EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 17.12.2013
SWD(2013) 525 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Targeted action on urban road safety

Accompanying the document

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

Together towards competitive and resource-efficient urban mobility

{COM(2013) 913 final}
{SWD(2013) 524 final}
{SWD(2013) 526 final}
{SWD(2013) 527 final}
{SWD(2013) 528 final}
{SWD(2013) 529 final}

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I. INTRODUCTION

In EU urban areas, pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, car drivers and public transport compete for the limited space. The same person can be a pedestrian, a biker and a driver all in one day: going to and from work or school, running errands and using the streets during leisure time. The constant interaction between unprotected or *vulnerable* road users and moving vehicles creates situations where people are regularly put at risk. Urban road safety is therefore to a large degree an issue of *vulnerable road user safety*.

Some 11,000 people are killed each year in road traffic crashes in EU urban areas. 37% of these are pedestrians. In addition, many more people are seriously injured, sustaining life-changing injuries. Road safety statistics show that progress in reducing road fatalities has been below average in urban areas.[1]

In urban areas, the restricted space must be used intelligently and effectively to enable increased mobility without compromising safety. To achieve this, a dedicated focus on road safety aspects throughout all levels of urban mobility planning is required.

Some of the EU cities and towns are already well advanced in managing urban road safety issues. Others face more difficult challenges. This document aims to support those urban areas that have not yet developed a strong mobility safety culture. The aim is never to put limits to those who already perform well on road safety, but to raise the minimum levels and thereby help closing the gap between the safest and the less safe EU urban areas.

II. STATISTICS AND TRENDS[2]

In spite of considerable progress in the past, the number of fatalities and serious injuries from road accidents remains high. In 2012, around 28,000 people were reported to have died in road traffic crashes in the Union. About 40% of these fatalities occurred on urban roads.

Between 2000 and 2009, the number of road fatalities inside urban areas decreased by 32%. The number of road fatalities on other roads decreased by 38% for the same period. Therefore, urban road deaths now make up a larger share of the total road safety problem compared to ten years ago.

Around half of the 11,000 urban road deaths per year are pedestrians and cyclists.

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1 EU road traffic safety database CARE, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/specialist/statistics/index_en.htm

2 All data from the EU road traffic safety database CARE, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/specialist/statistics/index_en.htm

People aged 65 years or more are clearly over-represented in fatal accidents in urban areas. In 30% of all fatal accidents in urban areas, the victim is elderly.

III. COMMISSION POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Transport White Paper[3] sets the target of moving close to zero fatalities in road transport by 2050. The interim target is to halve road casualties by 2020 as compared to the numbers in 2010.

The Commission has also identified seven specific work areas for road safety in the Communication "Towards a European road safety area: policy orientations on road safety 2011-2020"[4]:

(1) Improve education and training of road users

(2) Increase enforcement of road rules

(3) Safer road infrastructure

(4) Safer vehicles

(5) Promote the use of modern technology to increase road safety

(6) Improve emergency and post-injuries services

(7) Protect vulnerable road users

Urban road safety is a horizontal aspect of all these seven work areas; however, the most direct link is between urban road safety and the safety of vulnerable road users as the biggest risks for these road users are inside built-up areas. Vulnerable road user safety cannot be efficiently addressed without focusing on urban area road safety.

Also the other EU institutions call for specific attention to these road safety issues. The resolution of the European Parliament of 27 September 2011 on European road safety 2011-2020[5] called for a particular focus on the road safety of vulnerable road users and for improved framework conditions for safer and more environmentally benign transport, such as walking, cycling, bus or rail, so as to encourage their use.

The Council Conclusions on road safety, adopted in Brussels, 2–3 December 2010[6], stressed that certain categories of users, such as cyclists, pedestrians, young and elderly persons, people with disabilities, motorcycle riders and moped drivers, remain particularly vulnerable; and considered action for the safety of these vulnerable road users to be a matter of urgency.

Links between road safety and other urban mobility aspects

Road safety is closely interlinked with other Commission policy objectives. For example, cities who want to encourage a modal shift to more *sustainable* transport modes such as walking and cycling should make sure that these are safe options, so that the modal shift does not compromise safety. Access restriction zones such as low-speed zones may contribute not only to environmental objectives but also to increased urban road safety.

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3 COM (2011) 144 final: Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system, http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2011:0144:FIN:EN:PDF

4 COM (2010) 389 final, http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/pdf/com_20072010_en.pdf

5 2010/2235(INI), http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2011-0408&language=EN&ring=A7-2011-0264

6 Council Conclusions on Road Safety from the 3052nd Council meeting on Transport, Telecommunications and Energy, 2-3 December 2010, Brussels, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_PRES-10-326_en.htm

Greater physical activity levels as a result of increased participation in cycling and walking, through leisure time or through active commuting, may also lead to improvements in *population health* beyond those directly attributable to reductions in road accidents.

There is also a link between road safety and *congestion*: car crashes lead to more congestion and interruption of traffic flows. Safer streets, vehicles and drivers can therefore be elements in a policy to combat city congestion.

Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) are tools not only for freight logistics and passenger comfort but also for road safety. Intelligent systems such as vehicle-to-vehicle or vehicle-to-infrastructure communication can be well used for safety purposes.

City logistics and commercial vehicles are also linked to urban road safety. Unsafe deliveries by heavy and light goods vehicles and the presence of for example heavy construction vehicles in urban zones can pose specific threats to unprotected road users. While heavy goods vehicles have the potential of causing more damage because of their weight, the safety requirements for them are also stricter than for light goods vehicles, both with regard to professional driver qualifications and mandatory in-vehicle safety systems.

To effectively address all these interlinked issues, road safety needs to be an integral part of sustainable urban mobility planning.

IV. URBAN ROAD SAFETY: MAIN ISSUES

The main characteristic of urban road traffic from a safety point of view is the frequent and close interaction between unprotected and motorised road users.

The main risk factors in road traffic crashes are linked to road user behaviours, the safety of the infrastructure and the safety of vehicles. The post-crash emergency response can also affect the outcome of a road traffic crash.

Safe *driver behaviour* includes for example to avoid dangerous traffic offences such as driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol, crossing red lights, failure to wear a seatbelt and speeding. These four offences alone are estimated to be responsible for around 70% of all fatal road traffic crashes. Errors in traffic might be caused by external distractions or the road user being in an unsafe state, e.g. because of fatigue or intoxication. All road user categories can behave dangerously, including the vulnerable road users themselves. Safety measures that may be taken by vulnerable road users include the use of available protection devices such as bike helmets for cyclists or reflectors for increased visibility for pedestrians.

Bicycle helmet campaign – Germany

A national campaign for bicycle safety is launched in Germany: Ich trag' Helm – "I wear helmet". A biking tour with role model "helmet heroes" set out from in September 2013 to increase visibility of the campaign.[7]

Infrastructure safety for vulnerable road users is about the way roads and streets are designed to avoid or facilitate the interaction between the motorised road users and the vulnerable ones. Urban road networks are dense with crossings and junctions where the risk of conflicts between road users is particularly high.

[7] http://www.ich-trag-helm.de

Black-spot mapping in urban road safety plan – Madrid, Spain

The Madrid City Council is a signatory to the European Road Safety Charter. In their urban road safety plan Plan de seguridad vial 2012-2020, a black-spot mapping revealed that 20% of the serious road traffic crashes occurred on the same 21 roads.[8]

Vehicle safety includes the design, the maintenance and the equipment of a vehicle. Powered two-wheelers are of specific interest in this regard as they are both motorised vehicles themselves and considered as vulnerable road users, lacking the protective shell of a car. Small powered two-wheelers such as mopeds and scooters are also increasingly common in urban road traffic and therefore of specific interest for urban road safety. Cities might also pay special attention to heavy vehicles that, in the case of a crash, will cause severe injuries to affected vulnerable road users.

Procurement of safe garbage trucks – Copenhagen, Denmark

The city of Copenhagen is working on guidelines for procurement of garbage collecting services, requiring that the garbage trucks used should be designed to maximise the safety of surrounding vulnerable road users, e.g. with glass doors for increasing the driver's field of vision.

The *emergency response* can be a decisive factor in determining whether a road user survives the crash or not. Rapid and efficient emergency response saves lives and reduces the severity of injuries. Until now, the real scope of the serious road traffic injury problem has only been roughly estimated in the EU and targeted actions specifically on the serious injuries have been limited.

Urban road safety planning

In order to reach the EU targets of halving road deaths by 2020, road safety must be a prioritised issue by all relevant stakeholders, including at the local level. Sustainable urban mobility plans could be a useful tool to contribute to this objective.

Road safety is most efficiently addressed by being taken into account at all levels of planning and implementation of urban mobility. A recommended road safety management practice is also to ensure monitoring and follow-up by relevant performance indicators[9]. For example, local targets for the reduction of road fatalities and serious road traffic injuries can be adopted to support follow-up of a sustainable urban mobility plan.

Urban road safety efforts usually cover the following main road safety action areas: education and training; enforcement; safe infrastructure; safe vehicles; use of modern technology; post-crash emergency response; and the safety of vulnerable road users.

V. NEXT STEPS

The Commission will, during 2014-2015, gather and disseminate good practice examples for road safety planning, as well as analyse measures for reducing the number of serious road traffic injuries in urban areas.

The Member States should consider ensuring that Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans take account of road safety aspects as a horizontal issue, at all steps of the planning process and address appropriately issues like safe urban infrastructure, especially for vulnerable road users, the use of modern technology for enhanced urban road safety, traffic rules enforcement,

[8] http://www.madrid.es

[9] International Standardisation Organisation, *Road traffic safety (RTS) management systems — Requirements with guidance for use*, 2012, Ref no: ISO 39001:2012(E)

and road safety education. Member States should also consider ensuring proper gathering of data on road safety indicators at the most detailed level possible and encourage local authorities to use such data for local analysis and road safety planning.

VI. CONCLUSION

Urban road safety will be an increasingly important issue as the urbanisation of Europe continues. The number of vulnerable road users will not decrease; they should even increase with the shift to more sustainable transport modes.

The complex risks of urban road traffic can only be reduced by dedicated efforts throughout the urban mobility planning process, using the whole range of available tools. Sustainable urban mobility will only be achieved if fully taking into account the road safety aspects.