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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

On the interim evaluation of the EU road safety policy framework 2011-2020

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1. Introduction

The Commission road safety work in the period 2011-2020 is guided by the policy framework *Policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020*¹. An interim evaluation of these Policy orientations has been carried out half-way through this period.

The interim evaluation has taken stock of EU road safety actions within the policy framework. It has assessed progress made towards the strategic target of reducing the number of road fatalities by 50% by 2020. It has investigated indications of EU relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and added value.

The evaluation was based on data from the EU road accidents database CARE, on a technical study by a road safety expert², on information from external stakeholders and on findings from a wide literature review.

The evaluation concluded that the EU road safety policy framework is generally on the right track. The number of road fatalities in the EU is decreasing, especially for young people and for motorised road users. EU actions appear to have contributed to this reduction. The strategic target is found to remain relevant and challenging. All actions under the Policy orientations are ongoing as planned and some have already been completed.

This Staff Working Document summarises the outcomes of the interim evaluation and the expected next steps in EU road safety work.

2. Background

Road safety work is complex, with many factors playing a role in determining final outcomes; for example the behaviour of road users, the design and quality of vehicles and safety equipment, the design and maintenance of road infrastructure and the emergency response in the case of a crash.

Road safety is a shared competence. Many important measures, for example traffic rule enforcement and road user education are primarily managed by the Member States. The EU contributes where there is added value to cooperation and harmonisation of rules at EU level.

The road safety situation today

European roads are much safer today than ever before and the EU is the safest region world-wide. However, every year more than 25,000 people die in road traffic crashes in the EU and

¹ Commission Communication, Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020, COM(2010)389 final, Brussels, 20 July 2010

² Jeanne Breen, Road safety study for the interim evaluation of Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020, 12 February 2015, the report is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/study_final_report_february_2015_final.pdf

many more are reported to be seriously injured. Road crashes remain one of the most common causes of death for those between 15 and 25 years old. Drink-driving and speeding are responsible for a large share of all fatal road traffic crashes.

The number of road fatalities is decreasing in the EU. The number of road deaths dropped by 18.2% from 2010 to 2014. The differences between Member States are also decreasing.

The strongest development has been in the safety of those younger than 25 years and for motorised road users. The majority of those killed on the roads are nevertheless car occupants and motorcycle riders.

The safety of vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists) and of elderly road users (65 years and above) is improving more slowly. The fatality numbers for these groups decreased at a below-average rate.

Serious road traffic injuries are also decreasing but not as rapidly as fatalities.

The EU road safety policy framework

The contributions by the Commission during the current decade are guided by the Policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020. There are two main components to this framework:

- A strategic, aspirational target for the reduction of road fatalities by 2020;
- A list of 16 proposed Commission actions divided under seven focus areas.

The aim of the road safety target is to halve the number of road deaths over the decade, with 2010 as the baseline year. The target is not binding on EU Member States and it is not in conflict with separate target setting by Member States at national level. The intention to strive towards this target was announced by the Commission in the Policy orientations in 2010 and confirmed in the Transport White Paper³ the following year. The EU target was endorsed by the European Parliament⁴ and by the Council⁵.

The strategic target is intended as a tool for benchmarking and comparison between Member States and for mobilising partners to join the challenge and to increase road safety efforts at all levels. A strategic target is adopted to confirm the EU commitment to an important policy area. Setting strategic road safety targets is considered an international best practice.⁶

This target can only be reached by a combination of actions at local, national and EU level. The initiatives taken by the EU are grouped into seven focus areas:

1. Education and training of road users

³ Commission White Paper, Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system, COM(2011)144 final, Brussels, 28 March 2011

⁴ European Parliament resolution of 27 September 2011 on *European road safety 2011-2020* (2010/2235(INI))

⁵ *Council conclusions on road safety*, 3052th Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council meeting, Brussels, 2–3 December 2010

⁶ International Organisation for Standardisation, Road traffic safety (RTS) management systems — Requirements with guidance for use, ISO 39001:2012(E); World Health Organisation, Global status report on road safety 2013, p.27

2. Enforcement of road traffic rules
3. Safer road infrastructure
4. Safer vehicles
5. Better use of modern safety technologies
6. Serious injuries and emergency services
7. Safety of vulnerable road users.

There are 16 actions proposed in the framework document. These range from legislation to soft measures and studies. Several Commission DGs are involved in the execution of the tasks.

3. Summary of evaluation conclusions

Work is on-going within all the seven focus areas and several main milestones have already been reached. Two important legislative initiatives have been concluded on roadworthiness testing and on the cross-border enforcement of road traffic rules. Revisions of the vehicle approval legislation have also been completed. Actions are carried out in cooperation across the Commission Directorate-Generals.

Reviews of the infrastructure safety management rules and the rules on qualification and training of professional drivers are on-going. Vehicle safety systems e.g. to prevent speeding and drink-driving are investigated. Monitoring and follow-up of the legislation currently in place, analysis of road safety trends and contribution of road safety information to citizens are tasks that will continue throughout the strategy period.

Actions remain to be carried out especially in the area of cooperative system and advanced driver assistance technologies and on the reduction of serious road traffic injuries.

New challenges will also need to be taken into account in the coming years, for example the changing context of an ageing population, the increased use of potentially distracting devices in traffic and the possibilities offered by new technologies such as automated driving systems.

Relevance of the policy framework

The policy framework remains relevant. The target, the focus areas and the specific actions tackle serious road safety problems. All main road safety challenges except the continued over-representation of men among road traffic victims are directly targeted by actions under the framework. In order to achieve the target, the road safety policy framework should remain complete and holistic to cover all road user groups. There needs to be a focus both on motorised road users (the majority of the road fatalities) and on vulnerable road users (for whom fatality rates have decreased less than average).

However, the target for the reduction of fatalities focuses only on part of the road safety problem. The strategic target does not address the major problem of the high number of serious road traffic injuries.

Prognosis for the strategic target for the reduction of fatalities

In order to reach the target by 2020, a higher annual decrease rate is needed from this point onwards. For the remainder of the strategy period, an annual decrease rate of 7.8% is needed in order for the strategic target to be reached. This is considered to be challenging but not unattainable.

This means that additional efforts at EU and national level need to be considered. The actions by Member States are more likely to have an effect on road safety before 2020; for example enforcement of traffic rules and especially targeting speeding offences. EU actions within the road safety policy framework need to be continued, not least to prepare the ground for road safety progress in the longer term.

Effectiveness of EU actions

It is clear that the EU is the safest region world-wide, that the differences between Member States are decreasing over time, that new Member States usually make big road safety progress in the years following accession and that the average fatality decrease rate has speeded up since the adoption of the first EU-level strategic road safety target. Together, these facts indicate that the initiatives undertaken by the EU have a significant impact on road safety.

The different trends identified in specific target groups, for example age groups can in some cases be attributed to effects of individual EU actions; in other cases it is more difficult to draw any clear conclusions, for example, for different road user groups and road types.

The exact extent of EU effects on road safety outcomes could not be measured; this was also not expected due to the complex road safety context. It is not possible to isolate the results of Member State actions from those of EU actions.

Other external factors (financial crisis, demographic changes and climate change) have also been investigated, but could not be shown to have had any major impact on the road safety results in the period 2010-2014.

Efficiency of EU actions

The exact costs and savings could not be measured but based on the rough estimates made, it is deduced that the annual cost savings from the road safety progress made so far have been much higher than the annual total expenditure on road safety actions.

It is therefore concluded that the results have been achieved at a reasonable cost. It is also inferred that no other measures would have been likely to have yielded as broad, far-reaching results with benefits for the entire EU.

Coherence of policy objectives

The road safety policy objectives are clearly in line with other main policy objectives such as environmental, economic, social and health objectives. Only three possible exceptions to this were identified, but these can be resolved within the current policy framework:

- In the short term, there is a possibility that economic growth does not support a speedier road fatality reduction, mostly due to increased traffic volumes in times of strong economic development. This effect is however appears to level out over time.
- Promoting low-speed zones in sensitive areas could contradict the environmental objective of reducing fuel consumption and emissions due to the fact that low speeds increase road safety but are not optimal from an emissions point of view, at least for traditional combustion engines. A shift to more sustainable urban transport could be a solution.
- There could be increased road safety risks following promotion of sustainable transport modes like walking and cycling, unless measures are taken to ensure safe mobility also for pedestrians and cyclists.

Added value of EU contribution

An assessment was made of possible alternative ways to reach the same results; it is concluded that the EU actions have indeed had an added value, especially for the Member States with lower levels of road safety where EU actions are likely to have promoted developments more quickly.

4. Next Steps

The evaluation results indicate that no major changes to the strategic policy framework are needed at this point.

The work to complete the actions under the Policy orientations will continue, and in particular:

- The continued work on serious injuries including monitoring of progress based on the new data reporting and by further activities aimed at supporting Member States and local communities;
- Continued efforts to support Member States in exchanging experiences, and advice on best practices e.g. within the European Semester exercise;
- Further efforts in the area of cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems and advanced driver assistance systems in order to maximise the road safety benefits of new technologies;
- Efforts to increase the safety of vulnerable road users, aiming to speed up the fatality decrease rate for these groups;
- Monitoring and encouraging the implementation and enforcement of road safety rules at Member State level.

Novelties that could be considered in the upcoming preparatory work for the next strategy period include:

- Addressing the gender aspect of road safety;
- Identifying intermediary outcome objectives as part of the results-based approach.

5. Summary: Actions state of play

Focus area	EU action	State of play
Education and training of drivers	1. Education/ training strategy	On-going
Enforcement of traffic rules	2. Cross-border information exchange for enforcement	Completed
	3. Enforcement strategy: assessment of tools	Partly completed
	4. Enforcement implementation plans	Partly completed
Safer road infrastructure	5. EU funds conditional on infrastructure safety directive principles	On-going throughout the strategy period
	6. Infrastructure safety principles on inter-urban roads	On-going throughout the strategy period
Safer vehicles	7. Encourage active/ passive safety for motorcycles	Partly completed
	8. Strengthening of roadworthiness test rules	Completed
Modern safety technologies	9. Assess safety benefits of cooperative systems	Partly completed
	10. Evaluate benefits of Advanced Driving Assistance Systems	Partly completed
	11. Accelerate eCall deployment	On-going
Injuries and emergency response	12. Propose strategy on road injuries	On-going
Vulnerable road users	13. Technical standards for protection of vulnerable road users	On-going
	14. Vehicle inspections also for motorcycles	Completed
	15. Encourage safe cyclist/pedestrian infrastructure	On-going throughout the strategy period
	16. Contribute to better information to road users	On-going throughout the strategy period