



# Info

## Road safety: European Parliament says more action needed

**In a report produced in response to the Commission's mid-term review of the EU Road Safety Action Programme, the European Parliament is calling for "a higher level of political commitment" to road safety in all Member States and EU institutions.**

More than 40,000 deaths are caused by road traffic accidents in the European Union, the direct and indirect costs of which are estimated at €180 billion, or 2% of EU GDP. Moreover, the disparity between different Member States' road safety records is widening.

The European Parliament report, drawn up by Ewa **HEDKVIST PETERSEN** (PES, SE) voices disappointment at the lack of progress in reaching the target of halving the number of road fatalities in the EU by 2010. It urges Member States to enforce existing legislation, which MEPs say would greatly improve road safety if it were fully observed by road users.

The House makes a number of other recommendations:

- an EU-wide zero alcohol limit should be introduced for new drivers as well as for bus drivers and professional commercial drivers involved in the transport of hazardous goods;
- the Commission should conduct a study on harmonising road signs and rules in Europe to reduce unnecessary risks; at present, for example, differing priority rules at roundabouts can cause accidents;
- the Commission should consider creating a common minimum standard for driving instructors with test and certification;
- given the large number of accidents and deaths at road work zones, common guidelines should be devised for such areas;
- Member States should make hands-free mobile telephone systems compulsory for car, bus and commercial drivers;
- Member States should step up their efforts to increase the use of seat belts in all vehicles, especially buses;
- the Commission should launch a European-wide information campaign advocating breaks in driving every two hours to combat tiredness in drivers;
- the Commission should impose a general ban on overtaking for vehicles weighing more than 12 tonnes on one- and two-lane roads;

- more attention should be devoted to promoting technologies such as seat belt reminders and advanced restraint systems; Electronic Stability Control; speed limitation systems; alcohol interlocks; predictive safety systems and the eCall system, which could reduce accident response times considerably;
- legislation is needed on cross-border enforcement of penalties for driving offences (so that these are punished even if committed outside the offender's home country), daytime-running lights, the use of rear reflector strips to indicate the outlines of lorries and the use of installed and retro-fitted blind-spot mirrors;
- the Commission and Member States should promote "awareness of the single European emergency call number 112".

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