European Transport Safety Council

Vice President Kallas
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels

15 February 2010

RE: Ambitious Road Safety Targets for 2020

Dear Vice President Kallas,

We, the undersigned, are writing to you, as new Commissioner for Transport to urge you to demonstrate strong political will by setting a challenging yet achievable numerical target for the EU to reduce road deaths by 2020. Although the current target for 2010 will not be reached, it has contributed to at least a 30% reduction in deaths over the past decade. The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) believes that the adoption of the target in 2001 has been an essential element in motivating countries and international stakeholders to reduce the number of deaths in the past decade and supporting them in achieving this outcome.

The first Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety adopted a resolution that supported the importance of setting ambitious yet achievable road traffic casualty reduction targets in the framework of a safe systems approach.

Research from across the globe shows that improvements in road safety will only be brought about by adopting a more rational, systematic management approach. This means defining target levels of safety, defining priorities for resources and implementing cost-effective measures according to proven casualty reduction benefit and, regularly monitoring progress. Target setting is a vital part of this approach to improving road safety:

- A shared target at EU level provides a stimulus for EU actions in areas where the Union has exclusive responsibilities for road safety, and for shared activity with Member States on the other aspects of road safety.
- Ambitious, achievable, empirically-derived targets that are based on a comprehensive road safety vision communicate the importance of road safety to the media, the public and other stakeholders.
- Long term road safety visions need interim numerical targets to be realised.
- Targets motivate stakeholders to act and help stakeholders responsible for the road transport system be accountable for achieving defined results. A shared target at European level helps each Member State to see that its road safety improvements are contributing to addressing a Europe-wide problem, anything less could lead to a fragmented and less satisfactory road safety policy.
- Targets sharpen the focus on results and also on the development of system-wide interventions and effective institutional management processes to achieve them.

- The best performing Member States in road safety have used numerical targets in their strategies for many years.
- A shared EU target is helpful for countries to guide them in setting up their national targets and align their national efforts with the European one.
- The EU is still considered as one of the global leaders in road safety. Having adopted a target for the last decade, and not setting one for the next decade would diminish its credibility. As a consequence, the EU would risk leaving the global road safety mainstream.
- The EU has a clear responsibility in guaranteeing a high and uniform level of safety on the European roads.

ETSC's Blueprint for a 4th Road Safety Action Programme proposes a target of reducing road deaths by at least 40% between 2010 and 2020 and serious injuries by at least the same percentage. The proposed targets for reducing road deaths and serious injury by 2020 are based on expert analyses of past trends in numbers of deaths and serious injury, as well as estimated capacity for further improvement.

We thank you very much for considering these important points and look forward to a strong new European Road Safety Programme.

Yours sincerely,

The signatories of this letter are Directors of road safety organisations and supporters from across the ETSC network and beyond.

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Enc. ETSC Blueprint
ETSC 3rd PIN Annual Report Countdown to 2010
ETSC leaflet