



European
Commission

Newsletter N° 16 | November 2014

Road Safety Newsletter



© EPA/EU/EU Neighbourhood Info Centre

EU southern partners prioritise road safety in new transport action plan

As part of the EuroMed Transport Cooperation forum, the EU and 10 of its southern partners are preparing a Regional Transport Action Plan for 2014–20. National transport ministers from the Euro-Mediterranean area, meeting under the aegis of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), adopted priority guidelines for the Plan in November 2013 covering all transport modes and infrastructure policy. Compared to the previous plan (2007–13), these included, for the first time in the area of Euro-Mediterranean transport cooperation, road safety as a priority.

'The inclusion of road safety as a priority topic in the new Regional Transport Action Plan is a most welcome initiative. The southern neighbourhood suffers today from high road fatality rates: both a tragedy for those affected and an obstacle to development and growth', comments Szabolcs Schmidt, head of the Commission road safety unit.

A specific road safety action will be included in the Plan, which is expected to be formally established by the EuroMed Transport Forum by the end of 2014.

UfM aims to enhance cooperation between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Transport is a priority for such cooperation and the EU's partners in development of the Action Plan are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Turkey.¹ The European Commission road safety unit is advising the partner countries in the drafting of the Plan and the specific road safety action and will follow its implementation through its participation in the work of the EuroMed Transport Forum.

'With the exception of Israel and Palestine, numbers of road casualties in the participating countries remain high with road fatality rates considerably above the EU average', explains Commission road safety policy officer Susanne Lindahl.

Under the new Regional Transport Action Plan, road safety efforts in the region are expected to be based on a similar approach to that which has considerably reduced injuries and deaths on EU roads over the last two decades. This would entail collection and analysis of relevant data and setting of strategic targets for injury and fatality reduction. The draft Transport Action Plan also specifies the need to address all the main road safety areas: enforcement of traffic law, education of road users, and safety of vehicles, infrastructure and vulnerable road users. This final point is of special relevance to the Mediterranean region, where vulnerable road users run a particularly high risk of injury or death.

1. EuroMediterranean cooperation with Syria is currently suspended

Road safety exchange through TAIEX attracts considerable interest

Extensive exchange of road safety knowledge and good practice between the EU and its neighbours takes place via the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument. TAIEX allows EU Member State administrations to share technical expertise with neighbouring countries in all fields covered by EU legislation.

The instrument is mainly demand driven, with beneficiary countries sending applications outlining the topic on which they need support. The European Commission then coordinates with Member States to find suitable experts to help the applicant country.

Road safety is becoming a very popular subject for TAIEX exchanges, and a steady flow of applications is received for consultation by the Commission road safety unit. Common topics include driving licence legislation, infrastructure safety, transport of dangerous goods, safety education, requirements for professional drivers and data collection and analysis.

'This soft power of the EU, sharing knowledge with partners from around the neighbourhood regions, should not be under-estimated. And it's good to see that there is such a steady demand for tapping into the EU experiences', comments Ms Magda Kopczynska, Director of Innovative and Sustainable Mobility at DG MOVE.



Workshops, missions and study visits

As regards concrete activities, a two-day workshop for 27 participants from the transport ministries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro and Serbia took place in Slovenia in December 2013. Experts from Croatia, Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovenia gave presentations and facilitated exchange of expertise on application of legislation on driving times for road haulage and passenger transport drivers, including issues such as transport inspections, recording equipment and record keeping.

An expert mission to Turkey in June 2014 provided training for 13 participants over three days on road infrastructure safety management, and related institutional capacity and legislation. Experts from Germany and the UK gave presentations on subjects including the role of infrastructure in safety, safety management systems, audits and inspections, accident investigation and prevention and data collection.

Another study visit took place in September/October 2014 during which three officials from the Jordanian Ministry of Transport (MoT) spent four days with the Swedish Transport Authorities. This was to gain insight into road safety management practices, implementation of EU road safety legislation and training and capacity building for road safety

staff, with a view to establishing a specialised Transport Safety and Accident Investigation Unit within the MoT in Jordan.

Fredrik Rosén, Project Manager at SweRoad, a subsidiary of the Swedish Transport Administration, organised the visit and accompanied participants during their stay. In his view, 'the visit was a great experience for participants and the people they met from the Swedish transport authorities, especially the exchange of knowledge on the situations in Jordan and Sweden.'

Regarding TAIEX, Mr Rosén said that, 'It is a relevant instrument for exchanging experience. It was my first encounter with TAIEX and the planning went smoothly and the informative guide was easy to follow. I will definitely consider arranging another TAIEX visit if the opportunity arises.'

An interesting aspect for participants was Sweden's use in accident investigation of the STRADA national information system which collects data on injuries and accidents from the police and hospitals. Other topics of interest were how road safety is managed in Sweden, attribution of primary responsibility to system designers rather than road users, and how small things such as rear-facing child seats improve the chance of surviving accidents.

According to Mr Rosén, 'It's important for Jordan to start networking, with authorities making sure everybody works towards the same goals. Establishing a Transport Safety and Accident Investigation Unit is relevant and the next step would be networking with neighbouring countries. Institutional strengthening and capacity building is also needed. Participants should report findings from the visit to their Minister and I hope that this experience will contribute to improving road safety in Jordan.'

Other TAIEX road safety exchanges in 2014 have included a three-day study visit to Italy in July of seven BiH police representatives to discuss best accident and crime scene investigation practice for traffic police. A similar visit to Germany of six officials from the Kosovo Ministry of Infrastructure in April covered collection and analysis of road accident data and enforcement issues. A four-day expert mission in February, organised in cooperation with the Romanian Transport Ministry, trained 12 officials from the Georgian Ministry of Transport on compliance with EU road transport standards.



Transport Observatory aims to make Balkan roads safer

Roads in the Western Balkans remain unsafe. Factors including low levels of awareness, poor driver training and outdated vehicles and infrastructure meant that in 2012, over 80 people per million inhabitants died on the region's roads, as compared with 56 per million in the EU. The South-East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) is working to rectify this.

SEETO is a regional transport organisation, established in 2004 by Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo² and the European Commission. It aims to promote cooperation on development of regional transport infrastructure and to build capacity for implementation of investment programmes and data collection and analysis. A Road Safety Working Group composed of officials from all seven regional participants was set up in 2009 to exchange best practice, promote harmonisation and monitor application of soft measures.

The same year saw the drawing up of a Regional Road Safety Strategy based on good practices used by the EU and other relevant institutions active in promoting road safety worldwide. The Strategy was compiled with EU funding and is aimed at cutting fatalities on Balkan roads by 30 % by 2014 and 50 % by 2019, as compared with 2007 figures, and serious road injuries by 20 and 30 % by 2014 and 2019 respectively, also as compared with 2007.

In the short term, the Strategy aims to establish regional and national road safety bodies, a process of knowledge transfer from the EU to SEETO participants and a training system for road safety professionals, and to harmonise participants' legal frameworks with that of the EU. In the longer term, it seeks to bring infrastructure levels in SEETO participants into line with those in the EU and to establish a strong road safety system which is supported by decision makers, experts and the public.



As Liljana Çela, coordinator of the SEETO Secretariat Road Safety Working Group explains, 'The work and success of SEETO is based on the motto: "Common problems — Shared solutions". EC technical assistance offered to SEETO regional participants will help to close the road safety gap between them and the EU in terms of administrative, legislative, organisational, operational and efficiency aspects.'



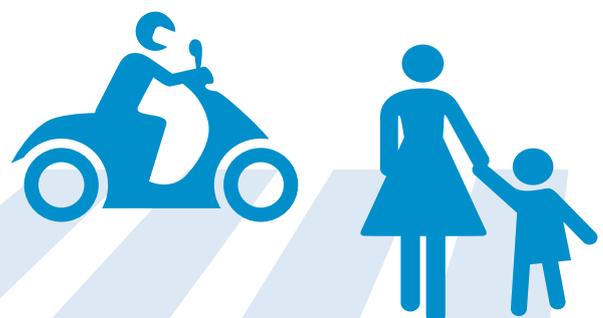
Barriers to Strategy implementation

A Road Safety Strategy Survey, published earlier this year, shows that Albania, Kosovo and Serbia have taken account of several recommendations and goals set out in the Regional Strategy in their national strategies and that certain national goals are in line with the Regional Strategy. However, the Survey found barriers to implementation of the Strategy, including lack of political and administrative support, a systematic approach and national- and regional-level coordination, shortcomings in institutional capacity and limited financial and human resources. The SEETO Road Safety Working Group, supported by the European Commission, is taking action to overcome these obstacles.

SEETO has developed a Strategic Work Programme for 2012–14 to guide its work in the medium term, supported by EU funding and technical assistance. One of the Programme objectives is to support improvements to participants' road safety auditing programmes. As part of this, a road safety training programme is planned, combining seminars, exercises and independent study by trainees, and exploring topics such as road safety management and safer infrastructure. A road safety audit handbook and road safety principles are being compiled with the aim of giving SEETO participants clear guidelines for carrying out road safety audits.

An important regional road safety event, organised by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, the Government of Serbia and the Regional Cooperation Council in partnership with SEETO, took place in Belgrade on 15–16 October 2014. It focused on issues such as development of national road safety strategies, target setting, funding sources and data support systems for monitoring and evaluation. Two of the sessions were moderated by Szabolcs Schmidt, head of the Commission road safety unit.

'These regional road safety initiatives are important — regional cooperation can make road safety work more efficient and effective. Just look at the EU, where the road safety record differences between the Member States are steadily declining and the number of fatalities is decreasing year by year', comments Mr Schmidt.



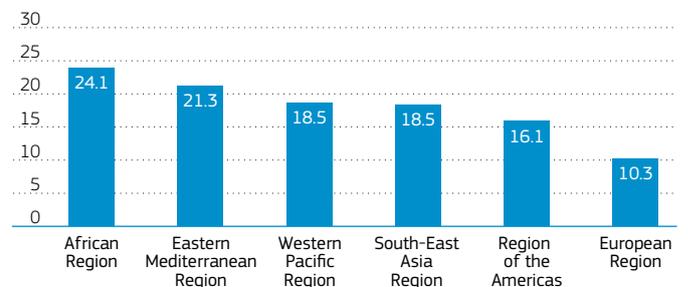
2. This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Europe: world-leading road safety region

Europe's roads are the safest in the world. With a fatality rate of just above 50 per million inhabitants, the risk of dying on the road in Europe is almost half as high as in the USA, around a quarter of the worldwide average, and a fifth of the African average. Africa has the world's highest road fatality rates, with some countries exceeding 300 dead per million inhabitants. Globally, as in the EU, young men are particularly at risk. In the rest of the world, pedestrians and cyclists make up a larger share of the road traffic victims than in the EU.

ROAD TRAFFIC DEATHS PER 100 000 POPULATION, BY WHO REGION



UN Decade of Action on Road Safety continues

Work continues in the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 which aims to save five million lives and prevent 50 million injuries. Activities are divided into five pillars on: road safety management; safety of road infrastructure and broader transport networks; vehicle safety; user behaviour; and post-crash care.

In April 2014 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on 'Improving global road safety'. This foresees a Second Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety and a Third UN Global Road Safety Week in 2015. It also promotes inclusion of road safety in the post-2015 development agenda and invites the WHO to continue monitoring progress during the Decade of Action.

The European Commission supports the Decade of Action and participated in the last Global Road Safety Week in May 2013.

The next Road Safety Week takes place on 4-10 May 2015 on the theme of children and road safety. The aim is to raise awareness of the need to better protect children on the road so as to ensure that necessary safety measures are taken.

Plans are being outlined and road safety partners worldwide are encouraged to develop their own activity plans in which children should play a leading role. The Week should give impetus to the Decade of Action and the achievement of its goals.

The UN Road Safety Collaboration will host the Week's global website at <http://www.who.int/roadsafety/en/>.



World Day of Remembrance coming up on 16 November

The third Sunday of November of each year was designated as World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims by the UN in 2005. In 2014, it falls on 16 November.

Events are to take place around the world to remember all of those killed or injured on roads, their families and the many others affected. The World Day of Remembrance also provides an opportunity to pay tribute to the emergency services who deal with the aftermath of traffic accidents and to reflect on the continuing suffering caused by road deaths and injuries.

Don't miss this opportunity for raising awareness about road safety and for paying respects to road crash victims. To find out more and to take part,

→ visit <http://www.worlddayofremembrance.org/>

Find out more...

If these subjects have revved up your interest, then check out the road safety website at: ec.europa.eu/roadsafety

European Youth Forum for Road Safety (EYFRS) also has a Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/EYFRS

EYFRS has its own website at: ec.europa.eu/eyfrs
Visit these sites for inspiration and information.

© European Union, 2014 — Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Published by: Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport | European Commission – BE-1049 Brussels
http://ec.europa.eu/transport/index_en.htm

Legal notice: The contents of this newsletter are prepared by officials of the Mobility and Transport DG and represent their personal views on the subject matter. These views have not been adopted or in any way approved by the European Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission or the Mobility and Transport DG.