

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

This Memorandum briefly outlines ETSC's priorities for the Cypriot Presidency of the EU and presents our recommendations on key EU policy dossiers¹. ETSC welcomes that the Cypriot Presidency of the EU has identified road safety as a priority, in particular for action on young drivers, under the EU's land transport policy. We hope that the President of Cyprus Mr. Christofias, Mr Efthemios Flourentzou Minister of Communications and Works and Eleni Mavrou, Minister of Interior will take a personal interest and show their leadership in delivering road safety in Cyprus and in the EU. This is absolutely crucial following a slow down in the reduction trend of road deaths in the EU. In 2011 there were 30,100 deaths representing only a 3% overall reduction in comparison to 2010. Moreover some countries with a long standing record in reducing their road traffic deaths have seen dramatic increases (Sweden +20%, Germany 10%) in comparison to 2010. Cyprus also saw a big increase of 18% of road deaths in 2011 compared with 2010. This is a real cause for concerted EU wide action to place road safety high up on the agenda. Key issues include carried over from the Danish Presidency are the discussions about the EU budget and the TEN-T and the tachograph legislation. At a national level in Cyprus it is fundamental to step up action in the area of seat belt wearing and fast track the intention to reduce the BAC limit for professional and novice drivers. This would assure that Cyprus makes big steps to improve its road safety record.

During the Cypriot Presidency a number of issues presented by the European Commission in the "Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020" are on the agenda. These include progress on tackling serious injuries on EU roads.

Road Safety Developments in Cyprus

Cyprus still has a way to go to improve its road safety record in comparison to other EU countries. Cyprus is lagging behind in terms of road deaths per million inhabitants. It has 71 deaths per million population, while the EU average is 60. Progress in reducing road deaths has been lower in Cyprus than in the rest of the EU since 2001 and the adoption of the first EU target. Road deaths decreased by only 28% compared to 45% in the EU. Moreover in the past year, Cyprus saw an increase of 18% in road deaths in 2011 compared to 2010 (EU average reduction -3%).

The previous strategic road safety plan for Cyprus was concluded in 2010 and a new Strategic Plan for 2012-2020 is expected to be adopted at the start of the Presidency. The new road safety plan will adopt the same target as the EU, that is to

reduce by 50% the number of road deaths by 2020. The plan will also aim to reduce serious injuries by 50% by 2020. The plan will include a special focus on two target groups: car drivers and vulnerable road users in built-up areas. The most important of the proposed measures are the following:

- Develop dedicated safety strategies for PTWs, pedestrians and cyclists;
- Promote 30 km/h zones in residential areas;
- Reinstall the system of safety cameras;
- Introduce restrictions to novice drivers;
- Raise road safety awareness of overseas nationals living in Cyprus;
- Upgrade the coordination and road safety management mechanisms;
- Promote road safety research.

Due to the economic crisis, there were significant cuts in 2008 in the budget to implement road safety measures.

The Road Safety Unit is responsible for handling all matters in the field of road safety which are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Communications and Works. The Ministry of Communications and Works is the competent authority for road safety and the Minister of Communications and Works chairs the Road Safety Council which is the national statutory body for the coordination of all government authorities involved in road safety.

The Road Safety Unit functions, in addition to its other responsibilities, as the supporting unit of the Road Safety Council for the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Road Safety. The unit is the executive, administrative and coordinating instrument of the Road Safety Council. Within the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Road Safety, six interdepartmental thematic committees have been established. The committees are the fora in which the consultations for the design, implementation and evaluation of road safety actions between the Ministry of Communications and Works and the authorities involved, take place.

The six committees include:

- The Committee for Road Infrastructure Safety.

- The Committee for Vehicle Safety.
- The Committee for Training and Testing Candidate Drivers.
- The Committee for Legislation, the Road Traffic Code and Police Enforcement*.
- The Committee for Public Road Safety Information and Road Safety Education.
- The Committee for Emergency Medical Care.

These committees are chaired by the Head of the Road Safety Unit. The unit performs a coordinating and guiding role by analyzing road accident data and collecting and analyzing other relevant data from Cyprus and abroad. The interministerial and interdepartmental Committee*, which reports to the national Road Safety Council reviews the legal framework, in relation to arising needs and developments in other countries.

In Cyprus there are regular conferences on road safety organised with the participation of government Ministers and at times also the President of the Republic. This demonstrates their support to the need to improve road safety. Debates also take place between youth delegates and state officials and this will be a focus during the Presidency, see more below. Moreover, there are currently, 92 Cypriot entities, which have signed the European Road Safety Charter. Their activities relate mainly to road safety awareness, road safety training and providing financial support to such activities organised by governmental organisations.

The Three Main Killers on the Road: Speed, Alcohol and Non Use of Seat Belts

This section analyses data linked to the three main road safety indicators: speed, alcohol and seat belts. In 2005 Cyprus introduced a pilot of fixed safety at high risk sites. This pilot proved to be successful at reducing speed at these points and should be re-introduced more broadly as a matter of priority. In terms of enforcement of speed collected data shows that in 2011 Cyprus issued 118 speed tickets per 1000 population. This represents one of the highest levels in the EU, although there is still a sizeable gap between Cyprus and the countries that issue more tickets above them: France, the Netherlands and Austria. In Cyprus the number of speed tickets has also

risen steadily since 2009. In terms of follow up for speeding offences detected by safety cameras, the legal responsibility will rest with the owner of the vehicle where recognition problems arise. Speed measurements are undertaken in Cyprus on certain roads. Speed data are collected on the motorway network on a continuous basis through weigh-in-motion (permanent traffic counters) systems. Data within the urban and rural areas are collected sporadically on an as-needed basis due to the absence of permanent traffic counter systems in these areas. A new system is planned for implementation in 2013 to permanently collect speed data in four of the busiest corridors

of the capital Nicosia and aims at the deployment of permanent traffic counters within an urban environment. Speed data collected so far in Cyprus indicate that mean speeds on motorways are 112-115 km/h, in rural areas around 88 km/h and in urban areas 55-65 km/h.

Drink driving is another important risk factor in Cyprus. The maximum blood alcohol content (BAC) is 0.5 g/l for all drivers but it is planned to reduce to 0.2g/l for novice and professional drivers. This is part of the new Road Safety Plan and is expected in the autumn 2012. All drivers stopped by traffic police are systematically breath-tested. Deaths attributed to alcohol collisions increased in Cyprus from 16 in 2007 to 26 in 2010 (but numbers are small and thus subject to random fluctuation)². In terms of enforcement, the number of roadside police

checks for alcohol per 1,000 inhabitants is relatively high. Although enforcement increased, the percentage of offenders there remains high. In terms of checks there were only 217 roadside police tests per 1000 inhabitant in 2010 compared with 287 in Sweden and 429 in Finland³.

A real weak point for Cyprus is seat belt wearing. Seat belt wearing rates are amongst the lowest in the EU. Front seat belt wearing rates are at 86% (last update 2010). This is compared with 98% and 97% for France and Germany and an EU average of 90%. On the rear, seat belt wearing rates are at 21% (last update 2009). This is compared with 88% and 87% for Germany and Finland and an EU average of 70%.

Road Safety and Tourism in Cyprus

With a population of 862,000 Cyprus hosted over 2.4 million tourists in 2010. There are numerous possibilities for taking action to improve the safety of holiday makers and integrating road safety concerns into tourism policy. The Cross Border Enforcement Directive⁴ will allow the exchange of data between the country in which the offence is committed and the one in which the vehicle is registered. The new Directive will help to enforce traffic laws across Europe including those driving on holiday and prevent deaths and serious injury. The main offences causing death and serious injury in the EU were listed including speeding, drink driving, failing to wear seatbelts and failing to stop at traffic lights. With the implementation of the Directive offenders, driving in a Member State other than the one their vehicle is registered in, will be identified and prosecuted.

The deadline for implementation is November 2013 by then EU Member States will have a legal duty to inform non-resident road users about existing rules in their country. Under Article 8 of the new Directive on Cross Border Information Exchange⁵ on road safety related offences, the European Commission will need to keep its website summary of the rules in force in Member States updated. Member States including Cyprus will also have obligations in this area. They will in turn need to provide information on these rules to the Commission as well as providing road users with the necessary information about the rules applicable in their territory.

Upon their arrival in the airports, tourists receive information leaflets related to the traffic rules in Cyprus. Road signs warning tourists that traffic runs on the left side in Cyprus have been installed at selected locations.

European Road Safety Day-Young People

Young people are among the groups facing the highest risks of dying while on the road: 140,000 young people aged 15 to 30 have lost their lives on European roads since 2001; 9,150 of them in 2010. This age group represents 20% of the

population of the EU, but makes up 30% of the total number of road deaths. In 2010, young people accounted for 25% of the total population and 40% of the number of road deaths in Cyprus. A recent study conducted by the University of

Cyprus proposed lowering the legally permitted BAC limit to 0.2 g/l for novice drivers, introducing either a Graduated Driving Licence Scheme or driving restrictions for novice drivers and introducing driver rehabilitation schemes, as well as the involvement of youth in road safety actions. In Cyprus, there are regular debates on road safety organised to take place between youth delegates and Members of Parliament. In the past these have also been organized within the Houses of Parliament. This tradition should be renewed regularly especially following the elections thus enabling new exchanges to take place on road safety.

In keeping with this tradition the Cypriot EU Presidency has chosen to set young people in the spotlight and is organising a European

Road Safety Day around this theme in July. It will hold a one day conference in Nicosia on "Active Involvement of Youth in Road Safety"⁶. High level speakers include the Vice President of the European Commission Siim Kallas and the President of Cyprus Mr. Christofias. Participants will be able to exchange good practice and hear about different approaches to improving road safety for young people, including research from the University of Cyprus. Specific workshops will be organised under the heading 'Risky behaviours and vulnerability of young road users (cyclists and PTWs)'.

Moreover, in the context of the Cyprus Presidency, the traffic Police will organize an international seminar in cooperation with TISPOL, the European Traffic Police Network.

EU Priorities for the Cypriot Presidency

Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020

In order for the EU to reach its new 2020 target it is up to the Cypriot EU Presidency to work together with the Member States and also the European Commission and the European Parliament to reinforce the "Policy Orientations" and translate them urgently into determined action. Their support to the current priority set on defining serious injury and an accompanying set of measures would be much welcome.

Following the adoption in July 2010 of the European Commission's "Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020" ETSC welcomed the new emphasis on serious injuries included in the "Road Safety Policy Orientations". Earlier this year the European Commission launched a public consultation on an EU Strategy to reduce injuries resulting from road traffic accidents. In addition to the 30,200 people killed in road collisions in the European Union, about 1,700,000 people are recorded as injured in police reports each year, among them 300,000 seriously. For every road death in the EU, at least 44 road injuries are recorded, of which eight are serious. The Commission is developing a comprehensive strategy of action concerning road traffic injuries and emergency services. The questionnaire addressed general issues related to road safety

and more specific issues on how to improve the data available on victims of accidents and their collection at EU level, and on how to target some specific groups of road users.

At present, EU comparisons are hampered because both the levels of injury reporting and national definitions of a serious injury vary greatly among countries. The magnitude of underreporting undermines proper allocation of resources to preventive measures. Improving the quality of data about seriously injured survivors of road collisions is key to designing more effective safety policies. ETSC believes the new EC injury strategy should include challenging targets for reducing the number of people seriously injured in traffic collisions. ETSC is proposing a dual track approach⁷. Each country should aim to reduce serious injuries, according to its own definition, at the same pace as deaths. At the same time, the EU should work towards the adoption of a common definition of serious injuries to foster EU comparison. In parallel, Member States should improve the recording of serious injuries by making use of both police and hospital data.

Regulation on type-approval of two- and three wheel motor vehicles and quadricycles

ETSC welcomed the proposal for a Regulation on the approval and market surveillance of two- or three- wheel vehicles and quadricycles (L-category vehicles) and hopes that trilogue discussions between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission yield a compromise text that can be adopted by the EU co-legislators. ETSC considers the proposal extremely useful as a means to improve the safety of Power Two Wheelers (PTWs), the group of road users facing the highest road risks. Stricter regulation on vehicle safety, and in particular on mandatory equipment for active safety systems, will contribute to reducing the current figure of more than 6,000 annual deaths among road users of these vehicles in Europe. The users of PTWs (the vast majority of vehicles concerned) represent 16% of the total number of road deaths in the EU while accounting for only 2% of the total kilometres driven. For the same distance travelled, the risk for riders being killed in road accidents while riding a PTW vehicle is on average 18 times higher than the risk for car drivers. While the number of road deaths has declined considerably in the past decade in Europe, the number of killed PTW riders rose in

13 out of 27 countries.

Many elements of the proposed framework Regulation have a great potential for improving the safety of riders of powered two-wheelers. ETSC supports the position adopted by the European Commission in mandating ABS systems for all PTWs with an engine power above 125cc and an advanced braking system (either Anti-Lock Braking System or Combined Braking System or both) for all other PTWs. ETSC adds that riders should be educated regarding use and benefits of such advanced braking systems. Moreover, evidence shows that motorcyclists are safer riding with lights on during the daytime and one third of all motorcycle accidents are linked directly to the lack of conspicuity. ETSC supports the proposal to introduce mandatory 'Automatic Headlights On' for all L-category vehicles. The Cypriot Presidency should work together with the European Parliament to agree on a legislative text that can be adopted swiftly by both the Council and the Parliament, while ensuring road safety benefits, both for the PTW riders and other road users.

Revision of the TEN-T Road guidelines and Funding of Safe Road Infrastructure

Cyprus will continue the work on the new proposals for the revision of the TEN-T Guidelines and the accompanying Connecting Europe Facility fund. A general approach was adopted by the Council for the TEN-T Guidelines in March and a general partial approach for the CEF in June. The review of the TEN-T guidelines included a specific reference to the two main infrastructure Directives: Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management and Directive 2004/54/EC on minimum requirements for tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network. The guidelines also include the prioritisation of "road safety" when promoting projects of common interest. The Guidelines foresee the provision of secure parking areas as a priority, this is important for managing fatigue amongst professional drivers and thus

reducing risk. The reference made in the guidelines to ITS safety applications, under the ITS Directive and Action Plan, is also welcome. Promoting walking and cycling is one of the new priorities of the Transport White Paper within urban areas and the European Commission argues that they "could readily substitute the large share of trips which cover less than 5km". The TEN-T urban infrastructure nodes should reinforce this new commitment by encouraging safe and sustainable integrated transport options especially for the last kilometer. It is hoped that the Cypriot Presidency will continue to support these safety orientated priorities in further discussions to reach agreement between the European Parliament and the Council in the coming months.

Regional Funds

ETSC calls on the Cypriot Presidency to work to ensure that the 'conditionality' to comply with EU infrastructure safety legislation which exists now in the proposal for the TEN-T Guidelines is extended to all EU funds including the European regional development funds that support transport infrastructure. The present

proposals for the Cohesion Fund and European Regional Development Fund do not reflect the prioritisation of safety nor conditionality linked to the Infrastructure Safety Directive and Tunnels Directive.

Horizon 2020 EU Funds for Research and Development

Another important topic within the budget discussions is research and development. Horizon 2020 is the new financial instrument running from 2014 to 2020 with an €80 billion budget. The Cypriot Presidency should work to support the inclusion of road safety in the research priorities set out in the new framework for EU research: Horizon 2020. Sound policies are based on known, effective, science based countermeasures, which in turn are grounded in good research. The EU has a global reputation to defend as a centre of excellence and innovation in research and development in areas of road safety. Road safety research should continue to benefit from European funds under the research framework programme as a priority area under transport. Related to this is the need to ensure

the dissemination of knowledge about successful measures (good practice) and research results among decision makers and practitioners.

ETSC proposes to create a major and dedicated Research and Development Initiative for Safer Car (on the model of the Green Car Initiative) This would promote research on key safety technologies such as co-operative systems and vulnerable road user passive and active safety systems. It would support and evaluate the deployment of the most life-saving safety technologies and create a market for safety. Demonstration activities and wider support are needed to promote consumer demand and reduce costs.

eCall

A proposal for the mandatory introduction of the in-vehicle part of the eCall service in new type-approved vehicles in Europe is expected imminently from the European Commission. This follows the adoption of a Commission recommendation of 2011 on support for an EU wide eCall service in electronic communication networks and the priority set for eCall within the 2010/40/EU Directive on ITS. The European Parliament has recently adopted a resolution supporting the need to progress in the implementation of this technology. ETSC asks the Cypriot EU Presidency to encourage the European Commission to come forward with this

proposal on in-vehicle type approval as soon as possible. ETSC supports eCall deployment and its extension to other vehicles especially PTWs as a matter of priority. eCall technology, once in operation, would allow for an emergency call to be generated, either manually or automatically, from a crashed vehicle immediately after a road accident has occurred. Basic data on the crash, including its location, would then be transmitted to an eCall operator and simultaneously a voice communication would be established between an emergency centre and the vehicle occupants. eCall has the potential to save lives in Europe and significantly reduce the severity of injuries.

Road Freight and the Social Rules: Sleepiness

The Cypriot Presidency will also be continuing the work on the proposal⁸ to revise the tachograph's legal framework together with the European Parliament. The legislative proposal looks at using the satellite positioning system, improving the technical capabilities of the digital tachograph and linking into current ITS developments. In a new report entitled: "Tackling Fatigue; EU Social Rules and Heavy Goods Vehicle Drivers" ETSC looks at how enforcing the social rules is one of the important tools to manage fatigue. Research shows that driver sleepiness is a significant factor in approximately 20% of commercial road transport crashes⁹. ETSC welcomes the recognition that one of the important tools in tackling sleepiness amongst professional drivers, the tachograph, will be reviewed.

The proposal underlines the need for more efforts in training enforcement officers. At present, there is room for interpretation in terms of procedures and application of the legislation which means that the decisions of control officers vary. Drawing up European minimum standards for the training of inspection bodies and for coordinating cooperation between the inspection bodies in line with the proposals of the TRACE project¹⁰ could lead to welcome improvements. When the regulations on working hours and tachographs are ignored or circumvented, the lives of drivers, passengers and other road users may be put at risk. Non-compliance and fraud also gives undue

competitive advantage to those breaking the law, with negative impacts on the functioning of the internal market. ETSC welcomes efforts included in the proposal to tackle this with for example higher standards demanded of the workshops which install and calibrate the tachograph.

The new proposal includes the intention to ensure a minimum degree of harmonisation of sanctions in relation to the tachograph rules. This is also welcomed as at present the rules on penalties applicable to serious infringements between Member States vary greatly. For drivers and undertakings engaged in international transport, it is therefore very difficult to receive a clear message concerning the gravity of possible infringements when they do not comply with certain provisions of regulations. There is much more to be done in this area to improve road safety including communicating more with the drivers and also their employers. The European Parliament is due to adopt its first reading position in plenary July.

To emphasise the importance of the tachograph in improving road safety, the Cypriot EU Presidency will organise a conference (October 30 and 31), in co-operation with CORTE (Confederation of Organisations in Road Transport Enforcement).

Technical Inspections and Road Worthiness

The European Commission is planning to revise the roadworthiness Directive 2009/40/EC in 2012. Although the Directive was recast in 2009 this involved only minor changes to the administrative articles. The body of the text has not seen any major revision since adoption in 1996. Since 1996 both cars and in vehicle safety systems that are electronically controlled have developed rapidly. Vehicle examiners also need to assure a similarly rigorous testing regime for new in vehicle technologies. Technical inspection interviews

should also be reassessed. Inspection protocols should be reviewed in relation to higher speed conditions relating to more severe crashes. In sum, the Directive needs to be revised to ensure that the testing of new modern vehicles is safely maintained. The EU should consider extending the Directive to cover other vehicle types such as PTWs. The Cypriot Presidency of the EU should encourage the European Commission to prioritise measures with the highest life saving potential in the revision of this Directive.

Notes:

1. The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to the reduction of transport deaths and injuries in transport in Europe. ETSC seeks to identify and promote effective measures on the basis of international scientific research and best practice. The Council brings together 45 international and national organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.
2. ETSC (2012) Drink driving: Towards Zero Tolerance
3. ETSC (2012) 6th PIN Report.
4. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:288:0001:0015:EN:PDF>
5. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:288:0001:0015:EN:PDF>
6. http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/ersd2012/draft_agenda.pdf
7. ETSC (2010), 4th PIN Report.
8. Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending the Council Regulation (EEC) N. 3821/85 on recording equipment in road transport and amending Regulation (EC) N. 561/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council.
9. ETSC (2001) The Role of Driver Fatigue in Commercial Road Transport Crashes.
10. <http://www.traceproject.eu/>

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