



PRESS NOTICE

26TH NOVEMBER 2001

**MEMBER STATES PUT INDUSTRIAL CONVENIENCE OVER PUBLIC SAFETY
- TODAY'S DECISION ON SAFER CAR FRONTS**

EU Ministers in today's Internal Market Council meeting in Brussels have supported the car industry's and the European Commission's weak negotiated agreement on safer car fronts.

Jeanne Breen, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council – the independent international NGO responded today by saying:

“Safety professionals and organisations throughout Europe are deeply worried about this decision by the EU Council which so clearly puts industrial convenience over the safety of our most vulnerable road users. Having favoured legislation last June, this change of position on the part of the Council represents a complete cave-in to the intensive lobby of the car industry and goes against the public interest.

“It is beyond belief that given the facts presented concerning the poor safety content of the agreement (by the year 2012 providing only 25% of the safety of the well-researched legislative tests despite the fact that a car offering 70% of this level of safety is on the road now) that the EU Council is not prepared to legislate for effective industry action to save lives.

“Road death is the leading cause of death for EU citizens aged under 45. By introducing legislation which reflects our best knowledge we have an opportunity here to save as many as 2000 lives and 18000 serious injuries annually at an additional cost at design stage of only 30 euro per car. Making the ordinary fronts of cars safer for vulnerable road users is, undoubtedly, the most important transport safety matter on the EU agenda.

“This voluntary agreement is also in conflict with Article 95(3) of the Treaty of European Union to provide a high level of protection in Single Market harmonisation. Our only hope now is that the European Parliament will demand and deliver the protection which the public deserves and expects.

“The Ministers' decision means that we will never again be able to take at face value any assertion that they are putting safety first.”

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Editor's notes:

- 1)The European Commission are currently consulting the EU Council and European Parliament on this draft negotiated agreement
- 2) A note of the long history of this issue is attached
- 3) Further information can be found on www.etsc.be

SAFER CAR FRONTS FOR PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

HISTORY OF DEVELOPMENTS

- 1978** -Large EC and national government funded research programme by research laboratories across Europe (European Enhanced vehicle Safety Committee - EEVC) starts accident research and dummy development for pedestrian protection. Reported in 1982.
- 1979** -UK in depth accident research documents the problem of deaths and injuries resulting from pedestrian/car impacts.
- 1985** -UK Department of Transport proposes simple test methods for pedestrian protection.
-TRL demonstrates pedestrian-friendly car (Austin Metro) to ESV Conference, Oxford.
- 1987** -ERGA Safety - A Commission Advisory Group discusses proposal and recommends further work be carried out by the EEVC to develop suitable legislative tests.
-With part funding from the Commission, EEVC sets up Working Group 10 to develop pedestrian crash test procedures.
- 1991** June. EEVC Working Group 10 completes studies and presents proposals for test methods to an ESV Conference, Paris.
- 1992** -Based on the EEVC proposals, the Commission prepares a draft legislative proposal (1) for a Directive (Doc III/4025/92) Brussels.
-Negative benefit to cost study published by ACEA, the European Car Manufacturers Association which puts an end to discussion on the Commission draft.
- 1993** -UK Transport Research Laboratory publishes positive EU-wide benefit to cost study on EEVC tests.
- 1994** -EEVC Working Group 10 publishes further report validating test methods and developing test tools.
-Dutch Institute for Road Safety Research publishes positive national benefit to cost study on EEVC tests which also highlights additional savings to cyclists.
-German Federal Highway Research Institute publishes national benefit study of EEVC tests.
- 1996** -January Commission presents legislative proposal (2) for discussion by an advisory group. Later that year, it decides a study to assess the existing cost benefit studies is necessary and the draft is not discussed further that year.
-Honda demonstrates pedestrian-friendly car to ESV Conference, Melbourne.
- 1997** -**January.** Commission announces intentions to award cost benefit assessment study to UK Motor Industry Research Association (MIRA) (which represent the UK car industry in Governmental discussions on EuroNCAP !).
-EEVC Working Group 17 invited to review Working Group 10 test methods.

-February. EuroNCAP consumer information test programme shows 7 cars performing generally poorly in the 4 EEVC pedestrian protection test procedures.

-April – Road safety communication highlights pedestrian protection in the programme – Parliament's opinion puts safer car fronts at the top of the road safety agenda.

-July.Transport Commissioner, Neil Kinnock states that Commission will publish a legislative proposal in 1998.

1998 -January. Commission published first MIRA report showing that the costs exceeded the benefits. ETSC shows costs are overestimated and benefits underestimated in the report. MIRA report addendum later revised benefits estimates. Initially the study reported lowest cost-benefit ratio of 5.3:1 which was later revised to 1.7: 1. They would not publish costings, so difficult to scrutinise.

1999 -January. Fifth set of EuroNCAP results published showing cars performing badly in pedestrian tests. The European Commission support EuroNCAP. EU Transport Commissioner announces that the Commission will publish a proposal in 1999.

-February. The EEVC report to the Commission having completed minor revisions to earlier tests.

-June: The Commission hold a meeting in Brussels to discuss EEVC tests.

-December: Commission announce that they will consult Member States again on draft proposal' probably available in March 2000. In December and January ETSC and MEPs visit Industry Commissioner and Mr Liikanen promises proposal in the Spring.

2000 -January: Transport Commissioner Mrs de Palacio tells Parliament's Transport Committee that the Commission intends to come forward with proposal.

-February: EuroNCAP results on small cars indicate continuing poor performance in the pedestrian tests.

-March: The new Commission states intention to introduce legislative proposal as one of 6 cost-effective road safety measures in new road safety communication

-June: Council of Ministers adopts resolution urging the Commission to bring forward as soon as possible a Directive on safer car fronts to protect the lives of pedestrians and cyclists.

-July Still no proposal. Many more 11th hour meetings of industry with Commission. No industry proposal has yet matched equivalence in safety of the 4 EEVC tests.

-August: Commission decides to get the Commission's Joint Research Centre, not know for its technical expertise in this area, to evaluate on technical grounds an ACEA proposal for a voluntary agreement

-September: Vice President de Palacio continues to promote need for type approval legislation, while Commissioner Liikanen says he will present two alternative proposals to the Commission – one voluntary one legislative. A letter from MEPs from all parties demands intervention from President Prodi.

-October: High level group on road safety (representatives of Member States) renew support for legislative proposal. ETSC states that the industry voluntary

agreement proposal would lead to 50% less protection and would make some injuries worse than at present. New ETSC estimates of 2000 lives and 18000 severe injuries saved by adoption in legislation of 4 EEVC tests.

-November: Informal Commission inter-service consultation of draft Directive proposal (3) COM 6065/2000 which is a two-phase approach with EEVC tests introduced in 2008.

-December: European Parliament's Transport Committee renews call for legislation on safer car fronts as top safety priority.

2001 -January: European Parliament's road safety resolution calls for legislative take up of four EEVC tests

-February: DG Enterprise and DG TREN organise hearing on pedestrian protection. ACEA and JRC present proposals for voluntary tests. Independent experts and consumer organisations criticise JRC evaluation and JRC/ACEA proposals as unscientific and weak. Criticism by MEPs Mark Watts MEP and Ewa Hedkvist Petersen MEP on content and process of agreement.

-June: Honda Civic gains three stars in EuroNCAP tests, passing over 70% of the tests.

-July : European Commission issues communication on pedestrian protection and seeks opinion of EU Council and European Parliament and says it will reach decision in December,

-September. DG Enterprise's European Motor Vehicle Working Group discusses briefly split level Directive (4) (ENTR/6508/01) (ENTR/6509/01)

-November: Council accepts voluntary agreement with certain conditions.

Summary

- 22 years of public investment by EU and Member States in R&D starting in 1978
- Pedestrian friendly car demonstrated by TRL – 1985
- Test methods ready in 1991, then updated further in 1994 and 1998 in view of political delay
- 4 draft legislative proposals produced in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2001
- Promises of Directive by Commissioners since 1997

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