

# INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN

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## HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON ROAD SAFETY MEETS IN THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR TRAFFIC



As part of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the EU High Level Group on Road Safety met in Madrid, in the Central Services of the General Directorate of Traffic, in the Central Services of the Directorate-General for Traffic, with the objective of analysing several of the challenges that affect road safety and assessing EU and national strategies to help executive leaders reduce road traffic accidents.

The meeting brought together traffic and road safety officials from the 27 Member states and the European Commission participated in the meeting, and the traffic authorities of Catalonia and the Basque Country were invited to attend.

The conference was opened by Kristian Schmidt, Director for Land Transport at the European Commission and European Road Safety Coordinator, and by Pere Navarro, Director of the Directorate-General for Traffic. Schmidt thanked Spain for holding the conference in Madrid to coincide with the Spanish Presidency of the EU and highlighted the value of meetings like the one held today, "as they allow us to reflect on EU and national approaches to reducing road traffic deaths, and give us a forum for exchanging knowledge, good practices and experiences in order to benefit the mobility and safety of European citizens on their journeys".

The European Road Safety Coordinator also pointed out that, as we approach the halfway point of the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030, it is important to focus on the actions needed to reduce road traffic accidents: "Europe may be the safest region in the world, but almost 20,000 people still die on EU roads every year. Determined implementation of national and EU road safety strategies is essential if we are to reach our goal of zero fatalities by 2050 within the context of dynamic and ever-changing mobility".

The EU Road Safety Coordinator congratulated Spain for its road safety efforts, which have reduced road deaths faster than the EU average over the last 20 years. An important example of this is the initiative to implement a speed limit of 30 km/h in cities, a pioneering measure that other countries in Europe are interested in studying.

He also highlighted Spain's important role in cooperation programmes with other countries, such as the EU Road Safety Exchange project; with initiatives such as European Mobility Week, which is being held this week; and the active participation of many Spanish stakeholders in the European Road Safety Charter.

For his part, the Director of the Directorate-General for Traffic, Pere Navarro, welcomed all the participants and thanked the European Commission for the assistance that has helped Spain to implement the safety policy. "Without the European Union, without its directives and recommendations, the progress made to combat road traffic accidents and their dramatic consequences would not have been possible." He also highlighted the important role of the High Level Group, "a group created last century in the 1990s and which is not only still active thirty years later, but its role as a forum for exchanging good practices is more solid than ever, as today's meeting demonstrates".

He also thanked the European Commission for the trust it has placed in Spain to advise on how to adopt measures to help reduce the accident rate in other EU countries. Greece, Romania and Bulgaria are among the countries receiving advice in areas such as motorist safety, automated surveillance and road safety training.

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## MEMORANDUM TO THE SPANISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU



Spain took over the EU Presidency on 1 July 2023 as the EU continues to grapple with the ongoing war in Ukraine, which still brings additional challenges for transport and mobility policies.

There were 20,678 road deaths on EU roads in 2022. In the last decade, there have been 39,554 fewer deaths than there would have been if deaths had continued at the same level as in 2012. ETSC estimates that the total value of the human losses avoided by the reductions in the years 2013-2022 taken together compared with 2012 is about €104 billion.

The EU, and its Member States, agreed on a target to cut road deaths by half in the decade to 2020 and again by half by 2030. The overall progress in reducing road deaths on EU roads was good in 2012 and 2013, with an 8% decrease. But the positive start was followed by six consecutive years of stagnation with only a 6% reduction over the 2014-2019 period. In 2020 there was an exceptional drop of 17% compared to 2019. The 2020 result was strongly related to travel restrictions across Europe due to the Covid19 pandemic. 2021 also saw a consistent drop of 13% with respect to 2019, but the number of road deaths increased by 5% with respect to 2020, influenced by a gradual relaxation of travel restrictions and lockdown requirements across Europe. 2022 saw a decrease of 9% with respect to 2019 – the pre-Covid year – but the number of road deaths increased by 4% with respect to 2021, confirming the increasing road deaths trend after the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this briefing, ETSC outlines its recommendations on the key EU road safety policy dossiers to be steered by the Spanish Presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2023.

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## URBAN MOBILITY DAYS 2023

Save the Date for Urban Mobility Days 2023 taking place from 4-6 October in Seville, Spain. Urban Mobility Days will bring together politicians, local authorities, industry, and urban transport practitioners with the European Commission to connect, share and discuss the path forward for a sustainable, innovative, and equitable future for Europe's urban mobility.



And as 2023 is the European Year of Skills, Urban Mobility Days will have a specific focus on transport skills.

The event is being organized together with the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU.

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## ROAD HOMICIDE, ALCOHOL, DRUGS, ... MAIN MEASURES ON ROAD SAFETY ANNOUNCED BY PRIME MINISTER BORNE

The Prime Minister has informed that the penalties for the consumption of narcotic substances and alcohol while driving will soon be increased. However, with regard to minor speeding, the legislation has been softened.

With thirty-eight new road safety measures, some of which reduce penalties and others increase them, Prime Minister Élisabeth Borne, who announced the measures on Monday, July 17, has tried to establish a consensus through negotiations between ministries. The measures relating to particularly dangerous behaviours related to alcohol and narcotic substances have been tightened.

Although the scourge of drugs has been taken into account for several years now, it has now been risen to the same level of concern as alcohol, especially due to the danger posed by those who drive under the influence of illegal substances, sometimes combined with alcohol. It is these special-risk behaviours when driving that the government intends to apply more severe sanctions.

This terrible cocktail, which caused 195 fatal accidents in 2021, will now lead to the loss of 8 points instead of 6, in addition to the application of other penalties such as fines or imprisonment. In addition, the vehicle will systematically be immobilized and impounded. Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol will from now on lead to the mandatory suspension of the driving license, a measure that was optional to date. The prefecture may decide its duration.

### **False reporting crime**

Likewise, the CISR intends to put an end to the tricks to escape punishment through domestic violence complaints. The Minister of Justice, Éric Dupond-Moretti, has announced "the creation of a new crime for false reporting".

### **Change of name for involuntary manslaughter**

Added to this new battery of measures is the one that has already been widely discussed and that refers to involuntary manslaughter renamed as road homicide. In this case, it is a purely semantic reform since the penalties it entails have not changed: 5 years' imprisonment for road homicide without aggravating circumstances, and 10 years for the same crime committed with aggravating circumstances such as drug and alcohol consumption or even speeding. This appeal, awaited by many associations, deletes the word "involuntary".

In addition to these measures, which will come into force progressively, others have been announced: in the area of education, taking into account that you can obtain a driving licence from the age of 17, the teaching of road safety at school will be reinforced, including for the use of the bicycle, increasingly used in our cities. Simplification measures have also been announced as of 1 April 2024, the insurance payment badge will go down in history. The controls will no longer be based on this green document, but directly on a file supplied by the insurers.

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### **'HAVE A SAFE T.R.I.P THIS SUMMER'**

National Highways is launching a major new driver awareness campaign, calling on motorists to plan their summer journeys ahead of one of the busiest times of the year for vehicle breakdowns.

In July and August 2022, National Highways traffic officer patrols dealt with more than 21,000 breakdowns on motorways. More than a third (34%) of vehicle breakdowns during these two months were caused by tyre problems, vehicles running out of fuel, loss of power and engine issues.

Meanwhile, data shows that almost one in four (23%) people agree checking tyre pressure is important – but don't know how to do it. Following the checklist will help to prevent vehicle

breakdowns and reduce the number of collisions caused by fatigue. The new T.R.I.P checklist is based on four key principles which are:

- **Top-up** – fuel, oil and screen wash
- **Rest** – take a rest break every two hours
- **Inspect**– check tyre pressure and tread
- **Prepare** – have a plan for all weather conditions



Motorists should also factor in regular rest stops on their summer journeys. It is recommended to take a minimum break of at least 15 minutes every two hours to ward off the effects of fatigue.

[More information](#)



## POLAND WINS INTERNATIONAL ROAD SAFETY AWARD AS DEATHS FALL BY HALF IN TEN YEARS

The European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) has awarded its 2023 Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) Award to Poland for the first time. The country cut road deaths by 47% between 2012 and 2022, a rate only bettered by Lithuania, last year's winner. The EU average reduction was 22%.

Road mortality (the number of road deaths per inhabitant) stood at 50 per million in Poland last year, down from 93 per million in 2012. Mortality in 2022 was better than Italy (54 per million). Norway had the safest roads in Europe (21 per million) followed by Sweden (22 per million).

The announcement coincides with new analysis published by ETSC which shows road deaths in the EU rose by 4% last year, to 20,679. That number is still 9% lower than in 2019, the last year before the Covid-19 pandemic dramatically altered traffic volumes. However, ETSC is warning that a 17.2% decrease would have been needed since 2019 in order to stay on track to reach the EU and UN target of halving the number of road deaths by 2030.

[More information](#)



## WHAT IS THE LEVEL OF CYCLIST SAFETY IN THE DANUBE REGION?



As cycling is becoming an increasingly popular mode of transport, it is crucial to ensure safe environments for cyclists. In the Danube region, in particular, this topic has recently received attention from road authorities and road safety experts thanks to the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme's SABRINA project. Within SABRINA a comprehensive survey of over 2700 km of EuroVelo2 cycling routes located within multiple

countries of the region was conducted. The project has uncovered potentially alarming data about the infrastructure safety standards for the region's cyclists.

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## MAJORITY SUPPORT 30KM/H SPEED LIMIT IN DUTCH CITIES, SURVEY FINDS

According to a recent survey conducted by Safe Traffic Netherlands (VVN) - an organization monitoring road safety in the Netherlands -, two-thirds of road users in the Netherlands say they are

willing to comply with a lower speed limit in built-up areas. The VVN is looking to reduce the speed limit in residential areas and cities from 50 to 30 kilometers an hour.

As part of the same survey, VVN found that 66 percent of respondents admitted they felt that other motorists often drive too fast in Dutch towns and cities. The research found that vans and delivery scooters were generally regarded as the main culprits. 54 percent of those taking part in the survey, therefore, agreed that lowering the speed limit from 50 kilometers an hour to 30 kilometers an hour would make built-up areas safer for road users and local residents.

The survey was carried out as part of VVN's campaign for authorities to enforce a reduced speed limit on certain roads: "VVN calls on municipalities to speed up the introduction of the speed standard from 50 kilometers an hour to 30 kilometers an hour," the organization writes on its website.

[More information](#)



## **COUNCILS URGED TO 'CUT THE CLUTTER ON BRITAIN'S PAVEMENTS'**

Councils are being urged to act to clear pavements of obstructions that make it difficult for pedestrians to walk and wheel easily. The plea was made by Living Streets, to mark its Cut the Clutter week (10-16 July 2023).

The walking charity wants councils to ban all A-board advertising on the pavement, remove unused phone boxes, and cut back hedges that encroach on pavements, amongst other measures to 'cut the clutter on Britain's pavements'.

With a rise in electric vehicles, e-scooters and e-bikes, the charity also wants a commitment from councils that charging points and cycle storage will be placed on the carriageway and not on the pavements, unless there is at least 1.5 meters clearance left for people walking and wheeling.

It is the third year that Living Streets has run its Cut the Clutter campaign. In previous years, the biggest blights reported by Brits were overgrown trees and hedges, intrusive signs and lamp posts.

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## ROAD SAFETY IN THE MEDIA



### MAUI RESIDENTS SAY UTILITY TRUCKS BLOCKED ROADS AS THEY TRIED TO FLEE



“That is our lifeline, our escape route, and you cut us off from it?” Amanda Cassidy said. “There was no other way out.”

Three survivors of the deadly wildfires that ravaged Maui said Wednesday that when the inferno erupted, the main escape route out of town was partly blocked by Hawaiian Electric trucks clearing downed lines and replacing busted power poles.

The result was “epic bumper-to-bumper traffic while we were trying to escape,” said resident Cole Millington, 26. “There were no police officers in sight. What there was were Hawaiian Electric trucks coming in with new telephone poles.

“Instead of waiting for everybody to get out, they were blocking the only way out with their big trucks. It made no sense what they were doing,” Millington said. “They could see the sky was black. They could see the city was on fire. They could see the wind was still whipping everything around. But they were already starting to plant new power poles.”

While investigators were trying to pinpoint what sparked the massive fires, which killed at least 110 people, reduced historic Lahaina to smoldering ruins and caused more than \$7 billion in damage, NBC News reported last week that the state's emergency warning sirens were not activated to alert unsuspecting residents.

[More information](#)



## TRANSPORT LEADERS MEET IN TURKMENISTAN TO BOOST RESILIENT CONNECTIVITY

Hundreds of delegates from over 40 countries gathered in Turkmenistan in May to discuss challenges and opportunities in cross-border transport and logistics. At the second edition of the “International Transport and Transit Corridors: Interconnection and Development” conference and exhibition in Turkmenistan, IRU outlined key measures to enhance transport and transit connectivity.

The conference brought together over 700 delegates from more than 40 countries, representing the public and private sector, international organizations, development partners, and financial institutions.

Summarising the discussions of the high-level panellists, IRU’s General Delegate to Eurasia, Vadim Zakharenko, highlighted that freight flows through traditional routes have fallen by 50%, while increasing by just as much along evolving transit corridors – or even doubling in some areas. This is overwhelming border crossings, causing bottlenecks and long delays. Investment in both hard and soft solutions are needed to keep up with the growing traffic of goods and vehicles.

Turkmenistan continues to demonstrate its support in promoting the role of transport and transit at the global level, supporting sustainable development for all. Most recently, the government of Turkmenistan supported IRU in proposing a new UN General Assembly resolution to establish a World Sustainable Transport Day. Starting this year, 26 November will be marked as UN World Sustainable Transport Day.

[More information](#)



## JOURNAL OF ROAS SAFETY: STRENGTHENING SPEED AND CHILD RESTRAINT ENFORCEMENT CAPACITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

This Academic Paper focuses on the work of the Global Road Safety Partnership's (GRSP) Road Policing Capacity Building programme team in strengthening existing speed enforcement capacity and build competence in relation to enforcing child restraint use for the first time in the Philippines.



More specifically, this paper provides a useful example of the mechanisms to transfer specific knowledge from the field of traffic law enforcement to police officers in a systematic way, and to build training and enforcement capacity in a sustainable manner.

Evidence-based road traffic laws are important, but alone, are insufficient. Equally important is the need for appropriate implementation, including sustained enforcement, to reduce crashes and associated trauma. Strengthening enforcement capacity is critical to encouraging safe road use (WHO, 2017). GRSP has collaborated with government and non-government agencies in the Philippines over a number of years to assist with implementing laws and regulations to combat speeding and non-use of child restraint systems (CRS).

[More information](#)