

Jean-Claude Juncker
President of the European Commission
Brussels

cc:

Frans Timmermans, First Vice-President, European Commission
Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President, European Commission
Violeta Bulc, European Commissioner for Transport

9 June 2015

Dear President Juncker,

We are writing to express our concern on hearing that the Commission has withdrawn plans to propose an EU-wide strategic target for reducing serious road traffic injuries, set to be announced later this week.

This long-planned initiative, reconfirmed in a Commission [press release](#) as recently as 24 March, has already been strongly supported by [member states](#) and the [European Parliament](#). An announcement at the meeting of Transport Ministers in June was expected but we understand on good authority that those plans have now been dropped.

You have said that the European Commission is to be “serious about being big on big things”. Serious road injuries are undoubtedly a very big thing, with at least 200,000 people suffering life-changing consequences resulting from traffic collisions last year alone. The timing of this decision is unfortunate as, according to analysis by ETSC, serious road injuries increased by 3% last year. Furthermore, over recent years, declines in serious road injuries have not matched the reductions in road deaths.

Moreover, there is a strong economic case to act. Estimates undertaken by ETSC show that, if all serious injuries recorded in 2010 could have been prevented, the benefits to society would have been more than 50 billion Euros in that year.


The role of road safety targets in the current progress in reducing road deaths is known to be effective, as is confirmed both by the OECD (“Towards zero: achieving ambitious road safety targets and the safe system approach”, 2008) and scientists (Elvik, “Quantified road safety targets: a useful tool for policy making”, Accident analysis and prevention, 1993).

The EU targets for road deaths were an important driver for the dramatic reductions we have seen in countries such as Spain, Portugal, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia and Estonia: all of which have cut deaths by more than 60% since 2001. The much slower decrease, or even increase in the number of serious road injuries must come to a stop and be turned into a steady decrease. A European road safety target is a simple, cheap, non-controversial and necessary step.

At the EU level a quantitative serious road injury target would provide a stimulus for EU actions in areas where it has exclusive responsibilities for road safety such as vehicle safety standards. An EU target would also inspire competition and knowledge sharing between member states, as it has done for the prevention of deaths.

We would like to have your assurance that the serious injury target will be proposed in the coming weeks. The quality of life of millions of road crash victims is at stake.

Yours sincerely,



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Executive Director, European Transport Safety Council

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