

**Speech of Matthew Baldwin, European Road Safety Coordinator,
to the Madrid conference "From Vision Zero to Goal Zero ?", 10
December 2018**

What is Europe Doing ?

Dear friends and colleagues from the road safety community from Spain, ladies and gentlemen, delighted to be in Madrid this fine morning.

And thank you for inviting me, on behalf of the European Commission, to set out some thoughts on what Europe is doing in response to the great title of your conference. If I interpret it correctly, it means: the VISION of getting to zero by 2050 is great, but what are we doing in specific terms, in order to get there.

I am now in my third month since being appointed by European Commissioner Violetta Bulc to serve as her European Coordinator for Road Safety and related aspects of sustainable mobility. Never in my career has any job so completely lived up to my expectations in terms of the scope of the challenge and the vitality, in both senses of the word, of the work. It is completely wonderful to be back in the RS world, 33 years after I first worked for the Parliamentary Council for Transport Safety in the UK back in 1985.

This Coordinator role reflects the major priority which the Commissioner has placed on road safety since day one of her mandate. For Commissioner Bulc, road safety is a moral challenge.

Even though she is immensely proud of what Europe has achieved on her watch, each and every death is one too many. And although she is driving us to better policy solutions every day, she never lets us forget that the problem is a human one. Each road death leaves a family and friends bereaved. Each road death contains its own particular story of pain and misery.

As I go around Europe talking about RS, I find it very useful to begin with some cold, hard numbers.

The first number is the WHO estimated death figure from road crashes. 1.2 million. Breaking that down, it comes to around 200,000 in India. Quarter of a million in China. Another quarter of a million in Africa. 35,000 in the US. 27,000 in Russia. 25,000 – that's the second figure - here in the EU. The figures pile up like deaths in an epidemic. And of course, road deaths ARE an epidemic, one now recognised as such by the WHO and since 2015 a key target in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We have indeed agreed to try to eliminate road deaths by 2050 under Vision Zero. I'll say more about targets in a moment.

But in the meantime, the slaughter goes on. By 2030, on current trends, another 13 million global road deaths, and it will be by 2030 the 5th largest cause of death, up there with cancer, heart disease. And that it is ON CURRENT TRENDS ... but we can also expect car numbers to grow by more than 1 billion by 2050. I don't think I need to spell out for you what that could mean.

By the way, this global figure is only an estimate. Firstly, total reported deaths come in at only around half that figure. In Africa, it is estimated that around $\frac{3}{4}$ of road deaths are not reported. Less than half in India. When the most basic profound piece of data is not collected, it is equally clear vital information about the causes of deaths is also going to be missing, making it much harder for public authorities to start to tackle those causes. Getting the data from fatal crashes is vital so that we can begin, together, to learn, and begin, together, to act.

And secondly, we need to do more to get on a common definition at global level. For example, the Chinese figure used domestically is much lower, as it only records deaths at the place at the accident, even if the victim dies on the way to hospital. I am not saying this is wrong (although naturally I prefer the WHO definition which the EU also uses) but the key is to have a shared data basis.

Road crashes cause 99% of all transport deaths. We have a long way to go to catch up with the extraordinary safety levels now reached in the aviation industry. Sometimes, I wonder if it is worse to die in a plane than under a truck. Would it be acceptable for 5000 planes, each carrying more than 200 passengers, to crash, each and every year, onto the surface of this planet ?

Of course not.

So the question becomes: why is it politically acceptable for the same number – 1.2 million – to die on the roads ? I don't have an answer to that.

What do we know about the deaths in Europe ? That's the second figure on your screen, 25,000, with 135,000 seriously injured (where again I am pleased to say we now have a common EU definition, and where we will for the first time establish a target, on which more in a moment).

45% of the deaths are in cars. 18% on powered two wheelers, 22% pedestrians, 8% cyclists – deaths for these vulnerable road users are not coming down as much as they should, and deserve a special focus. Fatalities are decreasing a lot among children, but actually increasing for the elderly.

They cost somewhere between 2% and 3% of EU GDP, based on the latest research.

76% male (disproportionately young men for whom road crashes are the largest source of mortality – like Spanish flu in 1918, carrying off the youngest, the strongest, indeed carrying off the future). Roughly 10% occur on our motorways, 40% on other main roads, and 50% in urban areas. 20% of deaths occur at junctions. 40% of deaths occur when people are commuting to and from work: they don't show up at work, and don't return home in the evening.

In total, once again, around 25,000.

Perhaps the most extraordinary statistic so far...is that this is the best in the world ! 98% of road deaths occur outside the EU, 90% in low and middle income countries. We are a success – but only in the strange world of road safety is 25,000 deaths a year a success.

What is the trend ?

Europe has indeed done *relatively* well in recent decades – if you measure deaths annually per million of the population, you see how we have come down from a high of more than 200 per million in 1972 to an average of 50 per million in 2017. Please also note the very wide divergence, with the dots on all parts of the graph, particularly in the early years.

We have reduced deaths by more than half since 2000. But since 2010, despite our target to reduce deaths in this decade by half again by 2020, we have only come down by around 20%. This stagnation in the rate of decline means that we have a frankly insurmountable challenge ahead of us to get there by 2020. We will keep pushing right to the end as every death avoided is worth having, but we are now at the point that we have to be ready to say: we won't make the target for 2020 – more on targets in a moment.

The other key point in the data, of course, is the continuation of divergence just within the European Union. Average again of deaths per million in the EU is around 50 – but some Member States –

Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK are doing much better than that – around 25-30 per million. Others have improved rapidly such as Spain, Greece, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Belgium.

You should indeed be proud of your rapid progress in Spain - just in 2001, you were still above the European average, but you are now well below it, at 39/million. But the stagnation in the rate of decline has been strong here. Your best figures ever were back in 2014 and since then, the numbers have slightly increased. I say "slightly" but in a big country like Spain, this means 150 more deaths in 2017 than in 2014.

So it's a good moment to look at what we do, at the European level, nationally here in Spain, and of course all the way down to the regional / city / local level.

A lot of work, of course, has gone into assessing HOW to bring down fatalities, in a systematic way. We know in fact that deaths and serious injuries are not the inevitable price we need to pay for our mobility. I think there is broad consensus that a number of factors are essential.

This slide sets out a check list of things that we know work, and of course you are doing many of them already in Spain.

Road safety is an emotional and emotive subject, and the terrible statistics and the human stories that lie behind them affect us all. But

it's not enough to be upset, or even mad as hell about the problem. Yes, the first step is no longer to accept carnage on the roads, politically and then at all levels in society.

But the next step is to be scientific, i.e., evidence based, and founded on internationally recognised good practice safety management principles, collectively known as the Safe System. This may sound bland but it is in fact a revolutionary approach of profound importance, and I am very pleased to say that the Commission has now proposed that we implement this at the EU level as well.

The Safe System says: people make mistakes, on the roads as anywhere else, and will continue to do so because that is human nature. On the roads, this leads to crashes. We also know that the human body has only a limited tolerance to kinetic energy, crash impact forces, after which death and serious injury occur. The goal is to ensure that our mistakes, translated into accidents, don't kill us. We need an inclusive systemic approach to accommodate human error.

We need safer – or indeed safe - roads, safe vehicles (and not just for the occupants but for other vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists), we need safe travel speeds, we need better use of protective equipment and we need improved post crash care. I hope in today's conference we can really get down into the detail of a number of these issues.

But deploying each of these elements of the Safe System needs to translate into targets, tough SMART targets, on the final outcomes in

terms of deaths and serious injuries. We must focus relentlessly on results. This is what we will be judged on, indeed what I expect to be judged on in taking on this coordinator role. Some believe that targets are dangerous – if we fail, do we reduce the credibility of the goal ? do we punish our politicians for their bravery in committing to them ? and is it realistic really to talk about ELIMINATING road deaths, as set out in Vision Zero by 2050 ?

Yes, there are risks. Going hard after even credible targets does not guarantee good results. There will be setbacks, maybe some actual increases in deaths in some categories, along the way. But targets are essential if we are to keep politicians focused on the problem, to draw in investment and other public resources, to provide an accountable yardstick to measure our progress. Again, even though we will miss our target for 2020, we absolutely must have new EU targets for 2030, and I am very pleased that EU ministers have unanimously agreed do to this.

But we will only do so if we tackle this as a collectively shared endeavour. From all levels of government to industry, from NGOs to individual citizens, we all share responsibility to make roads safer. And indeed my approach as coordinator will be to work with all parts of the road safety community. With Member States. With the European Parliament. With cities and regions. With NGOs, such as the great European Transport Safety Council. With industry of all shapes and sizes, for example, in pushing for voluntary commitments

to vehicle safety features that go beyond just the minimum requirements.

This is really what I mean by political will and cooperation.

And that is where education, awareness raising, and of course enforcement also come in, and here let me pay tribute to the work of the European Road Safety Charter.

So in slightly more detail, here you see our new policy framework. The Declaration of Valletta from last March, confirming our intention to implement the Safe System approach, to Vision Zero, to our interim targets for 2030.

Safety performance indicators sound technical and ARE technical, but they will be very very important in the years to come. Taking the different elements of the Safe System, such as use of seat belts, that we know will reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries, we are working very closely with the Member States to establish secondary European targets in a range of different areas, such as vehicles, emergency care, speed, and quality of the road infrastructure. Let me also say a word about speed – too often the forgotten child of road safety, or put to one side in the "politically too difficult" category. Well we can't simply go on accepting excessive speed on our highways or in our towns and cities when we know how deadly it is, so we also have to elevate speed to one of the key "pillars" of road

safety concern at the UN level in terms of preparing the next big RS conference in 2020.

For each of the safe system factors. This is important but detailed work as we will need to establish a common measurement methodology, an agreed baseline, and – as far as possible – quantify how we link them to outcome targets. Sweden has had great success with this approach at the national level and we are determined to apply it at the European level.

Let me say a brief word about funding, because that is an important lever at the EU's disposal to support road safety initiatives. We will encourage the use of EU financial support from European structural and investment funds for road safety upgrades of infrastructure. And here I urge Member States to make full use of the Connecting Europe Facility or CEF, and in particular the current open call. What I often hear, however, is that funding is too disparate, and individual funding possibilities are not always well known. So we are working hard to remedy this, working with our colleagues inside the Commission and also with the European Investment Bank to establish easier access to funding and financing solutions for road safety investment, and I hope we will be making formal announcements about that shortly, probably in the new year.

In pursuing the new road safety strategy, we do want to work differently with Member States - stepping up our cooperation to

establish best practices, and partnerships including financial support, to help meet the targets.

But we are not afraid to legislate further when that is justified. Let me quickly give a couple of examples of that.

One area where the EU has led very effectively has been through vehicle safety standards: to ensure we have the latest safety features on board. Again, this is a joint effort - our industry has been at the forefront of developing technologies enabling the introduction of increasingly affordable vehicle safety systems. We've studied the latest ideas, impact assessed them carefully, and we've now put forward a package of 16 new features - for all vehicle categories and models. This slide illustrates just some of the areas where we have proposed improvements. This is not tinkering - applied across the whole EU fleet, we calculate that these measures will save more than 7,000 lives, and reduce serious injuries by nearly 40,000, over the 2020-30 period. But and I stress we need all the elements of the package to be agreed in order to be effective. Co legislators must resist the urge or indeed lobbying by the car industry to take out one or other elements, such as Intelligent Speed Assistance, which we know work well to save lives.

We are also revising our EU legislation on infrastructure safety management. First, by extending the scope beyond our safest roads, Europe's TEN-T network, to the other primary roads, where a much higher percentage of severe accidents are taking place. Second, by

introducing new common procedures for mapping the risks of accidents across the whole network, enabling a comparison of safety levels across Europe, improving the targeting of our limited funds, and requiring that vulnerable road users – pedestrians and cyclists – are taken more systematically into account in road planning. Last week in the Transport Council, we were pleased to see agreement to a General Approach but frankly disappointed at what can only be described as a watering down of the key content, particularly on road signs and road markings.

Once again – look at the lives that can be saved – more than 3000 over the decade, and more than 20 000 serious injuries. I hope that the EP will look at this rapidly and that co legislators will take their cue from a very positive series of statements made by Ministers in the Council.

I am running out of time, but I want to say a word about ... the future. It is well established that humans will continue to make mistakes that cause accidents and the Safe System will play an important role therefore in reducing mortality.

But without full automation in the coming decades, it is true that getting to VisionZero will be very difficult. So we need to bring those connected and automated systems on stream, probably initially on motorways and also in urban contexts. It's an exciting prospect, and does indeed promise a brave new world, a new form of mobility.

But it's not a magic solution – indeed, it is also going to be a huge challenge just in terms of road safety. Infrastructure performance

requirements will have to change, e.g. for road signs. We will have a long period in which different levels of automated cars will have to coexist with cars fully or partially under human control. And once again, the evidence is that cyclists and pedestrians may be particularly vulnerable in our towns and cities. VRU deaths are now 40% of the total and as much as 80% in urban areas. So I want to use my new role also to work on some of these new and important challenges coming up in the field of sustainable mobility, and to work with urban and regional authorities on the next generation of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans.

In closing, I should stress that I will be the European coordinator for road safety. I want to be a useful resource for all Member States, to work in partnership with very effective road safety advocates such as the European Transport Safety Council, and I will do everything in my power to help bring down that 25,000 figure: initially, focusing on reducing it by half by 2030.

But we will equally not forget the global context, and the global epidemic that road safety represents. We need to take our responsibilities to help try to deliver road safety across the globe, insofar as we can – by working in UNICE to deliver better vehicle safety standards worldwide, but of course more broadly, with the ITF, with the World Bank, with global pressure groups such as Global NCAP and the FIA, under the tireless Jean Todt. I am honoured to have been asked by Sweden and by the WHO to help prepare the next

UN conference, and delighted that the EU has now been able to make a contribution to the UN Global Road Safety Trust Fund.

In short, there is a lot of work to be done, and I look forward to working with you !

Many thanks for your attention.