

[Logo - Parliamentary Group - PS]

### **III Interparliamentary Conference in Lisbon - Road Safety**

**Statement by Member of Parliament Joana Lima**

**Parliamentary Group of the Socialist Party**

*Free Topic*

*(Salutation to the Board)*

Ladies and Gentlemen, Congressmen and Member of Parliament,

I start my statement expressing a feeling of deep thanks for the invitation that I have received, to take part in this important Interparliamentary event.

I would like to greet and welcome our colleagues from other European Parliaments, who have joined us, coming from all parts of Europe.

I would also like to hail the work carried out by the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, for the important collaboration this institution has made towards the organisation of the III Interparliamentary Conference, dedicated to the issue of road safety. Of course, last but not least,

I could not finish without giving special mention to the President of the Subcommittee on Road Safety, Congressman Nelson Baltazar, and through him I would like to greet all Congressmen and Member of Parliament who have played a part in the organisation of this admirable event.

The central theme which brings us together in this European meeting is related to the harmonisation of concepts and principles of Road Safety, within the scope of the political space of the European Union.

The currency and importance of the matter warrants total attention and effort on the part of the 27 Member States of the European Union. In fact this effort has indeed been both concrete and real, with significant advances having been made in this area, with positive results regarding the reduction of road accidents, and especially those kinds of violations that cause most road accidents and deaths on the highway network, which are the following:

1. Speeding
2. Driving while under the influence of alcohol

### 3. Non-use of seat belts

### 4. Jumping red lights

The importance of these forums shows itself to us as a privileged venue for discussion and, more importantly, the exchange of impressions and experiences between the Congresspeople, regarding Road Safety policies, an issue that we shall be discussing and which shall provide plenty of room for thought.

This is how I see my participation in this wide European debate, and this shall be how I shall make my contribution to the search for the harmonisation of European road safety policies.

Therefore, I feel very honoured to make this small contribution towards the discussion, together with a brief analysis, in the short time slot I have available to make my statement, about a Document of the Portuguese Republic that addresses the judicial regime of the Group Transport of Children and Teenagers, up to the age of 16, to and from schools, crèches, kindergartens and other educational or formative institutions, as also to venues of sporting or cultural pursuits, study visits, and other trips organised for spare time activities.

Passed by this Assembly of the Republic in 2006, this Law is a real innovation in this area in Portugal, especially in the areas that follow:

1. Emphasis on the compulsory use of seat belts everywhere, as also the use of duly certified restraint systems for small children;
2. In group transport, there must be one seat for every child or teenager, thus respecting the maximum capacity of the vehicle;
3. Introduction of the figure of the Inspector, an adult monitor who shall act towards the safety of the children, with functions ranging from confirmation of use of seat belts through to helping the children cross the road, using a special signalling device and a reflective jacket;
4. The doors of those vehicles used for transporting children may only be opened from the outside or by the driver, and the windows shall be made of non-movable glass or locked to a maximum opening of one third of the total (with the exception of the driver's window);
5. The vehicles must be equipped with a tachograph, a fire extinguisher and a first-aid kit;
6. Laws have also been set governing the licensing of this activity, licensing of the vehicles, and the certification and the good standing of the drivers.

I could continue to ramble on and present greater details of Law no. 13/2006 of 17 April of the Portuguese Republic, but I feel that, through this brief analysis, I have managed to express what I consider to have been a tremendous advance, obtained in this Legislature. I also feel I have managed to contribute to an important and constructive debate about an important segment within road safety policies, which is that of the transport of our children.

So this is my statement.

*Lisbon, 29 September 2008*