



To: Member States' Representatives in the Motor Vehicle Working Group (MVWG)

Cc: European Commissioner for Internal Market, European Commissioner for Transport  
MEP Roza Thun, MEP Petra De Sutter, MEP Karima Delli  
Attachés for Internal Market

24 September 2020

Dear Sir, Madam,

Last year, the Council gave the green light to a new set of world-beating minimum vehicle safety standards for the European Union, due to come into force from 2022.

We are writing to draw your attention to the risk of weakening of these standards in a [draft delegated act](#) on Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) prepared by the European Commission as part of the technical implementation of the new Regulation. An updated version of the draft delegated act is expected to be presented to Member States at the next Working Group on Motor Vehicles on 8 October, which we hope you will be able to attend.

Inappropriate speed is still one of the biggest killers on our roads, as the [latest data from Germany](#) confirm. Around a third of fatal collisions involve at least one party driving at an inappropriate speed, with cyclists and pedestrians being particularly susceptible.

As you will be well aware, [road deaths in Europe](#) have not declined in recent years. If we want to improve road safety and reach the newly-agreed targets for 2030, tackling speed is essential.

Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) is a key technology for helping drivers avoid speeding, and, if implemented correctly, could eventually reduce road deaths by 20% - a game-changer. But the proposed draft delegated act would allow carmakers to fit a much less effective system than the one envisaged during the preparatory stages of the legislation you passed last year.

### **No evidence that a “cascaded acoustic warning” is effective**

Instead of requiring the use of a truly effective ISA technology that actually assists with speed compliance through feedback on the accelerator itself or by cutting engine power, the Commission draft delegated act proposes also allowing “cascaded acoustic warnings”.

There is no research basis for such a system – seemingly going against the Commission’s own “better regulation” agenda - and neither was it considered during the preparatory stages of the legislation.

The evidence for audible speeding alerts in general is that they are annoying and therefore likely to be switched off. [Research carried out for ETSC](#) by the Institute for Transport Studies at the University of Leeds found audible alerts to be the most annoying ISA type. Research by ACEA, representing vehicle manufacturers, found that drivers would be 90% likely to switch off such a

system.<sup>1</sup> The ISA feedback should not push drivers to switch the system off, it should be pleasant enough that it encourages drivers to use ISA, otherwise this would not be an 'effective' system as required by the legislation.

It is also obvious that an acoustic system will be ineffective for those that are hard of hearing or deaf - a particular concern amongst older drivers.

We believe that the Commission should only allow ISA systems where evidence of effectiveness is available; 'effectiveness' being a requirement of the legislation. Effectiveness must also include acceptance by drivers - not a system that is highly likely to be deactivated due to annoyance. According to the evidence, the best available options are either "haptic feedback", which uses increased force feedback on the accelerator control, or a "speed control function" which limits engine power. The latter system is already found on many cars on the market today, including the Ford Focus.

### **No single-step total deactivation of the system**

Our second concern with the proposed legislation is that, although the system would be on at the start of every journey, it could be deactivated completely for the rest of the drive with the flick of a switch. We believe that the system should be temporarily overridable until a new speed limit is detected (to allow the driver to respond to an incorrect speed limit) - but total deactivation for the rest of the journey should only be possible when the vehicle is at a standstill, through a sequence of actions. This would furthermore ensure for consistency with the switch-off procedures for other driver assistance systems such as advanced emergency braking systems.

### **Very high standards of accuracy for speed limit detection rates needed**

Our third concern with the draft legislation is that the proposed accuracy rates for speed limit detection are too weak. High accuracy will also be essential to driver acceptance of the system. [ETSC recommends](#) that 99% of explicit speed signs be correctly interpreted by the system, together with 95% of implicit speed signs (such as those indicating that you are leaving an urban area) and 95% of conditional speed signs (such as those with speed limits for certain times of day or specific categories of vehicle).

We urge you to ensure that these concerns are taken on board during the upcoming discussions on the draft delegated act, so that this legislation can be as effective as was intended.

Yours sincerely,

Antonio Avenoso, Executive Director, European Transport Safety Council (ETSC)

Anna-Lisa Boni, Secretary General, EURO CITIES

Professor Oliver Carsten, University of Leeds, UK

Jeannot Mersch, President, European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR)

Stephen Russell, Secretary General, ANEC – The European consumer voice in standardisation

William Todts, Executive Director, Transport & Environment

Karen Vancluyssen, Secretary General, POLIS Network - Cities and Regions for Transport Innovation

Geert van Waeg, President, International Federation of Pedestrians

David Ward, President, Towards Zero Foundation

Jill Warren, CEO, European Cyclists Federation (ECF)

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<sup>1</sup> See ACEA research cited in TRL interim report for the European Commission, page 74  
<https://bit.ly/3hGIUmw>