

ETSC Memorandum

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

ETSC Memorandum to the Hungarian Presidency

Hungary sits in the middle of Europe and is one of the most important transit countries. Hungary has moved from 121 deaths per million population in 2001 to 82 in 2009. Although this reduction in deaths is laudable, the number of road deaths per population in 2009 is still above the EU average of 70. In the first 9 months of 2010 the number of deaths decreased by 13%. Much work still needs to be done to reach the quantitative goal of the new National Road Safety Plan which is fully in line with that of the EU. Key issues include inappropriate speed, drinking and driving, non-wearing of safety belts. Efforts must also be made to increase the safety of the vulnerable road users.

ETSC welcomes the news that road safety will be one of the priorities under land transport during the Hungarian Presidency of the EU. Following the excellent progress made under the Belgian Presidency, ETSC hopes that Hungary will be able to complete the negotiations to reach an agreement on the Cross Border Enforcement Directive in line with the joint Presidency priorities set out by the Spanish, Belgian and Hungarian Trio. The year 2011 will also be important for launching the first actions under the European Commission's "Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020". Alongside this Hungary will preside over the EU Presidency when Vice-President Kallas presents the White Paper on Transport Policy to 2020. There must be a strong link between these two important Commission communications. We hope the Hungarian Presidency will work towards reaching a strong response from the Council to the place of road safety as a high level objective within the White Paper.

This Memorandum briefly outlines ETSC's priorities for the Hungarian Presidency of the EU and presents our recommendations on key EU policy dossiers¹.

Road Safety Developments in Hungary

Hungary has seen a reduction of 34% of road deaths between 2001 and 2009, from 1,239 deaths in 2001 down to 822 in 2009. Hungary has moved from an underperforming country to an average performer and is now 15th out of 27th in terms of road deaths per million population(2). The reduction in road deaths in Hungary can be explained mainly by the implementation of strict and consistent road safety measures. The introduction of the owner responsibility for speeding offences removed the final legal obstacle for the introduction of automatic safety camera enforcement. Penalties for major traffic offences have been increased and a drink driving „zero tolerance“ policy was introduced under which drink drivers see their licence withdrawn immediately. The further elaboration of the demerit point system has also contributed to this reduction as drivers take more care not to get points and comply with the traffic rules.

The final number of deaths occurred in 2009 shows clearly that the goal of the Hungarian Transport Policy (867 people killed) has already been achieved with a lower number of 822 killed. Based on the final data of the first nine months of 2010 (535 deaths), it seems very probable that Hungary, contrary to earlier estimations, will also reach the EU target. The newly adopted National Road Safety Programme (2011-2013) sets a new long term target for the decrease in the number of deaths by 50% which is in line with the EU target. Hungary intends to contribute to the elaboration of the new EU common definition of serious injuries within the framework of IRTAD, and once a definition is in place, Hungary also intends to set a target for the decrease in serious injuries.

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 43 international and national organisations concerned with transport safety from across Europe.

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

For speed, measurements of speed in free flowing traffic made in 2006, 2007 and 2008 by the Institute for Transport Sciences (KTI) indicated that mean speeds of cars have decreased and are now below the legal limit on all the three types of road categories. Still, more than half of the drivers are breaking the speed limit in cities. Moreover 30% of drivers are driving too fast on rural roads limited to 90km/h and 60% on roads limited to 80km/h². Deaths attributed to drink driving decreased in Hungary from 161 in 2007 to 111 in 2008 (or -31%). Hungary is at the bottom end of the EU league with front seat belt wearing rates of only 79%. Only Slovakia and Greece have lower rates⁽²⁾. Less than half of the rear passengers buckle up. Here there is room for huge improvement: it's important that the Police systematically check the use of seat belts together with communicating on the positive effects of seat belt wearing.

New Hungarian National Road Safety Plan

A new Road Safety Action Plan (2011-2013) was prepared at the end of 2010. The work has been coordinated by the KTI Institute for Transport Sciences, which provides the scientific background for the National Ministry for Development.

The main pillars of the new strategy are as follows: development of the human factor, infrastructure, legislation, enforcement and road safety research. Within the "Human Factor" category the plan aims to increase observance of rules through enforcement and campaigns. One target group includes vulnerable road users: the system of traffic rules governing them will be revised. Another element includes the introduction of new technologies and ITS into the driver training system. Under infrastructure the plan aims to develop "self explaining roads" and promote a "forgiving road environment". Infrastructure for cycling will be elaborated as will infrastructure safety to take the special needs of PTWs into account. Another focus under the regulatory section includes a renewal of the system of driver training. The improvement of emergency services and post accident care is a further priority area for development. An additional pillar of the Hungarian Road Safety Plan is to inform decision makers through increasing the efficiency and quality as well as the frequency of surveying of traffic behaviour such as seat belt wearing rates. The plan has been developed in line with the EU's "Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020".

² ETSC (2010) 4th Road Safety PIN Report, Road Safety Target in Sight - Making up for lost time.

What can the EU learn from Hungary? "Zero Tolerance" for Drink Driving

The European Commission estimates that across the EU at least 25% of all road deaths are alcohol related. Since 2001 deaths attributed to drink driving in the EU have decreased by about 5.7% on average each year. Along with awareness raising of the legal BAC limits, increased enforcement sanctions and rehabilitation programmes make up the solution to tackling drink driving in the EU.

Hungary has seen a positive reduction in deaths attributed to drink driving from 161 in 2007 to 111 in 2008 (or -31%). Part of this change was due to the introduction of "zero tolerance" of drink driving in January 2008. Whenever a driver is found to be under the influence of alcohol the driving licence is withdrawn immediately. So far 7,500 driving licences have been withdrawn due to drink driving. In 2008, 130 drink-driving tests per population were carried out by the police. Yet, here too there is room for improvement in comparison with the best performing countries, Finland, Sweden, Slovenia and France, who carried out more than 200 tests per population.

Priorities for the Hungarian Presidency

Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020

Following the adoption in July 2010 of the European Commission's "Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020" ETSC looks forward to seeing the first of the road safety packages for adoption by the European Commission in 2011. ETSC welcomed the adoption of a new EU target to reduce road deaths by 50% by 2020 and the new emphasis on serious injuries included in the "Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020" adopted in July. ETSC and the wider road safety community, however, had hoped for a new EU 10-year strategy providing a detailed road map against which performance could be measured and delivery made accountable. The Policy Orientations missed some easy wins linked to the three main killers on the roads. These include extending existing legislation on mandating Seat Belt Reminders to every seat. Developing harmonised standards for Intelligent Speed Assistance systems would also help to both curb speeds and reduce harmful CO₂ emissions. Thirdly, whilst alcolocks are included as an action for professional drivers and recidivists, the EC should also

have proposed to adopt a 0.2g/l BAC limit for novice and commercial drivers. Finally, there is a package of measures to improve the safety of motorcyclists, however little is proposed to protect pedestrians and cyclists.

Ministers at the Transport Council adopted Conclusions on the 2nd of December which prioritised measures they wanted to see for the brand new "common European area for road safety" in response to the European Commission's "Policy Orientations 2011-2020". The Ministers supported the Commission's new ambitious target of halving road traffic deaths by 2020 again by 50% and even went beyond this by proposing that the EU "aim towards the long-term zero vision" for European road transport safety. Their conclusions added value to the "Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020" adopted in July. One of the important issues they picked up was to increase the need to progress on work related road safety, a priority also in the eyes of ETSC³. They invited the Commission and Member States to stimulate the development and use of "safety management systems" in order to promote road safety amongst all stakeholders. They encouraged the "systems approach" advocating that "infrastructures and vehicles should be designed so as to prevent and limit consequences of failures of human behaviour."

The Ministers also gave support for the need for "further strengthening of enforcement of road traffic rules by Member States and at EU level". For them "harmonisation of traffic rules (where appropriate)" was also identified as a priority for the next decade. New technology was also seen to be important and "new technical solutions to deal with problems like speeding and impaired driving (such as driving under the influence of alcohol, drugs and fatigue)" were identified as an area for new co-operation between Member States and the vehicle industry. Ministers also looked forward to the next steps of the European Commission "to develop coherent and cost-effective action plans for each of the strategies in order to implement the road safety policy orientations 2011-2020". Thus Ministers gave an additional input into what should be the main areas of European road safety policy making for next decade. The role of the Hungarian Presidency should be to launch the beginning of this next chapter of the EU's important work.

The European Parliament is also due to adopt an Own Initiative Report on Road Safety in the first half of 2011. Road safety is an issue close to the heart of European citizens and thus their democratic rep-

resentatives in the European Parliament. In the first exchange of views in December the rapporteur Dr. Koch supported the strategic objectives proposed by the European Commission, however, he regretted that, instead of a new Action Programme, only some weaker policy orientations were put forward. He also argued that the envisaged measures - although going in the right direction - should be further developed in order to meet the Commission's proposed target of a further 50% reduction of road deaths by 2020. The rapporteur suggested a more ambitious 'Vision Zero' in the long run as well as additional and measurable targets for a better monitoring of road safety developments. Other MEPs shared the general view that the Commission's policy orientations were insufficiently ambitious. Other issues they raised included appropriate and harmonised limits for blood alcohol, effective cross-border enforcement of road transport legislation as well as new challenges with regard to the ageing population. The report is due for adoption in plenary by June 2011.

In order for the EU to reach its 2020 target and to maintain and build on its reputation as a world leader for road safety, it is up to the Hungarian EU Presidency to work together with other Member States and also the European Commission and the European Parliament to reinforce the Policy Orientations and translate them urgently into determined action.

Road Safety in the White Paper on the "Future of Transport"

In 2001 the Commission issued a White Paper setting the agenda for transport policy through to 2010. The White Paper also set the target to halve road deaths by 50% by 2010. Following a consultation period last year 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. Ahead of the new White Paper the European Parliament has adopted its own report on the "Future of Sustainable Transport". The European Parliament's Rapporteur MEP Grosch placed a considerable emphasis on road safety and the need to have compliance with clear and measurable targets to reduce road deaths and serious injuries on the roads by 2020. The need for a strong section in the White Paper on road safety has also enjoyed the support of other MEPs. MEPs also stressed the need for the next Road Safety Action Programme and the White Paper to be inextricably linked.

³ ETSC's PRAISE Project Praising Road Safety "At" Work and "To" Work <http://www.etsc.eu/PRAISE.php>

ETSC stated in its contribution that 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 within the future strategy.

The Hungarian Presidency should work towards ensuring that the response of the Council to the "Future of Transport" strategy should also include road safety as a priority and make sure that these two strategy documents, the White Paper and the European Commission's "Road Safety Policy Orientations 2011-2020", are mutually supporting.

Finalising the Directive on Cross Border Enforcement of Traffic Law in the Field of Road Safety

Following the conclusions on political agreement on the Cross Border Enforcement Directive at the Transport Council on the 2nd of December Hungary should work hard in reaching final agreement on the Directive. The Directive would introduce a system of exchanging information to enable the follow up of road safety related traffic offences committed by non-resident drivers. Enforcement is a means to prevent collisions from happening by way of persuading drivers to comply with the safety rules. Deterrence is based on giving drivers the feeling that they run too high a risk of being caught when breaking the rules. Thus effective enforcement leads to a rapid reduction in deaths and injuries.

The political agreement reached under the Belgian EU Presidency was a significant step forward in the political process of adopting the Directive and Hungary will have to take over the baton of finalising it within their part of the Presidency trio. Part of this includes co-ordinating the "opt-in" procedure for the UK and Ireland. The new legal basis (87.2) means that Ireland and the UK, which do not automatically take part in police cooperation under the Lisbon treaty, have to decide if they want to participate in this Directive. Both countries have so far signalled an interest and

have agreed in principle with the draft Directive, but have yet to take, within the three months, their final decision.

Two years ago the European Parliament, with the active role played by MEP Ines Ayala Sender, who acted as rapporteur, gave its overwhelming support to the proposed Directive. The Hungarian EU Presidency should start negotiating with the European Parliament so as to be able to reach a swift agreement and not contribute to any further delays on this much awaited for dossier. Following agreement with the European Parliament and the Council a two-year period follows for Member States to transpose EU legislation before it comes into force, ideally by 2013.

ETSC continues to give its strong support to this Directive, principally as this would clearly contribute to the EU road safety policy and reaching the new EU target of halving deaths on the EU roads by 2020. But also for reasons of equality, as EU citizens are entitled to fair and equal treatment. The principle of non-discrimination is enshrined in the Treaty. At present this principle is not being applied with non-residents acting with impunity and escaping punishment whilst travelling abroad. The future of police co-operation across the borders and the safety of Europe's citizens depend on the swift adoption of the Cross Border Directive to close this gap of road safety and equal treatment.

Hungary is a transit country, and the consequences of that can be experienced first of all on the main road network. For example, data from the motorway M1 and ring road M0 show that as much as 80% of speeding offences are committed by non-resident drivers. As fixed camera networks are extending and enforcement increases also in Hungary this number is likely to rise unless the Cross Border Enforcement Directive is implemented swiftly.

Following the considerable progress made by the Belgian EU Presidency, ETSC has high expectations for the Hungarian Presidency to take the next steps in reaching completion of this challenging and yet important piece of European road safety legislation.

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

ETSC welcomes the proposal for a Regulation on the approval and market surveillance of two- or three-wheel vehicles and quadricycles (L-category vehicles). ETSC considers the proposal extremely useful as addressed to improve the safety of Power Two Wheelers (PTWs), the most vulnerable group of road users. 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 (huge 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 is on average 18 times the risk of 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 great potential for improving safety in the most risky group of road users: riders of powered two-wheelers. ETSC supports the European Commission proposal that ABS and advanced braking systems should become mandatory for all PTWs and adds that riders be educated regarding their use and benefits. Evidence shows that motorcyclists are safer riding with lights on in daytime and one third of all motorcycle accidents are linked directly to the lack of conspicuity⁴. ETSC supports the proposal to introduce mandatory 'Automatic Headlights On' for L-category vehicles and particularly for L1e and L3e categories. The Hungarian Presidency should work to progress on

this new type approval regulation and thus support progress in addressing this group of EU road users.

Technical Inspections and Road Worthiness

The European Commission is planning to revise the roadworthiness Directive of 2009/40/EC in 2010. 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 these 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 collisions. In sum, the Directive needs to be revised to ensure that the testing of new modern vehicles are safely maintained. The EU should consider extending the Directive to cover other vehicle types such as PTWs. The Hungarian Presidency of the EU should encourage the European Commission to prioritise measures with the highest life saving potential in the revision of this Directive.

Literature

- ETSC (2010), Position on Cross Border Enforcement Directive
- ETSC (2008), Blueprint for a 4th Road Safety Action Programme
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