

Press Release

20 years of the European Road Safety Charter

EU Coordinator Schmidt: “We celebrate every single life saved”

- ▶ Expert organization was one of the 39 original signatories in 2004
- ▶ Number of road deaths in the EU has been falling only slowly for years
- ▶ Challenges posed by new forms of mobility and distraction

20 years after the signing of the European Road Safety Charter, the expert organization DEKRA, one of the 39 original signatories in 2004, is calling for road safety efforts not to slacken. “Despite all the successes that have been achieved over the past two decades, we have to face the fact that the number of road deaths has only been falling very slowly for around ten years”, says Jann Fehlauer, Managing Director of DEKRA Automobil GmbH, Board Member of the German Road Safety Council and Chairman of the Europe Regional Advisory Group of the international vehicle inspection association CITA.

On April 6, 2004, ministers from 15 EU states and ten accession countries as well as representatives of associations and companies signed the European Road Safety Charter in Dublin. The guest of honor was Formula 1 star Michael Schumacher. The then CEO Prof. Dr.-Ing. Gerhard Zeidler signed on behalf of DEKRA. “The goal of the European Union coincides with DEKRA's central concern”, said Zeidler at the time. “Ever since DEKRA was established, our work has centered around increasing road safety.”

Although DEKRA's commitment to a safe, secure and sustainable world has since expanded and diversified, these principles still apply 20 years later.

With more than 31 million vehicle inspections a year in 24 countries, DEKRA is by far the world's number 1 and thus makes a significant contribution to road safety by identifying and eliminating technical defects. DEKRA also contributes to vehicle safety through its work in the field of homologation and type approval. For more than 40 years, DEKRA Accident Research has been working on deriving conclusions for greater road safety from real accidents. The annual DEKRA Road Safety Report is a highly respected international publication and provides specific recommendations. DEKRA's

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experts are also valued as competent discussion partners in national and international committees.

“Road safety is our common goal and shared responsibility. When launching the European Road Safety Charter in 2004, our vision was a platform dedicated to those committed to safer roads across Europe and to highlight and share their experience. DEKRA was one of the first to join and you have since been an active and much-appreciated member”, says EU Road Safety Coordinator Kristian Schmidt. “As you mark 20 years of membership of the European Road Safety Charter, we thank you and we celebrate every single life saved through a road safety project by one of our members.”

Today, more than 4,000 members have signed up to the European Road Safety Charter. And notable successes have also been achieved over the past two decades: In the year the European Charter was signed, a total of approximately 44,800 people died in road accidents in today's EU member states. By 2014, this figure had fallen to about 24,200. Since then, however, the pace of reduction has slowed considerably, although developments in the individual member states vary greatly. According to provisional figures from the European Commission, 20,400 people died on EU roads last year.

“The change in mobility towards active and more sustainable forms of transportation such as cycling or walking, as well as new forms of mobility such as e-scooters, present additional challenges. However, the increasing distraction caused by smartphones and other electronic devices is also a negative factor that we need to address. It takes a lot of effort in terms of information and persuasion to make progress here”, says Fehlaue.

Assistance systems and automated driving functions can mitigate the consequences of human error. However, Fehlaue also sees new risks: “Systems that function very well and reliably, particularly in the areas of distance control and lane keeping, for example, tempt too many road users to turn their attention to tasks other than driving”, he points out. “With the current systems, however, the responsibility still remains with people, and nobody should close their eyes to that.”

Picture Caption

DEKRA, one of the initial signatories of the European Road Safety Charter in 2004, has been committed to road safety for almost 100 years – as the world's number one in the field of vehicle inspection, with homologation and type approval services, accident analysis and accident research, crash tests (photo), and many other activities.



About DEKRA

DEKRA was originally founded in 1925 to ensure road safety through vehicle inspection. With a much wider scope today, DEKRA is the world's largest independent non-listed expert organization in the testing, inspection, and certification sector. As a global provider of comprehensive services and solutions, we help our customers improve their safety, security, and sustainability outcomes. In 2022, DEKRA generated sales totaling nearly EUR 3.8 billion. The company currently employs almost 50,000 people who offer qualified and independent expert services in approximately 60 countries on five continents. With a platinum rating from EcoVadis, DEKRA is now in the top one percent of sustainable businesses ranked.