

Motorcycle Mind-set

23rd November 2017

Europe – The Federation of European Motorcyclists (FEMA) say that a vote in the European Parliament regarding an important report on road safety is good news for motorcyclists, as riders are explicitly mentioned in the report.

The report in question is entitled - [On saving lives: boosting car safety in the EU](#) – emanating from the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN) a committee of MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) the MEP responsible for the report (rapporteur) and one of the Vice-Chairs of the committee is Dr. Dieter-L. Koch.

FEMA states that the good news and explicit mention of riders includes:

- A clause about alterations of infrastructure (especially barriers) and the need for standardisation measures. This means that the European Parliament agrees with FEMA that road infrastructure, and barriers in particular, must be safe for motorcyclists as well.
- Motorcycles are explicitly mentioned in safety measure 34, about automatic emergency braking systems.

FEMA also says that, *“The European Parliament also calls on the European Commission, from 2019, to extend the eCall installation requirement (mandatory on new cars from April 2018) to motorcycles, heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches, and also to make the system available for retrofitting so as to ensure that it can cover the highest possible numbers of vehicles on the road.”*

Although FEMA says that it supports the installation of eCall on motorcycles under certain conditions in conjunction with privacy aspects, FEMA state that, *“It (eCall) must also be reliable (no false calls) and adapted to the special needs of motorcyclists.”*

Dolf Willigers, General Secretary of FEMA, in congratulating Dieter-Lebrecht Koch MEP with his excellent report and being happy with the support from the European Parliament, states, *“It is a good thing that the European Parliament has also looked at motorcyclists. We have been advocating infrastructure that is also safe for motorcyclists for many years. We have been asking for and working on standardisation measures for barriers especially for a long time. And Advanced Driver Assistance Systems in cars must react well to motorcycles.”* [FEMA European Parliament: ‘automatic braking systems must detect motorcycles’](#)

European Commission - On saving lives: boosting car safety in the EU

As always, we like to look behind the scenes and definitely become pedantic.

The report agreed by the TRAN committee, adopted as a resolution by the European Parliament is non-legislative, so it is not a list of proposals for future legislation but suggestions for future action.

In this case calling on the European Commission to include the proposals of the European Parliament in the revision of the EU Regulation on revision of the [General Safety Regulation](#) - concerning type-approval requirements for the general safety of motor vehicles, their trailers and systems, components and separate technical units and the [Pedestrian Safety Regulation](#) - on the type-approval of motor vehicles with regard to the protection of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users, these revisions are expected in the first quarter of 2018 aiming to address vulnerable road users and improve infrastructure safety. The revisions will also involve input from the Council of Ministers – member state governments.

In the debate in the [European Parliament in a Plenary Session](#) on 13th November 2017 regarding the report Violeta Bulc, the European Commissioner for Transport, specifically mentioned the revision of the Vehicle General Safety Regulation and the Pedestrian Safety Regulation with the aim to include these into a 3rd Mobility package. This package- [Europe on the Move](#) - includes a wide-ranging set of initiatives that will make traffic safer; encourage fairer road charging; reduce CO2 emissions, air pollution and congestion; cut red-tape for businesses; fight illicit employment and ensure proper conditions and rest times for workers.

During July-October the Directorate-General (DG) GROW - Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs published a [public and stakeholder consultation](#) on the revision of the Vehicle General Safety Regulation and the Pedestrian Safety Regulation.

The purpose of the consultation was stated to gather views on the best means to improve current vehicle safety measures, to complement existing studies in this field and the current Commission initiative aims to further decrease the number of road fatalities and injuries.

The European Commission recognises that vulnerable road users includes riders of Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs) and while the consultation asks those completing a survey in the consultation – *“What kind of vehicle or other mode of road transportation do you primarily use or does your company/organisation use?”* which includes as one of the answers, *“Motorcycle, moped, tricycle or quadricycle”*, specific questions asking the opinion of other vulnerable road users – pedestrians/cyclists - do not include riders of motorcycles, mopeds, tricycles or quadricycles.

For example:

- Please rank your 10 preferred safety requirements from the list below that you wish drivers of other motor-vehicles on the road would need to have to reduce or avoid accidents.
- Pedestrian and cyclist safety - Pedestrian and cyclist forward detection
- Pedestrian and cyclist safety - Head impact on a-pillars and front windscreen
- Pedestrian and cyclist safety - Reversing detection

We wrote to DG Grow asking if there was a reason not to include the users of PTWs (Powered Two Wheelers) as vulnerable road users in the consultation/survey - Perhaps there is a separate consultation/survey that specifically includes or mentions PTWs and their users?

DG Grow replied that our position was duly noted and that it would be very helpful and appreciative if we could provide more insight into what type of car/truck/bus safety features would exist and/or could be deployed in order to particularly target PTW safety.

They also assured us of their awareness on electronic warning systems - Forward Collision Warning Systems - Advanced Emergency Braking Systems to be taken on board as regards PTWs and that they do take PTW concerns very seriously.

Safety Measures For Accident Prevention

The specific mention of motorcycles and motorcyclists as vulnerable road users in the [TRAN Committee](#) report are as follows – bearing in mind actions of other vehicles or other vulnerable road users in the report would have a benefit for, or include motorcyclists and includes the opinion of the - Committee On The Internal Market And Consumer Protection (IMCO).:

- Points out that infrastructural alterations (for example certain types of crash barrier or traffic-calming devices) can sometimes cause accidents or make them worse, especially when **motorised two-wheelers** are involved; calls on the Commission, therefore, to propose any standardisation measure likely to remedy the drawbacks;
- Welcomes the fact that emergency braking is already mandatory, since November 2015, for all new trucks and buses in the EU, but calls on the Commission to make it compulsory to install automatic emergency braking assistants with detection of pedestrians, cyclists, **light powered two-wheelers and motorcyclists** in cars, light commercial vehicles, buses, coaches and, especially, heavy goods vehicles, as these have a strong potential to prevent road accidents by means of autonomous powerful braking and a resulting shorter stopping distance; **(1)**
- Calls for the compulsory installation of overridable intelligent speed assistant systems that indicate speed limits, stop signs and traffic lights and intervene to assist drivers to remain within speed limits;
- Stresses that, in order to improve road safety, the deceleration of vehicles should be rendered easier for other road users to perceive by means of clear signal lights on vehicles, and expects the compulsory use of an emergency braking indicator in the form of a flashing brake light or flashing hazard lights;
- Calls on the Commission, from 2019, to extend the eCall installation requirement to **motorcycles**, heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches, and also to make the system available for retrofitting so as to ensure that it can cover the highest possible numbers of vehicles on the road;
- The rapporteur takes the view that it should be compulsory to install only those driver assistance systems which make a genuine contribution to road safety, which have a favourable cost-benefit ratio and which have attained market maturity, and which therefore rarely give false alarms. – Motorcycle Minds Note: this would include **eCall for motorcycles**.
- As a matter of principle, road safety should not depend on EU citizens' wallets.

Welcomed Report – Make A Difference?

While the report is welcomed, as stated by the Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations (FEMA), this report is not as detailed regarding road safety solutions for motorcycles and riders as a previous report, which was adopted by the European Parliament in 2011 - European road safety 2011-2020.

Back at that time as Right To Ride EU we delved in-depth into that report, which MEP Dieter-Lebrecht Koch was also in charge of and we produced a response - [Highwaymen EU Road Safety](#) – looking at but not confined to the, “*specific recommendations and considerations for the safety of motorcyclists*”

Highwaymen EU Road Safety – For Motorcycling - 2011

What were those specific recommendations and considerations for the safety of motorcyclists by the European Parliament in 2011?

- *Considers that, in car driving lessons, greater attention should be devoted to the phenomenon of motorised two-wheeled vehicles and their visibility.*
- *Urges the Commission and Member States to call on their national, regional and local authorities to design their roads in such a way that they do not present any hazards to motorised two-wheeled vehicles; points out that the standard guard rails used on European roads are a death trap for motorcyclists.*
- *Calls on the Member States to take prompt action (including replacing the existing guard rails) to refit dangerous stretches of road with rails with upper and lower elements as well as with other alternative road barrier systems, in accordance with Standard EN 1317, in order to lessen the repercussions of accidents for all road users;*
- *Draws attention to the danger posed to motorcyclists by tarmac patches, which offer much less grip than the normal asphalt road surfaces;*
- *Calls on Member States and road operators to provide appropriately designed facilities to improve safety which are all well equipped with road signs and well lit, and thus more user-friendly, especially for motorcyclists and cyclists;*
- *Speed up the introduction of 'eCall', and calls on the Commission, over the next two years, to consider whether it should be extended to cover motorcycles.*

Further recommendations and considerations were:

- *Welcomes the Commission's stated aim of paying special attention to the safety of motorcyclists;*
- *Regards the phased, mandatory introduction of anti-brake-locking systems on all new motorcycles as an important measure which could substantially reduce the number of serious motorcycle accidents;*

Thankfully this current report does not appear to have any "anti-motorcycling" or lunatic fringe amendments or comments in debate as in 2011 in which the following proposed amendments included:

- *Calls for the introduction of monitoring equipment by means of which speeding offences by motorcyclists can be systematically detected and punished;*
- *Debate in the European Parliament - German MEP Thomas Ulmer – no longer an MEP - submitted a statement in writing, "Cynically I might note that we could reduce the number of road deaths fastest if we ban all two-wheelers now."*
- *Amendment submitted to the Transport and Tourism (Tran) committee and a speech later made in the European parliament by the Italian MEP Giommara Uggias – no longer an MEP - called for, "Determined efforts to harmonise road signs and road traffic rules by 2013 and for the driving side of the road to be standardised in all the Member States....." UK, Ireland and Malta would have to change to driving and riding on the 'right' side of the road!*

Six years down the line from this 2011 report, it is exactly the same, there has been no great explosion of European wide or individual member state considerations for the safety of

motorcyclists. There are certainly good intentions but motorcyclists as vulnerable road users have not sunk into the mind set of legislators when trying to improve road safety for vulnerable road users.

Motorcyclists – Riders Vulnerable Road Users

Although we have specific mention of motorcycles and riders in these two reports, reading through the recent report, when vulnerable road users are mentioned, it is all about pedestrians and cyclists, motorcyclists or Powered Two Wheeler users (PTWs – Motorcycles – Scooters – Mopeds) are not included in the general rhetoric, in fact the recognised term of PTWs is not used at all.

Terms used include - motorised two-wheelers - light powered two-wheelers and motorcyclists – in context the use of the term - light powered two-wheelers – is used to describe what vehicles should be detected by automatic emergency braking assistants – when as any rider knows that the profile of a light powered two wheeler could be as close as the profile of some unfaired styled heavy motorcycles.

If we look at the rhetoric around the report, [Dieter-Lebrecht Koch MEP](#)'s own press release states, *“Examples include the automatic emergency brake assistant with pedestrian and cyclist recognition, the emergency brake display, the lane departure warning system, the turn-off assistant in connection with camera devices for trucks to reduce the blind spot.....”* no mention of motorcyclists.

In the [debate at the European Parliament](#) out of around twenty eight MEPs speaking to the report, we heard only one MEP mention motorcycles in the context of driver turning assistance for trucks for the detection of motorcycles.

However, we must be careful that we do not get legislation that aims to protect us from ourselves without the thoughts on the need of input from motorcyclists.

Amendments – Crash Barriers - eCall

As with all these reports there is an opportunity by MEPs to submit amendments to any draft report. This report is no different, with [two hundred and twenty six amendments](#) listed to the draft report.

The motorcycles amendments that we are aware of that were submitted to the final report includes:

Submitted by French MEP [Dominique Riquet](#) and one of the Vice Chairs of the TRAN Committee on Transport and Tourism.

- Points out that infrastructural alterations (for example certain types of crash barrier or traffic-calming devices) can sometimes cause accidents or make them worse, especially when motorised two-wheelers are involved; calls on the Commission, therefore, to propose any standardisation measure likely to remedy the drawbacks;

Amendments submitted but not included in the final report are concerning eCall for motorcycles. eCall is basically an electronic “in vehicle” safety system that can automatically call emergency services based on the 112 service, if you have an accident:

The draft report included the text:

- Calls on the Commission, from 2019, to extend the eCall installation requirement to motorcycles, heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches;

French MEP [Renaud Muselier](#) submitted a sensible amendment to the original text:

- Calls on the Commission **to consider whether** the eCall installation requirement **might be extended to cover** motorcycles, heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches **from 2019**;

Czech Republic MEP [Kateřina Konečná](#) also submitted a sensible amendment to the original text:

- Calls on the Commission, from 2019, to extend the eCall installation requirement to motorcycles, heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches; **stresses, however, that the system should be extended to other groups of vehicles only after an in-depth analysis has been carried out into the benefits it has brought to the vehicles already fitted with it;**

French MEP [Karima Delli](#) submitted an amendment:

- Calls on the Commission, from 2019, to extend the eCall installation requirement to motorcycles, heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches, **and also to make the system available for retrofitting so as to ensure that it can cover the highest possible numbers of vehicles on the road;**

MEPS – Netherlands [Wim van de Camp](#) (promoted as a “motorcycling” politician - Luxembourg [Georges Bach](#) - Ireland [Deirdre Clune](#) – Poland [Elżbieta Katarzyna Łukacijewska](#) – submitted their amendment:

- Calls on the Commission, from 2019, to extend the eCall installation requirement to **motorcycle helmets**, heavy goods vehicles and buses and coaches;

The justifications calling for the eCall system to be installed in the helmet and not the motorcycle itself are not clear, considering that BMW Motorrad has already developed the “intelligent emergency call” (ECALL) optional accessory (no details of cost) along with other commercially available systems produced by others that are installed in/on the motorcycle.

Also considering that an eCall system - [RiderEcall System](#) - from major helmet manufacturer Schubert introduced around 2012 that was fitted to the motorcycle and the helmet, with a yearly subscription fee/cost of the unit, the system has been withdrawn from the market, one reason for this was apparently that the [system was too sensitive](#).

These systems cost to subscribe and connect or connect to private call centres as BMW Motorrad say the system, “constitutes a premium service”.

As far back as 2012 MEPs have said that they believe that, “The public eCall service should be mandatory and [available free of charge to all drivers in Europe](#), irrespective of the make of their vehicles.”

The rapporteur Dr. Dieter-L. Koch has taken the view in the report as regards to driver assist systems including eCall for motorcycles that, “It should be compulsory to install only those driver assistance systems which make a genuine contribution to road safety, which have a favourable cost-benefit ratio and which have attained market maturity, and which therefore rarely give false alarms.” a statement we would agree with.

Conclusion

One other statement in the report that we have not covered, but would agree with from our aspect of road safety research is, *"It is also essential to ensure improved availability of accident statistics and databases. Existing statistics and databases are very patchy. It would be useful to list the causes of accidents, injuries and accident victims, as they are an important source of information for research and development of safety measures."* and that is for all vulnerable road users.

We would suspect that considering the previous report from 2011, this current report and its aims and objectives will eventually be followed in a few years' time with another report outlining similar road safety concerns and calls to "fix" them, or not.....

Notes

(1) As regards this part of the report that, light powered two-wheelers and motorcyclists are included as vulnerable road users that should be detected by the compulsory installation of automatic emergency braking assistants, being pedantic we wrote to the office of Dr. Dieter-L. Koch, MEP.

"Might I suggest that the part in this point 34 - "calls on the Commission to make it compulsory to install automatic emergency braking assistants with detection of pedestrians, cyclists, light powered two-wheelers and motorcyclists in cars, light commercial vehicles, buses, coaches and, especially, heavy goods vehicles,"

Should have this part changed to, "calls on the Commission to make it compulsory to install automatic emergency braking assistants with detection of pedestrians, cyclists, light powered two-wheelers and motorcyclists, in cars, light commercial vehicles, buses, coaches and, especially, heavy goods vehicles,"

The change being the insertion of a comma, "motorcyclists, in cars," otherwise with the missing comma the report is calling that the compulsory installation of automatic emergency braking assistants will detect pedestrians, cyclists, light powered two-wheelers and motorcyclists in cars, light commercial vehicles, buses, coaches and, especially, heavy goods vehicles, not that the emergency braking assistants would be detecting, as one would assume, these vulnerable road users on the public road.

I hope this helps as I know how correct and pedantic European documents should be in their interpretation and legality."

His office replied that we were completely right about the missing comma and eventually due process will see the corrected text appear in the report.

We also asked, wondering why only light powered two-wheelers are mentioned in this point of the report and not all motorcycles, as there are "heavy" powered two-wheelers that would have the same physical profile as some light powered two-wheelers, that would be in the same circumstances on the road as a light powered two wheeler, we await a response.

Trevor Baird – Dr Elaine Hardy

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