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YOUNG PEOPLE AND ROAD SAFETY

An event organized by Prévention Routiére Internationale and the European Transport Safety Council was held in Paris in 21 March 2023. Different experts from the field of mobility dealt with the road safety challenges faced by young people. Among the speakers were Patrick Dixneuf, president of the Prévention Routiére Internationale; Antonio Avenoso, ETSC Executive Director; Florence Guillaume, French Interministerial Delegate for Road Safety; Sophie Glémet, Toyota Motor Europe Responsible; and Cristina Ródenas, Head of the International Relations Division within the Directorate-General for Traffic in Spain.

Ms Ródenas detailed the road safety challenges that the irruption of the increasingly used new personal mobility modes poses to the Spanish Government, such as PMVs, especially the so-called e-scooters. In her speech, she referred to the official publication of Royal Decree 970/2020, which amends the General Regulations on Road Traffic approved by Royal Decree 1428/2003, establishing the 30 km/h speed limit on urban roads with one lane in each direction and how this limit has contributed to a 20% reduction in the number of fatalities in urban areas. Likewise, the Personal Mobility Vehicles concept has been introduced in Spanish law for the first time.

Alongside this regulatory context, reference was also made to the importance of adopting a Technical Characteristics Manual set out in DGT's Resolution of 12 January 2022. It is a guidance document which includes the technical characteristics that PMVs must meet so as to be operated on public roads and the requirement for these vehicles to have been previously certified by the competent bodies. In this sense, the Manual imposes on manufacturers or authorised representatives the obligation to have the certificate for use for a make, model and version as well as to be accompanied by a certificate of identity.

Some of the most important recent developments included in the Manual are:

- ✓ The technical requirements are not only required to PMVs for personal mobility but also for the transport of goods and the provision of other services.

- ✓ All PMVs that are sold as of 22 January 2024 must be of a make and model previously certified. The list of makes and models that currently have a certificate is available on the DGT website.

- ✓ As of 22 January 2027, only the PMVs complying with the provisions laid down in this Manual shall be operated on public roads.

At the end of her presentation, Ms Ródenas made a reflection on the new urban mobility culture and how it is already being implemented. She also appealed to the need to move towards a sustainable city model and, in this advance, the role played by the various local governments is crucial, although it is also essential that they receive the support of regional and national governments.

More information

SWISS RESEARCH SHOWS 30 KM/H ZONES REDUCED CRASHES BY 38%

ETSC's Swiss member organisation, BFU, has released a report showing 30 km/h speed zones, and other infrastructure changes, lead to big improvements in road safety. Through their EVAMIR geographic database of infrastructure changes, the BFU has been able to assess the effectiveness of measures that affect road infrastructure for the first time. The database contains detailed information on 2500 measures classified into 28 types. BFU says it was able to make a reliable assessment of the effectiveness of seven types of measures which revealed reductions in the number of crashes by between 11% and 66%.

The BFU found that lowering the speed limit to 30 km/h led to a decline in the number of serious crashes according to data from almost 600 30 km/h zones in Switzerland. The study concluded that the creation of the zones reduced the number of serious crashes by 38% on average. The BFU is calling for a 'paradigm shift' in traffic management with speeds limited to 30 km/h «wherever road safety requires it».

More information

HOW TRAFFIC LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO SAFER ROADS

Exceeding speed limits, drink- or distracted- driving, and failure to wear a seatbelt are among the important factors leading to death and serious injury on European roads.
Road safety laws have been adopted to guide drivers in their behaviour. Many comply with them willingly. Others, however, would be less likely to comply if it were not for fear of being detected and sanctioned. This is where traffic law enforcement comes in.
This report gives an overview of the current state of road traffic enforcement across the EU, with recommendations for action.

More information

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SAFETY OF E-SCOOTERS

E-scooters have become an increasingly common sight on European roads since the launch of the first rental e-scooter schemes in several countries in 2018. In parallel, sales of e-scooters to private buyers have increased dramatically. In 2021, more than 900,000 e-scooters were sold in France, an annual increase of 42%. In the UK, where private e-scooters are currently illegal to use on public roads, total imports by November 2022 were over 1.3 million.

The rise of this novel mode of transport, together with related changes in the so-called micromobility sector, such as high-speed electric bikes, small electric cargo delivery vehicles as well as rarer sights including monowheel vehicles and electric skateboards, present a range of new challenges for policymakers. How these challenges are resolved could have significant impacts on road safety, the environment, urban design and public health in the coming years. This report will not address all of these challenges. Its aim is to set out recommendations for improving the safety of probably the largest and fastest-growing of these new micromobility vehicles: the e-scooter.

The question is not therefore, are e-scooters safe or dangerous? But rather, how do they compare to other vehicles currently in use, what risks do they present to their riders and other road users, and how can they be made safer, not only in terms of design, but also in terms of usage?

More information

REDUCING ROAD DEATHS AMONG POWERED TWO-WHEELER USERS

In recent years there has been much discussion about whether a PTW user falls into the category of vulnerable road user since they can pose substantial risks to other road users such as pedestrians and cyclists. But they remain unprotected by a vehicle body and the other protection systems that vehicle occupants enjoy, which exposes them to greater risks in motorised traffic.

While PTW user road deaths have been decreasing, they have not been decreasing at the same rate as other road deaths and there are differences between the reduction in moped road deaths and motorcycle road deaths. This also holds true for PTW user serious injuries. Age is another important factor in PTW safety. Improving the safety of PTW users can be achieved through a variety of measures starting with training and licensing through to infrastructure and new technologies. Some measures, such as speed enforcement or safe road design, benefit all road users.

More information

MONITORING PROGRESS IN URBAN ROAD SAFETY: 2022 UPDATE

This report tracks the progress in reducing the number of road traffic fatalities and serious injuries in cities between 2010 and 2020. It presents traffic safety data collected in 32 cities participating in the ITF Safer City Streets network and compares trends in urban and national road safety. It provides indicators for the risk of traffic death for different road user groups that permits benchmarking of road safety outcomes.

Most cities have continued to reduce the number of road deaths since 2010, despite considerable differences between them. The year 2020 stands out in the past decade's road safety data because of the Covid-19 pandemic. As many cities experienced restrictions on movements, traffic volumes fell, and mobility patterns changed. The number of road deaths decreased by 4% on average across the 32 cities in 2020. The average annual reduction for the period 2010-19 had been 3.5%. Overall, the reductions in the number of road deaths in 2020 are not as high as one could expect from the restrictions on movement. Out of 32 cities, 31 missed the initial road safety target stipulated in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) of cutting road deaths by 50% over the decade 2010-20. Warsaw was the only city to achieve the road safety target.

Barcelona and Edmonton reduced the number of road deaths by more than 45%. Despite considerable efforts and the exceptional decline due to the pandemic, most cities only achieved reductions between 20% and 40% over those ten years. Notably, both Helsinki and Oslo recorded zero fatalities among pedestrians or cyclists in 2019, thus demonstrating that "Vision Zero", the objective of eliminating all traffic deaths, has a basis in reality.

Sharing experiences and learning from other cities can accelerate progress towards meeting the revised SDG target of 50% fewer road deaths by 2030. Systematic and targeted use of urban road safety and mobility data will help cities to set the right policy priorities and take decisions that will save lives.

More information

DECARBONISING EUROPE'S TRUCKS: HOW TO MINIMISE COST UNCERTAINTY

Trucks account for one-fifth of transport sector emissions in Europe. To decarbonise, heavy-duty road freight must switch to zero-emission vehicles quickly. This report examines whether battery electric vehicles, electric road systems and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles could compete with diesel-driven vehicles. It looks at the total cost of ownership across nine different vehicle-size segments in Europe. The report gives six recommendations to accelerate the transition to zero-emission trucks, including the provision of necessary infrastructure.

More information

CALL TO MAKE ABS BRAKES MANDATORY ON MOTORCYCLES UNDER 125CC AS WELL AS PRACTICAL TESTS AND A MINIMUM AGE OF 16 FOR MOPEDS

ETSC is calling for the European Union and European national governments to make Anti-lock Braking Systems (ABS) mandatory on all new motorcycles in a new report published today on the state of motorcycling safety in Europe.

The report found that 3,891 people died while riding a motorcycle or moped in the EU in 2021, around 90% of whom were men. That figure is 25% lower than a decade earlier but, over the same period, other road deaths fell by a third.

According to the authors, changes to EU licensing requirements in 2013 may have contributed to the lower number of deaths by creating a series of stages to acquire a full license for the largest and most powerful motorcycles.

The minimum recommended age to ride a moped in the EU is now 16 but, in several countries, it is still possible to ride at the age of 14, without passing a practical test. ETSC says a practical test should be mandatory and all countries should apply the recommended minimum age of 16 or higher.

More information

ESSENTIAL EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY RESEARCH LACKING

In a position paper, FERSI expresses its concern that European road safety research is no longer delivering what it ought to, impeding the improvements needed to achieve the European ambitious road safety targets. The paper details how the structure of road safety research funding in Europe impacts the potential progress that can be made in European road safety and provides some suggestions for solutions.

More information

THE MOMENTUM TO REDUCE SPEEDS GROWS

The calls for speed limits to be lowered on highways and city streets have been growing as the connection between lower speeds, lowering road trauma rates, and reducing fuel use and CO2 emissions is finally being understood.

When the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021 to 2030 was released, it contained important speed-related recommendations. These recommendations included:

- ✓ Implement infrastructure treatments that ensure logical and intuitive compliance with the desired speed environment (e.g., 30 km/h urban centres; ≤ 80 km/h undivided rural roads; 100 km/h expressways).
- ✓ Implement policies that lower speeds, and prioritize the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transport users.

A five per cent decrease in average speed leads to approximately a 10 per cent decrease in all injury crashes and a 20 per cent decrease in fatal crashes. But fewer killed and injured is not the only benefit. Lower speeds also translate into lower fuel use and lower CO2 emissions.

When speeds reduce, everyone wins.

More information

ROAD SAFETY IN THE NEWS

WHY ARE NEW CARS DESIGNED AND TESTED WITH ONLY MALE BODIES IN MIND?

Women are far more likely to be severely injured or die in a frontal crash than men. The way we test car safety may have something to do with it. Cars have become much safer for everyone; thanks to modern crash testing and research we have come to expect our cars to protect us whether on family road trips or the daily commute.

Strapped into car seats and propelled at speed, they are designed to measure the effect and the impact of real-life crash situations and highlight potential injury. For car buyers, these tests give invaluable information about just how safe a car is for both driver and passengers as safety ratings are awarded by the European New Car Assessment Programme (EuroNCAP) to all new cars.

But do those ratings apply to all car occupants equally? It seems not.

Women are not scaled-down men and they have different physical characteristics, such as height, weight, bone density, and muscle mass. Because cars are designed for, and tested by, models representing the "average male," the results from these tests do not accurately predict the safety risks for female occupants in a crash.

Research shows that women are 73 per cent more likely to be severely injured or die in a frontal crash than men and three times as likely to experience whiplash injuries. The seating position can increase the risk of injury. As women tend to be shorter, they generally sit closer to the steering wheel, making them more vulnerable to lower-body injuries involving the legs, spine, and abdomen.

Despite the fact that, on average, women have a higher seatbelt usage rate than men in fatal crashes, have a lower mean body mass index, and drive newer cars, women are clearly at higher risk than men in vehicle collisions.

It does not in fact capture female geometry, such as the shape and form of the torso, muscle strength, spinal alignment, or the mass distribution of different body parts. It therefore does not reflect many of the physiological differences between men and women which potentially change the impact certain crash scenarios impose on women. The crash tests performed by the EuroNCAP not only make independent information about a car's safety available to consumers the results also influence how car manufacturers design cars.

And it's not just women who are missing out.

Elderly and obese drivers have high fatality rates per vehicle mile driven and research has demonstrated that elderly females and obese males suffer greater injury in crashes of equal severity than the "standard" male. The average male cannot be the default for all car users, so more diverse crash test dummies are needed to ensure star ratings identify which cars provide the best protection for the whole car-using population.

More information

NEW TRAFFIC CAMERA USES AI AND RADAR TO LOOK INSIDE CARS AND FIND ALL OFFENCES

The cutting-edge tech is solar powered and can see if you are on your phone or not wearing a belt. It also connects to databases to check your tax and insurance.

A new speed camera installed alongside a busy UK road is using artificial intelligence to look inside driver's cars - detecting offences such as using a mobile phone or not wearing a seatbelt. The camera deploys 4D cameras, radar and high-resolution imaging to detect drivers breaking the rules.

The Redspeed Sentio camera is being trialled on one route ahead of potential roll-out across the country, reports The Sun. The camera can also link to DVLA and police databases to check tax and insurance on the spot. The camera can monitor traffic across six lanes both day and night, using solar power to ensure it is never off.

The camera has been installed on the A23 in South London as part of a trial before it can be given Home Office approval."

Redspeed International said: "Sentio is designed to be whatever camera you want it to be. In combining several key enforcement applications and having AI at its heart, Redspeed Sentio has the built-in modular flexibility, capability and scalability to meet virtually any future challenge."

More information