

## VISIONS, TARGETS AND STRATEGIES 2000

### *SUMMARY*

- European Commissioner Mrs Loyola de Palacio announces new EU road safety priorities and urges more investment at national level;
- The UK introduces a new long term road safety programme with numerical targets for the year 2010. EU action will be needed to reach a key element of the target;
- The Institute for Road Safety Research (SWOV) reports on progress with the Dutch sustainable road safety programme and outlines future needs;
- Legislating for road safety inspection and the safety responsibilities of traffic system designers are proposed by a Swedish Committee of Inquiry as part of the Vision Zero programme.

### PRIORITIES IN EU ROAD SAFETY:

#### PROGRESS REPORT AND RANKING OF ACTIONS (COM(2000) 125 FINAL

Against the slower progress in casualty reduction being made, on 17th March the European Commission approved a set of priority cost-effective road safety measures at EU level to 2001.

In a press statement, Transport Commissioner and Vice President of the Commission, Mrs Loyola de Palacio said 'We simply could not resign ourselves to a daily tragedy on the current scale. Individually and collectively, all sections of society must play their part in promoting road safety'. She said that the Commission intended to play a full role in resolving the problem. Six measures are proposed for immediate action:

- Further support for EuroNCAP – the new car assessment programme for consumer information;
- Mandatory fitment of speed limiters on light commercial vehicles (lorries in excess of 12 tonnes and buses and coaches in excess of 10 tonnes);
- Seat belt legislation (including audible seat belt reminder systems) and information campaigns;
- Mandatory safer car fronts for pedestrians and cyclists;
- A recommendation to Member States to adopt blood alcohol limits of 0.50 promille or less;
- Develop guidelines for 'blackspot' management and 'forgiving roadsides'.

Action will also be taken on the CARE database, an integrated information system and research into vehicle standards and telematics.

In addition the Commission will look further into medical standards for driving licences, daytime running lights, standards for driving tests, effects of medicines on driver behaviour and post-accident care.

Finally, the Commission recommends that Member States systematically look at the costs and effects of road safety measures and to increase investment in these measures

and raise their public profile.

#### ETSC COMMENT:

ETSC has welcomed this statement and the emphasis on safer vehicles for EU action.

After 22 years of EU research and development programme, two previous attempts at legislation and with the potential to save 2000 lives and 19000 serious injuries annually, ETSC is pleased to see that a legislative proposal is, at last, an immediate road safety priority. ETSC believes that the integrated four E-NCAP sub-system tests which have been available for 10 years, and indeed used in EU-supported EuroNCAP programmes, should be required for new designs, where costs can be easily assimilated, and as soon as possible.

ETSC has also welcomed the fitment of speed limiters to light trucks, further seat belt legislation (especially if this means smart seat belt reminder systems), more support for EuroNCAP and best practice guidelines as EU priorities. These would all save many lives and help to reduce the sevenfold difference in fatal road death rates between the best and worst performing Member States.

ETSC welcomes too the activities planned on information gathering – CARE and the computerised information system and, hopefully, in-depth databases - and best practice guidelines for the voluntary use of road safety professionals which ETSC would like to see covering many aspects of road safety work.

However, there were important omissions.

- No common BAC limit. ETSC regrets the reversal in Commission policy regarding a binding EU upper blood alcohol limit of 0.50 promille. The alcohol limitation would have saved 1000 lives a year but has been rejected for reasons of subsidiarity. This is in stark contrast to the European Parliament's opinion and the recent UK Government's road safety strategy which states "we intend to deal with proposed reductions [0.80 to 0.50 promille] in the European context".
- No targets. ETSC continues to represent the opinion of most safety professionals and experts that an aspirational numerical target to reduce deaths is needed at EU level. The importance of target-setting in road safety should be acknowledged. The 5 best performing Member States in road safety have used numerical targets for some years. For the next programme, perhaps?

The Commission communication now goes to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers for consideration.

#### NEW UK ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

The UK Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions has launched a new 10 year road safety strategy 'Tomorrow's roads –safer for everyone' and a speed review.'

The first UK casualty reduction target was set in 1987 aiming for a 33% reduction in casualties compared with the 1981-85 average by the year 2000. While the target has

not been reached for slight injuries, the reductions in fatal and serious injuries have far exceeded expectations. Road deaths have fallen by 39% and serious injuries by 45%. Car use increased in most years since 1985 but motorcycle, pedestrian and cycle use tended to decline.

In the UK around 3,500 people are killed and 40,000 are seriously injured and over 300,000 casualties are reported to the police each year. The socio-economic cost of road crashes is estimated by the DETR to be around £16 billion annually, of which £11.5 billion is attributable to personal injury.

Launching the new road safety strategy on 1st March Prime Minister, Tony Blair said "We have the second best safety record in Europe, but the fact that 15 children are killed or seriously injured on our roads every day is simply unacceptable. That's why we have set a radical 50% reduction target for children by the year 2010."

### THE NEW TARGETS

By the year 2010 compared with the 1994-98 average to achieve:

- a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents
- a 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured
- a 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate (per 100 million veh km)

### MAIN ELEMENTS OF UK STRATEGY

- Local authorities required to plan specific measures to cut child deaths and injuries as part of their local transport plans
- Creating more 20mph (30km/h) zones around schools and residential areas
- Tougher and more targeted enforcement, including greater use of speed cameras
- Improving training of all drivers, including lorry, bus and motorcyclists
- Consulting on the mandatory fitting of seat belts in all new coaches and minibuses
- Consulting on how to improve the safety of working drivers, who are far more likely to be involved in accidents
- Home Office and DETR to carry out major review of road traffic offences and penalties. Raise maximum penalty for careless driving. Tackle drink and drug driving, and consult on mandatory re-testing for serious driving offences
- Setting appropriate speed limits for local conditions. Improve signs. Encouraging a norm of 30mph in all villages
- Ploughing back speeding fines into catching speeders
- Support for safer car design, including pedestrian protection which DETR estimates could save up to 20% of serious and fatal pedestrian injuries.
- Making road safety education part of the curriculum in schools for the first time.
- Publicity campaigns to target road safety, drink and drug driving. Crack down on irresponsible car advertising.

Copies of the [Road Safety Strategy and the Speed Review](#) are available, free of charge,

from:

DETR, Free Literature, PO Box 236, Wetherby, LS23 7NB.

Tel: 0870 1226 236. Fax: 0870 1226 237. Web site <http://www.detr.gov.uk/>

TRL Report 382 from which the following figures are taken, describes the casualty forecasting which was taken into account in formulating the new targets. The percentage casualty reductions are the assumptions of the maximum likely effect of new policies by 2010 which were used in forecasting the range of possible outcomes.

Estimated effects (%) of new policies, averaged over all types of roads

New policies	Car Occupants	Pedestrians	Pedal Cyclists	Motor Cyclists	Others	All road Users
New road safety engineering programme	6.0	13.7	4.3	6.0	6.0	7.7
Improved secondary safety in cars	10.0	15.0				8.6
Other vehicle safety improvements	5.4	2.0	3.2	8.0	3.0	4.6
Motorcycle and pedal cycle helmets			6.0	7.0		1.4
Safety of rural single carriageways	4.1			4.2	4.1	3.4
Reducing accident involvement of novice drivers	2.8	1.3	1.0	0.8	0.4	1.9
Additional measures for pedestrians and cyclist protection		6.0	4.0			1.2
Additional measures for speed reduction	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Additional measures for child protection		6.9	0.6			1.7
Reducing casualties in drink/drive accidents	1.9	0.4	0.2	0.8	0.8	1.2

Reducing accidents during high-mileage work driving	2.1	0.9	1.2	1.9	2.3	1.9
Additional measures for improved driver behaviour	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Combined effect of all measures	33	42	24	30	21	35

Source: The numerical context for setting national casualty reduction targets  
J Broughton (TRL), RE Allsop (UCL), DA Lynam (TRL) CM McMahon (DETR)

**ETSC COMMENT:**

ETSC welcomes this new policy statement from the UK. The numerical targets are challenging ones making a higher rate of implementation of existing demonstrably effective measures essential and the adoption of new measures unavoidable.

The UK experience with target-setting illustrates how helpful this tool can be and how it can motivate policymakers to do even better. The new child safety targets shows determination locally and nationally to take steps to improve its comparatively poor child pedestrian record. Especially challenging is the 10% targeted reduction in all the slight casualty rate which, hopefully, will not detract from more important efforts to reduce severe injury.

This is a comprehensive strategy which envisages a very broad range of activity – local child safety plans, more 20mph zones, speed camera enforcement funded by fines for speed offences; support for safer car fronts for vulnerable road users; improvements in drink driving enforcement equipment and operations; re-classification of the road network; targeting company driver safety – all have been welcomed by safety professionals.

Of special interest to ETSC are the estimates by UK experts of the different maximum effects of new policies (see Table).

It is noteworthy that the single most important measure during this 10 year period will be new secondary safety measures to improve car crash protection –with the largest casualty reduction effect predicted for pedestrians outside the vehicle. Effective EU action on vehicle standards will be needed if the UK is to meet its targets for fatal and serious injuries.

**NEXT STEPS FOR SUSTAINABLE SAFETY IN THE NETHERLANDS**

In 1997, central and local government in the Netherlands signed an agreement to start the implementation of the sustainable road safety programme. This programme forms the means by which the Netherlands aims to meet its long term national road safety target (50% fewer deaths and 40% fewer injuries by 2010 compared with 1986). The

start up programme set out measures between 1998 and 2002 (see ETSC Update: Visions, Targets and Strategies, 2nd edition [www.etsc.be](http://www.etsc.be)).

The Dutch Institute for Road Safety Research (SWOV) has reported on progress in the Netherlands with the sustainable road safety programme in Progress in implementing sustainable safety in Research Activities 13, SWOV, March 2000. Key developments include:

#### SUSTAINABLE SAFETY PROGRESS

- *re-classification of the road system*

Most local authorities have now devised a classification scheme distinguishing between through roads, distributor roads and access roads.

- *increasing the number and length of 30km/h zones in residential areas by up to 50% of the potential.*
- *increasing the length of 60km/h zones in rural areas by 7% of the potential.*

In both instances this includes taking road safety engineering measures at high risk sites. SWOV reports that there has been much take up of Central Government funds allocated for this purpose which indicates that a great deal of progress has been made in implementing most of the zones.

- *moving mopeds from cycle paths to the carriageway introduced in Dec. 1999.*

SWOV has also set out its view of the next steps given that all stakeholders will need to agree future actions to 2002 by the summer. SWOV believes that the full potential for sustainable safety will only be realised when the full range of measures is introduced. In Stage 1, road infrastructure measures need to be supported by educational and targeted safety-related enforcement effort. Stage 1 plans should include:

- Further extensions of the 30km/h and 60km/h zones;
- Development of an implementation programme aimed at through-roads and distributor roads;
- Use of safety audits (a protocol is now available) and/or a sustainable safety test in infrastructure planning;
- Speed management to include police enforcement and authorities to take part in the Stage 1 agreement;
- Sustainable safety to be integrated into the National Traffic and Transportation Plan and the Fifth Policy Memorandum on Physical Planning.

#### ETSC COMMENT:

The activity on re-classifying the road network and implementing 30kmh zones is a blueprint for local and central government partnership towards safer road infrastructure and its use.

#### SWEDISH VISION ZERO PROGRAMME

A Swedish Committee of Inquiry into Road Traffic Responsibility has recommended to the Government that "Vision Zero" and the responsibility of the system designers for road safety be regulated by law. Also that a road traffic inspectorate be established.

The Committee of Inquiry has suggested that a systematic quality programme to improve road safety managed by system designers could, within Vision Zero, bring about a 50% reduction in the number of persons killed within a ten-year period.

The principal task of the Inquiry was to examine the responsibility on the part of the public and private sectors for safe road traffic. It was invited to propose new or revised regulations, sanctions and systems of inspection emanating from the outcome of the inquiry. Also its task was to conduct an inquiry into the establishment of an independent road traffic inspectorate, how such a body should be organised, to define its tasks and powers of authority and to suggest how it should be financed.

In its report to Government, the Inquiry noted the number of deaths and serious injuries in traffic was not decreasing at the pace stipulated in traffic policy goals (maximum 400 fatalities by the year 2000 and 250 by 2007). On the contrary, the number of traffic fatalities was tending to increase.

#### Proposal for system designers' responsibility to be regulated by law

The Committee proposed that the parliamentary decision based on the principle of "Vision Zero" and the responsibility of system designers for safety in road traffic be regulated by law.

The physiological tolerance level of human beings in combination with actual human behaviour was the basic design parameter in the overall design of a Vision Zero road traffic system. This entailed a road transport system designed to meet the safe travel needs of everyone – the young, old and physically disabled.

The Inquiry noted that current legislation which puts the sole responsibility for traffic crashes and injuries on individuals, contributes to an erroneous view of how road safety can be developed and may well be counterproductive to traffic safety endeavours. Account should be taken of those who build up the traffic system, such as road managers, vehicle manufacturers, legislators and those who use the system professionally, who also exert a considerable influence on road safety.

The Committee said to achieve a safe road transport system, there must be a change in current views concerning responsibility, to the extent that system designers are given a clearly defined responsibility for designing the road transport system on the basis of human capabilities.

Following on from this legislative proposal, the Committee of Inquiry has proposed that requirements should be imposed on system designers to manage a systematic quality programme for the purpose of improving road safety.

#### A road safety inspectorate

A special supervisory authority, a road traffic inspectorate comprising 20-30 expert

staff, is proposed to uphold the purpose of the new law. Its tasks would be:

- to carry out general and specific evaluations and investigations;
- to ensure that the system designers conduct crash investigations of high standard and make decisions about adequate and effective measures;
- to draw up rules and regulations concerning requirements on a quality assurance system for road traffic safety
- to initiate some research and development.

#### ETSC COMMENT

Some ground-breaking proposals in road transport with regard to traffic system quality. Sweden's in-depth road accident investigations would also contribute to enhancing EU crash protection policies. ETSC hopes they will be adopted.

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