

Road Safety Newsletter

MALTA ROAD SAFETY CONFERENCE 28-29 MARCH 2017

With the trends in road safety statistics showing little sign of improvement, the EU's bold target of halving the number of road deaths by 2020 represents a growing challenge.

The Malta Road Safety Conference on 28 and 29 March 2017 brought together government ministers and other high-level stakeholders to discuss the current state of play in road safety. The discussions renewed impetus to efforts to reduce the number of road deaths and serious injuries in Europe.



On 28 March, road safety stakeholders met with the Maltese Presidency of the EU, the Commission and European Parliament representatives to propose actions to improve road safety.

The meeting was structured to be highly participatory, encouraging open discussion around the key pressure points on EU road safety systems where united action can make the maximum progress. The discussions focused on five areas: road safety strategies and policies, enforcement, smart road solutions, infrastructure safety and vulnerable road users.

The conclusions and recommendations from this stakeholder meeting were presented directly to a meeting of transport ministers on 29 March. This ministerial conference launched the political debate and outlined the future direction required to achieve enhanced road safety. The event culminated in the endorsement of the Valletta Declaration on Road Safety.

During the two-day event, an extensive exhibition promoted the work of the stakeholder organisations and a gala diner provided a unique opportunity for networking.

Stakeholder discussion

Opening the stakeholder conference, the Minister of Transport and Infrastructure for Malta, Joe Mizzi, stressed the importance of road safety

and the goal of halving the number of road fatalities by 2020. European Commissioner for Mobility and Transport, Violeta Bulc then highlighted the fact that road safety is a shared responsibility and urged stakeholders to work together to produce concrete proposals for improvement.

“Let’s use today’s meeting to share experiences, best practices, and challenges with each other so we can learn together and find a common way towards even safer roads in Europe,” she said. “The Commission is currently reflecting on what form and content our policy framework for the next strategic period, post 2020, should take. I want to listen carefully today to your views on this, and also present one or two thoughts from my side.”

The final introductory speaker was the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety, Jean Todt, who stressed the importance of innovation in the way we perceive road safety. Roads are the ninth leading cause of fatalities and are taking the lives of our future generations, he said, and we need to address disparities by improving road safety.

The conference then moved into its participatory phase with small group discussions to develop a range of proposals for action. Participants were asked to vote for their top proposals, which were then presented in a plenary session.

Latest statistics

During the conference the 2016 EU road safety statistics were released and Commissioner Bulc presented them to the media via a web-streamed press conference.



The results were encouraging as the the number of fatalities recorded across the EU last year fell by 2 %. This drop followed two years of stagnation. However, a total of 25 500 people lost their lives on EU roads in 2016. In addition the Commission estimates that some 135 000 people were seriously injured. Still, European roads remain the safest in the world:

in 2016, the EU recorded 50 road fatalities per one million inhabitants, in comparison to the global average of 174 deaths per million.

Announcing the figures on 28 March, Commissioner Bulc said: "Today's statistics are an improvement and something positive to build on. But it's not the figures that worry me the most — it's the lives lost, and the families left behind. Just today we will lose another 70 lives on EU roads and five-times as many will sustain serious injuries. I'm inviting all stakeholders to step up their efforts so we can meet the objective of halving the number of road deaths between 2010 and 2020."

Since 2010 EU road fatalities have been cut by 19 %. While this pace is encouraging, greater efforts from all stakeholders are required if the EU is to meet its target of halving road fatalities between 2010 and 2020.

While most EU countries have improved their road safety records since 2010, there is still a significant gap in performance across the EU with some nations registering less than 30 road deaths per million citizens and others over 90.

However in 2016, for the second year in a row, no EU country had a fatality rate above 100 deaths per million inhabitants. Most EU countries recorded a fatality rate below 80. Almost half achieved their best road safety records ever.

A media seminar followed the presentation of the fatality statistics with the active involvement of Commissioner Bulc, Jean Todt and representatives from two of the principle stakeholders at the workshop: the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) and the European Traffic Police Network (TISPOL).

In parallel, the Commission organised a regular high-level group meeting on road safety focusing on three main topics: the 2016 road safety statistics and possible trends, the application of the cross-border enforcement directive and speed enforcement in Member States.

Ministerial Conference

On 29 March, a road safety ministerial conference was held at the Grand Master's Palace in Valletta with representatives of all 28 EU countries in attendance as well as third countries, including Norway, Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The meeting was opened by Maltese Transport Minister, Joe Mizzi, Commissioner Bulc, Jean Todt and the European Parliament Transport Committee Chair, Karima Delli. A video message from Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis on the battle against drunk-driving was also received.

The introductory speeches were followed by presentations by five rapporteurs on the conclusions of the previous day's stakeholder conference. A subsequent roundtable of EU countries followed their five topics.

At the end of the meeting, the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims President, Jeannot Mersch, expressed the voice of those affected by accidents across Europe, before the Ministers formally endorsed the Valletta Declaration on Road Safety.

The journey ahead

The Malta Conference adopted an inclusive process to mobilise road safety stakeholders at the highest level. The wealth of practical ideas from the stakeholder meeting represents a new direction for the future.

Overall the Valletta Declaration and the conference was an event that gained high visibility and will be regarded as a landmark achievement for road safety. It produced unanimous agreement on some very important orientations for future policy, especially in terms of reducing serious injuries. The event has provided a sound platform for new policy orientations in the post-2020 period and many more issues that need addressing.

More info: <http://bit.ly/2pJcQZ7>

The Valletta Declaration

At the Malta conference Commissioner Bulc described the Valletta Declaration endorsed by transport ministers from all 28 EU member states as "ambitious, balanced and realistic" and saw it as a basis



to make further significant progress on road safety throughout the EU.

The declaration reconfirms the EU's commitment to improving road safety. It acknowledges the unacceptable costs of road accidents in terms of both human suffering and economic impact, while recognising the significant challenges that need to be addressed.

It looks to continue and reinforce measures necessary to achieve the target to halve the number of road deaths in the EU by 2020 relative to 2010. It also emphasises that work on improving road safety should not be measured by counting road deaths alone. The number of serious injuries should also be addressed with an ambitious overall target of halving the number of serious injuries in the EU by 2030 from 2020. Data reporting on serious injuries should be based on the new common definition and methodology.

The Declaration notes the wide range of existing instruments that promote better enforcement of traffic rules in EU countries and elsewhere, awareness raising for road users, and infrastructure and



vehicle safety improvement. And it looks for all players to work together to establish a Europe-wide road safety culture based on shared values and improved road user behaviour.

The Declaration also calls on the Commission to prepare a new road safety policy framework for the decade after 2020 taking into account the target and objectives set out in this Declaration; explore how the EU's road safety legal framework might be strengthened; and consider the potential of connected and automated driving technologies to enhance road safety amongst other actions.

In particular, the Declaration calls on industry and civil society to develop and promote automated driving and driver assistance systems that reduce the effects of human error and distraction. These include advanced intelligent speed assistance or autonomous emergency braking functions that could protect vulnerable road users.

The Declaration recognises the continuing work of all road safety stakeholders and invites them to work together to develop future transport systems and technologies that can boost road safety in the future.

You can find the full text of the Valetta Declaration here: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/sites/roadsafety/files/valetta_declaration_on_improving_road_safety.pdf

Valetta: Stakeholder Conclusions

The Malta Road Safety Conference fully involved participants. A series of intense stakeholder discussions on 28 March focused on five areas: road safety strategies and policies; enforcement; smart road solutions; infrastructure safety; and vulnerable road users.

Each discussion produced a set of stakeholder recommendations that were reported to the ministerial meeting on 29 March. Brief summaries of the recommendations are given below with a link to the full rapporteur's report covering each area.

Road safety strategies and policies

Participants stressed the importance of building political commitment and leadership at the highest level as prerequisites for preventing road traffic deaths and injuries.



Recommendations include the preparation of a new ten-year European Road Safety Strategy 2020-2030 guided by the 'safe system approach', including a target to reduce road deaths and serious injuries by 2030. Progress in EU countries should be tracked with a set of relevant intermediate outcome indicators and the collection of serious injury data should be improved with a common definition. A guaranteed budget should be allocated for road safety.

EU governments should demonstrate global leadership in progressing towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals on road safety and improve the enforcement of road safety legislation based on research, accident and casualty data collection.

Setting up a European Road Safety Agency to, among other tasks, collect and analyse road safety data to inform new safety policy and to evaluate the effectiveness of road safety countermeasures should also lead to reduced traffic deaths and injuries. Finally, participants called on the EU to work with health authorities to offer high standards of rescue, hospital care and long-term rehabilitation.

Enforcement of traffic rules



Participants felt that enforcement is an important part of an integrated approach to road safety and should be a significant theme in the 2020-2030 European Road Safety Strategy. Stakeholder recommendations included three key elements for the strategy.

The first consisted of the recommended implementation of individual road safety strategies for 2020-2030 by each EU country, which should include a strong commitment to reduce collisions leading to road death and serious injury through flexible enforcement based on intelligence, professional judgement and discretion. The second focused on how EU countries should commit to participating in cross border enforcement, which includes coordinated pan-European events.

Finally, participants called on EU countries to invest in education and new technology to support enforcement. Countries should recognise the importance of educating road users on the consequences of road traffic collisions and understand the importance of working collaboratively with other European road safety organisations to target the most vulnerable road users and deliver key road safety messages and enforcement.



Infrastructure safety



The key points from the discussion included the need for infrastructure safety budgets to reflect the public costs of road crashes and the establishment of performance metrics to better manage infrastructure safety.

Achieving significant reduction in road deaths will not be met with a 'business as usual' approach. Recommendations called on EU countries to consider establishing infrastructure safety performance goals for road agencies and concessions. Governments should also investigate establishing funds dedicated to targeting high risk roads. Recommendations for the EU include reviewing the safety performance goals for the TEN-T network, considering a 'safer road fund' or other instrument to deliver this, and reviewing the Road Infrastructure Safety Management Directive to focus on outputs and less on inputs.

Participants called on the EU to consider the development of a network of major rural roads that would eliminate the use of high risk roads. The network could be supported through regional trans-national cooperation projects.

Smart road solutions

Full implementation of the eCall initiative and a review of the EU's General Safety Regulation were encouraged in the short term. Over the longer term the potential for connected and automated vehicle technologies to improve road safety was highlighted. Recommendations for industry included a call to prioritise R&D supporting improved safety for all road users and ensuring the interoperability of new vehicles technologies. These goals could be achieved through a wider dialogue within the industry and with other stakeholders.

Recommendations to the Commission included ensuring that the policy mix will reinforce the competitiveness of the European automotive sector, increasing efforts to establish global harmonised safety regulations and continued support for road safety research.

The recommendations for EU countries included ones to fully implement the eCall European initiative to enable a seamless emergency service chain, support safer vehicle fleet renewal, and participate in field trials of automated vehicles.

Vulnerable road users

Efforts to support the uptake of new vehicle technologies that improve the safety of vulnerable road users were highlighted. Support for safe infrastructure in line with the 'safe system approach', and the separation of non-protected road users should be major goals.

EU-level recommendations included ones to reinstate an EU serious injury target, extend the 2008 Directive on road infrastructure safety management to other road networks, and include advanced vehicle technologies in the review of the General Safety and Pedestrian Protection Regulations.

Recommendations for EU countries included calls to record the numbers of deaths and serious injuries of motorcyclists, pedestrians and cyclists, ensure the separation of cyclists from motorised traffic in areas with high traffic volume and/or speed, make 30 km/h the default speed in urban areas where people work, cycle and play, and in general prioritise walking, cycling and public transport in urban areas.

Industry and civil society recommendations included calls to prioritise technology developments that focus on cyclists and pedestrians, promote semi-autonomous vehicles responsibly, and actively promote Intelligent Speed Assistance as a major tool for road safety.

Find out more...

If these subjects have revved up your interest, then check out the Road Safety website at: ec.europa.eu/roadsafety

Please visit @Transport_EU twitter account for regular updates on #roadsafety" and #EUtransport

Visit these sites for inspiration and information.

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