- Adopt a target this year to reduce by 35% between 2014 and 2020 the number of people seriously injured based on MAIS3+.
- Adopt a fully-fledged joint strategy to tackle serious injuries including measures against which delivery can be made accountable. Involve all relevant directorates general, in particular DG Health and Food Safety (SANTE), in identifying prevention measures, adopting the joint strategy and implementing it.
- Support the exchange of best practice between Member States on how to report seriously injured road casualties as MAIS3+.
- Continue to review the procedures used by Member States to estimate the number of people seriously injured with a view to achieving comparability even

¹² European [Commission, press release of 24 March 2015](#).

¹³ Ibid, p. 32.

¹⁴ ETSC (2013) ETSC Response to the First Milestone Towards a Serious Injury Strategy.

¹⁵ ETSC (2015) 9th PIN Annual Report 2015.

¹⁶ Source: PIN Panellists. In Finland, since no distinction is made between "serious" and "slight" injuries in the data, the target is to reduce by 25% the number of people injured on the roads between 2010 and 2020. Norway, Scotland and Northern Ireland have also adopted targets to reduce the number of people seriously injured. Wales has a target to reduce Killed and Seriously Injured by 50% by 2020.

though a variety of methods will be used in practice to implement the common definition.

2. Co-operative ITS and Advanced Driver Assistance Systems

The EC plans to *increase its efforts in the area of cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems and advanced driver assistance systems in order to maximise the road safety benefits of new technologies*. The EC notes that *there is still work to be done in the field of cooperative ITS and new technologies for safety*. Also that *this is a dynamic area with quick technological development and further studies or evolution of technical standards could become necessary between now and 2020*. ETSC stresses that the life-saving potential will depend on which C-ITS and vehicle safety measures are prioritised for fitment, to which vehicle types and by when¹⁷. The EC cites the current review of the General Safety Regulation and the Pedestrian Safety Regulation are expected to result in the preparation of a Communication in 2015 to the European Parliament and to the Council identifying a range of further possible measures on vehicle safety regulations.

In ETSC's view¹⁸, the most effective technologies from a road safety perspective which are linked to key risk factors are:

- Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA)
- Alcohol interlocks
- Seat belt reminders
- Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB).

3. Vulnerable Road Users

A further priority identified by the EC is the need to *increase the safety of vulnerable road users, aiming to speed up the fatality decrease rate for these groups*. This is very much supported by ETSC: 7,600 pedestrians and cyclists were killed in 2013 making up 29% of the deaths¹⁹. Deaths of this road user group have been decreasing at a slower rate than those of vehicle occupants. The EC's report states that:

The vulnerable road users are victims in all types of accidents and their safety depends not only on the targeted action for pedestrians and cyclists but also on the road safety work generally, including road user education, enforcement of rules, safety of infrastructure and safety of vehicles. To meet this operational objective, vulnerable road users must therefore be taken into account horizontally in all EU actions.

The EC highlights how upcoming reviews and improvements to vehicle safety legislation, including the General Safety Regulation and the Pedestrian Protection Regulation, can make a difference. The EC report also notes how the urban mobility package highlights

¹⁷ETSC (2015) Position on Revision of the General Safety Regulation 2009/661.

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ ETSC (2015) PIN Flash Making Walking and Cycling on Europe's Roads Safer.

the need to improve infrastructure for Vulnerable Road Users (VRUs): this should also be included as a priority in the upcoming review of the Infrastructure Safety Directive.

Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) represent 17% of the total number of road deaths while accounting for only 2% of the total kilometres driven.²⁰ The EC also identifies them as a high risk group.

One of ETSC's priorities has been included, namely that, under eCall, the EC must report on the possibility of extending this to other vehicle types including PTWs: yet they are not obliged to do so until 2021.

The safety of elderly (65+) is also improving more slowly. The elderly are prioritised as a road user group needing specific measures: here an EC Study is ongoing with results due imminently.

ETSC Recommendations:

- Encourage that, within urban transport planning, a clear hierarchy of transport users is adopted, with pedestrians and cyclists at the top of the hierarchy.
- Adopt in-vehicle safety technologies, such as ISA, which will benefit VRUs within the General Safety Regulation Review.
- Within the Pedestrian Protection Regulation, upgrade the pedestrian protection tests for new motor vehicles and extend them to protect cyclists.
- Draft 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.
- In line with the recommendation of the EC's Serious Injury document, apply the instruments of the Infrastructure Safety Directive beyond the TEN-T roads.
- Encourage Member States to adopt a maximum 50km/h speed limit in urban areas and a maximum 30km/h speed limit in residential areas and areas with high levels of pedestrians and cyclists.
- Evaluate the opportunity and the feasibility of introducing eCall and Intelligent Speed Assistance as a standard for new PTWs.
- Stimulate the design of the road environment to fit the abilities of the elderly.
- Within the context of the General Safety Regulation Review, encourage elderly-friendly design of new vehicles as well as evaluate the impact of new technologies on older drivers.

4. Infrastructure Safety

On the TEN-T, motorways, rural roads and urban road networks, EU Member States should be working towards the same high levels of infrastructure safety. The adopted TEN-T Guidelines and accompanying funding mechanisms require European funds to only be granted to infrastructure compliant with the infrastructure safety and tunnel safety Directives. This conditionality still needs to be extended to the EU's regional funds. The EC explains in its interim evaluation document that there are ongoing evaluations of Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management (this has since been

²⁰ ETSC (2011) 5th Road Safety PIN report, Chapter 2, Unprotected road users left behind in efforts to reduce road deaths.

completed and published²¹) and on Directive 2004/54/EC on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network, which will be finalised in 2015²².

ETSC Recommendations within the context of the review of the Infrastructure Safety Management Directive 2008/96:

- Extend application of the instruments of the Directive beyond the TEN-T network.
- Set up guidelines for providing and maintaining road markings, safety barriers and obstacle-free roadsides.
- Extend application of the instruments of the Directive to cover tunnels and maintain all the safety requirements currently covered by the Tunnel Safety Directive 2004/54.

5. Traffic Law Enforcement

Increased and well publicised enforcement targeting the main risks of speeding, drinking and drug driving and non-use of seat belts on the road forms a fundamental part of achieving the EU 2020 target. In its Staff Working Document, the EC says *that it will monitor and encourage the implementation and enforcement of road safety rules*. In its longer Interim Evaluation it explains that an evaluation of Directive 2011/82/EC on cross-border enforcement has started in 2015. This is in line with the revision article of the Directive. Also that *together with the development of enforcement guidelines the conclusions of the evaluation can feed into a common approach to enforcement of road traffic rules for safety in the Union*. This is much welcomed by ETSC.

Finally, that *there is scope for continued work on national road safety planning including enforcement implementation plans; the current EC working paper on good practice examples will be regularly reviewed and developed by the High Level Group on Road Safety*²³.

ETSC Recommendations:

- Support Member States in preparing national enforcement plans with yearly targets for compliance in the areas of speeding, drink and drug driving and seat belt use.
- Strengthen the Cross Border Enforcement Directive within the context of the revision in 2016 by ensuring greater convergence in enforcement of road safety related road traffic rules and developing common minimum standards for enforcement.

²¹ <http://www.tmlleuven.be/project/roadinfrastructuresafetymngt/2014-12-ex-post-evaluation-study-road-infra-safety-mgmt.pdf>

²² EC (2015) Interim Evaluation of the Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020. http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/study_final_report_february_2015_final.pdf

²³ Ibid.

6. Results based Approach to Improving Road Safety – Post 2020

The external study recommends that the European Commission improve on the current RSPO by setting intermediate outcome targets²⁴.

Consideration should be given to **setting targets to 2020** to:

- increase seat belt use and crash helmet use;
- reduce average speeds and speeding over the limit;
- reduce levels and drinking and driving and fatal injury outcomes;
- improving the safety quality of the new vehicle fleet through use of Euro NCAP star ratings;
- for the road infrastructure (at least for TEN-T) using road assessment programme ratings Euro RAP.

Regrettably, the EC has not taken on the independent expert's recommendation to *identify intermediary outcome objectives as part of the results-based approach*²⁵. but merely considers it for the next post 2020 strategy period.²⁶ ETSC strongly believes in indicators, based on the attained level of attributes leading to a desired final outcome²⁷ and support the targets suggested by the external study.²⁸

To enable the achievement of such an ambitious target as a 50% reduction in road deaths, the Commission should create a monitoring framework that includes a set of sub-targets and performance indicators, together with a well-functioning Road Safety Observatory.

7. Gender and Road Safety

The Staff Working Document also sets out an intention to look at gender and road safety within the next road safety strategy, although no details are given on how this would occur. This would be welcomed by ETSC but detailed actions should be elaborated. According to an ETSC report, females account for 51% of the total EU population but only 28% of road deaths, a percentage that has changed only slightly since 2001²⁹. Males

²⁴ Jeanne Breen (2015) [Road safety study for the interim evaluation of Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020](#),

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ EC (2015) Commission Staff Working Document On the Interim Evaluation of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2011-2020. http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/interim_eval_2011_2020/staff_working_document.pdf

²⁷ ETSC (2010) Response to the Road Safety Policy Orientations.

²⁸ ETSC is monitoring Member States' progress on a set of indicators as part of the Road Safety PIN program. See list of topics covered by the PIN since 2006 in the Annexes of ETSC PIN Report 2015 . For further supporting information in safety performance indicators in general, see Hakkert AS and V Gitelman (2007), Road Safety Performance Indicators: Manual. Deliverable D3.8 of the EU FP6 project SafetyNet.

²⁹ ETSC (2013) Risks on the Roads - a Male Problem? PIN Flash 25 <http://etsc.eu/risk-on-the-roads-a-male-problem-pin-flash-25/>

account for 72% of people killed on the roads in the EU in 2011³⁰. In terms of the three main risk factors on the roads (speeding, drink driving and failure to wear a seatbelt), a higher incidence of these behaviours was observed among males than among females³¹. ETSC's main recommendation is that gender differences should be recognised when developing road safety policies.

ETSC Recommendations:

- Achieve effective legislation and enforcement in particular against speeding, drink driving and the non-use of protective equipment (seat belts and helmets) where male drivers are over-represented.
- Improve training systems to take account of the different trajectories of learning and gaining experience among young male and female drivers.
- Support research on the adaptability of occupant protection devices to the biomechanical characteristics of the occupant.

New Developments for 2015-2020

The EC has taken up some of ETSC's other recommendations not yet in the scope of the RSPO published in 2010 and has left out others such as the creation of a Road Safety Agency.

1. Funding for Road Safety

There is a whole section in the interim evaluation report looking at both EU Member State and EU funding for road safety. One of the key conclusions of the expert analysis was that:

Despite the increasingly ambitious goals and targets sought, identified risks and demonstrated benefit to cost ratios of publicly acceptable measures, investment in preventing serious health loss in road crashes is not commensurate with the high socio-economic value of its prevention either at EU or national levels³².

ETSC Recommendation:

- EU funds should concentrate on the improvement of road safety through application of known, effective, science based countermeasures targeting the most life-saving actions.

2. Distraction

Driving whilst using a mobile phone and other electronic devices significantly impairs driving ability. The EC has included this as one of the "emerging concerns" in its interim report. A study is ongoing on which measures to take.

ETSC Recommendation:

³⁰ ibid

³¹ ibid

³² http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/study_final_report_february_2015_final.pdf

- Consider adopting legislation banning mobile phone (hand held and hands free) use during driving.

3. EU Road Safety Agency

ETSC fully supports the creation of an EU Road Safety Agency. A safety agency exists for each other transport mode apart from roads. At present every one of the special EU agencies for safety fulfils a different role. The EC has come forward with a proposal to create a Road Safety Agency.

The role of a new European Road Safety Agency should be to:

- Collect and analyse accident data and exposure data.
- Monitor Member States' progress on a set of performance indicators.
- Help speed up developments in road safety and provide a good catalyst for road safety information and data collection, and encourage best practice across the EU.
- Label unsafe roads and vehicles, identify unsafe behaviours, and communicate the results to EU road users.
- Propose new areas of legislation for improving road safety.

4. Drink and Drug Driving

Approximately 6,500 lives would have been saved in 2010 if all drivers had obeyed the prevailing drink driving laws³³. Efforts to tackle drink driving are paying off, through reducing the legally permitted blood alcohol concentration, enforcement efforts and the use of alcohol interlock devices. However, drink driving remains the second biggest contributory factor on EU roads. At the EU level the range of psychoactive substances available for illicit use is widening and this is further proven by the increased prevalence of illicit drugs in drivers killed in traffic collisions.³⁴

Although the EC recognises in its Staff Working Document that, alongside speeding, drink driving is responsible for a large share of all road deaths³⁵, regrettably tackling drink and drug driving seems to be nearly totally absent from the EC's list of priorities. Alcohol is one of the offences included in the Cross Border Enforcement Directive and will benefit from the implementation of this law. A study on alcohol interlocks has been undertaken, the results of which have been passed to DG GROW in light of the preparation of the General Safety Regulation Review³⁶.

ETSC Recommendations:

³³ ETSC (2012) Drink Driving: Towards Zero Tolerance.

³⁴ ETSC (2012) PRAISE Preventing Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees.

³⁵ EC (2015) Commission Staff Working Document On the Interim Evaluation of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2011-2020.

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/study_final_report_february_2015_final.pdf

³⁶ EC (2015) Interim Evaluation of the Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020.

- Propose a Directive on drink driving setting a zero tolerance for all drivers.
- Mandate alcohol interlocks for repeat offenders and professional drivers.
- Adopt common standards for roadside drug driving enforcement.

Further Reading

ETSC (2015) 9th Road Safety Performance Index Report

ETSC (2015) ETSC's Position on the Review of the General Safety Regulation

ETSC (2014) ETSC's Position on the Mid Term Review on the Road Safety Policy Orientations

ETSC (2014) 8th Road Safety Performance Index Report

ETSC (2014) ETSC's Response to the European Commission's Urban Mobility Package

ETSC (2013) ETSC's Manifesto for the 2014 European Parliamentary Elections

ETSC (2013) ETSC Response to the European Commission's First Milestone Towards a Serious Injury Strategy

ETSC (2012) Funding for Road Safety in the EU's 2014-2020 Budget

ETSC (2010) ETSC Response to the Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020

ETSC (2008) ETSC's Blueprint for a 4th Road Safety Action Programme

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