

Jesse Norman MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Monday 14 August, 2017

Improved safety standards for new vehicles

Dear Mr Norman

We are writing to urge you to support improvements to European legislation, and, post-Brexit, champion continued improvements under UK legislation, regarding minimum safety standards for vehicles to save lives and prevent serious injuries on UK roads.

As you will be aware, more than 1,700 people were killed in road collisions in Britain in 2015 - a figure that has reduced only slightly in recent years[1]. Further reductions can be achieved through tightening of vehicle safety standards.

EU vehicle safety standards, which apply in the UK, were last updated in 2009 and significant advances in vehicle technology, which have taken place since then, make it prudent to raise the bar and implement further cost effective life-saving safety measures as standard.

However, safer requirements have been subject to many delays in Europe and legislation is now expected in 2018. The UK government should ensure its voice is urgently heard in Europe, supporting the introduction of all 19 safety measures listed in the EC's December 2016 report[2], and ensuring these measures are retained and developed further following Brexit. These proposals (the key ones of which are detailed in the attached briefing paper) are fully in line with the UK Government's Road Safety Statement.

Supporting these changes, and the others under consideration in Europe, helps Britain assert its position as a global leader in supporting safety technology advances and also supporting the drive towards Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAVs), strengthening our competitive position.

These improved minimum vehicle safety standards, along with better investigation of the causes of crashes and injuries, are crucial to ensure the effective delivery of the 'safe system' approach adopted by Britain, driving towards the ultimate target of zero deaths on our roads.

We would welcome the opportunity to work with you and your department to understand the Government's position on the measures highlighted in the attached briefing and all those currently being proposed by the EC. Improving vehicle safety standards has the potential to save lives and prevent injuries, and there is considerable evidence that the measures suggested are cost effective[3].

Please could you let us know how the UK will support our call for higher vehicle safety standards and we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and your officials to discuss the issues raised in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Mary Williams, CEO, Brake

John Pryor, Chairman, Association of Car Fleet Operators

Sue Percy, Chief Executive, Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation

Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director, European Transport Safety Council

Rachel Maycock, Head of Public Affairs, Living Streets

David Davies, Executive Director, Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety

Amy Aeron-Thomas, Advocacy and Justice Manager, RoadPeace

References:

[1] Department for Transport, Reported road casualties Great Britain, annual report: 2015

[2] EC, 2016, Saving lives: boosting car safety in the EU

[3] Hynd et al. (2015). Benefit and Feasibility of a Range of New Technologies and Unregulated Measures in the fields of Vehicle Occupant Safety and Protection of Vulnerable Road Users.