

Road Safety Newsletter



Towards safer conditions for pedestrians

Pedestrians are perhaps the most vulnerable of all road users. Of some 30 000 people killed on EU roads each year, on average 21 % are pedestrians.

In Europe, pedestrian fatalities are a mainly urban phenomenon with over 70% occurring in cities. Pedestrians accounted for 37% of all road deaths in cities in 2011, with the elderly at particular risk.

While Europe has seen considerable reductions in road deaths in recent years, the drop in pedestrian deaths has been less sharp than for other users. Moreover, projected growth in the size of cities and in traffic volumes could aggravate the problem.

In many places, lack of infrastructure, such as separate lanes for cyclists and pedestrians, and pedestrian crossings, is a major risk factor. Irresponsible behaviour also presents significant risk, particularly exceeding speed limits, driving, cycling or walking while intoxicated or using distracting devices such as smart phones.

All road users are responsible for improving pedestrian safety. Aside from this, EU action in a number of areas should make for safer cities.

One example is the upcoming Urban Mobility Package aimed at ensuring safe and sustainable urban mobility and integration of road safety into all stages of mobility plan development. Another is proposed rules for the design of truck cabins. These aim to widen drivers' fields of vision and require the fitting of deflecting shapes and crumple zones which should help to save 300–500 lives each year.

The EU is also working to increase deployment of in-vehicle safety systems such as pedestrian detection, emergency braking, speed-limiters and blind spot mirrors. Other measures include development of a serious injury reduction strategy and awareness-raising such as via the Road Safety Charter which enables cities and road safety bodies to share good practice.

→ For more information, please visit http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/users/pedestrians/index_en.htm



Fifth European Road Safety Day held in Brussels

The fifth European Road Safety Day was hosted by the European Commission (EC) in Brussels on 6 May 2013, timed in order to tie in with the second UN Global Road Safety Week which ran from 6–13 May. Both events were dedicated to pedestrian safety, with the EU Road Safety Day focusing on issues facing vulnerable road users in urban areas.

As EC Vice-President with responsibility for mobility and transport, Siim Kallas explained, 'Pedestrians and cyclists are facing the biggest risks in urban areas. And these risks are likely to increase rather than decrease with ever rising traffic volumes in our growing cities. This is why we are addressing this issue pro-actively on the occasion of the European Road Safety Day and the UN Global Road Safety Week.'

The Road Safety Day brought together around 170 road safety experts from NGOs, industry and Member States in order to explore the roles of the main road user groups and the risks they face, and to formulate proposals for solutions to specific challenges in urban areas.

Vice-President Kallas and European Parliament Vice-President Isabelle Durant opened the event. Mr Kallas began with positive news balanced by a note of caution, telling delegates, 'I am happy to see the EU's road safety figures for 2012 showing a 9% fall in the number of road deaths compared to the previous year. But still — every death is one too many.' Ms Durant spoke about the need to pay more attention to vulnerable road users by adapting cities and highway codes to their needs and promoting pedestrian rights.

This was followed by two addresses. Frédéric Péchenard, French Interministerial Delegate for Road Safety, looked at development of pedestrian safety in France. He pointed out that, as pedestrian fatality rates are not dropping as quickly as those for drivers, pedestrians account for an increasing share of road deaths. This is an incentive to focus on pedestrian safety for which the main responsibility lies with those posing the greatest risk. Olivier Onidi, EC Director responsible for innovative and sustainable mobility, provided information on EC pedestrian safety initiatives.

Panel discussions

The rest of the event consisted of panel discussions, each of which was followed by debate and questions from the audience. The first panel examined risks as well as causes of and responsibility for accidents. President of the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims, Jeannot Mersch, opened the discussion, followed by European Cyclists' Federation President, Manfred Neun and International Automobile Federation (FIA) Director-General for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Jacob Bangsgaard. The main risks identified were vehicle speed and unsafe infrastructure and behaviour. Risks related to reduced mobility of the elderly,



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pedestrian visibility in the dark and relationships between pedestrians and cyclists were also discussed. The panel concluded that considerate, adaptive behaviour is key to making roads safe.

The second panel looked at how to improve urban road safety. Dinesh Sethi, World Health Organisation (WHO) Programme Manager, presented the WHO pedestrian safety manual. Andrés Martínez of the San Sebastián Municipality explained the success of pedestrian safety projects in his city. International Federation of Pedestrians President, Geert van Waeg, gave examples of areas for improvement in Brussels. The panel underlined the need for proper spatial planning, separation of vehicles from vulnerable road users and enforcement of traffic rules, and concluded that speed is a big risk and an integral factor in urban mobility planning.

The final panel discussed the road safety potential of new technology and in-vehicle safety systems. Antonio Avenoso, European Transport Safety Council Executive Director, Michiel van Ratingen, European New Car Assessment Programme Secretary-General and Sylvain Haon, European Cities and Regions Networking for Innovative Transport Solutions Director gave insight into recent developments. Dr van Ratingen showed how testing of features such as safer vehicle fronts has encouraged development by manufacturers. Other issues discussed included risks from distractions, benefits of pedestrian detection systems and the impact of intelligent transport systems. It was concluded that modern technology has road safety potential as a support to individual users.

The day was closed by Commission Director-General for Mobility and Transport, Matthias Ruete who stressed shared road safety responsibility and the need for political involvement at all levels to bring about cultural change. To this end, Mr Ruete announced plans for inviting transport ministers to an informal meeting in 2014 and stressed that while technology has a role to play, road users are the key to road safety.

→ For more information, please visit http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/events-archive/2013_05_06_ersd_en.htm





Road safety action across the globe

Road safety is receiving ever more attention globally, with 2011–20 designated UN Decade of Action for Road Safety. According to the WHO, 1.24 million people a year die worldwide in road accidents, which are the most common cause of death for people aged 15–29. Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists together account for about half of these deaths, and for each fatality an estimated ten people are seriously injured.

The EU accounts for less than 2.5% of all of these road deaths, making it the world's leading road safety region. The number of road deaths per million EU inhabitants was 55 in 2012, with the UK as the best-performing Member State with 28. Further afield, according to the latest figures, only Israel and Japan came close to the levels of the safest EU countries. Australia and Canada matched the EU average while fatality rates in the USA and Russia were almost twice and three times as high respectively.



An important part of the UN Decade of Action is the adoption of a Global Plan, coordinated by the WHO, setting out road safety aims and providing a framework for activities divided into categories. These cover road safety management capacity, safety of road infrastructure and broader transport networks, vehicle safety, user behaviour and post-crash care.

The second UN Road Safety Week marked the second anniversary of the launch of the Decade of Action. The Week was aimed at drawing attention to the need to better protect pedestrians so as to help achieve the Decade of Action goal of saving 5 million lives. To this end, governments, NGOs and other stakeholders organised a range of events across the globe.

- For further details on the UN Decade of Action, please visit http://www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action/en/
- For more information on the Global Road Safety Week, please visit <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/week/2013/en/index.html>



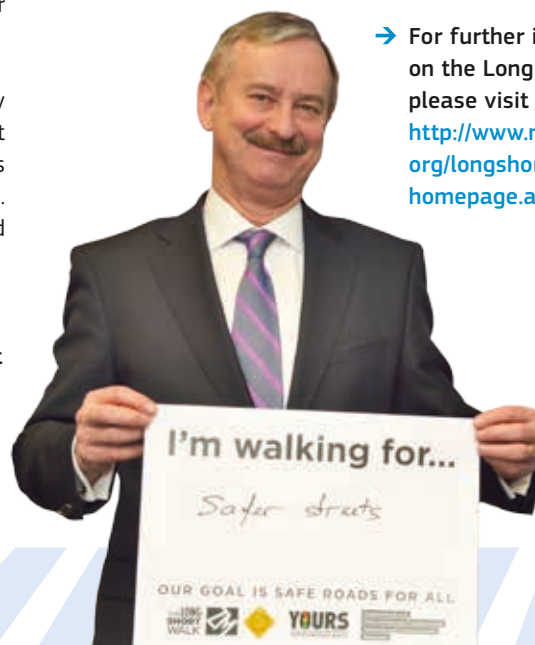
A long short walk towards safer roads

An important activity within the UN Global Road Safety Week was the Long Short Walk. These have been organised worldwide in order to draw attention to pedestrian rights, encourage investment in footpaths, cycle paths and pedestrian crossings and promote lower speed limits. Participants go for a walk and take photographs of dangerous roads or junctions. The images are combined to create a snapshot of streets around the world.

The Long Short Walk was one element linking the EU Road Safety Day with the UN Road Safety Week. Following the Road Safety Day conference on 6 May, Vice-President Siim Kallas and most of the conference participants took part in the Brussels walk which started from the Schuman roundabout.

The walk ended at Autoworld in Cinquantenaire Park which hosted an exhibition of road safety technology and in-vehicle safety devices. Vice-President Kallas tested equipment and simulators such as tools to spot and highlight pedestrians on the roadside at night and systems to detect signs of driver fatigue, commenting that 'All technical and safety improvements concerning the vehicles, concerning urban planning and concerning roads are extremely important'.

- For further information on the Long Short Walk, please visit <http://www.makeroadssafe.org/longshortwalk/Pages/homepage.aspx>





Road safety simulations at Commission Open Day

The road safety stand at the Commission's Open Day on 4 May drew a large audience. Throughout the day, people queued to try out the alcohol goggles and multi-tasking challenges. One of the first brave visitors to take the alcohol goggles challenge was Director-General for Mobility and Transport, Matthias Ruete who commented that 'to drive drunk is to gamble the life of yourself as well as of those around you'.

The goggles simulate the visual impairment effect of drinking five units of alcohol. Those taking the challenge put the goggles on and tried to walk a slalom course of a couple of metres. Most participants were shocked by how difficult this was and how many mistakes they made. This led to some interesting conversations with the DG Mobility and Transport volunteers present, who explained that alcohol consumption reduces vision by around 25 % and slows reaction times by an estimated 10–30 %.

Another widely-appreciated Open Day simulation was the distracted driving game. Participants were asked to match shapes and colours while simultaneously sending a text message. This is more difficult than it sounds as distractions such as smart phones affect drivers' concentration and their ability to pay attention to such things as road signs.



Dancing for road safety in Athens

A further event linking the UN Global Road Safety Week with EU road safety efforts was a huge Flash-Mob dance event in front of the Greek Parliament on Syntagma Square, Athens on 10 May. It was organised by the Hellenic Road Safety Institute 'Panos Mylonas' with the help of European Youth Forum for Road Safety (EYFRS) Youth Delegates within the framework of EYFRS 2013.

The key message of the Flash-Mob was 'Stop road crashes' and it aimed to show that young people are on the move and want to improve things in this area. Young road safety enthusiasts performed a choreographed dance depicting this message in front of pedestrians and drivers.

Placards were displayed in order to reinforce the message and a song was composed to serve as the soundtrack to the Flash-Mob and the event video, which you can watch on the EYFRS website: https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=w9InMqN6Vq8

Find out more...

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

European Youth Forum for Road Safety (EYFRS) also has a Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/EYFRS

EYFRS has its own website at: ec.europa.eu/eyfrs
Visit these sites for inspiration and information.

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