

Road Safety: Europe-wide harmonisation and coordination needed to improve safety

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"To achieve safer streets, we have to start with different points: All of us - Europe, the Member States and each and every one of us - is responsible", said Rapporteur Dieter-Lebrecht Koch. With today's vote, the European Parliament's Transport Committee is calling on the Commission to develop a full action programme of road safety by 2011 and has suggested concrete measures for this purpose.

"Europe must ensure that we have available high quality and comparable data, especially with regard to accident and injury causes, to implement relevant accident research on the basis of which effective measures to improve road safety can be taken", said Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Vice-Chairman of the Transport Committee in the European Parliament.

"With the implementation of measures such as the consistent harmonisation of traffic signs and rules, or equal alcohol limits, the Member States should aim for the highest possible degree of harmonised, common guidelines to result in the best possible evaluation as a basis for future steps. However, it is equally important to allow Member States sufficient flexibility to be able to customise their programmes to the different national conditions", Koch explained. Therefore, the Rapporteur endorses the appointment of a coordinator who would align the various measures to improve road safety among the European Commission, the EU and the Member States.

Furthermore Koch focuses on people to provide safe streets: "Very practical things such as a regular repetition of first aid courses can be lifesaving. Also to improve the training of novice drivers is important. This could be done with accompanied driving from 17 years on or with the introduction of a temporary driver's license, confirmed after a certain period of time", the transport expert said. "Lifelong learning is important in all areas, but it can save lives where road safety is concerned", Mr Koch concluded.