



Contribution of Norauto Groupe to the European Commission's Consultation relating to the preparation of a EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMME 2011-2020

As a company of the automotive sector, which is active in several Member States of the European Union, Norauto Groupe welcomes the opportunity of expressing its position on the future European Road Safety Programme for 2011-2020.

Over the last years, progress has been made in several fields of road safety, most notably in the development of safety-enhancing new technologies, mainly for cars. These efforts however still need to be continued and reinforced as it has become clear now that the ambitious EU target of reducing road fatalities by 50% until 2010 compared to 2000 will not be met.

Main concerns

Many actors must contribute to the efforts for better road safety. However, we believe that vehicle safety, especially of **cars and powered two-wheelers**, still is the aspect where the highest potential in increasing road safety can be found.

Especially Powered Two-Wheelers (PTW) are becoming more and more a topic of concern as statistics show that, in proportion, PTW users are more often affected by road accidents and suffer more severe injuries than users of any other transport mode. Contrary to the general trend, PTW accidents are even on the rise, due to the fact that congestion problems in cities have led to an increased use of Powered Two-Wheelers.

Road safety measures, whether they address infrastructure, user behaviour or vehicle safety must take into account this reality.

Vehicle Safety

Technological progress, in particular the development of innovative transport systems, can substantially enhance the safety of motor vehicles. It has to be noted that new technologies should not only be applied to new vehicles, but also be made available or mandatory for the existing car park.

Efforts to make transport more sustainable also create new challenges for road safety that should be addressed in the development of new transport solutions. For instance, new types of vehicles, especially electric ones, do not have the same characteristics as conventional

ones (absence of noise); car-sharing and other models based on temporary use of vehicles (PTW, bicycles etc.) increase the number of road users with vehicles they are unfamiliar with.

Innovative technologies also create a new challenge for maintenance and replacement of parts, as consumers, repairers and parts retailers need to acquire new knowledge on the equipment. Increased efforts in training and public awareness are necessary.

Integrating European policies for a coherent Road Safety Strategy

Norauto Groupe would like to stress the importance of integrating and coordinating all relevant policies that can contribute to higher road safety.

Concerning vehicle safety, **competition policies** and **consumer policies** are of key importance. Repair services and maintenance account for about 40% of consumers' expenses on vehicles. These high costs can occasionally lead car users to neglect their vehicles and to expose themselves and others to risks. However, regular maintenance of vehicles and reparation also of smaller damages is important to ensure a maximum of vehicle safety.

Norauto Groupe therefore believes that public policies should strive to provide the best **market conditions for consumers in the field of repair services and the sale of spare parts**. Consumers should be free to choose spare parts and repair services on a competitive market, without facing disadvantages (e.g. restrictive warranty schemes, vertical agreements excluding certain actors from the market), as long as services and spare parts are of equivalent quality and satisfy all safety standards.

In particular, Norauto Groupe strongly supports the **liberalisation of visible spare parts markets**¹, which would make car reparations more accessible and more affordable for consumers. Indeed, the regular maintenance of vehicles is a tool for road safety which must be within reach of the consumer. A prohibitive cost of visible spare parts is a considerable hindrance for the efforts undertaken to improve the safety of traffic. The benefits of a liberalisation are widely recognised and 10 Member States have already liberalised their markets, but political will still needs to be stepped up to achieve liberalisation in all Member States.

In order to provide the best service to consumers, independent repairers also need **access to all technical information** necessary for their services.

Vulnerable users

The importance of safety technologies does not mean that efforts focusing on the behaviour of or towards certain groups of road users, especially vulnerable users like cyclists, elderly people and children, should be neglected. We believe that, in these fields, awareness

¹ As suggested by the European Commission in 2004, in its proposal for a revision of Directive 1998/71/EC.

campaigns, training measures, and a substantial place for road safety in education are of key importance.

Norauto Groupe believes that the commitment of social actors can make a considerable difference in the efforts on promoting road safety, and that especially private companies should take responsibility. As a company of the automotive sector, Norauto Groupe is promoting social campaigns and education measures via its foundation. The Norauto Foundation has been promoting grass-roots initiatives and campaigns in favour of road safety for several years, and has already provided support to numerous actors in this field. We believe that even more public and private actors should become active for road safety and should be effectively encouraged to do so by the new Action Programme.

For more information on the activities of Norauto Groupe and The Norauto Foundation, please see the annex document.

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About Norauto Groupe

Since its foundation in France in the 1970's, Norauto Groupe has progressively become a Group of brand names and businesses that creates and sells multi-brand car services throughout the world.

The six brands of Norauto Groupe – Norauto, Auto 5, Carter Cash, Maxauto, Synchro Diffusion, Midas – perform four activities :

- **Car centres** which include a store and workshop; they are most often based in commercial areas (Norauto, Maxauto & Auto 5)
- **Local maintenance & service centres**; they are usually located in town centres (Midas)
- **Low cost stores** (Carter-Cash)
- **Sale of car products for professionals** (Synchro Diffusion).

With more than 8700 employees, Norauto is a major player in car repair and maintenance, present in 8 EU Member States : Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain.

Further information : www.norautogroupe.com

The Norauto Foundation

Norauto Groupe believes private companies should take responsibility in the efforts for increased road safety. Therefore, Norauto Groupe has signed the European Road Safety Charter.

As a company from the automotive sector, Norauto Groupe wants to play an active role in promoting road safety. Via its foundation, the Norauto Foundation, Norauto Groupe supports since 2005 projects to encourage socially aware and responsible driving. In particular, the Foundation organises each year the European Road Safety Awards (Prix européen de la sécurité routière), rewarding grass-roots associations for exemplary initiatives promoting road safety.

Further information : www.norauto.fr/fondation

