

Respecting the Rules Better Road Safety Enforcement in the European Union

**Consultation contributor: Ministry of Communications & Works
and the Police,
Republic of Cyprus**

Background

Every year in Cyprus we have approximately 102 fatalities, 912 serious injuries and 2275 slight injuries (last five years average). These records represent one of the worst cases in national level around EU25. On the other hand every year Cyprus accepts tourists triple its population though Cyprus is an island with no land borders with another State. These tourists usually arrive in Cyprus by air. As for freight road transport there is no direct international land services beside a small amount of RO-RO movements through ports.

The table below shows the involvement of foreigners in fatal accidents. In approximately 33% of the fatal accidents there is involvement of a foreigner. 1/3 of these accidents is caused by Cypriots and the rest by foreigners. Foreigners may be tourists, permanent residents, workers, or visitors. Approximately 23% of the total foreigners' fatalities are tourists.

YEAR	TOTAL FATAL ACCIDENTS	TOTAL FATALITIES	No. of FATAL ACCIDENTS- FOREIGNERS* INVOLVED	CAUSED BY CYPRIOTS	CAUSED BY FOREIGNERS	FOREIGNERS FATALITIES
2003	86	97	25	9	15	21
2004	110	117	40	16	24	33
2005	94	102	38	6	32	34
total	290	316	103	31	71	88

Our Views

1. We agree with the definition of the problem given by the Commission and that the solutions must address the problem efficiently and effectively thus helping the EU Member States reaching the 2010 goal.

2. We believe that if the application of the Directive is limited to the Trans-European Road Network it will not be effective, especially in the case of Cyprus since the TEN covers only a small proportion of the total network. Furthermore it will not be cost effective given the level of investment required to set up the required mechanisms.

3. There is no doubt that the three main traffic offences responsible for road accidents and deaths in the EU and in Cyprus are speeding, drink-driving and non-use of seat belts. We are propose the inclusion of more serious traffic offences such as the non-use of safety helmets by riders of powered two wheeled and traffic signal violations.

4. Cyprus supports the fifth option presented by the European Commission in the Consultation Paper. We strongly support the creation of a Common Forum, which could be managed by the European Commission and support Member States in collecting, analyzing and exchanging best practices. Small countries like Cyprus have limited resources for research but they can easily try new practices as pilot schemes. However we support the fifth option not for the above reasons but because we believe that Europeans are entitled to live in the safest possible road safety conditions. We believe that Cypriots will be willing to accept stricter enforcement measures if they are convinced that are effective in providing a safer road environment and less road victims. In this framework we would like to see sanctions against non- resident offenders in the country where the offenders are normally resident (with no limitation regarding the level of the fine) but above all the introduction of enforcement and public information methods and measures meet common European standards and targets.

Conclusions

In conclusion we would like the Commission to proceed with the formulation of specific measures and the identification of any possible side effects or legal problems through a comprehensive impact assessment study. Furthermore each Member State should be requested to provide information on the existing situation in order to enable the estimation of the required financial resources. Finally we believe that the first step after the adoption of the proposed Directive should be the establishment of the Common Forum which will support and guide the Member States in the implementation of the provisions .

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