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DRAFT REPORT

on European road safety 2011-2020
(2010/2235(INI))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on European road safety 2011-2020 (2010/2235(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘A sustainable future for transport: Towards an integrated, technology-led and user friendly system’ (COM(2009)0279),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020’ (COM(2010)0389),
 - having regard to the Council Conclusions of 2 and 3 December 2010 on the Commission Communication entitled ‘Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020’ (16951/10),
 - having regard to the Commission study¹ assessing the Third European Road Safety Action Programme,
 - having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 64/255 of 10 May 2010 on improving global road safety,
 - having regard to its resolution of 29 September 2005 on the European Road Safety Action Programme: Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 27 April 2006 on road safety: bringing eCall to citizens³,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 January 2007 on the Third European Road Safety Action Programme - mid-term review⁴,
 - having regard to its resolution of 23 April 2009 on the Intelligent Transport Systems Action Plan⁵,
 - having regard to its resolution of 23 April 2009 on an action plan on urban mobility⁶,
 - having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2010 on penalties for serious infringements against the social rules in road transport⁷,
 - having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2010 on a sustainable future for transport¹,
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A7-0000/2011),
- A. whereas in 2009 more than 35 000 people were killed and more than 1 500 000 injured in road accidents in the European Union,

- B. whereas the social cost of road accidents is estimated at EUR 130 billion per year,
- C. whereas the target set in the Third Action Programme of halving the number of road deaths in the EU by the end of 2010 was not achieved, although the number has been substantially reduced,
- D. whereas social acceptance of road accidents is still relatively high in the EU, and whereas the number of people killed each year is equivalent to the toll which would result from 250 crashes involving medium-sized airliners,
- E. whereas road safety is the responsibility of society as a whole,
- F. whereas only 27.5% of the measures outlined in the Third Action Programme have been fully implemented,
- G. whereas the Commission failed to submit a proposal for a new action programme before the Third Road Safety Action Programme expired,
- H. whereas the likelihood of being killed in a road accident is nine times higher per kilometre travelled for pedestrians, seven times higher for cyclists and 18 times higher for motorcyclists than for people travelling by car,
- I. whereas some 55% of fatal accidents occur on rural roads, 36% in urban areas and 6% on motorways,
- J. whereas travel by public transport is many times safer than travel by private vehicle,
- K. whereas the European Union is facing a process of demographic change, so that due account must be taken of the mobility needs of elderly people in particular,
- L. whereas new technological developments, for example the introduction of hybrid vehicles and electric propulsion systems, are creating new challenges for the rescue services,
- M. whereas the implementation of European, national, regional and local measures must be closely coordinated,

Basis

1. Welcomes the Commission communication under consideration here, but calls on the Commission, by the end of 2011, to develop its proposals into a fully-fledged action programme incorporating a detailed set of measures with clear timetables for their implementation, monitoring instruments, so that the effectiveness of the measures can be regularly checked, and provision for a mid-term review;
2. Endorses the Commission's view that if road safety is to be improved a coherent, holistic and integrated approach is required, and calls for road safety issues to be addressed in all relevant policy areas;
3. Proposes that the office of EU Road Safety Coordinator should be created by 2014;

4. Emphasises that particular attention must be paid to the proper implementation of existing laws and measures; points out, at the same time, that the scope for legislative measures at EU level has not yet been exhausted;
5. Wholeheartedly endorses the objective of halving by 2020 the total number road deaths in the EU by comparison with 2010, and calls for further clear and measurable targets to be set for the same period, in particular
 - a 60% reduction in the number of children under the age of 14 killed in road accidents, and
 - a 40% reduction in the number of people suffering critical injuries, on the basis of a uniform EU definition to be developed quickly;

Ethical aspects

6. Emphasises that every EU citizen not only has a right to safe road transport, but above all also has a duty to contribute to road safety by means of his or her own behaviour;
7. Reiterates its view that a complementary, long-term strategy is needed which goes beyond the period covered by the communication under consideration here and has the objective of preventing all road deaths ('Vision Zero'); calls on the Commission to develop the central features of such a strategy and to present them within the next three years;

Proven practices and their implementation in national plans

8. Calls on the Commission to encourage exchanges of proven practices so that more of them can be incorporated into national road safety plans;
9. Calls on the Commission to review the European Road Safety Charter and to encourage the introduction of similar charters at regional and local level;
10. Emphasises that clear, quantifiable objectives act as fresh incentives to improve road safety and are essential if comparisons of the progress made by individual Member States are to be drawn up and the implementation of road safety measures is to be monitored and assessed;
11. Supports the Commission in its efforts to persuade the Member States to draw up national road safety plans; calls for the drafting and publication of such plans on the basis of harmonised joint guidelines to be made compulsory; emphasises, however, that the Member States should be given considerable leeway to tailor their respective measures, programmes and objectives to national circumstances;

Improving indicators and data

12. Regards high-quality, comparable data as a prerequisite for a successful road safety policy;
13. Calls on the Commission, by the end of 2013, to apply as part of the SafetyNet project a

set of additional, harmonised indicators on the basis of which monitoring can be improved and meaningful comparisons of the progress made by individual Member States can be drawn up;

14. Calls on the Commission to draw up by 2012 a proposal to improve the data available concerning the causes of accidents and injuries;
15. Calls on the Commission to draw up within two years definitions of the terms ‘critically injured’, ‘seriously injured’ and ‘slightly injured’ with a view to making comparisons of measures and their impact in the Member States possible;
16. Calls for the development of a genuine EU road safety monitoring centre whose task it would be to collate data from existing databases and the knowledge gained through the implementation of EU projects such as SafetyNet or DaCoTa and make it available to everyone in a readily comprehensible, annually updated form;
17. Calls on the Member States to honour existing commitments to transfer data;

Areas for action

Improving road users’ training and behaviour

18. Emphasises that care, consideration for others and mutual respect and observance of rules are fundamental to road safety;
19. Takes the view that greater importance should be attached to the concept of lifelong learning in the area of road transport as well;
20. Calls, in the context of driver training, for greater attention to be paid to the main causes of road deaths, such as speeding, driving while drunk or under the influence of drugs, failure to wear a seat belt or other protective equipment and the use of mobile communications devices while driving;
21. Recommends, as a reintegration measure, the fitting of alcolocks to the vehicles of road users who are known to drink and drive;

Harmonising and enforcing road traffic rules

22. Calls for determined efforts to harmonise road signs and road traffic rules by 2013;
23. Regards the enforcement of existing rules as a central pillar of the EU’s road safety policy; calls, in that connection, on the Member States to set annual national targets for checks on speeding, drink-driving or driving whilst under the influence of drugs and the wearing of seat belts;
24. Calls for the introduction of monitoring equipment by means of which speeding offences by motorcyclists can be systematically detected and punished;

Making road transport infrastructure safer

25. Wholeheartedly supports the Commission's proposal to make EU funding available as a matter of principle only to infrastructure projects which comply with EU directives on road safety and tunnel safety;
26. Points out that the standard guard rails used on European roads are a death trap for motorcyclists, and calls on the Member States to take prompt action to refit dangerous stretches of road with rails with upper and lower elements;
27. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to identify and implement suitable measures to prevent accidents on rural roads and in rural areas and reduce the damage they cause;
28. Emphasises the importance of observing driving and rest periods, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to make a sufficient number of safe parking areas which meet minimum social standards available to professional HGV drivers;

Putting safer vehicles on the road

29. Recommends that the fitting of alcolocks to all commercial passenger and goods transport vehicles should be made compulsory;
30. Calls on the Commission to present within two years a report on the issue of the extent to which improved passenger protection through the use of strengthened A, B and C pillars in vehicles compromises the driver's all-round vision and whether this has an impact on the safety of vulnerable road users;
31. Calls on the Commission to present within two years a report on the safety aspects of electromobility;
32. Calls on automobile manufacturers, when developing electric cars and other new propulsion systems, to pay particular attention to protecting both vehicle occupants and first-aid workers and members of the rescue services effectively against new sources of danger they may face in the event of an accident;
33. Calls on the Member States to monitor imported accessories and spare parts more closely in order to ensure that they are suitable and meet stringent European consumer protection standards;
34. Calls on the Commission to lay down within two years common standards for technical checks to be performed on vehicles which have been involved in serious accidents;

Using modern technologies for vehicles, infrastructure and the emergency services

35. Calls for details of the traffic rules currently in force in individual Member States to be made available to road users before and during journeys, for example through the use of smart traffic systems;
36. Calls on the Commission to draw up a proposal to fit vehicles with 'intelligent speed assistance systems' which incorporates a timetable, details of an approval procedure and a description of the requisite road infrastructure;

37. Welcomes the Commission's announcement that it intends to speed up the introduction of 'eCall', and calls on the Commission, over the next two years, to consider whether it should be extended to cover motorcycles, heavy goods vehicles and buses and, if appropriate, make corresponding proposals;

Protecting vulnerable road users

38. Calls for the carrying of warning jackets for all vehicle occupants and the wearing of warning jackets by cyclists, as a means of improving their visibility, to be made compulsory;
39. Calls for greater account to be taken of the protection of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, children and elderly people, as an integral aspect of road safety;
40. Recommends that children up to the age of three travelling in vehicles should be secured in rearwards-facing child seats;
41. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Background

In recent years Europe's roads have become substantially safer. Between 2001 and 2009 the number of road deaths in the EU fell by 36%, and the Third European Road Safety Action Programme was instrumental in bringing about that fall. Since 2001, almost 80 000 lives have been saved as a result of the progress made. Although the target of halving the annual number of road deaths has not been met, the figures are very encouraging. Above all, however, they are a call for further action. In 2009, the number of people killed on Europe's roads was still 35 000 and the number seriously injured was 1.5 million, with many of them being left disabled. The social and economic cost of these road accidents is huge (roughly EUR 130 billion in 2009). The human loss involved, the grief experienced by the friends and families of the victims, the suffering of the injured and the dramatic changes to the lives of accident victims represent costs of a different kind.

A total of 35 000 road deaths – this is equivalent to the death toll which would result if some 250 medium-sized airliners full of passengers were to crash, an unimaginable scenario. However, society essentially accepts or refuses to acknowledge the deadly danger we face as road users. The tragedies which occur every day on Europe's roads are largely ignored.

2. The Commission communication

Shortly before the Third Action Programme expired, the Commission submitted a communication setting out its strategic objectives for the period to 2020.

Once again, the Commission's main target is to halve the number of road deaths in the European Union (as compared with 2010).

With a view to achieving that target, the Commission sets itself seven strategic objectives:

- improved training for road users and more stringent licensing and driver training procedures
- more effective enforcement of road traffic rules
- safer infrastructure
- improved safety measures for commercial and private vehicles
- development of intelligent vehicles
- improvements to emergency and first-aid services
- measures to protect vulnerable road users, in particular motorcyclists.

The Commission is thus seeking to establish general rules and objectives to which national or local strategies should be tailored. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the measures involved are to be taken at the most appropriate level, on the basis of shared responsibility.

3. Criticisms and proposals for improvement

3.1 Better coordination of the measures

In principle, your rapporteur supports the objectives and the measures sketched out by the Commission. He also endorses the Commission's view that if road safety is to be improved a coherent, holistic and integrated approach is needed which encompasses all road users and stakeholders and seeks to develop synergies with other policy objectives. However, this, the mainstreaming of road safety issues in all relevant policy areas and the combined involvement of local, regional, national and European authorities in the preparation and implementation of the measures all call for an exceptionally high degree of coordination. If current EU structures remain unchanged, decisive action to develop this integrated strategy is unlikely. Your rapporteur is therefore proposing the creation of the office of European Road Safety Coordinator. With the support of the Commission, he or she would orchestrate the various approaches and the work of the authorities at the various levels. Above all, the coordinator could play a valuable role by liaising between the various levels.

3.2 'Vision Zero'

Your rapporteur wholeheartedly supports the objective of halving the number of road deaths by 2020. This means, however, that in 2020 some 15 000 people would still lose their lives in road accidents. The price EU citizens pay for their mobility would thus still be shockingly high. If even one person is killed or injured in a road accident it is one too many. Although absolute safety is an impossibility, the objective of only halving the number of road deaths – however ambitious it may be given the time frame – is ethically questionable. The Commission should therefore finally acknowledge Parliament's call and set as the long-term aim the prevention of all road deaths ('Vision Zero'), as a number of Member States have already done. The EU must make a start on the work of turning this vision into reality and developing a strategy which looks beyond the 10-year time frame.

3.3 More ambitious objectives and practical measures

What is more, within the time frame set by the communication under consideration here the EU needs a raft of much more specific measures if it is to achieve the ambitious target of a 50% cut in road deaths, above all because steady progress in the area of road safety will make it ever more difficult to secure further reductions in the number of deaths and accidents. Against this background, many of the measures announced by the Commission are too vague, too timid and not commensurate with the challenges facing us.

It is regrettable that the Commission failed to submit a proposal for a new action programme before the Third Road Safety Action Programme expired. Instead it presented only a strategic communication, whose impact will be much less significant. As a framework for action it is inadequate. By the end of 2011, therefore, the Commission should develop its proposals into a fully-fledged new action programme which incorporates a set of detailed measures, with clear timetables and monitoring instruments to assess the progress made, and makes provision for a mid-term review.

In addition, at EU level two further clear and measurable objectives should be set for the period to 2020:

- a 60% reduction in the number of children under the age of 14 killed in road accidents, and
- a 40% reduction in the number of people critically injured in road accidents.

In connection with the latter objective, a harmonised European definition of the term 'critically injured' needs to be developed. One possible criterion might be the requirement following an accident to be treated in intensive care. A firm deadline must be set for agreement on this definition.

3.4 Improved road safety indicators and data

International comparisons and assessments of the progress made or of the effectiveness of the measures taken in the area of road safety are essential.

They can only be carried out on the basis of high-quality, comparable data and indicators covering all the Member States, using appropriate assessment tools. Despite the considerable progress made, further improvements are needed. Many EU-funded research projects (e.g. SafetyNet) have already been conducted in an effort to develop improved sets of indicators. The findings of these research projects should be used, in conjunction with better and more comprehensive sets of data, to gain a better insight into the impact and effectiveness of road safety measures.

The need for comparable data is particularly great in the area of the analysis of the causes of injuries and accidents. The EU should take the initiative now and propose a system for compiling harmonised European statistics on the causes of accidents. This should include the development of harmonised accident data analysis, on the basis of a standard form, and EU funding for detailed research into accidents on representative stretches of road in all the Member States, with a view to improving our understanding of the problem. This research could draw on the experience already gained in this area in individual Member States.

In addition, the data compiled from all the Member States should be processed by a centralised body and turned into readily understandable statistics which can then be made public, subject to compliance with stringent personal data protection standards.

3.5 National and EU objectives

Clear, quantifiable objectives can also act as additional incentives to improve road safety in the Member States - above all if harmonised data makes regular comparisons of the progress made and assessments of national policies possible and if the results are made public. In that connection, the EU could make it a requirement for every Member State to draw up and publish national road safety plans based on harmonised common guidelines. In accordance with the subsidiarity principle, the form these plans take, i.e. the objectives they set and the measures they incorporate, should remain largely a matter for the Member States.

3.6 Road behaviour

EU citizens have a right to a high level of road safety. Governments must play their part, in particular in connection with the enforcement of traffic rules.

At the same time, every road user has a duty to make his or her own contribution to road safety. Everyone can do their bit. Measures to improve road behaviour are therefore particularly important.

These should include, for example, measures to improve the training of new drivers, such as accompanied driving as from the age of 17, a system which has already proved its worth in Germany, or the introduction of a multi-phase model for driver training which involves practical instruction even after a driver has passed his or her test. Greater attention should be paid to the concept of lifelong learning in the area of road transport as well. Only if road users constantly improve their skills will they be able to cope with new vehicle functions and more complex traffic situations. All road users should also be required to brush up at regular intervals the knowledge of first aid they acquired as part of their driver training.

However, there is also a need for psychological measures designed to change the behaviour of road users who consistently breach traffic rules, such as the introduction throughout Europe of a harmonised points system.

In addition the EU has a very praiseworthy Road Safety Charter which many people have already voluntarily committed themselves to observing. The communication channels which have grown up as a result of the implementation of this Charter should be developed and used more systematically in connection with EU road safety campaigns.

3.7 Specific individual measures

In addition to the repeating once again the calls consistently made by Parliament, your rapporteur is proposing a series of additional measures to improve road safety in the EU. Parliament's rules on translation impose constraints on the length of this draft own-initiative report. For that reason, not all the proposals your rapporteur had in mind could be included. In the course of the procedure your rapporteur will therefore confine himself to proposing new measures which focus in particular on:

- tyre pressures/compulsory use of winter tyres
- provision of relevant information to first-aid workers and members of the professional rescue services
- training and further training for road users
- road safety campaigns
- measures to protect vulnerable road users
- technical changes to private cars and commercial vehicles
- anti-locking systems for motorcycles
- driver fatigue alert systems
- compulsory wearing of warning jackets at night outside built-up areas
- uniform legal alcohol limits
- pedelecs