



## **European road safety policy 2016-2020: a forecast on topics and activities**

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### **Keywords**

European Union,  
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### **Abstract**

#### **Objective**

25,500 people were killed on European roads in 2016. Thus, despite the achievements of the past, there is still need for action in order to reduce the number of people killed or injured in road traffic. Road safety will therefore certainly continue to be a part of the political agenda of the EU and its member states. However, the topics and activities of road safety policy that will determine the next few years are less apparent. Official programmes usually provide an insight on a very general level only. For this reason, the Austrian Road Safety Board (KFV) has asked the Erfurt University of Applied Sciences to carry out a policy analysis in order to clearly forecast the actions of the EU 2016-2020 in terms of road safety policy. The forecast aims at supporting the work programmes of public and private institutions as well as decision makers.

#### **Method**

The study was based on an evaluation of programmes and legal acts of the past years as well as on expert opinions. From the results, conclusions were drawn on the activities and actions to be expected till 2020.

#### **Results**

The results were structured according to the seven objectives defined by the European Commission in its policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020. Among others, the following developments can be expected in the near future:

- The EU Commission is revising several directives, most importantly the directive on initial qualification and periodic training for professional drivers (a proposal has already been published), the infrastructure directive (with a possible inclusion of all highways and a focus on motorcycles and ITS), and the tunnel safety directive.
- Other directives have been or are currently being evaluated and will most likely be revised in the future. This includes the driving license directive and the cross-border enforcement directive. Apart from that, in the field of enforcement, only recommendations on the exchange of good-practice are expected.
- Technical vehicle safety and the promotion of the use of modern technology will gain more importance. A report on advanced vehicle safety features was published in December 2016, a proposal can be expected in 2017. In 2018, new directives on technical vehicle inspection are going to be applied in the member states. A “road package” has been published in May 2017, targeting electronic road toll systems, competition in commercial road transport as well as social conditions of professional drivers. C-ITS (cooperative ITS) are becoming a priority: Based on a strategy published 2016, networked vehicles should be introduced by 2019. A review of the ITS action plan and

directive is pending.

- Driver distraction and the safety of senior road users are a subject of EU-funded research projects. Results will be published within the next years. However, no legislative proposals are expected.
- Reducing the number of seriously injured will be a core objective in the future: A reduction goal of 50% has been set by the Council of the European Union for the period 2020-2030.

The results show that the developments of the last years point towards a full and active agenda till 2020 and beyond. This roadmap will support all stakeholders in road safety in their contribution.

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## 1. Introduction

25,671 people were killed in road traffic accidents in the European Union in 2016. Therefore, despite all achievements of the past, there is still need for action in order to further reduce the number of road traffic injuries and fatalities. Thus, road safety will still continue to be a part of the political agenda of the EU and its member states. However, the topics and activities of road safety policy that will determine the next few years are less obvious. Official programmes usually provide an insight on a very general level only.

In order to gain a clear and detailed picture of future EU actions in relation to road safety, the KfV (Austrian Road Safety Board) commissioned Prof. Mathias Gather (Gather, et al., 2016) of the Erfurt University of Applied Sciences to conduct an analysis of the EU policies of recent years. The result of this analysis was a forecast predicting which topics and measures will be part of EU policy until 2020 and beyond. The objective was to make the forecast as clear as possible so that public and private institutions, as well as important decision-makers, can use it as a basis for their working programmes, budgets, and research focus. At the center of the policy analysis is the policy of the EU itself. In addition, a few selected European countries with a high level of road safety (Sweden, Norway, United Kingdom and Germany) were also considered. However, the present article focuses only on European policy.

As a basis for the analysis, documents issued by the government and non-government stakeholders were evaluated systematically, focussing on the years 2010 – 2015. At the center of attention were core programmes defining the framework for road safety, particularly the EU's road safety programme "Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020" (European Commission, 2011) and its interim evaluation (European Commission, 2015b). Directives and Regulations, including proposals by the Commission, were also systematically assessed. They often contain concrete instructions for the Commission for further steps including a date for a mandatory report on the implementation of the legal act. These reports often form the basis for amendments to a legal act and include valuable information on possible topics and activities. The third type of documents included in the analysis were position statements of selected institutions operating on a European level, for instance, ETSC (European Transport Safety Council), FERSI (Forum of European Road Safety Research Institutes) and CIECA (International Commission for Driver Testing). In addition to this document analysis, interviews were conducted with experts who possess detailed insights into current and future policies. On a European level, those experts included members of the EU Commission and EU Parliament. The interviews were conducted with Szabolcs Schmidt (Head of the Road Safety Unit of DG MOVE), Susanne Lindahl (Road Safety Unit of DG MOVE), Michael Cramer (MEP), Dr. Dieter-Lebrecht Koch (MEP).

The document analysis and the expert interviews made it possible to draw conclusions on the developments in the second half of the current decade and to identify working fields and activities that are to be expected with high probability over the next few years.

## 2. Outlook on the European road traffic policies

The key document on a European level is "Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020", which specifies seven fields of action. These fields of action were used as a basis for the structure of the results of this study. Over the next few years, the following developments can be expected in each of the target fields.

### 2.1. Education and training of road users

In the area of road safety education and driver training, the **EU driving license Directive** (2006/126/EC) is currently being evaluated (MOVE/C4/2016-100). The evaluation is conducted by IMOB (Hasselt University, Belgium)

together with KFV (Austria), the National Technical University of Athens (Greece), ETSC and the Austrian State Printing House. The study includes, among others, an evaluation of the driving license model, the category system, the regulations for driving examiners and the EU driving license network RESPER. The results are expected by the beginning of 2018; amendments based on the evaluation are likely. Proposals for EU-wide standards on driver training and driving instructors (currently not regulated by the driving license Directive) have been presented by CIECA (CIECA, 2015). Furthermore, a study financed by the European Commission on the topic of driver education (including the requirements for driving instructors), driver testing and fitness to drive has recently been published (TRL, SWOV, BAST, Loughborough University, & Monash University, 2017). The results provide a basis for the Commission to assess in what respect initiatives by the EU would be useful.

The **Directive for the initial and periodic training of professional drivers** (2003/59/EC) has already been evaluated (Panteia, Research & Mobility Leuven, 2014) and a proposal for amendment has been published in February 2017 (COM(2017) 47 final). The planned changes to the Directive target several problematic areas that were identified. Among others, the proposal includes an adaptation of the contents of the training, measures for improved mutual recognition of the training and adaptations aiming at reducing interpretation difficulties.

## 2.2. Increased enforcement of road rules

Important topics in the area of enforcing traffic regulations are the cross-border enforcement as well as onboard vehicle equipment to ensure compliance with regulations. The activities of the EU on these matters will rather be in the form of recommendations and the exchange of good-practice cases; legal acts are not to be expected.

An evaluation of the **Directive facilitating the cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offenses** ((EU) 2015/413), commissioned by the EU Commission, was completed in the first half of 2016 (Grimaldi Studio Legale, 2016). This evaluation not only confirmed the Directive's contribution to a better enforcement of road safety related traffic regulations and its economic benefit but also showed that the revenues surpass the costs. The recommendations of this study are particularly aimed at an improved application in the member states as well as more efficient procedures. Furthermore, legislative amendments are also proposed, in particular, an assessment whether an EU-wide regulation could force vehicle owners of all member states to reveal the identity of the driver when required.

In 2013 two important studies in the area of automotive technology were made public: An evaluation (Transport & Mobility Leuven, TNO, CE Delft, TRT, 2013) in relation to the **Directive on the installation and use of speed limitation devices for certain categories of motor vehicles in the community** (92/6/EEC) contains recommendations for the expansion of the directive, namely the extension of its scope to light commercial vehicles as well as the equipment of all commercial utility vehicles with an ISA-System (Intelligent Speed Adoption). The study (Ecorys, COWI, 2014) about the **implementation of Alcohol Interlocks** came to the conclusion that, among others, the exchange of experiences between all member states should be encouraged and the focus should be placed on harmonizing technical as well as cross-border aspects. In the meantime, significant progress has been made through the introduction of the EU-wide driving license code "69" for Alcohol Interlocks (Directive (EU) 2015/653). Furthermore, the study suggests the drafting of guidelines for the implementation of Alcohol Interlocks for drivers who have committed alcohol-related offenses and the observation of further technological developments.

## 2.3. Safer road infrastructure

The core legal act in the area of road traffic infrastructure is the **Directive on road safety management** (2008/96/EC). It specifies coherent procedures in relation to road infrastructure safety management and applies to all roads in the trans-European road network that are being planned, built or already operational. The evaluation (Transport & Mobility Leuven, TRT, Prospex, 2014) of the directive from 2014 is encouraging an extension of the scope to all motorways. An even higher benefit could be achieved through the extension to all roads, however, such an extension would lead to an increase in costs for the member states. The evaluation further recommends to increase the focus on motorcycles and to provide support for the distribution of ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) applications. The Commission is also conducting an Impact Assessment of possible amendments with corresponding recommendations being expected in 2017.

The **Directive on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network** (2004/54/EC) was also evaluated (ICF Consulting Services, TRT, 2015). Depending on the outcome of the Impact Assessment, whose results should be available by the end of 2017, suggestions for amendments could be expected in 2018.

## 2.4. Safer vehicles

In the area of motor vehicle type approval, falling under the competence of the DG GROW (Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry Entrepreneurship and SMEs), a report on the **Regulation concerning type-approval**

**requirements for the general safety of motor vehicles** ((EC) 661/2009) and the **Regulation on the protection of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users** ((EC) 78/2009) was published in December 2016 (European Commission, 2016a). The report focusses on advanced vehicle safety features and outlines key issues to be addressed in the review and possible update of the regulations. It presents 19 specific vehicle safety measures that appear to be feasible and cost-effective. Based on the report, an impact assessment is carried out that will most likely lead to a proposal for amending both Regulations, to be expected by mid-2017.

The Directives from the **“Roadworthiness Package”** dealing with the periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers (2014/45/EU), the vehicle registration documents (2014/46/EU) as well as the technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles (2014/47/EU) have to be applied on a national level from 2018.

## 2.5. Use of modern technologies to increase road safety

The use of modern technologies will become one of the most important fields of action of the EU in the next few years. At the center of attention are **C-ITS** (Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems), which allow vehicles to interact between themselves and with the road infrastructure. A “C-ITS Platform” was brought to life in 2014. At the beginning of 2016, the Platform presented a report (C-ITS Platform, 2016) that served as a basis for the development of an EU strategy for the implementation of C-ITS. The strategy was published at the end of 2016 (European Commission, 2016b). It identifies issues to be addressed at European level and proposes actions to ensure coordinated deployment of C-ITS services in 2019. In addition, the European transport ministers endorsed the Declaration of Amsterdam on cooperation in the field of connected and automated driving in April 2016. The Declaration identifies actions for the Member States, the European Commission, and the industry to support the introduction of connected and automated driving. It aims at ensuring more coordinated approach between the Member States and at European level to remove barriers and promote, among others, a consistent legal framework.

The **ITS Directive** (2010/40/EU), which sets a framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport, will also be further developed. Regarding most of the ITS applications ranked as priority measures in the Directive, uniform specifications have already been adopted in delegated Regulations. This concerns, among others, the interoperable EU-wide eCall (see Chapter 2.6), safe and secure truck parking lots and EU-wide real-time traffic information systems. The progress was analyzed in a report (European Commission, 2014a) on the implementation of the ITS directive as well as in a progress report (European Commission, 2014b) on the ITS action plan (European Commission, 2008). Based on these reports, the Commission came to the conclusion that after the implementation of the designated measures, it will be necessary for a second step to reassess the Directive and the Action Plan. A roadmap (European Commission, 2017b) was published in March 2017, setting March 2018 as a completion date for the evaluation. As a first step, the period to adopt delegated legal acts, currently expiring on 26 August 2017, will be extended: The Commission will be able to exert this power for another five years, with an automatic tacit extension after that (COM(2017) 136 final). Regarding the systems covered by the Directive, long-term trends such as using crowdsourcing for traffic data, automated driving and the deployment of cooperative services are to be considered. Next to the currently prioritized measures,, it could be necessary to determine new priorities.

## 2.6. Emergency and post-injuries services

A key measure in the area of emergency services is the EU-wide introduction of the onboard emergency call system **eCall**, which automatically dials the Europe-wide emergency number 112 in the event of an accident and communicates the position of the vehicle. Several legal acts have already been published: a regulation on type approval ((EU) 2015/758) regulating the mandatory installation of the system in passenger cars and light trucks starting 2018, a Decision of the deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall service (585/2014/EU), a Regulation ((EU) 305/2013) based on the ITS directive containing specifications for the PSAP (public safety answering points) infrastructure required for the proper receipt and handling of eCalls and recently two regulations specifying additional details concerning data protection and technical requirements and test procedures ((EU) 2017/78 and (EU) 2017/79). Based on Article 12 of the Regulation on type approval, the Commission should present an evaluation report by 31/3/2021 on the achievements and the penetration rate of the eCall system and assess whether the scope of the Regulation should be extended to other vehicles as well.

While the focus of road safety politics has so far been primarily on road traffic fatalities, seriously injured road users will be more at the center of attention in the near future. In this regard, a common European definition of serious injuries was agreed upon in 2013 (European Commission, 2013). Figures for seriously injured users of European roads were published for the first time for the year 2014: 135.000 (European Commission, 2016c). A study on serious road traffic injuries in the EU has been financed by the Commission and finalized in late 2016 (Aarts, et al., 2016). After repeated requests both from NGOs (ETSC, 2016a) and the EU Parliament (European Parliament, 2016), the

EU finally set a target of 50% reduction for the period 2020-2030 in June 2017 (Council of the European Union, 2017).

## 2.7. Protection of vulnerable road users

In July 2017, the Council of the European Union endorsed conclusions on road safety where it is stated that the safety of vulnerable road users – pedestrians and cyclists – is of special concern as accident rates are particularly high (Council of the European Union, 2017). The Commission is asked to enhance the protection of vulnerable road users by ensuring the deployment of new safety features for vehicles. Similarly, ETSC published a position statement (ETSC, 2016b) in 2016 which demands a revision of the **Regulation on the type-approval of motor vehicles with regard to the protection of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users** ((EC) 78/2009). At the moment, an impact assessment is carried as a preparation for a possible amendment of the Regulation and changes are expected (see Chapter 2.4).

The **safety of older road users** has become a central activity field in light of the current demographic trends. This was recognized by the EU Commission in its policy orientations (European Commission, 2011). A recent study (IMOB, NTUA, LAB, ERF, 2015) recommends measures in the areas of infrastructure, awareness-raising, driving license and medical fitness as well as vehicle technology, particularly driver assistance systems. The EU Commission could become active in the area of vehicle technology and promote the exchange of experience. Legal measures in relation to driver licensing, such as medical tests and a restricted validity of the driving license, would be possible. However, there is currently no consensus on this topic between the member states, so no regulation is to be expected.

## 2.8. Further topics

A road traffic package called “Europe on the Move” (European Commission, 2017a) was presented by the Commission in May 2017. It aims at promoting clean, competitive and connected mobility and comprises a wide-ranging set of initiatives in different areas of road transport. The package includes, among others, legislative proposals regarding the interoperability of electronic road toll systems as well as regarding competitive conditions in commercial road transport and social conditions of professional drivers.

Over the next years, activities outside of the seven goals already set in the policy orientations can also be expected. For instance, studies on the topic of **distraction** are being financed (European Commission, 2015a). Additionally, gender aspects (higher risk of male road users) could gain importance over the next few years (European Commission, 2015b).

## 3. Summary

Until recently, there has been a steady and promising downwards trend of road traffic fatalities. Meeting the common target in the EU of halving the number of road deaths seemed realistic. However, the reduction has come to a halt during the last three years. The reduction target may therefore not be met unless further efforts are made. In March 2017 (Valetta Declaration, 2017) and again in June 2017 (Council of the European Union, 2017) the transport ministers of the EU member states took action and stressed the continuing importance of joint and determined efforts to improve road safety. They listed several topics that require particular attention in the coming years, including vulnerable road users, connected and automated driving, post-collision care, influencing the behavior of road users and developing a Europe-wide road safety culture.

These latest developments and the results of the study point towards a full and active agenda till 2020 and beyond.

## 4. List of cited documents

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2017/79 of 12 September 2016 establishing detailed technical requirements and test procedures for the EC type-approval of motor vehicles with respect to their 112-based eCall in-vehicle systems, of 112-based eCall in-vehicle separate technical units and components and supplementing and amending Regulation (EU) 2015/758 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the exemptions and applicable standards

Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 305/2013 of 26 November 2012 supplementing Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the harmonized provision for an interoperable EU-wide eCall

Commission Directive (EU) 2015/653 of 24 April 2015 amending Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on driving licenses

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/78 of 15 July 2016 establishing administrative provisions for the EC type-approval of motor vehicles with respect to their 112-based eCall in-vehicle systems and uniform

conditions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) 2015/758 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to the privacy and data protection of users of such systems

Council Directive 92/6/EEC of 10 February 1992 on the installation and use of speed limitation devices for certain categories of motor vehicles in the Community

Decision No 585/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the deployment of the interoperable EU-wide eCall service

Directive (EU) 2015/413 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2015 facilitating cross-border exchange of information on road-safety-related traffic offenses

Directive (EU) 2015/719 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 amending Council Directive 96/53/EC laying down for certain road vehicles circulating within the Community the maximum authorized dimensions in national and international traffic and the maximum authorized weights in international traffic

Directive 2003/59/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 July 2003 on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers, amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85 and Council Directive 91/439/EEC and repealing Council Directive 76/914/EEC

Directive 2004/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the trans-European road network

Directive 2006/126/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on driving licenses (Recast) (Text with EEA relevance)

Directive 2008/96/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on road infrastructure safety management

Directive 2010/40/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the framework for the deployment of Intelligent Transport Systems in the field of road transport and for interfaces with other modes of transport

Directive 2014/45/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 on periodic roadworthiness tests for motor vehicles and their trailers and repealing Directive 2009/40/EC

Directive 2014/46/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 amending Council Directive 1999/37/EC on the registration documents for vehicles

Directive 2014/47/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 on the technical roadside inspection of the roadworthiness of commercial vehicles circulating in the Union and repealing Directive 2000/30/EC

Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2010/40/EU as regards the period for adopting delegated acts, COM(2017) 136 final

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/59/EC on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers and Directive 2006/126/EC on driving licenses, COM(2017) 47 final

Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/59/EC on the initial qualification and periodic training of drivers of certain road vehicles for the carriage of goods or passengers and Directive 2006/126/EC on driving licenses, COM/2017/047 final

Regulation (EC) No 78/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 January 2009 on the type-approval of motor vehicles with regard to the protection of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users, amending Directive 2007/46/EC and repealing Directives 2003/102/EC and 2005/66/EC

Regulation (EC) No 661/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning type-approval requirements for the general safety of motor vehicles, their trailers and systems, components and separate technical units intended therefor

Regulation (EU) 2015/758 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2015 concerning type-approval requirements for the deployment of the eCall in-vehicle system based on the 112 service and amending Directive 2007/46/EC

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