



Mobility for Prosperity in Europe

Contribution to the consultation on the EU Road Safety Action Plan 2011-2020¹

Forewords

Mobility for Prosperity in Europe (MPE) is a pan-European umbrella organization representing a broad range of road users, safety organizations, public authorities, infrastructure operators, vehicle manufacturers and related industries. Road safety lies at the heart of the activities of all the above mentioned sectors who are largely contributing to the EU objective to reduce fatalities.

The European Union has to play a key role in this field by setting ambitious targets in its fourth **Road Safety Action Programme (2011-2020)**, launching new initiatives, foreseeing further legislation where appropriate and showing a high level of commitment in reaching the set targets. MPE observes that roads have become safer despite the dramatic increase of traffic density. However, important actions are still needed to reduce the harm.

Finally, MPE regrets that DG TREN services have decided to deal with such an important and complex domain by means of a rather simplistic and brief online questionnaire and urges the European Commission to take action in order to allow serious stakeholders to provide adequate support to the EU policy preparation.

➤ **The safety triangle**

MPE has always been promoting and fully supporting an **integrated approach** to safety, linking the users, the vehicle and the infrastructure aspects into a single chain. It is only through a holistic approach taking into account this “safety triangle” that consistent improvements may be achieved in the decade to come. As a matter of fact, a traffic accident is the consequence of a combination of factors: appropriate speed, driver capability, vehicle, infrastructure, and environmental conditions all come into play.

Whilst recognizing the significant progress achieved by the EU in this domain, MPE urges the European Commission to keep the pace, encouraging and politically supporting ambitious road safety performance targets and the **best practices** which are already in use in Europe in terms of users training, vehicle innovation and infrastructure efficient management.

MPE welcomes the Commission's will to pursue an ambitious road safety policy, in particular by targeting high risk groups such as young/elderly drivers and vulnerable road users, raising the awareness for safety amongst all **road users** and reinforcing traffic safety education and testing. The awareness and responsibility of all road users need to be further reinforced and promoted through better driver' training and behaviour, as well as through information campaigns at EU, national and/or local level.

¹ This contribution was jointly prepared by Brussels-based stakeholder organizations active in the transport sector within the association *Mobility for Prosperity in Europe* which is multimodal in its approach, privileging the use of the most efficient and welfare-creating modes at all times. As such, it does not necessarily reflect in full their own positions and standpoints on the individual issues raised in the paper.

Most of the time, accidents causes are linked to human error (the main contributing factor in most all crashes², in 88% for PTWs accidents³ and in 85.2 % for HGVs accidents⁴).

Despite the recent drive towards harmonisation of speed limits, blood alcohol levels and – to some extent – of enforcement policies, the fact remains that some EU countries – and some roads – are up to six times safer to drive in than others. Even in Member States where identical speed limits and blood alcohol levels are applied, the road death ratio stands at 1:3. Road infrastructure is not a motionless element; it must be carefully planned, designed, operated and maintained. A good **transport infrastructure** is a *sine qua non* condition for ensuring smooth traffic flow and giving a high level of safety.

Despite significant progress, there is still room for improvement for **vehicle safety** policies, mainly in casualty reduction and accidents avoidance/mitigation systems. . Vehicle safety starts from research and development investments, design, monitoring of performance, tyre pressure control and enforcement, and develops through advanced safety systems, a stronger focus in addressing human limitations, protection of vehicles' occupants and vulnerable users. All the involved actors (EU, Member States, industry etc.) have to continue their cooperation in order to ensure that both passive and active safety systems are correctly delivered and fully implemented.

Whatever legislation or measure is adopted, either at EU or national level, its effectiveness is only dependent on a fast and correct implementation, followed by its full respect by citizens. It is therefore evident that **enforcement** is a key element for any sound safety policy. MPE welcomes the steps into the right direction achieved so far, but stresses the importance of further actions, notably in the field of cross-border infringements and exchange of information between national authorities. Enforcement is much more effective when people understand why the respect of rules is being enforced.

➤ **Innovation and smarter safety practices**

Innovation in general and more specifically **ITS applications** are crucial assets but will not be sufficient alone. All categories of road users – motorists, professional drivers, two-wheelers riders and pedestrians – stand to gain from smarter infrastructure, while road safety will benefit from better trained and intelligent users, innovative in-vehicle solutions will assist the drivers in the interaction with other users and the infrastructure. EU policies need to be driven from research to effective deployment strategies.

² A report based on British and American crash data found driver error and other human factors contribute wholly or partly to about 93% of crashes. The report found that 57% of crashes were due solely to driver factors, 27% to combined roadway and driver factors, 6% to combined vehicle and driver factors, 3% solely to roadway factors, 3% to combined roadway, driver, and vehicle factors, 2% solely to vehicle factors and 1% to combined roadway and vehicle factors.

Harry Lum & Jerry A. Reagan (Winter 1995). "Interactive Highway Safety Design Model: Accident Predictive Module". Public Roads Magazine.

³ MAIDS, Motorcycle Accidents In-Depth Study (2004, see www.maids-study.eu) Out of the human primary contributing factors, Powered Two-Wheelers (PTW) riders are responsible in 42% of all accidents. Other primary contributing factors include environmental factors in 8% of all accidents (mainly road design or maintenance defect 3%, the weather 2%, traffic hazard 1%) and the vehicle in 0,3% of all accidents.

⁴ IRU, A Scientific Study "ETAC", European Truck Accident Causation. However, out of the accidents linked to human error, only 25% are caused by the truck driver. Other factors such as weather conditions 4.4%, infrastructure conditions 5.1% or technical failures of the vehicle 5.3% played only a minor role.

➤ **Providing guidelines for urban safety management**

About two thirds of the accidents and one third of the road deaths take place in urban areas and affect the most vulnerable road users. Always respecting the boundaries set by the principle of subsidiarity and the share of competences with national and local authorities, the EU needs and can develop a more incisive **urban safety policy**. The EU should continue drafting guidelines for promoting best practices and foster - where appropriate - common urban safety management, starting from the largest EU towns and cities.

➤ **Relevant facts and road safety statistics**

Accurate accident statistics and research data are the pillars of road safety analysis and evaluation. Appropriate, comparable, reliable and timely data on safety at EU level is a prerequisite for efficient policy actions. As an example, it is unacceptable that definitions on “road safety injuries” or “fatalities” vary from a Member State to another. Work should start immediately to develop the necessary methodology and willingness to collect these essential figures and make them available to policy makers.

MPE “Raison d’être”

What is MPE’s vision?

Mobility is an important facilitator of social and economic welfare. It is an important basic right to be protected and further enhanced. Transport policy should therefore:

- Put citizens’ needs at the forefront.
- Be part of a holistic approach.
- Be based on relevant facts and thorough analysis.
- Develop effective co-modality rather than force unsuitable modal shift.
- Foster investment into transport infrastructure, the basis for future welfare.
- Encourage intelligent innovation, making transport more efficient and sustainable.
- Enhance the benefits of transport rather than increase the burden on users.
- Focus on meeting the demand for mobility.
- Make sure public money is efficiently used.

What does MPE do to support its vision?

The main actions include:

- Gathering Members, EU decision makers and other stakeholders to openly discuss transport policy needs.
- Supplying expertise and positions.
- Organising public events to increase public awareness and reach the media.

Why is MPE needed?

Much remains to be done to take users’ needs into account, within a fact-based approach to transport policy. There is a need for a European association to bring together major stakeholders to ensure that citizens’ needs are put at the centre of the public and political transport debate.