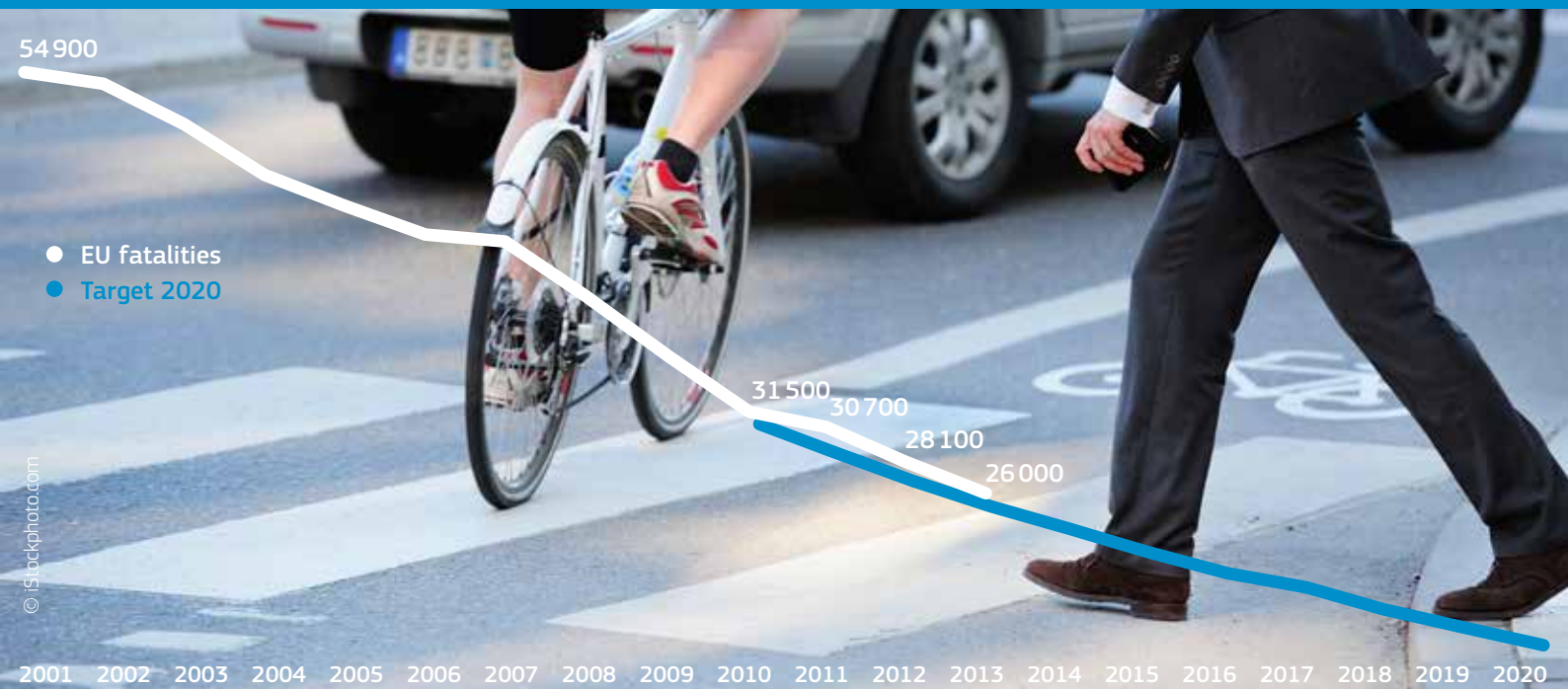




European Commission

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# Road Safety Newsletter



## New European Commissioner for Transport makes road safety a priority

*Violeta Bulc is the new European Commissioner for Transport for the period 2014–19. Before entering politics, Ms Bulc held several top corporate positions both in Slovenia, her native country, and in the US in fields including logistics, telecommunications and sustainable and innovative business solutions. She was Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development, Strategic Projects and Cohesion before moving to Brussels.*

On the occasion of the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on 16 November 2014, Commissioner Bulc pledged to make road safety one of her top priorities as Commissioner for Transport. She highlighted the great progress that Europe has made so far — a 17% drop in EU road deaths between 2010 and 2013 — but also added that, ‘our work cannot stop here! More than 26 000 people still die on our roads every year, and many more suffer horrific road traffic injuries. Behind these statistics are grieving parents, children, siblings, colleagues and friends. This is an unacceptable price to pay for mobility.’

In Commissioner Bulc’s new agenda for Transport in Europe, the most relevant point concerning road safety will be the development of common EU standards for transport safety and security. Her work will also focus on infrastructure and connections, with the further development of the trans-European transport network (TEN-T);

on pushing forward the creation of a single airspace in Europe through the Single European Sky (SES) initiatives; and on completing negotiations on the new railway regulations (Fourth Railway package), to name but a few of the main ongoing initiatives for transport in Europe. True to her entrepreneurial past, she will focus on increasing competitiveness and sustainability of the whole transport sector in Europe, with particular attention to innovation.



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→ For further information, please visit [http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/bulc\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/commission/2014-2019/bulc_en)



# Commission-backed study defines measures for safer tyre use

Two technical studies with important road safety implications have recently been carried out on behalf of the European Commission, the first of which deals with safety aspects of tyre use. Good tyres enhance roadholding, particularly in wet or slippery conditions, or when braking.



As important as having good tyres is taking good care of them. This covers such aspects as ensuring that they are inflated to the correct pressure, are not worn out, have the minimum tread depth, and are appropriate for the climatic conditions in which they are used.

The key figure in this is the driver, who has to be aware of what to look out for with tyres and to check them regularly. The fact that tyres are regularly featured in the media, such as through advertising, and are a vehicle component with which everyone is familiar can help to ensure high levels of awareness of the need to use them appropriately.

The role of tyres as a cause of accidents is relatively minor. Nonetheless, if Europe is to continue to make progress in the area of road safety, no issue on which room for improvement exists can be neglected.

The EU has performance requirements for tyres for use in severe snow as regards aspects such as grip during acceleration and braking on snow. Such tyres are identified by an 'alpine' pictogram showing a three-peak mountain and a snowflake (3PMS). Also, as of November 2014 cars in the EU must be fitted with tyre pressure monitoring systems (TPMS).

## Tyre use measures to improve road safety

The study was aimed at defining measures related to tyre use in order to improve road safety and began by examining tyre safety aspects, particularly grip level and blowout. It then looked at conditions of tyre use, the role of tyres in road safety and the influence of tyre use on accidents. Each of these subjects was considered in relation to use of winter tyres, tread depth and inflation pressure.

The benefits of harmonised measures for use of suitable tyres in different climatic conditions were evaluated, specifically as regards winter tyres. In some EU Member States there is no legislation on this, while others have measures requiring use of winter tyres in certain conditions or in certain periods of the year, reflecting the fact that there is no optimum tyre for all conditions. The study also considered tread depth requirements and possible increases, consumer awareness level of the need for good tyre use and means of raising awareness, and categories and performance of TPMS.



A stakeholder consultation was organised through questionnaires and a meeting. On the basis of the analysis and consultation, possible measures for harmonised winter tyre use, tread depth and TPMS requirements, and awareness-raising were assessed.

Following a cost-benefit analysis of each measure, policy recommendations were prepared. For winter tyres the study recommends definition of standard requirements, including the 3PMS marking and a specific tread depth, increased winter tyre legislation enforcement efforts and awareness-raising campaigns on the need to choose the right tyres. As regards tread depth, it proposes greater efforts to enforce current tread depth legislation and harmonised requirements for winter and truck tyres.

Concerning inflation pressure, the study suggests increasing user awareness, provision of sufficient access to air filling stations and including a requirement for quick deflation detection in TPMS legislation. Finally, to guard against ageing and defects, the study recommends organising tyre inspections on a voluntary basis or between periodic vehicle inspections.







# Commission looks at benefits of event data recorders

The second recent road safety-related study examines the benefits resulting from installation of event data recorders (EDR) on motor vehicles. EDRs record vehicle data from before, during and after a crash so that a sequence of records can be recovered. This helps with investigation of the circumstances of an accident, determination of liability and data collection for safety research aimed at improving understanding of causes of accidents and applying appropriate safety measures to prevent them.

EDRs do not track drivers, but only store between 5 and 20 seconds of data which is captured in the event of a crash. They are fitted to many new cars in Europe and have been for some time, although most drivers are unaware of this.

The study aimed to help the Commission to decide if fitting EDRs to all vehicles or certain categories of vehicle could improve road safety or have other consequences justifying legislative or other measures, and to assess the cost and benefits of such measures. It began with an information-gathering phase involving a literature review and discussion with stakeholders, and covering experience of EDR installation and use, technical issues linked to fitting of EDRs and access to and use of EDR data.

The next phase was a stakeholder consultation comprising an online questionnaire, a meeting and further direct discussion of possible EDR deployment measures in heavy and light goods vehicles, buses, coaches and cars. The final phase entailed a cost-benefit analysis to compare the costs and benefits of the status quo with those of introducing new EDR measures, with a view to preparing recommendations.

The study found that as most new cars in Europe have some sort of EDR, additional system costs for cars might be negligible. The situation is similar for light goods vehicles, but more variable for heavy goods vehicles, buses and coaches, with many commercial fleets fitting data recorders to measure and influence driving behaviour.

## Well-documented benefits

The benefits of data recorders are well documented in terms of accident reduction for commercial fleets since they improve driver behaviour. Such a change in driver behaviour would have large road safety benefits if transferred to private fleets. However, these effects are linked to high levels of awareness of the presence of data recorders among commercial fleet drivers, implying that, at the very least, mechanisms to improve car driver awareness of EDRs would be needed to realise such benefits.

The data recovered from EDRs can, in all cases, help accident causation research, reconstruction and liability, and influence vehicle design. EDRs provide hard data on the chronology of and actions taken in the pre-crash phase, whereas without them there can only be estimates.



Evidence indicates that EDRs have positive effects on driver behaviour in commercial fleets which, if transferred to private fleets, would have large road safety benefits. These effects are linked to high levels of awareness of the presence of EDRs among commercial fleet drivers, implying that mechanisms to improve driver awareness of EDRs are needed to ensure such benefits.

Main obstacles relate to legal issues of ownership of data and data protection concerns among the public, which might need to be clarified primarily at Member State level. Also, larger vehicles appear less standardised as regards EDR capability, meaning that enhanced deployment may increase costs for manufacturers.

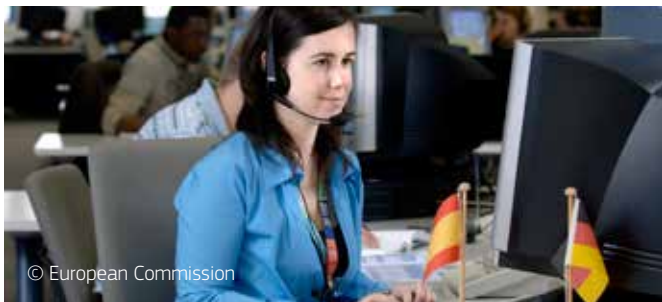
The study concluded that while further information should be sought on costs and benefits of enhanced EDR deployment, the benefits could be significant, although their scale is difficult to quantify. The benefit-cost ratio appears highest for large vehicles, although the biggest absolute benefit would accrue to cars due to their greater numbers.

According to the study, efforts should be made to make EDR data accessible. In some Member States, courts can already request it in order to determine liability following an accident, while in the USA, if a vehicle is fitted with an EDR the data must be made available in the event of a crash. However, it is not yet clear if new legislation on EDRs is required.



# Europe Direct Contact Centre provides invaluable road safety support

The Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC) in Brussels provides a central information service which citizens can contact by phone or e-mail in any official EU language in order to get answers to questions on a range of subjects related to the EU. It can also point citizens in the direction of information and advice sources and EU-, national- or local-level contacts, give information on EU citizens' rights and opportunities and how to use them and provide specialised information.



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The EDCC also offers a web chat service in German, English and French for anyone having trouble navigating the EU website. This can help them to find documents on specific EU policies and information about European integration, history, symbols and institutions.

Road safety is an issue which affects all EU citizens and the EDCC deals with a considerable number of enquiries on this topic. It received 2 183 such enquiries in 2014 up to 10 December. Road safety-related enquiries reached a peak in the summer months at the beginning of the holiday season, with 236 received in June and 229 in July.

In terms of the specific subjects of the enquiries, two issues appear to be of particular interest to citizens: firstly vehicles, including registration issues, which were the subject of 1 049 enquiries, or 48.1 % of the total; and secondly behaviour, including driving licences, on which 900 enquiries (41.2 %) were submitted. In addition, 34 queries (1.6 %) were received on road infrastructure, five on dangerous goods (0.2 %), and 195 on other road safety issues (8.9 %).

## Below are some examples of road safety-related questions received by the EDCC

'I live and work in Germany and am from Romania. While on vacation in Romania, I got my driving licence, which is an EU licence. As I wanted to register it in Germany, the authorities told me that I should have got my licence in Germany since I am resident here. But I am not German, why would I have to get my licence there?'

'We are British and are going to move to France. Our car insurer told us the insurance will not be valid there. What should we do? Where can we get more information?'

'I am Portuguese and live in Spain. My car is registered in Spain and I have a Portuguese driving licence. Can I drive my car in any EU country without having problems with the authorities?'

'I would like information on speed limits in other EU countries. If I receive a fine in another EU country, do I have to pay it? What can they do if I don't?'

Without the vital and efficient support which the EDCC provides, it would be impossible to respond quickly and satisfactorily to questions such as these. Road safety has thus become an important part of the EDCC's work.

→ For more details, please visit [http://europa.eu/europedirect/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm)

## Excellence in Road Safety award ceremony takes place in Brussels

The Excellence in Road Safety Awards ceremony for 2015 takes place on the afternoon of 4 February at the Square Meeting Centre in Brussels. The Awards recognise the most innovative practices implemented within the framework of the European Road Safety Charter, a civil society platform committed to carrying out road safety actions.

European Commissioner for Transport Violeta Bulc will attend the ceremony and present awards.

Prior to the ceremony, the European Road Safety Charter team and the platform's members from all over Europe will host a World Café thematic workshop, where participants will have the opportunity to share ideas on best practices, thus contributing to making roads safer and saving lives.

→ For further details, please visit <http://www.erscharter.eu/en/excellence-road-safety-awards>

### Find out more...

If these subjects have revved up your interest, then check out the Road Safety website at: [ec.europa.eu/roadsafety](http://ec.europa.eu/roadsafety)

European Youth Forum for Road Safety (EYFRS) also has a Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/EYFRS](http://www.facebook.com/EYFRS)

EYFRS has its own website at: [ec.europa.eu/eyfrs](http://ec.europa.eu/eyfrs)  
Visit these sites for inspiration and information.

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