

WRITTEN QUESTION P-2760/00
by Maria Sanders-ten Holte (ELDR)
to the Commission

Subject: Legislation on making car fronts safer for pedestrians and cyclists

42 600 people die on the European Union's roads each year¹. This is partly due to technical factors such as unsafe car fronts.

During the busy holiday months, the average number of fatal accidents rises considerably.

Research has shown that instituting safety requirements for car fronts, in accordance with the four crash tests developed by the European Experimental Vehicles Committee (EEVC), could save many lives.

These four crash tests have already been developed in the EU, and are the outcome of 22 years of European-subsidised research and development programmes.

Despite repeated commitments, we still have not received a proposal for a regulation providing for car fronts and the like to be made safer from the point of view of pedestrians and cyclists. This is a matter for which the Commission has sole responsibility, so Member States cannot introduce independent provisions.

In view of the above, it is difficult to understand why this proposal for a regulation should still not be forthcoming, particularly in the light of the requirements of the Treaty and the priorities stated in the Commission's communication of March 2000 on road safety. In the communication the Commission expresses the intention of proposing legislation on rendering car fronts safer for pedestrians and cyclists, which is one of the six priorities for road safety. This measure was also at the top of the list of priorities of the European Parliament in the last opinion on road safety.

1. Does the Commission agree that this regulation on making car fronts safer, including all four compulsory EEVC crash tests, could save many lives – up to 5 or 6 lives per day in the EU – and ought therefore to be adopted as soon as possible?
2. Does the Commission agree that after 22 years of EU-subsidised research programmes, which have produced the four well-known tests that are used by EuroNCAP (New Car Assessment Programme), this is not the time to commission fresh research in this field but rather that a first step must be taken by now drafting this regulation in order to save many lives?
3. Does the Commission agree that any further delay in adopting this regulation will be bad for the image of the EU, and particularly of the Commission, as sufficient research has been done and sufficient information is available to save 175 lives per month in the EU and, for example in the Netherlands, a country with a relatively good safety record, approximately 41 lives every year?

¹ 1998 figure