



COMMISSION FOR PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

III INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE ON ROAD SAFETY

A European Policy for Road Safety

LISBON, 29 and 30 SEPTEMBER 2008

Conclusions

The two main concerns shown by the Members of Parliament who took part in the debate were:

- 1) The development and enhancement of road safety policies, and the importance of these being harmonised throughout European territory;
- 2) The quest to attain the objective set by the European Commission in 2001, that of reducing the number of fatal accidents by 50% by 2010.

1ST PANEL -- CIRCULATION, TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

Within the scope of the debate established with regard to the theme of this panel, the main causes of the casualty problem have been set out as follows:

- Excess speed;
- Non-use of seat belts;
- Driving while under the influence of alcohol, drugs, and medication that causes drowsiness;
- Young drivers: poor training and limited self-awareness of their driving capabilities, dangerous and/or sport driving, excess speed, driving while under the influence of alcohol;
- The safety problem in group transport of children;
- Old vehicles with security problems;
- Poor quality of construction and maintenance of infrastructure;
- Poor signposting: absent or poorly located road signs, and insufficient road markings;
- The lack of road safety audits;

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- The saturation of the road network and the increase in traffic in the large cities.

Some possible solutions for these causes have been put forward:

- Implementation of tougher driving tuition, more demanding and split into several phases;
- Inclusion of traffic lessons, including the rules of the road and highway safety, in the education system, from elementary school right up to secondary level;
- Generalisation of the point endorsement system;
- Establishment of stricter measures for cases of infringement of traffic rules, especially cases of driving while under the effects of alcohol or drugs;
- Increase in vehicle safety through encouragement of the search for safer vehicles, together with the elimination of the older vehicles, for the renewal of the group of automobiles, taking advantage of technological progress;
- Stepping up of the safety inspections carried out on vehicles and violations of the Highway Code, particularly with regard to driving under the effects of alcohol or drugs;
- Increased security of vehicles used for group transport of children;
- Improvement of infrastructure;
- Standardisation, across all European countries, of road signs, speed limits, maximum blood alcohol rates, and systems for teaching how to drive;
- Promotion of awareness-building campaigns in social communications and also through the Internet (on the sites of the line Ministries) for the reduction in traffic accident rates and changes in the behaviour of those who drive dangerously;
- Increased use of alternative means of transport;
- Establishment of the need for obligatory road audits, conducted by external organisations and technicians specialised in several different areas.

Another point that was addressed was the economic and financial effects of the lack of road safety, which brings significant burdens in the areas of health care and social protection, not to mention the effects on the GDP of the respective countries.

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2ND PANEL – AUDITS, INSPECTION AND TRANSPORT OF GOODS

In this second panel session within the Conference, the following issues were addressed:

- Alcohol consumption by professional drivers;
- Inspection of transported cargo, routes and working hours;
- Increase in the traffic volume, with worsening of the traffic problem, especially in secondary networks;
- Rules governing the exercise of professional activities by drivers of cargo vehicles;

The following suggestions were put forward in relation to these issues:

- Creation of special mechanisms for blocking vehicle movement when the driver is drunk;
- Step up the inspection of cargo transport;
- Encourage multimodal transport, by boosting the transport of goods by rail, sea and river;
- Take up a model European Charter for drivers transporting cargo by road, so that there may be a standardisation of rules, to allow the transport of merchandise in total safety, but without any distortions at the competition level;

Final Conclusion:

There is a common feeling, shared by all Members of Parliament present, that there is an urgent need to press on with the political task of establishing harmony of concepts, rules and inspection procedures, so as to cement the definition of a European policy for road safety, stressing once again the importance of achieving the main objective, which is that of bringing about a 50% reduction in the number of fatal casualties on European roads by 2010, compared with the figures for 2001.

São Bento Palace, Lisbon, 29 September 2008