

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Directorate C - Innovative & sustainable mobility C.4 - Road safety

Brussels, MOVE/C4/MSV/ARES (2014)

HIGH LEVEL GROUP ON ROAD SAFETY 25 FEBRUARY 2013 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

The meeting was opened by Mr Fotis Karamitsos, Acting Director of DG MOVE Directorate C. Mr Karamitsos welcomed the participants and presented the agenda of the day, inviting all participants to discuss openly and constructively. The challenges of the current economic crisis and the potential benefits of safety technologies of interest for further exploration were mentioned.

NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANS

Mr Szabolcs Schmidt, Head of Unit MOVE C.4, shortly reminded of the background to the initiative and the previous steps: discussion in last two HLG meetings, circulation of draft discussion paper, workshop with external stakeholders and circulation of a revised discussion paper in view of today's meeting. Mr Schmidt reminded the meeting of the limits of subsidiarity defining the scope of the initiative.

Ms Susanne Lindahl, MOVE C.4, gave a short presentation of the discussion paper, underlining that it does not present a prescribed set of recommended practices but a few examples illustrating the wide diversity of actions currently prioritised by Member States.

The Member States were invited to comment on the paper and on the process. Meeting participants congratulated the Commission on the paper and expressed their satisfaction with its content in general. It was underlined that the implementation of actions is the key to results.

A number of specific proposals were made for addition to the paper. References are to be added on: cross-border enforcement; linking education and enforcement e.g. by quick feedback to offenders; intelligent traffic management systems with variable speed limits responding to the present traffic situation and road conditions; improved high-quality speed cameras; and possibly an action linked to heavy goods vehicles and cyclists' safety. NL informed about the correct fatality target to be updated in the paper and DE

Commission européenne, B-1049 Bruxelles / Europese Commissie, B-1049 Brussel - Belgium. Telephone: (32-2) 299 11 11. Office: DM24 2/102. Telephone: direct line (32-2) 29 68919.

E-mail: Maria-Teresa.Sanz-Villegas@ec.europa.eu

proposed to include into the text some web-links to national road safety strategies available on-line. It was also proposed to keep, as far as possible, the paper as a living document with possibility of up-dates when needed.

Member States were asked to contribute concrete text proposals and to send the weblinks to their national road safety strategies, if possible to versions in English.

It was proposed that the paper is posted on the internal CIRCA network but also on the Commission road safety website, once it is updated with these proposals.

COMMISSION INFORMATION ON LATEST DEVELOPMENTS:

- European road safety charter

Ms Maria Teresa Sanz Villegas, MOVE C.4, informed the Member States that the European Road Safety Charter, now with more than 2000 signatories, will very soon get a facelift with a new and more user-friendly website. The criteria for having a commitment accepted will be somewhat stricter, a signatory must show and impact assessment of their planned action. A focus area will be road safety for young people.

A Road Safety Charter Award winner will be presented in connection to the European Road Safety Day in Athens in May 2014.

- In-vehicle safety systems

Mr Casto Lopez Benitez, MOVE C.4, informed the Member States of the studies being completed in connection to the on-going paper on in-vehicle safety technologies. A study on speed limiters and intelligent speed assistance is already completed and available via the Commission website¹. A study on alcohol interlocks is to be finalised very soon and published on-line. The study indicates that enabling the fitting of alcohol interlocks (by means of technical harmonisation under type approval) is the most cost-effective measure at EU level and does not recommend mandatory deployment in the short term.

Two studies, one on safety-related aspect of tyre use and another on the safety benefits of event data recorders respectively are expected to be delivered by October 2014.

Member States were asked to cooperate with the contractors performing the studies by responding quickly to the questionnaires sent out. Stakeholder consultations are planned to be held on 10th June for the tyres study and one week earlier for the EDR.

The results of the studies will be used as contributions to the review of the General Safety Regulation on type approval, run by DG ENTR.

- European road safety day 2014

Member States were informed about the next European Road Safety Day, to be organised in Athens on 9 May 2014. The topic is "safe and smart infrastructure". Registration is now open via the Commission website². The event is held back-to-back with the informal council organised by the Greek Presidency on 8 May on the same

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/vehicles/speed_limitation_evaluation_en.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road safety/events-archive/2014 05 09 ersd en.htm

topic. Meeting participants raised concerns that they have not yet received invitations and information from the Presidency concerning the informal council.

Member States took the opportunity to ask more information about Commission planned work on infrastructure safety. It was explained that the informal council will be a starting point to see what the Transport Ministers wish to focus a review of the infrastructure safety management directive but that at the present time, no specific direction for such a review is decided.

Mr Karamitsos invited the Member States to consider already constructive infrastructure-related ideas and proposals to send with their Ministers for the informal council.

- Serious injuries

Mr Szabolcs Schmidt thanked the Member States for their good cooperation on the serious injury initiative. He acknowledged the good work done and encouraged all Member States to continue the efforts during 2014 to ensure that more reliable data can be reported in 2015 for the first baseline year. Ms Maria Teresa Sanz Villegas explained the latest work on methodology issues. Notably, conversion tables will be prepared for those who already wish to start transforming hospital data from ICD codes to the MAIS codes. The option to continue current reporting systems but applying a correction coefficient also remains. More information on conversion algorithms is expected to be circulated before the summer. The pragmatic approach of the Commission was underlined. It was clarified that the Commission's contact point for this exercise is with the HLG and the CARE expert group and that the national delegates must organise their cooperation with health authorities internally. The Forum of European Road Safety Research Institutes (FERSI) has offered to help Member States on the implementation of the new serious injury data collection. Some Member States have already received a letter from them. It was clarified that FERSI does this on its own initiative and not on a mandate from the European Commission.

- Other on-going initiatives

Mr Szabolcs Schmidt informed the meeting of the review of the directive on professional drivers' qualifications and training. The impact assessment is under way.

The evaluation process of the infrastructure safety management directive has just started. The working group on Roadworks will continue its work in 2014. Member States are kindly requested to provide national good practises on signalization of roadworks for the trans-European road network.

PLANNED INITIATIVES:

- Road user distractions study

Ms Susanne Lindahl presented the Commission's intention to commission a study on road user distractions. The idea is a study focusing primarily on new distraction sources like technical devices, to study the effects of distractions also for other road user groups than car drivers and to focus on possible solutions and countermeasures rather than only mapping the regulatory situation. The HLG was asked to provide inputs on the outline and scope of this work.

The HLG Members generally welcomed the initiative as timely and relevant. It was stressed that there are many sources of distractions today, not only the technical devices – even sources of distraction outside of the vehicles. Also alcohol was mentioned as a cause of road user inattention. It might therefore be useful to keep a broad focus and not limit the study e.g. to mobile phone use. It was proposed that the study could focus more generally on how to increase road user alertness and attention instead of reducing distraction. The importance of education, information and enforcement was stressed and several Member States provided examples of information campaigns they run. It was underlined that technological devices can be both a source of distraction and an aid to reduce risks. The challenge of drafting legislation that keeps up with technical developments was discussed. The question of how to mobilise industry and producers of both vehicles and of potentially distracting devices was raised.

FR informed the meeting of a planned in the framework of the "Francophonie": a conference in Quebec on the topic of road user distractions, to be held in October 2014.

IE informed of an up-coming conference on 20 March on the same topic and invited the HLG members to participate (invitation attached).

The Commission thanked the members for their inputs. The proposals will be taken into account in adjusting the terms of reference for this planned study. Member States were encouraged to share any reports or studies they have on the topic for further knowledge exchange.

- Ageing society study

Ms Maria Teresa Sanz Villegas presented a planned study on road safety for the ageing society. The aim is to assess possible measures and actions that might help reducing road traffic risks for elderly road users, without reducing their mobility and quality of life.

Meeting participants shared information on their statistics and on the work done in their countries, e.g. on driver courses and information campaigns for elderly. It was stressed that different age groups (in particular the big difference between those aged 65-75 and those older than 75) and different road user groups (e.g. cyclists) may encounter different risks and require different road safety measures. The differences between urban and rural road safety was stressed in this regard. Some Member States presented recent research done and offered to share their reports with the HLG, for example NO who has made in-depth analysis of all fatal accidents 2005-2010.

There was general agreement on not recommending discriminatory measures, for example mandatory medical checks and on rather promoting mobility measures and voluntarily trainings or health check-ups.

DE informed that a conference will be organized by FERSI on that subject the 27-28 Nov 2014.

The Commission expressed its appreciation of all inputs and will prepare the terms of reference for this planned study with these proposals in mind.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- Sharing of photos, videos and other road safety information materials

The Member States were reminded that the Commission invites them to share photos, videos, campaign materials etc via the Commission website, in order to help promoting road safety in the EU.

Originally, the priority was for photos and campaigns linked to infrastructure safety in view of the up-coming European Road Safety Day but following the great interest in the topics of distractions and road safety for elderly, it was proposed that campaign materials on these themes would also be of great interest, as well as more general road safety information materials.

Instructions for up-loading the photos will follow separately.

- Advanced driver assistance systems - discussions in UNECE

The upcoming meeting of the UNECE Working Party 1 on road safety was mentioned and the Commission stressed the Union interest in a quick solution to the present legal uncertainty regarding advanced driver assistance systems. These systems can have a strong road safety impact. Mr Joël Valmain, vice-chair of the UNECE Working Party 1, explained the present compromise proposal on Article 8 of the Vienna Road Traffic Convention, to be discussed in Geneva on 24-26 March. More information about this process, its background and the compromise proposal is found via the UNECE website³.

Mr Valmain also informed that on 27 March 2014 in Geneva, the first meeting of the expert group on road signs and signals, which will report to WP 1, will take place.

- Child restraint systems

The HLG was informed that an implementing act will soon be adopted⁴ in order to update the directive 91/671/EEC on safety belts and child restraints, in view of technical developments in the field. The Member States will be informed so they can adopt transposition measures as soon as possible.

- Spanish accident report

Spain informed that they have prepared an English translation of their annual road traffic accident report and that they will share this report with the Commission.

³ http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=34258

Postscript. The amendment to Directive 91/671 was adopted on 27 February 2014 as Commission Implementing Directive 2014/37/EU

CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

Meeting minutes are to be sent out shortly together with enclosures. The discussion paper on national road safety strategies will be updated in line with the HLG comments and then published on-line. The Commission will keep the HLG informed of further developments, e.g. on serious injuries, in-vehicle safety systems and the European Road Safety Day. Conversion tables for ICD-MAIS coding would be circulated as soon as they are finalised and available.

The next meeting is tentatively planned for September 2014. More information will follow.

Enclosed:

- Invitation to European Road Safety Day 2014
- Programme for European Road Safety Day 2014
- Invitation from Ireland: Conference on road user distractions on the 20^{th} of March
- Paper on serious injury reporting by FERSI