

SAFETY MONITOR

ETSC's Newsletter on Transport Safety Policy Developments in the EU

□ Across the Modes	1
□ Road Safety	2
□ Maritime and Inland Waterway Safety	4
□ Air Safety	5
□ Safety of Railways	5
□ International Events Diary	7

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SUMMARY

The Belgian Presidency

- Makes safety a priority and calls for legislative action on safer car fronts

The European Commission

- Proposes to increase road safety budget by nearly half
- Postpones decision on safer car fronts until December
- Proposes legislation to extend speed limitation to all commercial vehicles over 3,5 tonnes.

The European Parliament

- The Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee adopted opinions on: emergency protection, seat belts, working time in road transport, a European maritime safety agency, air occurrence reporting; maritime monitoring and black boxes.

European Transport Safety Council

- Incoming EU Presidency and MEPs back conclusions of new ETSC study urging legislation over weak industry agreement on safer car fronts for pedestrians and cyclists.



ACROSS THE MODES

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Belgian Presidency

Isabelle Durant, incoming chair of the Transport Council of Ministers, announced that the priorities of the Belgian Presidency in transport would be environmental protection, safety and working conditions. In relation to road safety, she said, "The debate focusing on the Third European Road Safety Programme will enable the discussion of issues such as targeted objectives, the elimination of blind spots for heavy good vehicles and the protection of pedestrians in the event of collisions". At a press conference launching a new ETSC study on vehicle safety, she gave her full support to the introduction of a Directive on safer car fronts. Other issues mentioned in the declaration are: lorry drivers working hours, their driving time and training, and the Erika II package. A new initiative would be the equipment of lorries with blind spot mirrors.

Reduction of alcohol-related harm

In June the Council of Ministers (Health) adopted conclusions about a comprehensive Community Strategy to reduce alcohol-

related harm. The European Commission is invited to put forward proposals for such a strategy complementing national actions and to set out a timetable for actions in all relevant policy areas, including transport.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Transport safety budget

The Preliminary Draft Budget for the year 2002 recently proposed by the European Commission shows a large increase in transport safety expenditure. New budgets will be provided for the new Maritime and Aviation Safety Agencies. The Transport Safety budget line, in order to finance a new road safety programme, will be increased by 48% for commitments to 14 million euros. The Parliament's Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee, though not yet informed about the new programme, warmly welcomed this initiative when discussing a Working Document on the 2002 budget by Josu Ortuendo Larrea (Greens, Spain) in June.

ETSC, also, very much welcomes this development.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Emergency protection

In June, the Plenary Session of Parliament adopted a report, by its Environment, Health and Consumer Policy Committee (rapporteur Laura González Álvarez, EUL/NGL, Spain) welcoming a Commission proposal (COM (2000) 593) on emergency protection.

The aim of the Commission proposal is to improve co-ordination and co-operation by encouraging the establishment of networks and training. EU organised assistance would be provided when requested by national authorities intervening in natural or technological disasters. The initiative was taken after the recent maritime disasters creating enormous oil spills.



ROAD SAFETY

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Safer car fronts for pedestrians and cyclists

European Commissioners decided on 11th July to delay the decision on whether to accept a voluntary agreement for a further 6 months. They will now consult the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

ETSC notes that both institutions voted in the last 12 months for early legislation. Knowing that every month of delay means a missed opportunity to save 170 lives, this further 6-month delay comes at a very high cost.

Speed limitation devices

In June the Commission published a proposal for a Directive to extend the mandatory installation and use of speed limiting devices in light commercial vehicles. All heavy goods vehicles have been under such an obligation since 1 January 1998 as a consequence of the Directive 92/6/EEC. Speed limitation will be required for vehicles in excess of 3.5 tonnes. This means that all N2 vehicles will be covered, as well as buses and coaches (M2 and M3). The lead-time will be 1.1.04 for new vehicles and 1.1.06 for retrofit.

The proposal (COM (2001) 135) is based on a report published simultaneously on the effects of the current regulation. These have proved to be positive for both road safety and environmental protection. Problems with tampering and even non-installment could be reduced by better enforcement.

Although positives effects, and on a much larger scale, are to be expected from speed limiters on passenger cars, the Commission says that this would be a highly controversial and political issue. However, the ongoing work with intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) might lay the ground for future possibilities with this category of vehicle.

The proposed extension of speed limitation to lighter commercial vehicles was one of the priorities in the 2000 Road Safety Communication of the Commission and is fully supported by ETSC.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Professional driver certification

In the May Plenary Session, the European Parliament adopted the report on professional driver attestation by the Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee (rapporteur Rijk van Dam, see Safety Monitor 36). Transport Commissioner Loyola de Palacio accepted the compromise brought forward by the Committee to include EU drivers after two years.

Dangerous goods

Also in the May Plenary, on a recommendation by the Industry, External Trade, Research and Energy Committee, Parliament gave its assent to the accession of the EU to the UN ECE Regulation 105 on the approval of vehicles intended for the carriage of dangerous goods. This is an extension of the accession to the Agreement of the UN ECE in 1998, and the same procedures will apply as are in use in the EU for other Regulations since that accession.

In June the Council of Ministers adopted the accession to this and several other UN/ECE Regulations on motor vehicles.

Seat belts

The Plenary Session of Parliament held in Brussels by the end of May, adopted the report on seat belts by Ewa Hedkvist-Petersen (PSE, S, see Safety Monitor 36). Almost all amendments were acceptable to Transport Commissioner Loyola de Palacio and were subsequently adopted.

However, regrettably this proposal has since run into difficulty in the Council and the Commission is considering the next steps.

Working time

In June, the Plenary Session adopted a Recommendation for second reading by the Employment and Social Affairs Committee on the Council Common Position on working time for road transport workers (see Safety Monitor 35 and 36).

The main aim expressed by the rapporteur, Stephen Hughes (PSE, UK) was to make Conciliation talks possible between the Parliament and the Council on the recent exclusion of self-employed drivers from the new Directive by the Council. He feared that this exclusion would lead to a massive transfer of drivers to self-employed status, so that the Directive would have an adverse effect on social protection of workers. ETSC has also expressed concern about this exclusion on road safety grounds.

As a compromise the Parliament was prepared to allow a temporary exclusion of self-employed drivers, on the condition that they would be included automatically after three years. The Parliament also wanted to delete the derogation on night work in the interests of drivers' health and safety, and to tighten the text in several other cases where the Council had omitted aspects of the original proposal considered vital by the Committee.

Motor vehicle insurance

The July Plenary Session of Parliament adopted an own-initiative report of the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market by Willy Rothley (D, PSE) on improving the legal protection of accident victims. The report requests the Commission to bring forward a proposal, giving detailed recommendations for its content. Commissioner Frits Bolkestein welcomed the Resolution, announcing his intention to act speedily to bring the existing Directive up to date.



MARITIME & INLAND WATERWAY SAFETY

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

Loading of bulk carriers

In June, the Council adopted a common position on the proposal concerning loading and unloading of bulk carriers (see Safety Monitor 32).

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Black boxes - Ship inspections

In May, the Plenary Session adopted the recommendation for second reading by Mark Watts (PES, UK) maintaining Parliament's wish to see the fitment of black boxes in all ships over 300 tonnes (see Safety Monitor 36). Before the vote Commissioner Chris Patten had stated that the Commission was willing, in principle, to support the Parliament in the Conciliation talks to come.

In the same Session, the recommendation for second reading by Josu Ortuendo Larrea (Greens, Spain) on liability for inadequate ship inspection was adopted (see Safety Monitor 36).

Maritime Safety Agency

In its June Plenary session, the European Parliament adopted the report by its Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee on a European Maritime Safety Agency (rapporteur Emmanouil Mastorakis, PES, GR, see Safety Monitor 36).

Parliament believes the Agency should be more independent of the European Commission than had been proposed. Also it did not want to see representatives from the Parliament on its Administrative Board in view of the need for the proper separation of powers. Commissioner Loyola de Palacio

agreed to the latter and to some of the other amendments.

Maritime monitoring

The June Plenary Session also adopted the report by Dirk Sterckx (ELDR, B) of the Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee on the proposed Directive establishing an EU monitoring, control and information system for maritime traffic (part of the Erika II package, COM (2000) 802, see Safety Monitor 35 and 36).

The report supports and, in several places, strengthens the Commission proposal. It proposes that in exceptionally poor weather and sea conditions threatening the environment or the life of crew and passengers, the competent national authorities should inform the master of the ship intending to leave or to enter a port and provide appropriate advice. The master would have the right not to follow such advice but would have to state the reasons for his decision. The authorities, however, would retain the right to suspend the departure or entry of the ship. Member States would have to guarantee appropriate assistance from sea-going tugs for ships in difficulties off the coasts.

Commissioner Palacio de Loyola was able to support several amendments, but not the amendment allowing certain technical exemptions for black boxes on older ships, which had been strongly opposed by Mark Watts (PES, UK). This amendment was rejected.



AIR SAFETY

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

European Aviation Safety Agency

In July the Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee adopted a report by Ingo Schmitt (EPP,D) on the Commission's proposal for a European Aviation Safety Agency (see Safety Monitor 33). The rapporteur strongly supported the proposal but emphasised the need for greater independence of the Agency in relation both to Member States and the Commission. Also there should be a clear separation of powers with Parliament. In due time the remit of the Agency should be widened from the aircraft to the operation of it. The rapporteur's amendment inviting the Commission to submit as soon as possible a proposal for setting up an independent EU body to investigate aircraft accidents was also adopted.

In its July session the Council of Ministers discussed the proposal, but did not come to final conclusions. The Council wanted the Commission to present within a year proposal for the application of the regulation to third country aircraft.

Occurrence reporting in civil aviation

The June Plenary Session adopted the report by the Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee (rapporteur Gerard Collins, UEN, IRL) supporting the proposed Directive on occurrence reporting in civil aviation (see Safety Monitor 36). The report includes an amendment by Jan Marinus Wiersma (ELDR, NL) deleting the Commission proposal that names of persons should be disclosed when required in the context of judicial inquiries. Commissioner Loyola de Palacio could accept most of the amendments proposed.

Working time in aviation

In May, the Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee discussed the follow-up of the Commission's proposal on 'technical requirements and administrative procedures' in civil aviation (Safety Monitor 35), in particular the need for a regulation on harmonised safe flight times. The Committee generally supported the rapporteur, Brian Simpson (PES, UK), inviting the Commission to wait until October 1, but no longer, before bringing forward new legislation concerning flight crew working time. This would allow the social partners some more time to reach the agreement that now seemed within reach on this long waited issue.



RAIL SAFETY

Rail statistics

In February the European Commission submitted a proposal for a Regulation on statistical reporting by rail transport (COM (2000) 798) to replace the existing Directive of 1980. Harmonised safety data is one of the main changes. The accident data to be collected are set out in Annex H of the proposal. It is hoped that the lack of comparable statistical information will be remedied by the new rules.

ETSC has outlined regularly the need for this policy support but while welcoming this initiative has noted that the lead-time of five years for Member States to make the necessary changes seems unnecessarily long.

By adopting in July the report of Juan Ojeda Sanz (Spain, EPP) the Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism Committee met the Commission proposal mentioned above.

ETSC NEWS

A new international review of vehicle safety was issued by ETSC on 26th June highlighting the huge potential to reduce death and disability from motor vehicle design measures. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium and incoming Chair of the EU Transport Council, Ewa Hedkvist-Petersen MEP, the road safety rapporteur for the European Parliament, Mark Watts MEP and Marieke Sanders- ten Holte MEP voiced their support for the life-saving EU action recommended by the experts.

New evidence from one EU Member State shows that, since the 1980s car crash, protection has been the single most effective way of reducing road deaths and serious injuries achieving 15% of the total reduction compared with 11% for drink/drive measures and just over 6% for road safety engineering measures.

The review by Europe's leading independent vehicle safety experts proposes a comprehensive strategy of demonstrably effective legislative and consumer information measures to be carried out or supported by the EU.

At a Press Conference to launch the review, Professor Adrian Hobbs, Chairman of ETSC's Vehicle Safety Working Party said: "Topping our list for immediate action is a Directive on safer car fronts for pedestrians and cyclists – which could save up to 2100 lives and prevent 18000 injuries across the EU

annually. We are also urging the Commission to improve further the current frontal impact protection test requirement for car occupants and to draw up a specification on seat belt reminders which could contribute cheaply and effectively to preventing 7000 car occupant deaths a year".

Isabelle Durant, Deputy Prime Minister of Belgium said: "Expediting EU action to reduce road death and injury is a priority for the incoming Belgian Presidency. ETSC's report demonstrates, beyond any doubt, the potential for effective EU action on vehicle design to save lives in every Member State. I share the European Parliament's and ETSC's view that the top priority is a Directive on safer car fronts to protect pedestrian and cyclists, many of whom are elderly or are children - the most vulnerable in society. Last June, the EU Transport Council also urged early legislation. I will do my best to encourage action on this and other measures cited in this report – including mirrors on trucks".

Ewa Hedkvist-Petersen MEP said: "Shortly, the European Commission is to take a decision on safer car fronts which could have a major impact on road safety. For all our sakes, let us hope that it is a decision to introduce robust legislation and open decision making on this vital matter of public safety rather than a weak negotiated agreement with serious loopholes and conducted without transparency".

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS DIARY

- 17-21 Sept, 2001 International Conference Velo-City, Glasgow and Edinburgh www.velo-city2001.org
- 19-21 Sept. 2001 12th International Conference Traffic Safety on Three Continents organised by the Russian Ministry of Transport NIIAT, Transdekra, CSIR, FERSI, VTI and TRB to be held in Moscow, Russia. Contact: Dr. K. Asp, VTI SE-581 95 Linköping, Tel: +46 13 204 000, Fax: +46 13 126 162, E-mail: info@vti-utveckling.se
- 30 Sept.-3 Oct.2001 WHO Safe Community Conference on Cost Calculation and Cost-effectiveness in Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion Contact: Viborg Amt, WHO Safe Community-Conference 2001 Skottenborg 26, Postbox 21 DK-8800 Viborg Denmark, Fax: +45 8660 2311, E-mail: ukhkk@vibamt.dk, Internet: www.vibamt.dk/conference2001
- 1-5 Oct. 2001 8th World Congress on Intelligent Transport Systems to be held at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, Australia. Internet: www.itsworldcongress.org
- 8-10 Oct. 2001 Sixth International Conference on Safety in the Port Environment. *Shifting Responsibilities Between Land- and Ship-Side Operations*, Bremen, Host: The Bremen Senator for Economy and Ports, Sponsors: International Maritime Organization, Baltic and International Maritime Council; Organizer and Contact: BLG Consult, Ms Käpnick/Dr. Wesnigk, Hafenstrasse 55, 28217 Bremen, Tel :+49 421 396 - 3805, Fax - 3698, e-mail: blg-consult@blg.de; homepage
- 8-10 Oct 2001 7th International Congress on Driver Improvement, Salzburg, Austria, KfV, Registration: office@imperial-tours.com, Tel:+43 1 535 6970/Fax:+43 1534 11 202
- 10-12 Oct. 2001 2001 IRCOBI Conference on the Biomechanics of Impact to be held on the Isle of Man, United Kingdom. Contact: Antoinette Charpenne-IRCOBI +33 4 7214 2420, Fax: +33 4 7214 2573, E-mail: charpenne@inrets.fr
- 22-25 Oct. 2001 3rd International Conference on Tunnel Fires to be held in Washington, USA. Contact: Stephanie Whittham, Tel: +44 1234 854756, Fax: +44 1234 841375, www.itc-conferences.com
- 12-15 May 2002 6th World Conference Injury Prevention and Control organised by the WHO, Palais des Congrès Montréal, Convention Centre, Montréal, Canada. Contact: place d'Armes 511 #600 Montréal QC H2Y 2W7 Canada Tel:+514 848 1133 Fax: +514 288 6469, E-mail: trauma@coplanor.qc.ca, Internet: www.trauma2002.com
- 4-9 August 2002 16th ICADTS International Conference on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety, Palais des Congrès Montréal, Convention Centre, Montréal Québec, Canada. Internet: www.saaq.gouv.qc.ca/2002

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