

## Can you imagine a day without a death on EU roads?

*Wednesday, 21 September 2016 was designated the first 'European Day Without a Road Death, or EDWARD for short. The initiative was launched by the European Traffic Police Network (TISPOL) and widely supported by the European Commission with a huge range of events and initiatives taking place across Europe.*

EDWARD is part of a wider Commission programme aimed at halving road deaths and serious injuries in Europe by 2020. At the heart of the campaign is the truth that road safety concerns every single one of us. On average, some 70 people die and a further 370 are seriously injured every day on Europe's roads. This has to stop.

Welcoming the initiative, Violeta Bulc, EU Commissioner for Transport said, EDWARD is an excellent opportunity to encourage all road users to reduce risks and improve safety while they are driving, walking or cycling. "If individuals commit to small changes, we can all achieve a great deal in making our roads safer," she urged.

### Target 'zero'

With a target of **no** road fatalities and serious road traffic injuries, EDWARD is taking a zero-tolerance stance on daily road safety. Leading up to 21 September, road users were asked to think about the dangers they face, the risks they may pose to others and how they can go about reducing those risks.

As part of the campaign, private and public entities as well as civil society organisations across the EU were mobilised to contribute by sharing the EDWARD message on social media and making a pledge



on TISPOL's website. Road safety actions – such as the roadside operation around Brussels organised on 21 September by Belgian police and attended by Commissioner Bulc, or others planned to coincide with European Mobility Week 2016 (16-22 September) – were another key feature of the EDWARD campaign.

In total, more than 100 000 organisations and individuals have already signed the pledge and over 80 road safety actions were organised across Europe (see article below).

EDWARD has been a big hit and raised awareness of road safety issues across Europe. But of course, every day should be an EDWARD day, or as Commissioner Bulc put it: *"A day without a road death is the vision we should strive for every day, not just today."*

More info:

[www.tispol.org/edward](http://www.tispol.org/edward) and <http://roadsafetydays.eu>

## Road Safety Days boost EDWARD

Across Europe, over 80 events took place in support of the EDWARD project (see cover story) including information and awareness-raising activities in schools and companies, road safety workshops, conferences and competitions. The European Commission's Road Safety Day interactive map shows the 'What, When, Who and Why' for all the activities.

A flavour of the range of actions organised on the inaugural EDWARD Day:

### Stop! Watch! Make sure!



Children aged 10 to 13 attending 35 secondary schools across Estonia took part in the 'Stop! Watch! Make sure!' campaign, involving around 2 000 children. The aim was to draw young people's attention to traffic

risks when using pedestrian crossings and remind them of the rules that can reduce risks. According to national statistics, this age group are at greatest risk on the road with an injury rate twice as high as the average for adults. Children together with teachers discussed road safety issues in their class rooms, identified the most dangerous road crossings on their way to school and marked on sidewalks approaching pedestrian crossings the message 'Stop! Watch! Make sure!'.

### KRESZ Safari

KRESZ Safari (KRESZ is the Hungarian Highway Code) was a road safety educational event and competition organised for fifth-grade students and hosted by Budapest Zoo. Awareness of the rules of the road was achieved



using the characteristics of various zoo animals! Zebras symbolised pedestrian crossings, kangaroos represented state-of-the-art safety belts, while meerkats showed the importance of paying attention and the danger of being distracted around roads. Some 250 students took part, demonstrating their knowledge of both animals and the rules of the road to win a fantastic prize – the adoption of a zoo animal!

### I still drive, but I don't walk



In the city of Celje in Slovenia, a series of preventative workshops entitled 'I still drive, but I don't walk' was organised for all students aged 17-18 years enrolled in local high schools. The main presenter was a road

traffic accident victim who is now a wheelchair user. Through his personal experience young people were made aware of the importance of safe driving and compliance with traffic regulations.

### Death vigil in Nicosia

Dozens of Cypriot cyclists rode their bikes safely in a group to Ledras Street in central Nicosia where they held a 'Vigil & Die' event. The cyclists laid down on the ground with their bikes and played dead for 15 minutes with the aim of promoting the clear message: 'Stop the killing, safe roads for everybody'.



More info: <http://roadsafetydays.eu>



## Road safety: a personal choice



As an ex-police officer, Ruth Purdie has personal experience of attending many road traffic accidents and having to deal with the aftermath. As General Secretary of TISPOL (European Traffic Police Network), she is clear about the issue of road safety and what needs to change for improvement.

“Road safety is not just a European issue, it is a global issue,” she says. “Some 70 people lose their lives on EU roads every day. Road traffic incidents are the most significant cause of death in males under 25.”

Road incidents are also huge life-changing events for the victims and their families and friends. Having to visit a family and break the news of the death of a son or daughter is one of the worst jobs for a police officer. “No parent expects to have to bury a child,” Ruth Purdie adds.

### EDWARD succeeds

We are speaking just after a seminar marking TISPOL’s European Day without a Road Death (EDWARD) initiative on 21 September, which was held in Brussels and webcast across the world. Purdie is buzzing about the success of the event – especially in terms of its reach through social media with well over 19 million tweets on the topic and over 103 000 pledges of support recorded.

The idea behind EDWARD emerged only around 12 months ago, but with good planning the concept grew, got traction and was launched officially at the Dublin Road Policing Conference in May 2016.

“The physical event today in Brussels was small,” concedes Purdie. “But the reach achieved to audiences out there has been phenomenal. TISPOL members and associated charities and drivers’ associations have taken up the cause and promoted the idea of a day without a road death with great enthusiasm.”

Purdie was very pleased that the EDWARD initiative received the full support of Commissioner Bulc who signed the pledge very soon after it was launched. “Commissioner Bulc’s leadership and commitment to the cause has been a great help to spread the word about EDWARD to fire, ambulance and police services across Europe,” she adds.

Although EDWARD was initially seen as a one-off event, the TISPOL General Secretary is now keen to continue the initiative. “EDWARD is all about raising awareness and this first event has really worked well and gathered significant momentum. It would be good to keep it going,” she says. “We will quickly evaluate the results and, if the case is good, I will recommend that we organise further events in 2017 and 2018.”

### Personal behaviour key

“After all, EDWARD is all about preventing death and serious injuries on the road,” Purdie continues. “And responsible personal behaviour by all road users – drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and passengers – is key to making a change and ensuring that road deaths and injuries in Europe start to decrease again. Awareness-raising activities like EDWARD are essential to inform and motivate people to change and show more respect to other road users. If we save just one life today it has been worth it.”

### But what does Purdie mean by personal behaviour?

“For example, using a mobile phone when driving is a personal choice that means the driver is less focused on the road. We know phone use causes death on our roads,” she asserts. “And not just drivers; pedestrians are also placing themselves at risk by focusing too much on their smartphones rather than the real world around them.”

“If I had a magic wand to alter driver behaviour, my first target would be such distractions, followed by fatigue – far too many people are driving when tired – and then speeding, and drink and drug abuse,” stresses Purdie. “These are all areas of personal choice, where we can make a difference.”

### Future challenges

And the future holds more challenges. “Autonomous cars are racing ahead in terms of technology, but legislation has to catch up, and it will take time for road users to become proficient and understand this technological change,” says the former police officer. “Other developments like fast electric bikes are also appearing on the streets. New technology is here to challenge us, but we must engage with it and ensure public safety policy adapts.”

Another essential element is how we design our urban spaces. “Many cities around the world are growing fast, but their main transport infrastructure has not kept up,” concludes Purdie. “City authorities need to think about this and consider how we make our urban areas and transport links smarter,” she concludes.



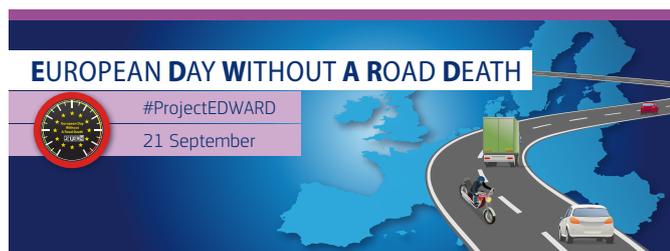


## What did **EDWARD** do?

The EDWARD initiative took place in more than 30 countries on Wednesday 21 September and proved to be a very successful awareness-raiser. The project's ambitious mission was to **make 21 September one day without death on Europe's roads.**

According to TISPOL's statistics, on Wednesday 21 September 2016 there were 43 road deaths across 31 countries. This compares with 70 fatalities on the same day in 2015 and represents a reduction of almost 39 per cent. 19 countries recorded zero fatalities on 21 September, compared with 11 countries in 2015.

When Project EDWARD was launched, we accepted that it would be incredibly difficult to achieve a day without road death across Europe. However, the idea that we must aim for zero, because any loss of life on Europe's roads is unacceptable, has gained a great deal of interest and the day demonstrated that if individuals commit to small changes, we can all achieve a great deal in making our roads safer.



Awareness of this 'zero-tolerance' vision has grown significantly thanks to the initiative. On social media, #ProjectEDWARD was a top-trending hashtag on Twitter in many countries and – for a short time – in the top 50 trending topics globally. In total, there were 7 923 Twitter posts on the day with an audience reach of more than 19 million people. This social media activity was enhanced by the use of ten excellent short awareness-raising videos that are available in 12 languages.

The twitter activity was so successful that it was featured by Twitter in its 'Moments' section, which presents the most significant topics trending at a particular time.

In parallel, more than 103 000 organisations and individuals signed the EDWARD pledge on the TISPOL website and over 80 road safety actions were organised across Europe (see separate article). TISPOL has produced an excellent video summary of the day that you can view here.

<https://vimeo.com/185661019>

## High-level conference on Road Safety in Malta announced

The European Commission, in collaboration with the forthcoming Maltese Presidency of the European Union, is organising a high-level conference on road safety. This participatory stakeholder event will bring together road safety experts, stakeholders and political decision-makers on 28 March 2017, followed by a ministerial conference on 29 March 2017.

The event will give participants the opportunity to share knowledge and discuss ways to continue improving safety on European roads. There will also be an opportunity to visit information stands where road safety organisations Europe-wide will present their work and share their experience.

This conference will be an essential date for all those interested in road safety in Europe, so mark your agenda today and join us in March 2017 in Malta!

More info: [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road\\_safety/events-archive/2017\\_03\\_28-29\\_malta\\_conference\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/events-archive/2017_03_28-29_malta_conference_en.htm)

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims, Sunday 20 November:**

<http://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](http://ec.europa.eu/roadsafety)

Please visit @Transport\_EU twitter account for regular updates on #roadsafety” and #EUtransport

Visit these sites for inspiration and information.

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