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UNECE ADOPTS NEW SAFETY RULES FOR EMERGENCY LANE KEEPING AND DATA STORAGE IN AUTOMATED VEHICLES



The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has adopted a new regulation on Emergency Lane Keeping Systems (ELKS), designed to improve road safety by assisting drivers who unintentionally drift out of their lanes. ELKS provides

warnings and, if necessary, automatically steers the vehicle back into its lane to avoid potential collisions, especially during long or monotonous drives. The system applies to passenger cars and vans, can be overridden by the driver at any time, and will become mandatory starting February 2026 under the new regulation.

UNECE also endorsed guidance on data storage systems for automated driving (levels 3 to 5), which are designed to record critical data during automated driving events. These systems help determine whether the driver or the automated system was in control at the time of a safety-related incident. The guidance outlines which data should be stored, how it should be secured and accessed, and recommends standardized, readable formats for legal and regulatory purposes. In addition, UNECE approved updates to Regulation No. 175 to prevent unintended acceleration caused by pedal errors, expanding its scope to include vans with automatic transmission.

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PORTUGAL LAUNCHES ROAD SAFETY CAMPAIGN TO PROTECT MOTORCYCLISTS

Portugal has launched the “2 Rodas: Agarre-se à Vida” road safety campaign to raise awareness among motorcycle and moped drivers about the dangers of risky behaviours such as speeding, driving under the influence, and improper use of safety equipment. Taking place from 8 to 14 July, this is the seventh of eleven planned campaigns under the 2025 National Inspection Plan. The initiative is a joint effort by the Public Security Police (PSP), the National Road Safety Authority (ANSR), and the National Republican Guard (GNR), combining public awareness actions and police inspections, particularly in high-traffic areas.



Authorities emphasize that motorcyclists face significantly greater risks in road accidents due to their lack of physical protection. They highlight that wearing a properly fitted, approved helmet can reduce the risk of death by 40%, and stress the importance of additional gear like gloves, jackets with protectors, and airbags to lessen injury severity. The campaign urges two-wheeled vehicle users to adopt safe driving habits,

reinforcing that many of the most serious accident outcomes are preventable through responsible behaviour.

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LAW ESTABLISHING VEHICULAR HOMICIDE AND AIMED AT COMBATING ROAD VIOLENCE COMES INTO FORCE IN FRANCE

The new French law, enacted on 9 July 2025, introduces the offence of ‘homicide routier’ (vehicular homicide) to classify fatal accidents caused by drivers who engage in deliberate reckless behaviour, such as driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, serious speeding or unlicensed driving. In cases where what is already considered ‘unintentional manslaughter’ is accompanied by a series of factors reflecting deliberately dangerous driving, it will become vehicular homicide. The text does not change the main penalties in place, but increases the number of aggravating circumstances. Victims and their families have long called for a change in terminology, and this reform seeks to give greater symbolic and legal weight to these offences. New rights are also granted to victims, and the new designation also covers injuries, as the concept of ‘road traffic injuries’ is introduced.



In addition, the law strengthens penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs and for speeding, making it a criminal offence to exceed the speed limit by more than 50 km/h, even for a first offence. It also establishes measures to suspend the driving licence of drivers involved in traffic accidents on medical grounds. The new law also extends the list of offences that can be considered, for the purposes of repeat offences, as the same offence.

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GERMANY SETS NEW RECORD FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLE SALES DESPITE OVERALL MARKET DECLINE

Electric vehicle (EV) sales in Germany surged to an all-time high in the first half of 2025, with nearly one in five new car registrations being electric, according to the German road traffic agency KBA. A total of 248,726 EVs were sold between January and June, marking a 35% increase over the same period in 2024 and surpassing the previous record set in 2023. This growth places Germany among the fastest-growing EV markets in Europe, despite a broader decline in total car sales.



Experts attribute the rise in EV demand across Europe—the world's second-largest EV market—to stricter EU emissions regulations and the introduction of more affordable electric models. While electric cars gained market share, total vehicle registrations in Germany fell by 4.7% year-on-year to 1.4 million units, reflecting broader industry challenges even as the shift to cleaner mobility gains momentum.

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TRANSPORT MINISTER SCHNIEDER REJECTS AUTOBAHN SPEED LIMIT AND SENIOR DRIVING TESTS



Germany's Transport Minister Patrick Schnieder (CDU) has spoken out against introducing a general speed limit on the country's autobahns. In an interview, he argued that the average speed on German highways is below 115 km/h and that many stretches already have restrictions due to construction zones or traffic congestion. Given these conditions, Schnieder believes a nationwide speed limit is unnecessary. He also stated that he has no plans to change the legal blood alcohol limit for drivers.

Schnieder also dismissed the idea of mandatory driving tests for senior citizens. He claimed that older drivers do not pose a particular risk on the roads and pointed instead to younger drivers as a more concerning group. Although statistics show that drivers over 75 are more likely to be at fault in accidents involving injuries, Schnieder emphasized that seniors are generally involved in fewer crashes—partly because many no longer commute regularly. Despite this, he sees no reason to impose additional tests or restrictions based on age.

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LOW-TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOODS IN LONDON CUT INJURIES BY 35% WITHOUT INCREASING DANGER ON NEIGHBOURING STREETS

A recent study shows that Low-Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) have achieved a 35% decrease in the total number of road traffic injuries within their boundaries, and a 37% reduction in serious injuries and fatalities. By analysing data collected over more than a decade in 113 areas of London, researchers concluded that thanks to these measures, more than 600 injuries, including 100 serious and fatal cases, were prevented. Moreover, no increase in accidents was recorded on neighbouring streets, refuting a common criticism that LTNs simply displace danger to boundary roads.

LTNs restrict through-traffic from motor vehicles on residential streets to encourage active transport forms such as walking or cycling. Their use has become widespread since 2020, provoking both political and media pushback. However, a study conducted by Westminster University and the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine reinforces their effectiveness and popularity. Even in cases where LTNs were removed, it is estimated that they could have prevented more than a hundred additional injuries. In spite of slight variations across areas, particularly between the inner and outer London, the outcomes support the implementation of these measures as an effective tool to enhance road safety.



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AFRICAN CITIES EMBRACE CYCLING AND WALKING TO BUILD SAFER, GREENER URBAN FUTURES

Cities across Africa are increasingly turning to cycling and walking as sustainable transport solutions, transforming urban mobility and addressing both climate and public health challenges. Countries like Ethiopia, Egypt, Kenya, and Rwanda are investing in infrastructure such as protected bike lanes, walkways, and bike-sharing systems, often with support from UNEP, UN-Habitat, and ITDP. Addis Ababa has led the way with over 60 km of pedestrian and cycling corridors, while Cairo and Kisumu are advancing similar initiatives. Kigali, host of the 2025 UCI World Championship, has implemented car-free zones and introduced electric bikes, further promoting cycling culture.

These non-motorised transport efforts not only reduce emissions but also improve accessibility, safety, and quality of life. Experts note that cycling infrastructure is far more cost-effective than metro systems in cutting emissions, and generates health and economic benefits. As Africa faces disproportionately high road fatality rates, improving infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians becomes a crucial step in saving lives. By integrating active mobility into national strategies, African governments are paving the way toward cleaner, more inclusive cities and a more resilient transport future.



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UZBEKISTAN INTRODUCES AI-DRIVEN DRIVER TESTING TO BOOST ROAD SAFETY AND TRANSPARENCY

Uzbekistan is modernizing its driver licensing system by introducing AI-powered testing centres to enhance transparency, road safety, and public confidence. These new automated facilities assess both theoretical knowledge and practical driving skills without human involvement, using sensor-equipped tracks and real-time monitoring technology. This move is part of a broader effort to eliminate corruption and ensure fair, standardized testing procedures across the country.

Since the system's implementation, pass rates have improved, encouraging driving schools to elevate their training quality. Public perception is also evolving, with more citizens recognizing that earning a driver's license should require genuine effort and skill. With 11 centres already operational and more planned, authorities aim to create a unified national standard for driver evaluation. Kamil Allamjonov, the founder of the initiative, emphasized that removing the human factor from exams is essential to improving training outcomes and eliminating corruption entirely.

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