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REPORT

on the European Road Safety Action Programme: Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility (2004/2162(INI))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

Rapporteur: Ari Vatanen

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the European Road Safety Action Programme: Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility (2004/2162(INI))

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EU road-safety action programme

European Parliament resolution on the European Road Safety Action Programme: Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility (2004/2162(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission White Paper 'European transport policy for 2010: time to decide' (COM(2001)0370), and its resolution of 12 February 2003 thereon¹,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication 'Information and Communications Technologies for Safe and Intelligent Vehicles' (COM(2003)0542),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication 'European road safety action programme – Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: a shared responsibility' (COM(2003)0311) and more recently its publication 'Saving 20 000 lives on our roads' of October 2004,
 - having regard to Commission Recommendation 2004/345/EC of 6 April 2004 on enforcement in the field of road safety²,
 - having regard to the Verona Declaration on Road Safety of 24 October 2003 as well as the conclusions on the Second Verona Conference held on 25 and 26 October 2004 and the subsequent commitment given by EU transport ministers to regard road safety as a priority,
 - having regard to the European Road Safety Charter annexed to the abovementioned Commission Communication on the European road safety action programme,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A6-0225/2005),
- A. whereas the target of halving the number of road fatalities in the EU by 2010 as well as

¹ OJ C 43 E, 19.2.2004, p. 250.

² OJ L 111, 17.4.2004, p. 75.

- the ongoing mid-term reviews of the European road safety action programme by the Commission are to be welcomed,
- B. whereas important work is being done by the e-Safety Forum, with the participation of an impressive number of stakeholders,
 - C. whereas the enforcement of speed, alcohol and seat belt legislation must be based on the exchange of best practices,
 - D. whereas it is universally recognised that exceeding speed limits or driving at a speed inappropriate to the road conditions, driving while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or particular medicines, and the failure to use seat belts properly play havoc with road safety, given the death toll arising from those factors and the numbers that they leave injured or disabled; whereas even though many efforts have already been undertaken, the high death toll implies that much more needs to be done to achieve the target set for 2010,
 - E. whereas as far as road safety is concerned, the EU has specific obligations explicitly laid down in the Treaties and is empowered to act in areas in which EU action could provide added value over and above the measures taken by Member States, as well as in other vitally important matters such as the use of seat belts and driving licences; whereas, in addition, the scope of EU action has widened and thus covers a further 80 million citizens,
 - F. whereas the exchange of best practice has a particularly important role to play in preventing road accidents, 65% of which occur in towns, 30% out of towns and no more than 5% on motorways,
 - G. having regard to the fact that every year, more than 40 000 deaths are caused by road traffic accidents in the EU and, in addition to the unacceptable human suffering, there are the related direct and indirect costs, estimated at EUR 180 billion or 2% of EU GNP,
 - H. noting with satisfaction that vehicles are now four times safer than in 1970, a fact which has contributed significantly to reducing by 50% the number of deaths in the EU of 15 Member States since 1970, during a period in which traffic volumes have tripled,
 - I. concerned by the low levels of road safety in some Member States, especially in many of the 10 new Member States; noting that, if all the Member States were to achieve the same results as the United Kingdom and Sweden, the number of fatalities would fall by 17 000 a year in the Union of 25 Member States, representing a reduction of 39% and thus a great step forward, but falling short of the 50% target,
 - 1. Stresses the shared responsibility of all stakeholders, namely the EU, Member States, regional and local authorities, industry, organisations, and individuals to take concrete positive and coherent action to improve road safety and to halve the number of road accident victims by 2010, thereby achieving the common target; stresses that the principle of subsidiarity should be fully respected, without using it as an excuse for complacency or inaction in light of the important responsibility which Europe bears to

- create the necessary policy framework;
2. Welcomes the planned mid-term review by the Commission of progress made by Member States in implementing the European road safety action programme;
 3. Urges the Commission to propose in its mid-term review a comprehensive and permanent EU road safety framework in which all relevant areas of road safety are detailed, targets and accompanying measures for the EU and Member States are presented and progress is measured against the targets and widely published on a yearly basis;
 4. Regrets that the abovementioned Commission Communication on the European road safety action programme did not include an evaluation of the Second Road Safety Action Programme (1997-2001), as an evaluation is essential to avoid the repetition of errors; furthermore, regrets the fact that the Communication failed to address the particular road safety problems of urban areas;
 5. Calls on the Commission to develop a long-term road safety concept, going beyond 2010 and describing the required steps leading to the avoidance of all fatalities and serious injuries caused by road accidents ('Vision Zero');
 6. Considers that the Commission should promote a move towards public transport and soft modes of non-motorised road transport with a view to improving road safety and considers furthermore that a clear framework of political support is necessary in this regard;
 7. Is of the view that exchange of best practice and coordination of common policies call for enhanced policy coordination, the dissemination of irrefutable data so as to place poor performers under pressure and a more structured approach than has been the case so far; considers that the vital tasks for which a common approach is needed include, for instance, the following:
 - collecting, analysing and publishing data as well as safety-performance indicators,
 - harmonising accident statistics (and their subsequent inclusion in a EU database),
 - conducting Community-wide road safety campaigns,
 - promoting research programmes and possibly introducing new technologies in close cooperation with industry and other stakeholders,
 - enhancing cross-border information exchange and audits on the enforcement of Community legislation e.g. on driving times and rest periods in road transport, in order to stimulate more uniform interpretation and application of that legislation;
 8. Asks the Commission to report to the European Parliament within two years on what institutional setting would be the most appropriate, in terms of independence and expertise, for evaluating and fostering progress on road safety;
 9. Calls on the Council Presidency to host the 3rd Verona Conference in 2005 and initiate

- the Verona Process, incorporating it into the proposed EU road safety framework; expects the Verona Process to help create the necessary political leadership, as did the Cardiff or Lisbon processes, by encouraging top-level political decision makers to strongly commit themselves to reducing road accidents; furthermore, considers that performance indicators and peer reviews conducted by Member States can be efficient if used to "name, shame and fame" and thus create political pressure to reach targeted safety levels;
10. Points out that high-level engagement with regard to road safety can - as recently demonstrated in France, where a campaign launched in 2002 reduced the number of fatalities by 30% over two years - bring about significant results in a short time; calls for a higher level of political commitment to road safety across the EU;
 11. Welcomes the fact that the European Road Safety Charter so clearly demonstrates that road safety is a shared responsibility and provides a means for the stakeholders concerned to undertake commitments; is concerned, however, that the Charter has not attracted as many adherents or publicity as initially foreseen; proposes that the Charter be promoted by a campaign organised jointly at European and national level to publicise the commitments undertaken; calls for adequate financial resources to be committed also by the Community Institutions and for a strengthened communication strategy to be developed so as to attract the interest of a greater number of players, such as SMEs, and to disseminate best practice in each field; calls for yearly road safety awards to be given to best performers at highly publicised events; invites the Commission to study the possibility of reaching individual citizens by means of personal road safety commitments;
 12. Stresses the importance of the buyers of transport services participating actively in the work to improve road safety and calls on the Commission to do everything it can to ensure that buyers of transport services demand that their suppliers meet road safety requirements; calls on the European, national, regional and local bodies responsible to require a plan of action in the area of road safety from the undertakings from which they buy transport services; calls on the Commission to do what it can to ensure that the European road safety charter serve to issue transport undertakings with a certificate certifying that they meet the road safety requirements;
 13. Is convinced that only an integrated approach involving all aspects of road safety, namely all road users and all users and purchasers of transport services and especially the driver (physical condition, training, behaviour), the vehicle (its equipment, safety regulations, maintenance) and the infrastructure (condition and maintenance of road networks, the intensity of road use, road building, signs) – together with incentives to make greater use of public transport – and effective legislation in the Member States, can lead to significant and lasting results;
 14. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and their regional authorities to focus their road safety education, legislation and control measures on higher-risk groups;
 15. Considers that thorough and high-quality training for drivers, instructors and law enforcement officers is of great importance; calls on the Commission to promote training, as early as in primary schools so as to reduce the death rate among the young,

- as well as life-long driver education with due regard to the needs of specific groups such as the elderly, disabled people or immigrants; supports Community-wide campaigns especially targeting the most frequent offenders and putting emphasis on the most serious causes of death such as speeding, drink-driving or the failure to use seat belts; calls for the rapid introduction of the European driving licence not least with a view to enabling the physical and mental faculties of drivers and their driving skills to be checked over time;
16. Expressly supports the Commission's efforts to investigate, in the area of commercial freight transport, the impact of the increasing use of small commercial vehicles on road safety in connection with training, driving and rest times and speed-limiting devices; calls on the Commission to forward the results of this examination to the European Parliament as quickly as possible, if necessary in conjunction with a legislative proposal;
 17. Recalls that many fatalities are caused by driver fatigue, as has been demonstrated by a British study³ which found that fatigue is the cause of around 20% of accidents on long journeys on trunk roads and motorways; calls on the Commission to publish statistics on the overall situation in Europe and to support measures to counter this problem;
 18. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and their regional authorities to pay particular attention to the protection and safety of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists;
 19. Is worried about the safety of those vulnerable road users; including young people, for whom the death rate is particularly high; notes that the risk of death in motorcycle or moped travel is 17 times higher than in car travel and that walking or cycling is up to nine times riskier; stresses that safety needs to be significantly improved not only for car occupants but also for vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists; highlights the need to focus on road safety education, legislation and control measures on higher-risk groups through a more holistic approach; calls on the Commission to propose effective measures to ensure that all vulnerable road users benefit from maximum protection - such as hazard warning lights for the safety of two-wheeled vehicles; maintains that all road users should be made aware of the risks and of ways to reduce them; welcomes the EU-funded New Programme for the Assessment of Child Seats (NPACS) that establishes harmonised test and rating protocols; calls on the Commission to investigate whether child safety could be given higher priority in the Community road safety policy, whether extra attention to pedestrian safety could be brought to bear in European New Car Assessment Programme (EuroNCAP) crash tests and in the introduction of the second phase of Directive 2003/102/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 relating to the protection of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users before and in the event of a collision with a motor vehicle and amending Council Directive 70/156/EEC⁴;
 20. Considers that proper, regular enforcement is of crucial importance for the improvement of road safety;

³ <http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/>

⁴ OJ L 321, 6.12.2003, p. 15.

21. Points out that enforcing compliance with existing road traffic rules would dramatically improve road safety as most accidents are the result of the non-respect of traffic rules; especially emphasises the importance of compliance with speed, blood alcohol limits, medicine and drug intake as well as with rules on the use of seat belts and helmets noting that these, primarily fall within the competence of the Member States but are in urgent need of coordination and dissemination of best practice; especially welcomes the Recommendation of the European Commission of a maximum alcohol level of 0.5 mg/ml and urges all Member States to adopt this maximum limit; urges Member States to implement swiftly the Commission's Recommendation of 6 April 2004 on enforcement⁵; calls on the Commission to monitor the implementation of the Recommendation and, as necessary, to lend support to Member States which do not succeed in implementing the Recommendation; calls on the Commission to report, in its mid-term review of the Action Programme, on the level of implementation; calls on the Commission, on the basis of this evaluation, to propose the necessary legislative measures of a binding nature in the area of maximum alcohol levels (in line with the European Parliament recommendation of 0.5 mg/ml for adults and 0.2mg/ml for novice drivers) and the use of safety-belts;
22. Is aware that cross-border enforcement of road traffic law remains very unsatisfactory owing to the lack of any uniform system by means of which the authorities of one Member State are able to prosecute offenders from other Member States⁶ urges the Commission to outline a proposal for a workable Community-wide campaign to ensure that drivers obey road traffic rules in whichever Member State they are driving; urges the Commission to outline a proposal for a workable Community-wide approach to enable the Member States to follow up offences and penalties imposed; notes that, as regards financial penalties, both the basis for possible legislation⁷ and the necessary framework for an information exchange system⁸ have been prepared;
23. Welcomes the idea of introducing compulsory harmonised pictograms on medical packaging, based on the European classification of drugs according to their effects;
24. Points out the danger of blind spots; calls for rapid, low-cost measures for the fitting of lorries with mirrors to eliminate blind spots; calls on the Commission to consider the need for and feasibility of revising Community legislation in order to enable manufacturers to introduce central A pillars offering a better field of vision; calls for the fitting of articulated lorries with "front view mirrors" in particular, so as to counteract the blind spot for drivers at pedestrian crossings;

⁵ Police enforcement of rules covering speeding, drink driving and the use of seat belt alone can help avoid 6 000 fatalities and 14 000 injuries by 2010, according to Commission estimates.

⁶ An illustration of this is that in its first four months of operation, approximately 25% of the violations recorded by the French national speed enforcement system, which started in 2003, were committed by vehicles registered outside France (VERA 2 2004:1), while these vehicles represent only 10% of the overall traffic.

⁷ Council Framework Decision 2005/214/JHA of 24 February 2005 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to financial penalties (OJ L 76, 22.3.2005, p. 16).

⁸ EUCARIS is a system based on a multilateral treaty of 29 June 2000. It is an infrastructure through which participating countries can search databases of other countries which hold driving licence and/or vehicle information (www.eucaris.com). RESPER is the Driving Licence network being set up the Commission and Council to share information and data on all European Driving Licences.

25. Recalls that a newer car fleet would also be a safer one; regrets that the Commission Communication on the taxation of passenger cars in the European Union (COM(2002)0431) and the subsequent resolution adopted by the European Parliament⁹ have not led to the suggested replacement of registration taxes by annual road taxes, thus forfeiting an improvement in the functioning of the internal market and a faster introduction of newer and safer cars; calls on the Commission to put forward incentive programmes for the renewal of the vehicle fleet, including agricultural vehicles, which would bring clear benefits not only in terms of road safety and the environment but also in terms of industrial development; to this end, calls on the Commission to assess the effect of the increased use of 4x4 vehicles and of other vehicles intended for other purposes (quads, buggies, etc.) on the accident rate and to put forward measures to reduce the risks posed by them;
26. Is keen to preserve the cultural heritage represented by historic vehicles; therefore urges that planned legislation should take into consideration any unintentional but potentially negative effects on the use - and thus also the preservation - of historic vehicles;
27. Recalls that an incident-prone road network and a road network which does not minimise the consequences of accidents is a major safety hazard; recognises that roads should be upgraded to accommodate current traffic levels and built according to standards which take into account the needs of all road users, including the more vulnerable ones; strongly favours the endeavours of the Commission to introduce a harmonised definition of black spots, Community signs, motorist information, and counter-measures;
28. Regards a framework directive on safe infrastructure management as a useful tool for implementing an integrated approach to road safety; considers that such a directive should establish which operational procedures are required at the design, construction and operational stages of new and existing roads to ensure that they meet all safety standards, encourage national programmes to find solutions for road sections which present a high risk of accidents, in particular by doing away with level crossings, and contribute to setting up expert networks enabling "best in Europe" approaches to safe road design and management; stresses that the Member States should systematically take account of the safety of all drivers (of motorcycles, bicycles, heavy vehicles, etc.) and of accident prevention when designing and building roads;
29. Urges the Commission to pay more attention to coordinating the European road safety action programme with the Environmental Action Programme, and suggests the inclusion of safety and environmental criteria in assessments for funding the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T); proposes the basic harmonisation of road signs and information as a first step towards a European system of road signs with uniform colour, shape, typeface and symbols, followed by the equipment of roads with intelligent traffic management and information systems;
30. Notes the potential of the EuroTest platform to foster the development of a range of Community mobility assessment and benchmarking programmes for mobility infrastructure products and services and to raise citizens' awareness; especially

⁹ OJ C 83 E, 2.4.2004, p. 191.

welcomes the EuroRAP (European Road Assessment Programme) and EuroTAP (European Tunnel Assessment Programme); calls for the swift extension, of EuroRAP and EuroTAP programmes to all Member States and all major roads and tunnels as well as for the publication of best practice guidelines; supports the idea of allocating 'safety points' to all major EU roads in accordance with EU guidelines;

31. Notes the findings of the EuroTest 2005 road signs survey, which revealed that 91% of motorists want greater harmonisation of road signs across Europe in order to improve road safety; calls on the Commission to respond by taking effective measures to improve traffic signing systems and driver behaviour and the provision of information to drivers in this respect; calls on the Commission to launch an initiative to ensure that the UN Convention of 8 November 1968 on Road Signs and Signals is interpreted in the same way throughout the EU; urges the Commission to investigate identified problems such as the over-abundance of road signs and the deficient understanding of signs; favours the provision of user-friendly and up-to-date information about the traffic signing systems used in the Member States, thus facilitating cross-border traffic; maintains that such information should be made easily accessible via an EU internet website available in all official EU languages;
32. Regrets the fact that the common emergency number 112 is not known to all Europeans; calls on the Commission and the Member States to evaluate current awareness of the single European emergency number on the part of the European public and the quality of the services provided to citizens in distress via this number; invites the Commission and the Member States to propose measures based on that evaluation to improve the situation in the EU;
33. Calls for an ex-ante cost-efficiency analysis for every action having a considerable financial impact and every major action to be undertaken; recommends that, when the benefit is likely to be insignificant, the Commission explain why it has come to its conclusion; notes that it is sensible to involve the Member States in the assessment of whether a measure should be implemented;
34. Draws attention to the role which insurance companies may have in reducing road accidents in commercial traffic; differential premiums are an appropriate way of motivating haulage firms to prioritise road safety and thereby to reduce the number of road accidents;
35. Regrets that the Third Road Safety Action Programme does not particularly highlight the road safety problems in densely populated areas and that the ways in which public transport can contribute to reducing the number of road accidents is not mentioned; is convinced of the enormous potential impact of the sharing of best practice for urban areas all over Europe; calls for strengthened action for spreading best practices and for intensifying research; in this context, underlines the major contribution to road safety of developing common standards concerning road geometry, infrastructure design and traffic signs;
36. Is aware that many promising technologies cannot be introduced immediately; calls, therefore, on the Commission to propose a list of priority areas in which technological research should be focused as well as a road map for their introduction; insists that both

- the priority list and the road map should be established only when a thorough cost-benefit analysis has been carried out; calls for these priority activities to cover the short, medium and long term and to be seamlessly included in the Verona process;
37. Considers that technologies such as telematics offer, in the long term, the possibility of eliminating fatal accidents almost totally; calls, therefore, for intensive research and cooperation between all stakeholders in order to promote the speedy introduction of the most promising technologies;
 38. Is aware of the fact that introducing many new technologies may prove to be costly and that new car buyers are not always able or willing to pay the full cost even though the socio-economic cost savings would be higher than the added cost to the vehicle; calls on the Commission to define, together with the Member States (and at the same time safeguarding the functioning of the internal market), fiscal and other incentives to accelerate the introduction of effective solutions and enhance their introduction through a reformed and more exhaustive EuroNCAP;
 39. Is of the view that out of the huge selection of technologies the following solutions should receive particular attention and be considered:
 - Seat belt reminders and advanced restraint systems: notes that in Sweden, 95% of car occupants wear their seatbelts while half of all those killed were not wearing their seatbelts; supports the compulsory fitting of seat belt reminders for driver seats in all new vehicles with due exceptions for urban public transport, and the extension of such reminders to passenger seats;
 - Electronic Stability Control (ESC): points out that worldwide research is unanimous of the significant life saving potential of vehicle stability control systems such as ESC¹⁰; supports the rapid introduction of ESC systems - possibly by a voluntary agreement - as well as the development of an internationally harmonised validation test for vehicle stability systems;
 - Speed limitation systems: notes the possibilities of speed reduction technologies through information to the driver, user selectable speed limiters and Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA), which could reduce crashes by around 35% as a compulsory and intervening system¹¹; calls for speed alert systems in cars and eventually the introduction of ISA where seen appropriate by national authorities; favours common technical standards as well as action to make EU-wide speed limit data available for digital maps;
 - Alcolocks: notes that alcohol-related road accidents total about 10.000 every year; urges the Commission to stimulate the introduction of reliable alcolocks; sees merit in a step-by-step approach starting with rehabilitation measures for repeat offenders, voluntary measures and commercial transports;

¹⁰ US research by the National Highway Safety Administration suggests that there could be a reduction of 30% in deaths in single car crashes if all cars were equipped with ESC.

¹¹ Intelligent Transportation Systems and Road Safety, ETSC 1999.

- eCall: recalls that eCall (emergency call) has the potential to greatly reduce the number of fatalities, the severity of injuries and stress in post-crash situations, by speeding up the response to emergencies; welcomes the Action Plan for equipping new cars with e-call by 2009, and calls for this to be extended, if deemed cost-effective, to passenger vehicles and to vehicles for the transport of dangerous goods;
40. Supports the introduction of a revised, comprehensive EuroNCAP by strengthening cooperation with the Commission through additional financial support and more active participation in the work of the programme; calls for EuroNCAP to incorporate other passive safety aspects, such as whiplash protection and the compatibility of vehicles in the event of car-on-car impact; notes, furthermore, that active safety systems (such as ESC) are still a largely untried possibility with great potential for the improvement of road safety and that the most promising solutions should be incorporated into the EuroNCAP procedure;
41. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. Road Safety in Europe

The incredible mobility offered by the road network is indispensable for a well-functioning society. Unfortunately, there is a darker side to the success story: Road traffic accidents remain the main cause of death for the under 50 year's age group. Additionally, the direct and indirect costs in EU25 are around €200 billion, i.e. 2% of EU GNP with 43.000 fatalities estimated for 2004. Without any doubt there is a strong case for vigorous action to promote road safety. The trend in the enlarged EU has been positive, but gives no reason for complacency:

Over three decades (1970-2000) road traffic has tripled while the number of fatalities has been halved. However, the situation remains unacceptable. It is also to be noted that road safety records of most of the ten new Member States are lagging far behind the EU15. The gap between the best- and worst-performing Member States is widening making the Baltic States 8 times as unsafe as the UK.

2. a. The 3rd Road Safety Action Programme

The Third Road Safety Action Programme was published in June 2003. It sets up EU-wide targets for the period 2003-2010. The Commission's Programme has identified 60 measures to be implemented at EU level, most of them of non-legislative nature. In its Communication¹² the European Commission proposes setting as a target halving the number of fatalities down to 25.000 until 2010. The very long term objective is the Nordic "vision zero".

b. The Systems Approach

The so-called systems approach to road safety recognises that, the driver (as well as other road users), the vehicle and the road infrastructure make up three components of a dynamic system. Within this system safety is a shared responsibility that should involve all the stakeholders. Successful road safety management should try to identify all sources of design weakness that contribute to crash occurrence or to making crashes fatal or serious so as to mitigate the consequences¹³. It also recognises that a degree of road user error is inevitable and should be "tolerated" by making the system as a whole more "forgiving".

	Driver	Vehicle	Road
Pre-crash			

¹² European Road Safety Action Programme Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility (COM (2003) 311 final)

¹³ This conceptual framework for road safety follows the matrix developed by William Hadden, former Administrator of the US National Highway Safety Administration.

Crash			
Post Crash			

Progress in road safety in industrialised countries since 1970 is mainly derived from systematic improvements across the matrix involving:

- Safer drivers (enforcement of speed limits, drink-driving laws, improved driver training and licensing etc);
- Safer cars (crash test standards, air bags, seatbelts etc.);
- Safer roads (road design and maintenance, safety barriers, vertical and horizontal signalling, safety audits etc.).

3. Recommendations

All in all, your rapporteur welcomes the Communication on the Road Safety Action Programme and its worthy target of halving deaths on our roads. The numerous initiatives in the area of eSafety promise also substantial improvements in the future. Concentrating our efforts on some key areas will already mean tremendous progress.

Your rapporteur considers that legislation at EU level should provide added value over and above what national means can provide. In almost each and every topic, and in particular where there is no room for EU legislation, there is nevertheless a great potential for EU-wide action. EU leadership can ensure a policy environment favourable to the implementation of road safety in national action plans.

a. Actions to Be Undertaken

A Comprehensive European Road Safety Enhancement Framework

Your rapporteur suggests a comprehensive and permanent EU Road Safety Framework to be designed by the Commission within the imminent mid-term review of the Programme. To evaluate progress, performance indicators must be part of the Framework. A "name, fame and shame" approach demonstrating who is reaching or missing the targets is liable to create necessary political pressure. This Framework should be closely integrated with the Verona Process of the Council and be regularly updated in order to remain effective, adaptive and ambitious enough. Close cooperation with all relevant stakeholders should be provided for.

The Framework would necessarily need to contain a clear division of responsibilities, challenging but realistic timeframes and prioritisation based on cost-effectiveness. To reach the targets the Commission, or the European Road Safety Agency, should prepare a list of priority actions after a thorough impact assessment, feasibility, collateral damage and benefits. A detailed time schedule for short term, medium term and long term activities at EU and Member State level should also be stated in an unambiguous way.

European Road Safety Agency vs. European Road Safety Observatory?

The Commission has proposed a Road Safety Observatory that will collect, analyse and publish any possible data and scientific knowledge on road safety. However, that can only be a first step and only a small part of the tasks of the Agency. The Agency would establish rules and norms, adopt type approval schemes, operate cross-border information systems (driving licence, vehicle registration) and most importantly draft and disseminate best practice guidelines within a structured framework.

Repeating the demand already expressed by the European Parliament, your rapporteur favours the establishment of an Agency, which could be entrusted with all the above-mentioned tasks.

Action for the Short and the Long Run

Actions should be carefully time-tabled: improvement in behaviour must be our short term priority since fast results can be obtained thanks to enforcement and campaigns making road users comply with the law. Thereafter measures need to be taken to ensure sustainable road safety by acting on training and education of users, on the vehicle park and on the road infrastructure.

In the longer term technological solutions can offer remedies to most safety hazards. Therefore, it seems fit to put our efforts on furthering such technologies which can dramatically reduce accident risk or the consequences of accidents.

New technologies should preferably be based on world-wide standards. They must be conceived so that the vehicles possessing the technology can easily co-exist with ones without the technology. To make the introduction of novel technologies attractive, the Member States could be allowed to lower VAT, road charges or other taxation for vehicles fulfilling certain EU guidelines (e.g. based on the European New Car Assessment Programme, EuroNCAP). Any such programme must not impinge on the single market.

The eSafety Programme¹⁴ is an excellent initiative for developing and introducing safety technologies. It provides for structured co-operation between industry, the Commission and other stakeholders and should consequently be encouraged.

b. Specific Areas of the Systems Approach

Behaviour

Since most of road accidents are due to violations of essential rules, behaviour is by far the issue offering the highest potential for short term results. If everybody followed all traffic rules, road fatalities would be cut by more than 90 %. If everybody wore a seat belt, complied with the legal speed limits and did not drive under the influence of alcohol, fatalities would be

¹⁴ COM (2003) 542

cut by more than 60 %¹⁵ and we will already achieve the Commission's target of halving road deaths.

Enforcement is however mainly an issue for the Member States. These actions must be conducted within a framework that fully respects the principle of subsidiarity. Thus the approach taken by the Commission in its Recommendation¹⁶ - calling for national plans based on best practice in the enforcement of speed, alcohol and seat belt legislation - is laudable.

Vehicle

Over less than ten years vehicles have achieved huge improvements in passive safety (EuroNCAP since 1997 and the SARAC project). Even though there is room for further improvement in passive safety (e.g. seat belt reminders, day time running lights, elimination of dead angles, conspicuity of heavy goods vehicles, better pedestrian protection), the future lies in the improvement of active safety thanks to the wide implementation of electronic devices ("smart cars"). However, since - without specific incentives - these innovations will only slowly penetrate the market; their impact will be very progressive. In speeding up the process and sequencing it optimally the eSafety Programme is of utmost importance.

It is also a fact that a younger car fleet would by default also mean a drastically safer one. It is therefore regrettable that a recent Commission Communication¹⁷ has not given rise to the suggested replacement of registration taxes by annual circulation taxes. Such a tax overhaul would improve the functioning of the internal market and enhance the introduction of newer and safer cars.

The cost of safety-enhancing technologies ranges from negligible to fairly high, and so does availability and acceptability to the public. The Commission should study their socio-economic impact as related to the cost and rank them. Steps should then be taken in consultation with the stakeholders, e.g. within the eSafety Forum, to identify the best way to implement them in practice, either through the type-approval system or through alternative means such as voluntary commitments and tax incentives. The result should be a roadmap for implementation over the foreseeable future.

Infrastructure

The road infrastructure has not at all kept up with traffic growth. Roads should be upgraded to

¹⁵ Elvik&Asmussen 2000 estimate that full compliance to speed limits would reduce fatalities by 40% in Sweden; According to Nilsson (2001) Japanese & Danish statistics indicate that fatality risk is decreased by 75-80% - in Europe the proportion of fatalities for not wearing seatbelt is 15-60%. Fatalities where drivers are under the influence of alcohol range usually between 5-20% of fatalities; here the risk reduction would be more than 90%. Naturally one can not add these up as often the same person speeds, is drunk and does not wear seat belt i.e. 40% + (12...48%) + (5...20) but it would be safe to say that in EU15 the effect would be more than 60%. In addition if people followed the give way regulations, signals, always maintain such a speed that the vehicle can be stopped in the area currently seen, etc. the effect would surely be more than 90%.

¹⁶ 2004/345/EC

¹⁷ COM (2002) 431

accommodate the current traffic levels. Your rapporteur thinks that safety improvements to the road network get far too little resources both at national and European level when public funds are shared between different transport modes.

Even the most modern infrastructure must be built according to the limitations of the driver. Driver errors can be avoided and their consequences mitigated by means of a systematic inclusion of road safety issues at any stage of the design, construction and operation of roads. The needed safety impact assessments, audits and inspections are very cost effective. Therefore, as it is already the case for environmental issues, safety issues should become a prerequisite for road construction and road operation. A European framework Directive on safe infrastructure management applicable to the TEN road network would contribute to the emergence of a culture of safe road engineering without impinging on subsidiarity. Such a Directive is thus supported by your rapporteur since it is a crucial missing link to cover all domains of road safety.

c. The Future

Much has been achieved, but of course setting targets is not enough. Time has come for the Commission to fully implement the Road Safety Action Programme. Thereafter new priorities must be identified and forcefully tackled, preferably in a structured and systematic way as suggested by your rapporteur. Much improvement potential lies in the following issues:

- Young road users and their education,
- Introduction of cost-effective intelligent safety systems,
- Motorcycle riding and other vulnerable road users,
- The particular issues linked with the less performing Member States.

Though the economist John Maynard Keynes once said that "*In the long term we are all dead.*" it is our duty to make the roads safer through both short and long term measures. The safety of our children and grandchildren depends on our actions today. Thus one thing is clear: we must not collect cheap points by avoiding necessary but sometimes unpopular action. No single death on the road is for a good cause!

PROCEDURE

Title	The European Road Safety Action Programme: Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility
Procedure number	2004/2162(INI)
Motion(s) for resolution(s) considered	
Basis in Rules of Procedure	Rule 45
Committee responsible	TRAN
Date of decision to draw up report	1.9.2004
Authorisation Date announced in plenary	28.10.2004
Committee(s) asked for opinion(s) Date announced in plenary	ITRE ENVI 28.10.2004 28.10.2004
Not delivering opinion(s) Date of decision	ITRE ENVI 24.11.2004 30.11.2004
Enhanced cooperation Date announced in plenary	
Motion(s) for resolution(s) included in report	
Rapporteur(s) Date appointed	Ari Vatanen 1.9.2004
Previous rapporteur(s)	
Discussed in committee	16.3.2005 25.4.2005
Date adopted	15.6.2005
Result of final vote	for: 30 against: 5 abstentions: 5
Members present for the final vote	Inés Ayala Sender, Philip Bradbourn, António Costa, Michael Cramer, Armando Dionisi, Petr Duchoň, Saïd El Khadraoui, Luis de Grandes Pascual, Mathieu Grosch, Ewa Hedkvist Petersen, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Georg Jarzembowski, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Jaromír Kohlíček, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Jörg Leichtfried, Bogusław Liberadzki, Evelin Lichtenberger, Erik Meijer, Michael Henry Nattrass, Seán Ó Neachtain, Josu Ortuondo Larrea, Willi Piecyk, Luís Queiró, Reinhard Rack, Gilles Savary, Ingo Schmitt, Ulrich Stockmann, Gary Titley, Georgios Toussas, Marta Vincenzi, Corien Wortmann-Kool
Substitutes present for the final vote	Alessandro Battilocchio, Zsolt László Becsey, Den Dover, Jelko Kacin, Sepp Kusstatscher, Jan Olbrycht, Hannu Takkula, Ari Vatanen
Substitutes under Rule 178(2)	

present for the final vote	
Date tabled – A6	1.7.2005 A6-0225/2005
Comments	