

## ETSC Submission to the UK 'Balance of Competences Review'

### Road Safety

On behalf of the European Transport Safety Council see the below contribution to the UK 'Balance of Competences Review'. ETSC is submitting this to the Internal Market, Transport and Research and Development Review.

#### **1. Vehicle Safety**

The advent of new EU legislation has led to unprecedented improvements in occupant safety, which has benefitted UK and EU citizens. The EU has exclusive competence on vehicle safety and vehicle type approval under Article 114 of the EU Treaty. One of the single most effective ways of achieving the reduction of the risk of injury on collision impact is by improving the safety of cars<sup>1</sup>.

Minimum technical requirements for vehicles, participation in UNECE and worldwide technical harmonisation on vehicle standards have delivered considerable benefits to all EU member states including the UK in terms of lives and serious injuries saved. Vehicle occupants have been the group that has benefitted the most. Thus Broughton<sup>2</sup> modelled the severity of vehicle crashes in the period 1980 to 1998 using data on vehicle model year. The concludes: "It is estimated that, of the casualties that would have occurred in 1998, if all cars had had that level of secondary safety, improved secondary safety reduced the number of drivers who were KSI by at least 19.7%. This figure relates to all cars on the road in 1998, and rises to 33% when confined to the most modern cars (those which were first registered in 1998). The benefits have been proportionately greater in accidents occurring on roads with speed limits of at most 40 mph." A more recent analysis confirms that the contribution of improved vehicle safety standards has continued: Broughton<sup>3</sup> calculated that the number of fatalities in 2010 was 20.5% less than it would have been if there were no improvement in secondary safety between 2006 and 2010.

There are further improvements that need to be made and the EU can benefit from UK expertise in vehicle safety<sup>4</sup>.

The European vehicle industry faces a time of crisis. Beating off the international competition will be a challenge but developing its safety credentials and profiling itself as the producers of the world's safest vehicles can play a crucial role<sup>5</sup>. Thus investing in

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<sup>1</sup> ETSC (2001) Priorities for Motor Vehicle Design.

<sup>2</sup> Broughton, J. (2003). The benefits of improved car secondary safety. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 35: 527-535.

<sup>3</sup> Broughton, J. (2011). Updated post-2010 casualty forecasts. Report PPR 552. Transport Research Laboratory, Crowthorne.

<sup>4</sup> ETSC (2013) ETSC Response to CARS 2020

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*

vehicle safety can also contribute to providing a competitive advantage for the European and the UK's vehicle industry.

## **2. Infrastructure Safety**

All EU Member States, including the UK, are working towards the same high standards of infrastructure safety on the TEN-T. There are two main pieces of EU legislation that contribute to safe infrastructure: Directive 2008/96/EC on road infrastructure safety management and Directive 2004/54/EC on minimum requirements for tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network. The implementation of the Directive on infrastructure safety has the potential of saving 600 lives and avoiding 7,000 serious injuries every year across the EU<sup>6</sup>. The Infrastructure Safety Directive also helps to protect UK travellers on European roads including the TEN.

## **3. ITS to enhance Safety**

Increasingly enhanced safety and other transport benefits are being delivered through new technologies including information and communication technologies. The UK managed motorways provide a good example of such deployment in that the use of ITS is more cost-effective than the use of more traditional approaches. The ITS Directive can promote common standards and common deployment across the member states, so enabling deployment at a lower costs and greater scales than would occur with a more piecemeal approach. Cross-border traffic is an obvious beneficiary but all European motorists can benefit from harmonisation. The prospect is that in the future ITS technologies will be able to deliver very considerable benefits.

## **4. EU Road Safety Target and International Data Exchange**

The European targets can help ensure that the level of safety across the EU converges to the performance of the best members states such as the UK. This helps to protect UK drivers and passengers when travelling outside the UK.

The adoption of the EU target in 2001 to halve road deaths gave a boost to the combined efforts at national and EU level to improve road safety. The UK has also contributed to the EU road safety targets. The UK has one of the lowest levels of road deaths per inhabitant in the EU, in 2012 there were 1,802 road deaths representing a fall of 50% compared with 2001. Since 2001, in the EU15, the countries who originally set the target, road deaths have been cut by 48%<sup>7</sup>. Clearly the EU target for reducing the number of road deaths served as a strong catalyst for progress. A new target to reduce road deaths again by 50% was set in 2011 together with a longer term 'vision zero' for 2050. It is regrettable that GB has not adopted a new numerical road death reduction target. However its progress will nevertheless still contribute to the joint EU target.

Moreover, international comparison can help national policy makers to identify fields in which better progress is possible. The EU is already collecting data on collision outcomes

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<sup>6</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road\\_safety/infrastructure/doc/summary\\_impact\\_assessment\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/infrastructure/doc/summary_impact_assessment_en.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> ETSC (2011) 5<sup>th</sup> PIN Report.

and collision circumstances within the CARE database. The EU funded SafetyNet research project also came up with safety performance indicators which allow actions to be targeted in key areas systematically. ETSC has been running the Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) Programme since 2006 which also aims to identify best practice and promote positive competition between countries to deliver a safer road transport system<sup>8</sup>. The UK is also able to benefit from participating in these bodies and learn from others as well as contributing its own excellent knowledge to the EU pool.

## **5. Sharing of European best practice**

A key part of EU road safety work is sharing best practice in the context of EU funded projects. Over the past decades this has benefitted all EU Member States including the UK. Even with an outstanding road safety record and with a history scoring amongst the best in terms of road deaths per million inhabitants, in Europe, the UK can also still benefit from sharing experience with other EU Member States.

A 'one size fits all' approach is not recommended by ETSC, but ETSC has developed a checklist for road safety which can be regarded as a "step ladder" which has been used as a point of reference by EU Member States<sup>9</sup>. As one of the S.U.N<sup>10</sup> countries, the UK is indeed looked upon by other less well performing EU Member States as a source of inspiration and ideas. Amongst the road safety front runners the S.U.N countries have now been joined by a number of newcomers including Denmark and Ireland. This new slightly enlarged group at the top of the road safety league also benefits from this healthy competition and sharing best practice between each other.

The EU has in their "Policy Orientations on Road Safety 2011-2020" set up a structured open cooperation framework on road safety for EU Member States including the aims of sharing national road safety plans and monitoring progress towards the EU 2020 target through exchange of best practice. Representatives of national road safety departments continue to meet regularly with the European Commission in the EU High Level Group on Road Safety.

## **6. Research and Development Project**

Sound policies are based on known, effective, science based countermeasures, which in turn are grounded in good research. The EU has a global reputation as a centre of excellence and innovation in research and development in areas of road safety. Research and development in the UK is supported by the spending from public authorities including the EU. The automotive industry itself is a key driver of knowledge and innovation in the UK and the EU. It represents Europe's largest private investor in research and

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<sup>8</sup> ETSC (2012) 6<sup>th</sup> PIN Report Chapter 2 Institutional Set Ups Fit for Road Safety

<sup>9</sup> ETSC (2006) A methodological Approach to Road Safety Programmes

<sup>10</sup> S.U.N. an abbreviation coined by SWOV in 2002 to describe the three EU countries (Sweden, U.K. and the Netherlands) with the lowest fatality rates. Koornstra et al (2002) Sunflower Report A comparative study of road safety in Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands

development. The EU automotive industry was the biggest investor in R&D in 2009 (€ 28bn/year) and also participates in many joint European projects.

UK research institutes and universities, including ETSC's member organisations, have also benefitted from EU funds to explore new ideas and contribute to road safety knowledge. Road safety research in the UK should continue to benefit from European funds under the new research framework programme Horizon 2020.

## **7. Overseas Travel and Road Safety**

Finally, the DfT documentation details the flow of overseas travel in and out of the UK. This shows that over two-thirds of visits abroad by UK residents in 2011 were to EU countries, amounting to over 40 million visits. Higher levels of EU road safety policy will benefit the safety of UK visitors when they are travelling abroad. Moreover, the report states that there were over 20 million visits to the UK by EU residents, accounting for two-thirds of all foreign visitors, a quarter travelling on business. Again, UK citizens can benefit from the increased safety brought about by higher levels of road safety of visitors to the UK through their compliance with EU legislation, in terms of their driver behaviour, awareness of prevailing UK traffic rules and the roadworthiness condition and safety standards of their vehicles.

## **8. Cross Border Exchange of Information on Road Safety Related Traffic Offences**

As of November 2013 the Directive 2011/82/EU on facilitating the cross-border exchange of information on road safety related traffic offences will come into force. The UK has yet to opt in to this Directive, an action that ETSC would strongly recommend. The objective of this Directive is to facilitate the enforcement of financial penalties against drivers who commit an offence in another Member State than the one where the vehicle concerned is registered. UK authorities will be unable to access help from authorities in other EU Member States in penalising non-resident traffic offenders in the UK, unless the UK concludes bilateral agreements with other countries. The EU Directive aims to provide one EU system to prevent the need for multiple bilateral agreements. Moreover, EU Member States will not be able to benefit from the new system that would have enabled UK authorities to help in dealing with offenders from the UK who have broken the law abroad.

One of the important articles of the Directive also covers informing non-residents of the traffic rules in the country they are driving in (see Point 7 on overseas travel). The European Commission has a new website which gives a useful overview of the road safety legislation in the different Member States covered by the Directive<sup>11</sup>. The UK is encouraged to provide the EC with updated information on the most important road safety related traffic information. This Directive's effectiveness also relies on its deterrent effect and

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<sup>11</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road\\_safety/going\\_abroad/united\\_kingdom/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/going_abroad/united_kingdom/index_en.htm)

enabling drivers to have access to information on the relevant road safety rules and increasing their awareness of them will increase compliance and improve road safety.

ETSC strongly encourages the UK to opt in. EU citizens are entitled to fair and equal treatment and the principle of non-discrimination is enshrined in the Treaty. At present this principle is not being applied with non-residents acting with impunity and escaping punishment whilst travelling abroad. Not only is this important as regards non-residents flouting laws in the UK but also in the interest of reciprocal treatment. UK drivers should also be protected when they go abroad. Their safety would be better protected under a UK opt-in to this EU wide road safety initiative.

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The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) is a Brussels-based independent non-profit making organisation dedicated to reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries in transport in Europe. The ETSC seeks to identify and promote research-based measures with a high safety potential. It brings together 47 national and international organisations concerned with road safety from across Europe.