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(Information)

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 26 June 2000

on the improvement of road safety

(2000/C 218/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the general discussion on the communication submitted by the Commission on 20 March 2000 entitled 'Priorities in EU road safety: progress report and ranking of actions', welcomes the submission of the paper, which forms part of the second Community action programme entitled 'Promoting Road Safety in the EU' for the period 1997 to 2001.

(1) Points out that the adoption of measures to increase transport safety is an objective of the common transport policy, expressly embodied in the Treaty.

(2) Considers that improving road safety should be one of the main priorities of transport policy, given the unacceptable number of deaths and injuries as a result of road accidents in Europe leading to serious physical, mental and material harm, be it to the victims and their families or to society as a whole.

(3) Points out that improving road safety is the responsibility of everyone, that is to say the European Union, the national, regional and local authorities of the Member States, the motor vehicle industry, transport companies, associations and above all road users themselves.

(4) Notes that as regards road accidents there are still significant differences between Member States and that that is one reason for stepping up action, at Community level as well.

(5) Notes that, in attributing an economic cost to fatalities, and to the physical and material damage caused by road accidents, the second programme introduced an economic dimension in the approach to road safety.

(6) Acknowledges that the costs of preventing accidents are, in general, much less than the economic cost of accidents and of the damage caused by them.

(7) Notes that although there is a trend towards a reduction in the annual number of victims, a significant proportion of whom are children and young people, the situation continues to be socially unacceptable, obliging everyone involved to make an active contribution to reducing the number of victims.

(8) Emphasises the importance of continuing and developing the work undertaken in the framework of administrative agreements on the application and implementation of joint traffic controls.

(9) Endorses the European Parliament's view expressed in its resolution of 11 March 1998 on the second action programme⁽¹⁾ as to the need for action in accordance with the new strategy to speed up progress regarding road safety, by establishing, *inter alia*, a ranking system for measures which need to be taken in future at Community level.

(10) Considers that progress on the following measures is essential:

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 104, 6.4.1998, p. 139.

I. LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

1. Amendment of Directive 91/671/EEC⁽¹⁾ with the aim of extending compulsory use of seat belts to all vehicles already fitted with this device as standard, and making it compulsory to use type-approved child restraint systems.
2. Extension of the scope of Directive 92/6/EEC⁽²⁾ on speed limitation devices to goods or passenger vehicles weighing over 3,5 tonnes taking into account the next evaluation report by the Commission on the experience gained in implementing that Directive.
3. Directive on the type-approval of vehicles with a forgiving front design, in the event of a collision, for the most vulnerable road users, in particular children, pedestrians and cyclists.
4. Directive on the requirement that users of motorcycles and mopeds wear helmets.
5. Amendment of Directive 91/439/EEC⁽³⁾ on driving licences with the aim of harmonising the subcategories in accordance with the various types of vehicles as well as targeting better the application of the medical criteria for driving licences.
6. Amendment of Directive 71/127/EEC⁽⁴⁾ so as to increase the field of lateral and rear visibility, thus reducing 'blind spots'.
7. Measures relating to the problem of drunken driving: recommendation for driving under the influence of alcohol, encouraging Member States to consider, *inter alia*, the adoption of a maximum blood-alcohol level of

0,5 mg/ml for drivers, without prejudice to the establishment of lower general limits or lower limits for specific categories of drivers.

II. INVESTIGATIVE MEASURES

1. Pursuing and intensifying work under the European New Car Assessment Programme (EURO-NCAP) with a view to possibly including additional criteria concerning, in particular, active safety and the safety of pedestrians; assessing the results of the EURO-NCAP programme in terms of road safety.
2. Continuing to investigate road safety problems caused by the behaviour of drivers under the influence of drugs and certain medicinal products, by studying in particular the best control practices in the Member States and developing methods of detection by screening which will permit more effective control.
3. Continuing investigative work aimed at establishing rules for the application of telematic systems in vehicles, given the current importance of the development of such systems and the need to increase knowledge of their effects in terms of road safety.
4. Continuing to investigate the use of advanced assisted driving technology, relating both to vehicles and infrastructure, which has considerable potential for improving road safety.
5. Continuing to evaluate technology relating to speed limitation devices and to identify any technical, organisational, administrative and legal difficulties in introducing them; defining a coherent strategy to eliminate those obstacles and promote the marketing of such technology.
6. Continuing and developing work on the protection of car occupants in the event of rear impact (whiplash).
7. Investigating the scope for using devices which prevent the engine from starting if the maximum blood-alcohol level authorised at national level has been exceeded.

⁽¹⁾ Council Directive 91/671/EEC of 16 December 1991 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to compulsory use of safety belts in vehicles of less than 3,5 tonnes (OJ L 373, 31.12.1991, p. 26).

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 92/6/EEC of 10 February 1992 on the installation and use of speed limitation devices for certain categories of motor vehicles in the Community (OJ L 57, 2.3.1992, p. 27).

⁽³⁾ OJ L 237, 24.8.1991, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ Directive 71/127/EEC of 1 March 1971 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the rear-view mirrors of motor vehicles (OJ L 68, 22.3.1971, p. 1).

8. Continuing work on the installation in vehicles of devices reminding users to wear belts with a view to developing specifications.
9. Examining whether a requirement that cyclists wear helmets might not have negative repercussions for cycling and assessing the problems of applying such a measure in practice.
10. Continuing to look into the advantages and the consequences of permanent use of dipped headlights or special lights by vehicles for day-time driving.
11. Examining the possible secondary effects of air bags' being activated particularly in the event of a multiple impact.
12. Studying the affects and means of possible compulsory installation in light vehicles of adjustable devices of speed-limit infringements, which drivers could operate.
5. Setting up and administering an integrated information system collecting, comparing, interpreting and disseminating statistics on all aspects of road safety in the European Union.
6. Encouraging the exchange of information at European level on first aid for accident victims, since improving the effectiveness of that aid is one of the factors which has helped to reduce the number of road deaths.
7. Establishing guidelines for the dissemination of information on best practice for designing 'forgiving' infrastructure and defining policies for eliminating black spots, as well as for informing drivers of their existence.
8. Promoting exchange of information on the best strategies for awareness campaigns.

III. INFORMATION MEASURES

1. Promoting the dissemination of the results of the test campaigns conducted in the framework of the EURO-NCAP programme.
2. Facilitating and reinforcing the exchange of information on road safety, particularly by exploiting the Community CARE⁽¹⁾ database, since the availability of qualitative and quantitative information makes it possible to establish priorities and the measures to be taken to define road safety policies.
3. Promoting campaigns to raise awareness of the consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol and speeding.
4. Promoting campaigns to raise awareness of the importance of the use of seat belts by vehicle users and of helmets in the case of those using two-wheeled vehicles.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision 93/704/EC of 30 November 1993 on the creation of a Community database on road accidents (OJ L 329, 30.12.1993, p. 63).

IV. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, and with the constant aim of reducing accidents as much as possible, the Council:

- (1) supports the Commission Recommendation which aims at encouraging Member States' national, regional and local authorities to calculate expenditure on road safety measures and to monitor their effects, in order to compare expenditure with savings calculated on the basis of the total cost of accidents avoided;
- (2) invites the abovementioned authorities to increase their investment in road safety projects and create new incentives, in particular financial incentives, designed to speed up investment at all levels;
- (3) encourages the Member States to implement the Convention on Driving Disqualifications, signed on 17 June 1998⁽²⁾;
- (4) invites the Member States to complete the work already initiated under the Schengen Convention aimed at drawing up a cooperation agreement on proceedings for road traffic offences and the enforcement of financial penalties imposed in respect thereof.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 216, 10.7.1998, p. 2.

In addition, the Council invites the Commission to:

- (5) submit as quickly as possible the legislative proposals referred to above;
 - (6) continue work on investigative and information measures;
 - (7) continue, in cooperation with the Member States, work aimed at improving the quality of the CARE database and harmonising the concepts used;
 - (8) take into account when drafting its next action programme:
 - this resolution;
 - any measures which could reduce the harmful consequences of inappropriate speed for road safety;
 - the wisdom of setting a target figure for a reduction in the total number of victims on the roads of the Community.
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