

Road Safety under the Spanish Chairmanship of the Presidency of the EU

ETSC welcomes the news that road safety will be a priority under land transport during the Spanish Presidency of the EU. Strong leadership is needed at a time when the EU is preparing its Road Safety Policy for the next decade. Spain should lead the coalition for the adoption of ambitious yet achievable targets for 2020 and for the general policy objectives to make EU roads the safest in the world.

Spain is a source of inspiration to other Member States proving that substantial road safety improvement can be achieved over a period of just few years, regardless of the initial starting point and economic background. Strong political leadership allowed for the adoption of more effective legislation. The Spanish example also provides a good testimony on how the EU can help to support and inspire a country to improve. The adoption of the EU common target and the 3rd Road Safety Action Plan was the tipping point for the adoption of the Spanish strategy in 2004. Spain also carefully applied the Commission's recommendations on enforcement. As a result, Spain has become one of the most important contributors to the EU reduction target. Since 2001, 59,000 road deaths have been avoided in the EU-27 thanks to the reduction in road deaths, 13% of them in Spain alone. Spain successfully moved from 134 deaths per million population in 2001 down to 68 in 2008.

Spain will have the first Presidency following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and all the important changes this will bring about. Spain must work hard to keep road safety up on the agenda despite these EU institutional changes underway in our policy landscape.

Following a consultation process on the EU's future road safety policy this will be the time when the European Commission will adopt the new reduction target and a new strategy with its 4th Road Safety Action Programme (RSAP) to tackle the challenges of saving lives on Europe's roads beyond 2010 to 2020. When the EU is setting new targets for the next decade, the Spanish Presidency is called to ask the European Commission to strike the balance between what is challenging and what is achievable. New target groups such as children also should not be neglected and the support to Member states in order to set and achieve a 40% reduction for serious injury could also be seen as an essential added value from the European Union. Another important development is also being prepared: the White Paper on Transport Policy to 2020. There must be a strong link between these two important Commission communications. The Spanish Presidency must work towards a strong response from the Council to these two strategic documents.

This Memorandum briefly outlines ETSC's priorities for the Spanish Presidency of the EU and presents our recommendations on key EU policy dossiers

ETSC congratulates Spain for being amongst the best performers in reducing the number of deaths since 2001. With a 44% reduction between 2001 and 2008 Spain is close on the heels of the top three Luxembourg, France and Portugal. ETSC presented Spain with the "2009 Road Safety PIN Award". Spain should try to maintain its progress in road safety and encourage other Member States to reach the shared EU reduction target.

Road Safety Developments in Spain

Spain has seen a rapid improvement of road safety over the past years and has become one of the leading countries in terms of progress towards the European road safety target of halving the number of road deaths in 2010 compared to 2001 figures. A traditional underperformer, Spain has reduced by 44% its death toll in only seven years and consequently, the gap between the EU road safety leaders (Sweden, UK and The Netherlands) and Spain has been considerably diminished. If Spain sustains its efforts, it will stand in 2009, for the first time, below the EU-15 average of road deaths per million population.

This excellent progress made by Spain can be attributed to a coordinated strategy where road safety has been made one of the top priorities of the Spanish political agenda by its Prime Minister Mr. Zapatero since 2004. Under the auspices of the National Road Safety Plan 2004-2008, a national target to reach a -40% reduction by 2008 was set up, quantitative indicators to monitor the progress towards the target were defined and specific responsibilities were clearly attributed to the relevant stakeholders. The introduction of a penalty point system in 2006 and the reform of the Criminal Code in 2007 have provided the legal basis. In parallel, enforcement of traffic offences has been intensified. The media also played an important role in communicating new provisions, raising awareness and gaining public support.

New National Political Goals for the Transport Safety System in Spain

Spain is also set to adopt a new national Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 in the coming months. Objectives will focus on keeping high levels of enforcement on alcohol and speed and include some new topics such as improving road safety for Powered Two Wheelers and developing a strategy for work related road safety. A special Strategic Plan just for Powered Two Wheelers has already been adopted in February of 2009 with 36 specific measures. Although there is no numerical target the strategy aims to “reverse the trend” of current high numbers of deaths of Powered Two Wheelers in Spain. Notwithstanding the overall reduction in the total number of road deaths the number of PTW users who died on Spanish roads has not decreased in the last five years. Today it accounts for one sixth of all traffic deaths. Additionally, 40% of the Spanish deaths occurring at work in 2007 were on the roads. A new strategy to ensure the safety of employees when they drive “at” work or “to” and “from” work needs to be put into practice to sustain the positive trend started in 2004.

4th RSAP and beyond 2010

The Spanish Presidency should consider as its highest political priority to support the European Commission in its launch of the 4th Road Safety Action Programme. As Spain prepares to launch its future strategy and target setting the EU could benefit from the priorities and discussions ongoing in Spain.

ETSC launched its **“Blueprint for the EU’s 4th Road Safety Action Programme 2010-2020”** and hopes it will make a valuable contribution to the debate. ETSC proposes a shared target of 40% reduction of deaths with a further target to reduce injuries with lasting effects in each Member State by 40%. ETSC also recommends the EU to adopt a target of 60% reduction between 2011 and 2020 for child deaths. Alongside these targets a vision is also needed to inspire and motivate all players to work together. ETSC also proposes a vision: “Road Safety as a right and responsibility for all” whereby both mobility and safety should be a fundamental right of EU citizens.

The 4th Road Safety Action Programme should focus its top activities upon the main behavioural causes of death and injuries with lasting effect (speeding, drink driving and lack of seat belt and child safety restraint use) as well as badly designed infrastructure and vehicles. Alongside this the Programme should tackle new emerging trends such as the increasing numbers of motorcyclists among

those killed or injured on the roads. It should work to reap the rewards of reducing speeds and the resulting reductions in road deaths and injuries with lasting effects, as well as in emissions of carbon dioxide.

The DRUID project on driving under the influence of drugs, alcohol and medicines will be published in 2010 and these results should also be taken into account in the next Road Safety Action Programme. Some Member States are already planning a revision of their own legislation according to the 2010 DRUID findings.

The Action Programme needs also to present policy solutions to take on the demographic challenge of an ageing society. The Programme should also ensure that companies and public administrations include road safety into their management parameters when managing their fleets and transport operations.

A new institutional setup with the aim of linking responsibility for implementing the Action Programme and for reaching the 2020 targets is also needed. This includes ETSC’s proposal that every EU Presidency holder, both individually and in their troika formation, should make an effort to focus attention on road safety and ensure a regular meeting of Transport Ministers to concentrate on this topic.

The “Future of Transport” strategy should also reflect some of the key ideas proposed by ETSC for the 4th Road Safety Action Programme and these two future strategy documents should definitely be mutually supporting.

Future of Transport

In 2001, the Commission issued a White Paper setting the agenda for transport policy throughout 2010. Approaching the end of the ten-year period, the European Commission is looking further ahead and defining a vision for the future of transport and mobility, preparing the ground for future policy developments with a ten year perspective up to 2020.

The Commission is now about to summarise the results of the debate on the main challenges and opportunities for the transport sector in the long term (20 to 40 years). The Spanish Presidency should guarantee that safety related issues will not be overlooked by economic and environmental aspects.

As ETSC stated in its contribution, road safety should always be viewed as an integral part of all transport policy considerations and not as a stand-alone issue. Road traffic volume alone is indeed the major single contributing factor to the occurrence of road crashes and related injuries, thus transport policy in respect to modal split is the starting point

for any strategic decision making. Strategic tools such as target setting, planning and programming should provide a general framework for relevant policy making in the long term. Building upon the successful shared responsibility approach, the shift towards attributed responsibility and professionalism should be sought within the future strategy.

There is now a potential to move from compliance as a 'preventer' to compliance as an 'enabler' of the aims of road safety and environmental sustainability. This potential should be fully realised.

Cross Border Enforcement of Traffic Law in the Field of Road Safety

This dossier is now ripe for being reconsidered by the EU Member States and ETSC hopes this will be an important priority for Spain. Following the Irish yes vote for the Lisbon Treaty and with the final signature the ratification process of the Treaty is complete. The new Treaty will make some key changes to both the procedure for adoption of such a text and the likely legal basis for a future Directive on Cross Border Enforcement. The 3rd pillar procedure will change under the new Treaty including instead a new "area of freedom, security and justice" under article 91 of the "Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union", "measures allowing the improvement of transport safety" are explicitly included in the objectives of the Transport policy.

ETSC welcomed the legislative proposal of March 2008 that would allow EU drivers to be identified and thus prosecuted for offences committed in a Member State other than the one where their vehicle is registered. Such a Directive is needed in an increasingly mobile, integrated and enlarged EU, where non-resident drivers make up an ever increasing part of the traffic flow. If road traffic violations are committed EU citizens are entitled to fair and equal treatment in whichever country they are travelling.

As the proposal is being re-drafted, ETSC would like to see that the proposal is extended to include an EU wide reference framework for convergence of enforcement best practices in the areas of speeding, impaired (drug and drink) driving and seat belt use. The Directive should thus encourage all EU Member States to consider improving their quality of enforcement.

ETSC asks Spain to work with its Presidency Trio (Spain, Belgium and Hungary) to pave the way for a renewed discussion on this dossier at the start of 2010 and adoption of a common agreement by the Council in 2010.

Intelligent Transport Systems Directive

After progress made under the Swedish Presidency in the Council the Spanish will have to finalise the agreement with the European Parliament on the ITS Directive. ETSC strongly supports the clear road safety goals set in the Action Plan and in the accompanying framework Directive especially under Articles 3 and 4. The 30th of March Transport Council stressed that the ITS technologies and systems that bring about the greatest injury reduction and life saving potential should be fast-tracked for deployment.

ETSC fully supports this and stresses that the ITS Directive should also promote specific safety relevant technologies in the Member States. We would like to see a specific reference made to the three most important technologies: Intelligent Speed Assistance, Alcohol Interlocks and Seat Belt Reminders for all seats. A link should also be made to the provision of a digital database of speed limits under the Action Plan and Directive. This would be one of the essential ingredients for propelling forward progress of implementing intelligent speed assistance across Europe.

In 2007 17,000 vulnerable road users (pedestrians, cyclists and users of motorised two wheelers) were killed in EU countries as a consequence of road crashes, contributing 40% of all road deaths. Thus, ETSC supports the commitment of the Council to prioritise actions improving VRUs safety in this Action Plan and Directive and asks the Council to take these into special consideration when considering the legislative text.

Improving Work Related Road Safety

In Europe six out of ten work accidents resulting in death are road collisions, including both collisions while driving for work and commuting collisions (Eurogip 2004). ETSC welcomes that this will also feature as one of the priorities of the Spanish Presidency and a priority for action at a national level in Spain. In Spain 40% of the work related accidents resulting in deaths occurred on the roads. As the general number of road deaths is decreasing, the opposite trend is affecting work-related road accidents: +0.9% in the period 1999 to 2004¹.

One effective measure that the Presidency could stress is that all employers prepare a road safety plan. The starting point for any employer should always be to undertake a risk assessment and draw up a road safety action plan, based on priorities identified

in the assessment and as part of occupational health responsibilities (a European Directive requires every employer in Europe to undertake a risk assessment). But equally important, it most often makes sound business sense to draw up and implement a road safety action plan.

The Spanish Presidency could ask the European Commission to consider this as one of the areas for priority in its new Road Safety Action Programme. Practically speaking it could also encourage employers managing fleets (also those of EU institutions and EU Member State public authorities) to purchase vehicles with in vehicle technologies which have high life saving potential. They could also request the adaption of the EU Directive on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles to include in vehicle technologies for safety in public procurement.

ETSC has launched a new project on this topic that could feed into the discussions called PRAISE on Preventing Road Accidents and Injuries for the Safety of Employees (<http://www.etsc.eu/PRAISE.php>). The project aims to advance work-related Road Safety Management and provide the know-how to employers who have to take on that challenge.

Driving Under the Influence of Drugs

Research shows that prevalence of drug and medicine consumption in accidents can reach 15%. Yet there is still no clear picture of the drug-driving phenomenon across Europe according to research of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). In its Blueprint ETSC proposes four steps to be taken in this field. Firstly, the EU should develop a drug driving code of practice for health professionals on advising the public on medication and risks to driving. Secondly, an EU wide campaign should be launched targeting both young drivers for illicit drug use and other drivers about the dangers of prescription medicine and driving. Thirdly, Member States should take steps to ensure that all drivers involved in a fatal collision are tested for drugs. Finally an appropriate classification and labelling of medicines that affect driving ability are needed. The Spanish Presidency could take the initiative to promote traffic law enforcement using saliva testers and the extension of European-wide minimum enforcement requirements for illicit drugs. This should be included in the EC Recommendation or in a future Directive on Traffic Law Enforcement.

¹ Los riesgos viales-laborales y su prevención, Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (2006).

² Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work.

Literature on www.etsc.eu:

ETSC Position on ITS 2009

ETSC Position on Cross Border Enforcement Directive 2009

ETSC Position on the Future of Transport 2009

ETSC Blueprint for a 4th Road Safety Action Programme 2008

ETSC PIN Annual Report 2009

ETSC PRAISE Thematic Report How Can In-Vehicle Safety Equipment Improve Road Safety at Work 2009

The **European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)** is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of transport crashes and casualties in Europe. ETSC seeks to identify and promote effective measures on the basis of international scientific research and best practice. The Council brings together 43 international and national organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.

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