



# How to halve road accident deaths and injuries by 2020

Committees: Committee on Transport and Tourism

**Each year 35,000 Europeans die in road accidents and 1.5 million are seriously injured, some with lifelong consequences\*. To tackle this tragedy, Transport Committee MEPs on Tuesday demanded a tough action plan and wider use of 30 km/h speed limits in urban areas.**

The road safety strategy paper tabled by the Commission in 2010 disappointed MEPs. It was "too vague, too timid - inadequate", said rapporteur Dieter-Lebrecht Koch (EPP, DE). His own-initiative report, approved by the Transport Committee on Tuesday, sets out specific measures to cut the number of road accident victims by half by 2020.

## Protect children

MEPs call for a 30km/h speed limit in all residential areas and on single-lane roads without cycle tracks, to help cut the number of children under 14 years old killed on roads by 60% and those seriously injured by 40%. They also say children should be taught road safety at the youngest possible age.

## See clearly at any age...

MEPs say that drivers should be offered eyesight tests every ten years, and every five years after the age of 65. Substances or medicines that affect the ability to drive should be systematically identified, and driving whilst taking them should eventually be prohibited. Professional drivers and beginners (for two years) should refrain from drinking any alcohol before they drive, they add.

## ...and be seen

High-visibility reflective vests should be carried in vehicles for all occupants, say MEPs. Cyclists, too, should be encouraged to wear helmets and reflective vests after nightfall, they add.

## Eliminate motorbike traps

Simple roadside rails should be replaced as soon as possible by double safety barriers to protect motorcyclists throughout the EU, says the committee.

MEPs favoured harmonising highway codes and road signs EU-wide, and called for a European road safety co-ordinator to be appointed within the Commission by 2014. He or she should co-ordinate the efforts of Member States, road safety services and authorities to maximize effectiveness and consistency.

## Killer figures

• At equal distances, a motorcyclist is 18 times likelier to be killed in a road accident than a motorist, 7 times likelier than a cyclist, and 9 times likelier than a pedestrian.

# Press release

- 55 % of road accident deaths happen on country roads, 36% on urban ones and 6% on motorways.
- The social cost of road accidents in the EU is estimated at €130 billion a year.

In the chair: Brian Simpson (S&D, UK)

\*Source : European Commission, 2009

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