

## Forum for the Automobile and Society

### “Can the EU Prioritize Road Safety in the Member States?”

Representation of the Free State of Bavaria to the EU  
Rue Wiertz 77, 1000 Brussels

*3 November 2009, 12.30-14.00h*

**Martin Callanan**, Member of the European Parliament and Chairman of the meeting, welcomed the speakers and the audience to the Forum debate, introduced the new program for the year 2010 and spoke about the goal of the Forum – organising debates on topics related to the use of private road transport: safety, environment, competitiveness and mobility. The purpose of the current Forum debate was to contribute to European Commission’s Road Safety Action Program that was being prepared. The Commission was planning to present the public consultation results in an event scheduled for 2 December 2009.

Members of the Forum had drawn up an issue paper on Road Safety, with topics divided into three areas: vehicle technology, infrastructure and driver behaviour. Of these areas infrastructure and driver behaviour are very much influenced by actions of the member states. That is why the present debate was centred on the role of the member states.

The Chairman introduced the first speaker, **Mr. Claes Tingvall**, Director of the Swedish Road Authority. Mr. Tingvall expressed concern with regards to the growing number of deaths and serious injuries provoked by the lack of traffic safety globally. The European Union and its Member States experienced progress: some countries had high success, while others had no considerable improvement. New counter measures were needed for the future and the systems oriented approach represented the key element of any type of development, the speaker noted.

In his opinion, another important element consisted of building norms in the society through regulations, legislations and enforcement. Technology without norms would be hopeless, especially because technology developed much faster than the development of the norms in the society. The speaker noted an existing demand for safety in the community.

He continued his intervention by stressing the importance of speed limits and made reference to iRAP/ EuroRAP, a tool that enabled to set the appropriate speed limit adapted to the existing infrastructure. In addition, he stressed the importance of the integrated safety approach, which had overtaken old concepts such as active or passive safety.

The speaker noted the field of vulnerable road users, specifically that of the powered two wheelers (PTW), for which the existing treatments had not proven to be sufficiently effective. It was not yet clear what could be done, except for technologies like ABS (advanced braking systems) which worked very well on motorcycles.

He spoke about the necessity to have a European target, a numerical target for each Member State for the year 2020. Progress indicators (e.g. the amount of seatbelt used, the standard of the infrastructure etc) were needed in order to monitor developments in each country and at EU level. Without monitoring there will be no big progress. In addition, corporate behaviour had been sought for because corporations, organisations, public or private enterprises represented main users of the road transport system and they are able to influence their drivers more effectively.

In conclusion, Mr. Tingvall expressed his belief that management of traffic safety represented a crucial element in ensuring road safety.

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The moderator gave the floor to **Mr. Stephen Perkins**, Head of the Joint Transport Research Centre of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Transport Forum.

The speaker made reference to the report *Towards Zero: Ambitious Road Safety Targets and the Safe System Approach*, issued in 2008, which highlighted the institutional management changes required in many countries to implement effective interventions through a strong focus on results and underlines the economic case for road safety investment. He reinforced the statement that the safe system approach was linked to a comprehensive management system with a very strong results focus. Targets represented an important aspect in such context.

The report showed targets needed a split into two parts: firstly, a vision that would raise the level of ambition and stimulate new measures and research and secondly, interim targets. In addition, a strategy needed to be defined and focused on intensifying tried and tested measures (e.g. speed, drink, seatbelts and safer vehicles) and on developing a Safe System Approach (e.g. integrating measures that target infrastructure design and maintenance, traffic management, vehicles and driver behaviour).

Mr. Perkins highlighted the performance of Netherlands and Sweden, countries that moved to the safe system culture of trying to get improvement through integrated action. United Kingdom, France, Spain and Portugal followed on the list of performers. He continued by summarising the main elements of the safe system approach: vision and targets, management system with strong results focus, investment and commitment at top political levels and data analysis.

The speaker noted the European Commission's important role with a very large research programme towards a harmonised system of alcohol and drug control across Europe. He welcomed the new regulation on type approval, which seemed to be more comprehensive than before and included mention of iRAP, the environment and new technology (e.g. advance truck braking systems, speed limiters for vans, intelligent speed adaptations and performance based standards for tyre pressure monitoring).

Further to last year's discussions with senior policy makers in Europe on the safe system approach, the support in the Member States' administration increased. The policy

makers remained uncomfortable with and questioned the label of Vision Zero. In consultation with partners in Australia, where the approach had been dealt with successfully, the conclusion was to change the term into Towards Zero. The change was embraced by politicians and people involved in improving the implementation of the road safety.

Mr. Perkins invited the audience to access the report and additional information about road safety on the website: [www.internationaltransportforum.org](http://www.internationaltransportforum.org) / research / safety

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Martin Callanan invited the next speaker, **Mr. Antonio Avenoso**, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), who started his intervention by mentioning ETSC's Blueprint for the EU's 4<sup>th</sup> Road Safety Action Programme 2010-2020, called "Road Safety as a right and responsibility for all".

In his opinion, Member States needed to have a strong political will to increase road safety, accompanied by consistency between statements and actions. In addition, Member States could play a significant role when it came to matters in the three pillars of road safety: behaviour, infrastructure and vehicle.

ETSC asked the European Commission for a Directive on Cross Border Enforcement and Enforcement in general because the Recommendations represented soft legislation that many Member States tended not to apply as they should.

On behaviour, the speaker reinforced the importance of public acceptance, which made the users understand the impact of their behaviour (e.g. non respect of speed limits, drinking and driving, the non use of restraint systems etc). When it came to speed, ETSC asked Members States to set the speed limit to 120 km/h on the TEN-T Network (Trans-European Transport Network).

The speaker expressed concern that many European countries had not enforced alcohol legislation and noted that three countries still had 0,8 BAC (blood-alcohol content) limit. ETSC asked for a general EU limit of 0.5 or lower for general driving population and 0.2 for commercial drivers and young and novice drivers.

With regards to the second pillar - infrastructure - Member States needed to apply without delay the EC Directive. A lot remains to be done at Member State level on the third pillar – vehicle. An example was EuroNCAP, very important as a way of informing consumers and stimulating manufacturers to improve vehicle safety. Unfortunately not many Member States became member of it.

Fleet safety was another important issue within the vehicle pillar. Public authorities had to ensure the safety of the newly acquired fleet. The speaker gave the example of SRA procurement policy in Sweden, which provided the national administration with certain guidelines to be followed when acquiring a new vehicle. Within the same pillar, Mr. Avenoso stressed the importance of adding safety within scrapage schemes.

In conclusion, the speaker said that Member States needed to ask the European Commission for a new achievable target to be introduced in the 4<sup>th</sup> Road Safety Action Programme.

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The Moderator introduced **Mr. Luís Miguel Pereira Farinha**, Vice-President of the Portuguese Authority for Road Safety. The speaker made reference to the Road Safety National Strategy 2009-2015 approved by the Portuguese government in May. The main goal of the strategy was to place Portugal among the first ten European Union Member States with better road safety by 2015.

The country had been successful in the past ten years with regards to decreasing deaths on the roads – latest figures indicated less than 800 cases in 2008. Certain changes occurred during that period. Mr. Farinha mentioned: new roads, mainly motorways built, compulsory and more severe motor tests, tax measures adopted to contribute to the replacement of old vehicles by new ones, updates of the Road Code, authorities better equipped and in possession of new efficient enforcement techniques, road safety campaigns (three to four per year), civil society requirements and press involvement and monitoring. He spoke about the considerable reduction of injuries and deaths between 2000 and 2008 and noted that the decreasing trend had to be continued and improved.

A new specialised agency on Road Safety was set by the Portuguese government in 2007, an agency that started to work on a new Road Safety Strategy with a new approach. Universities, public departments and private associations, as well as 12 ministries were involved in the strategy. The new approach to the strategy was that each part had been bound to provide the adequate financial means and respect the closing date, both expressively indicated in the National Strategy for Road Safety final document.

Until the mid-term evaluation set for 2011, some operational objectives and key actions were expected to be met. Mr. Farinha referred to the key actions of the road safety: the improvement of road safety data (new indicators that would provide a clearer picture of the reality), variable message sign technical instruction, methodology for automatic road speed enforcement, promotion of bicycle use, the introduction of the penalty point system driving license and the revision of the Road Code.

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**Martin Callanan** opened the floor for questions and comments from the audience.

**Mrs. A. Thompson** from the UK Transport Safety Council addressed the representative of Sweden and Portugal and wanted to know what the added value was for them to be part of the European Union in terms of road safety.

**Mr. Claes Tingvall** believed in the significant contribution of the EU, the European Commission, as well as the other European organisations. In his opinion, all nations

were in competition, a healthy competition to reduce the death on the roads but also to implement policies and legislation.

**Mr. Luís Miguel Pereira Farinha** shared Mr. Tingvall's view and added that European countries worked with the same standards, whether legislation, targets or good practices, which represented a positive aspect.

**Nina Renshaw from Transport and Environment**, wanted to know what the EU could do to facilitate the situation of the Member States with regards to the Type Approval Regulation.

**Mr. Stephen Perkins** mentioned that the Regulation did provide for incorporating new technologies as they became available and an obvious next round would be the ABS for motorcycles and truck fronts for energy absorption.

In reply to the question, **Mr. Antonio Avenoso** believed the EU had to focus on those technologies with highest life saving potential, those addressing speed, drink & drive and the non-use of seatbelts.

**Tom Antonissen** from LOGOS Public Affairs launched the idea of setting up a sort of database system, a warning system where citizens themselves could signal road users' misbehaviour. In his opinion, such system would involve the civil society in changing road user behaviour.

**Mr. Claes Tingvall** mentioned the idea had been already brought up some years ago, in the form of sending an SMS with a preset text. Corporations were expected in the future to be the forerunners in behaviour for all reasons such as occupational health and safety reasons, brand image and corporate social responsibility and economical.

**Mr. Luís Miguel Pereira Farinha** expressed concern with regards to registering the data especially because of the existing laws that protected personal data.

**Antonio Perlot** from ACEM mentioned the differences between countries at the level of training, equipment and behaviour. His organisation tackled already the issue of shared responsibility and introduction of ABS (advanced braking systems) for motorcycles. Mr. Perlot believed legislation was not always the way forward. ACEM welcomed and supported the 4<sup>th</sup> Road Safety Action Programme and believed that improvement towards safety for powered two wheelers was very much needed.

**Mr. Claes Tingvall** added that ABS was indeed not a solution to everything but it represented the most effective technology seen on motorcycles. Figures had shown 35% reduction of serious injuries and fatalities due to ABS. The speaker also made the difference between the term ABS used for advanced braking system and anti-lock braking systems. He called upon support from the motorcycle organisations for a new multinational study recently initiated across Europe.

**Mario Rohracher** of the Austrian Automobile Club (ÖAMTC) noticed that the current discussion mentioned technology measures but less the education and training. In addition, he drew the attention to figures that indicated 35% of accidents caused by

fatigue and distraction. He believed that in certain circumstances speed caused less damage than fatigue and distraction.

**Urban Wass** from the Volvo Group mentioned new technologies in the pipeline (e.g. pedestrian detection) that needed political support in order to make them come true. He made reference to the need for a single ITS platform that would enable the usage of such new technology.

**Wil Botman** from the FIA wanted to know if the panel had any recommendations on how to influence norms.

On the issue of the ITS platform, **Stephen Perkins** agreed with its importance and mentioned the upcoming ITF discussion with transport ministers in May 2010, where the issue would be part of the agenda.

Referring to the topic of education and training, **Antonio Avenoso** said the topics were part of the overall picture but not substitute for actions in areas like technology, enforcement or infrastructure. In his opinion, speed and alcohol remained the main “killers” and expressed disagreement with the participant who denied that speed was not an issue in certain circumstances. He agreed that fatigue and distraction represented a serious problem which could worsen the consequences of speed and drink & drive.

**Claes Tingvall** noted that speed was not always a cause for a crash but it had always influenced injuries and therefore speed management remained a key element. Teaching the public the meaning of kinetic energy represented a task to be seriously considered. The speaker regarded as crucial the need for support from the EU for new technology and ITS. Finally, Mr. Tingvall considered that existing norms needed reinforcement. In his opinion, changing the norms always required political and public support.

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The Chairman closed the meeting by thanking all guests for their valuable contributions and the organising team for their effort. He invited everyone to complete the Forum feedback forms and launched the invitation to the next Forum debate on ITS in transport, organised on 1 December: “Is ITS Promising More than it Can Deliver?”

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