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SPAIN PRESENTS ITS ROAD SAFETY MODEL AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Spain's Minister for Home Affairs, Fernando Grande-Marlaska, presented last July the country's road safety model at a high-level meeting of the United Nations General Assembly, highlighting its significant progress over the past two decades. Spain has reduced its road mortality rate from 128 deaths per million inhabitants to 37, placing it among the countries with the best road safety records in the world. Grande-Marlaska attributed this progress to three main pillars: putting victims and their families at the heart of road safety policies, involving the whole of society in prevention efforts, and ensuring compliance with traffic legislation through effective enforcement of key risk factors such as speeding, alcohol and drugs, distractions, and the use of seatbelts and helmets.



The minister also highlighted recent measures such as the 30 km/h speed limit on single-lane urban roads and the introduction of connected V-16 emergency beacons. Looking ahead, he called for reducing the maximum

alcohol limit for drivers to 0.1 mg per litre of breath and for stronger international cooperation on road safety. Drawing on Spain's experience, he identified seven factors behind successful road safety policies: political commitment, strong institutions such as the DGT, coordination between authorities and sectors, evidence-based policies, partnerships with civil society, individual responsibility and effective public communication. These measures contribute to the UN goal of halving road deaths and injuries worldwide by 2030.

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NEW EU SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR CARS AND VANS TAKE EFFECT

New, more advanced vehicle safety requirements have come into force across the EU from 7 July 2026, building on the General Safety Regulation, which has already made several safety systems mandatory in newly registered cars and vans since 2024. The new rules require all new passenger cars and vans to be equipped with advanced emergency braking systems capable of detecting pedestrians and cyclists, improved driver distraction warning systems, better forward vision and expanded safety-glass areas to reduce the risk of injury to pedestrians. They also introduce new tests for worn tyres to ensure vehicles maintain adequate safety performance throughout their use.

The requirements were introduced in phases to give manufacturers sufficient time to develop the more technically demanding systems. The measures are intended to address some of the main causes and consequences of road crashes, particularly driver distraction and collisions involving vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. They are part of the EU's long-term Vision Zero objective of moving as close as possible to zero road fatalities by 2050, while also encouraging the wider adoption of advanced driver-assistance technologies and improving overall vehicle safety.

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION SETS OUT PLAN TO IMPLEMENT NEW EU DRIVING LICENCE RULES

The European Commission has published an implementation strategy to help Member States introduce the EU's new rules on driving licences and driving disqualifications. The measures aim to improve road safety while reducing administrative burdens and include an EU-wide accompanied driving scheme for 17-year-olds, a probationary period for novice drivers and more systematic assessments of drivers' fitness to drive. Training and testing requirements will also place greater emphasis on protecting vulnerable road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and micromobility users.

The strategy also outlines the introduction of mobile EU driving licences and the EU-wide recognition of driving disqualifications, ensuring that drivers who commit serious traffic offences can be held accountable across Member States. The Commission will support implementation through guidance, technical exchanges, cross-border cooperation and peer learning. The initiative contributes to the EU's Vision Zero objective, which aims to eliminate road deaths by 2050 and reduce fatalities by 50% by 2030, following an estimated 19,400 deaths on EU roads in 2025.

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GLOBAL ROAD DEATHS FALL BY 21%, BUT STRONGER ACTION IS NEEDED

According to new data from the World Health Organization (WHO), the global rate of road traffic deaths fell by 21% between 2011 and 2025, despite the addition of more than one billion motor vehicles worldwide. However, road crashes still claimed around 1.16 million lives in 2025 and remain the leading cause of death among people aged 5–29. Progress has been uneven across regions: road deaths fell by 36% in the WHO European Region and 15% in the Western Pacific, while they increased by 17% in Africa and remained unchanged in the Americas. The rapid growth in motorcycle use is also a major concern, with motorcycles now accounting for nearly one-third of global road fatalities.



Against this backdrop, UN Member States have adopted a new declaration aimed at accelerating progress towards the goal of reducing road deaths and serious injuries by 50% by 2030 compared with 2021 levels. The declaration promotes the proven “Safe System” approach, which recognises that people make mistakes and calls for safer infrastructure, vehicles, speed limits and stronger legislation and enforcement. It also highlights the need to protect vulnerable road users, as more than half of all road deaths involve people walking, cycling or riding motorcycles. With urban populations and new forms of mobility continuing to grow, the WHO stresses that stronger and faster action is needed to make transport systems safer and more sustainable.

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MISUSE OF DRIVER-ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS IDENTIFIED AS MAJOR ROAD SAFETY RISK



A survey of more than 1,000 transport specialists across 10 major car-producing countries has identified the misuse of driver-assistance systems and driver distraction caused by in-vehicle technology as the biggest emerging risks to road safety. Around 30% of experts said that drivers misunderstanding or misusing these systems was the main source of mobility safety problems, while 24% identified increasingly distracting in-vehicle features as a major risk. The findings reflect growing concerns about

human error as vehicles become increasingly automated, particularly when drivers overestimate what these technologies are capable of doing.

The survey also found that two-thirds of transport professionals believe advertising exaggerates the capabilities of driver-assistance systems, potentially creating unrealistic expectations among motorists. Experts therefore stress the importance of clearly explaining the limitations of these technologies and ensuring that drivers understand their responsibilities. At the same time, regulation of automated driving is becoming increasingly important in several countries, while a separate survey of more than 5,000 road users found that 88% support tougher road safety measures. Overall, the findings suggest that the interaction between humans and increasingly automated vehicles will be one of the key road safety challenges of the coming years.

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HELSINKI: A ROAD SAFETY SUCCESS STORY FOR EUROPE

The Helsinki metropolitan area, home to around 1.4 million people, has achieved a remarkable road safety milestone, recording 12 consecutive months without a single road death between 2024 and 2025, followed by another nine months without fatalities. By comparison, 31 people died on the streets of Paris during a similar period. This success is the result of four decades of sustained action, combining comprehensive urban planning with lower speed limits, safer infrastructure, improved public transport, automated enforcement and awareness campaigns. Helsinki has also invested heavily in pedestrian and cycling facilities, allocating around €35 million to this infrastructure last year.



The city now aims to build on this achievement by further restricting private vehicles in busy areas around the Central Railway Station from 2030. Helsinki has adopted a 30 km/h speed limit on many of its streets and strengthened enforcement through 70 automatic speed cameras, alongside traffic controls and communication campaigns. Its experience

demonstrates that road deaths and serious injuries are preventable and offers valuable lessons for other European cities pursuing the EU's Vision Zero strategy. Although every city faces different challenges, Helsinki's example highlights the importance of setting ambitious long-term goals, reducing speed limits and consistently prioritising safer mobility.

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NAPLES RING ROAD BECOMES ITALY'S FIRST SMART ROAD

Naples' Tangenziale has become Italy's first road infrastructure to receive official Smart Road certification from the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport. The project uses advanced technologies to improve traffic management, road safety and sustainability through continuous infrastructure monitoring and real-time communication with connected vehicles. Along its 22 kilometres, the network is being equipped with 217 smart cameras, 15 traffic detection gantries, eight weather stations and 40 communication antennas, all connected to the Movyon C-ITS central platform.

One of the project's most innovative features is two-way Vehicle-to-Infrastructure (V2I) communication, allowing vehicles to receive real-time information on accidents, roadworks, weather conditions and recommended speeds while also transmitting data to the infrastructure. The system can therefore help operators anticipate problems and manage traffic proactively. The project has also tested



self-driving technology, with an autonomous vehicle successfully adjusting its speed in real time according to instructions received from the road infrastructure. Currently, 30 connected vehicles are operating on the Naples ring road, making it a national testing ground for the future of connected and autonomous mobility.

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ALTERNATIVE-FUEL CARS GAIN GROUND IN INDIA AMID E20 PETROL CONCERNS

Consumer uncertainty surrounding India's transition to E20 petrol is encouraging some buyers to consider alternative-fuel vehicles, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA). In July, CNG, hybrid and electric passenger vehicles accounted for 40.59% of total sales, coming close to petrol-powered vehicles at 41.68%. Petrol's market share fell from 47.6% a year earlier, while CNG increased its share to around 24% and electric vehicles rose to nearly 8% of total passenger vehicle sales.

The shift comes amid concerns that E20 petrol, which contains 20% ethanol and has replaced the previous E10 blend, could affect fuel efficiency and the performance of older vehicles. However, dealers report receiving more customer queries than actual complaints and have not

identified vehicle problems directly linked to E20. FADA believes that misinformation and a lack of clear communication have contributed to consumer anxiety, with some buyers delaying petrol vehicle purchases or exploring alternative options. Despite these concerns, overall passenger vehicle retail sales in India increased by 19.1% year-on-year in July, reaching 416,555 units.



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