

Press Release

DEKRA Road Safety Report 2024 presented in Brussels

EU Road Safety Coordinator: “There is no ‘acceptable’ number of road deaths”

- ▶ Positive development in road fatality statistics has stalled in the past years
- ▶ Road infrastructure needs a clear focus on safety
- ▶ For the time being, the human factor still plays a key role

EU Road Safety Coordinator Kristian Schmidt has renewed the European Commission’s commitment to improving safety on Europe’s roads. At DEKRA’s annual reception in Brussels, Schmidt said, “There is no ‘acceptable’ number of road deaths. So, we need to continue acting on all levers of the ‘safe system’. Not only more investment in road infrastructure, but also safe speeds, safe vehicles, better road behavior, and improved post-crash care. As we enter a new European Commission term, our commitment to helping create that safe system will not change.” Schmidt, who is Director Land Transport at the European Commission’s DG MOVE, has contributed to the 2024 DEKRA Road Safety Report entitled “Traffic Environments for People”. The report with a focus on road infrastructure was presented at the event in Brussels by Jann Fehlauer, Executive Vice President of DEKRA Group. The 17th report in the series examines various infrastructure-related problem areas from the perspective of accident research, traffic psychology, vehicle technology, infrastructure design and legislation.

More than ever before, road infrastructure is caught between a wide variety of demands. Added to this is the rapid change in mobility behavior in many parts of the world. Further developments in the areas of sensor technology, computing power and battery capacity have created new forms of mobility or revolutionized existing ones. This change is taking place faster than it is possible to adapt the infrastructure.

“In view of these complex challenges, careful planning and implementation of appropriate measures are more important than ever in order to avoid accidents altogether or at least minimize their consequences”, says Fehlauer. “No matter whether infrastructure is designed for mixed traffic, such as local and rural roads, or whether it is reserved for certain groups of users, such as pedestrian zones, cycle highways or freeways: The focus must always be on safety”, Fehlauer emphasizes.

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Inadequate road conditions in many parts of the world

Statistics show that there is still a lot to do in this respect. Although the number of road deaths in the EU fell by 32.8 percent between 2010 and 2021, from 29,600 to 19,900, the positive development has stalled for the past couple of years: The figure rose again to just under 20,600 in 2022; for 2023, the EU estimates around 20,400 road deaths in the preliminary statistics. "From today's perspective, the target set by the WHO and the EU itself of halving the number of road deaths between 2021 and 2030 will likely be difficult to achieve", the DEKRA experts state in the report.

Jens Gieseke, MEP, EPP Coordinator of the Committee Transport and Tourism, pledged continued political efforts for road safety. "Politics must contribute to the protection of human life with its decisions. Despite the good development of city centers, the necessity of road safety measures in other areas is becoming apparent. Especially country roads are particularly dangerous, and many trips end fatally. In 2022, more than half of the fatal traffic accidents occurred there. In Finland and Ireland, the figure was as high as two thirds. The roots of the problem must be tackled, and efficient measures taken. One approach to this is the expansion of vehicle communication."

In his statement in the DEKRA Road Safety Report, Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director of the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), focused on the topic of 30 km/h (~20 mph) speed limits in cities. In his opinion, municipalities should be empowered to introduce 30 km/h by default without national governments putting obstacles in their way. "It would be naïve to think that 30 km/h limits will end road death and injury in cities. But it should be seen as a simple, cost-effective move that has benefits beyond safety", writes Avenoso. "It also signals loud and clear the acceptance of a reality that has been forgotten in many corners of Europe: that cities should be designed for the benefit of all citizens, not just those that choose to travel by car."

Responsible behavior and adherence to rules remain essential

Infrastructure, regulatory frameworks, as well as vehicle technology each play an important role in road safety. However, in all efforts, one essential requirement must not be forgotten, emphasized DEKRA manager Jann Fehlauer: "To prevent dangerous situations from arising in the first place, responsible behavior, the correct assessment of one's own abilities and a high degree of adherence to the rules are and remain essential." Even the best road and communication infrastructure or vehicle technology cannot change that fact. For the time being, the human factor still plays a key role.

The DEKRA Road Safety Report 2024 “Traffic Environments for People” is available to download online at www.dekra-roadsafety.com. All previous reports can also be found there, including additional content.

Picture Caption

DEKRA annual reception in Brussels, marking the presentation of the 2024 DEKRA Road Safety Report: (from left to right) Maik Beermann, Head of External Affairs and Advocacy at DEKRA; Kristian Schmidt, EU Road Safety Coordinator; DEKRA CEO Stan Zurkiewicz; Jens Gieseke, MEP; Jann Fehlauer, Executive Vice President DEKRA; Oliver Deiters, Head of the DEKRA Representation in Brussels.

Photo: Alexander Louvet / DEKRA

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 2023, DEKRA generated revenue of EUR 4.1 billion. The company currently employs around 49,000 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.