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Communauté d'Agglomération de La Rochelle

POLIS EUROPEAN CITIES AND REGIONS NETWORKING FOR INNOVATIVE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

EUROCITIES

ETSC European Transport Safety Council
25 YEARS 1993-2018

ECF EUROPEAN CYCLISTS' FEDERATION

TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT

To: President of the European Commission,
Mr Jean Claude Juncker

Cc:
First Vice-President of the European Commission,
Frans Timmermans
Vice-Presidents Maroš Šefčovič, Jyrki Katainen
Commissioners Elżbieta Bieńkowska, Violeta Bulc

Karima Delli, Chair of the Transport Committee of the European Parliament
Anneleen van Bossuyt, Chair of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy Committee of the European Parliament

On 16th May 2018, the European Commission will update the General Safety and Pedestrian Safety Regulations that set Europe's vehicle safety standards. We are writing to you to urge you to make road safety a priority and to put forward ambitious new vehicle standards.

The cities that sign this letter are all very actively engaged in efforts to promote walking and cycling. We do this because we strive to make our cities better places for our citizens to live, while also improving public health and protecting the environment. Addressing road safety is a vital part of this effort. While we are working to improve roads, reduce vehicle speeds and educate road users, it is also essential that action is taken to improve the safety of vehicles themselves.

We therefore urge you, as part of the GSR proposal, to introduce a European direct vision standard for Heavy Goods Vehicles that makes safer designs compulsory for new trucks sold from 2024.

This standard should include:

a) **The elimination of the blind spot at the front of trucks and a significantly reduced blind spot on the passenger side.**

b) **A differentiated approach based on the type of truck, so that safer vehicles can be introduced in urban areas as soon as possible.**

The EU has the exclusive competence to mandate safety improvements for new cars, vans and trucks and has done so successfully in the past – the last new safety requirements date back to 2009. There remains huge potential for improvement. Your own studies show that advanced

emergency braking (AEB), intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) and direct vision standards for trucks could save thousands of lives at limited cost. Indeed, these technologies are already commercially available, but are usually optional and therefore expensive. Mandating improved safety for all new vehicles – i.e. at the stage of production - would increase sales volumes and greatly reduce costs, making safer vehicles accessible to all.

One area of particular concern is truck safety. A modern and vibrant city cannot do without trucks – they are essential, for example, to supply retailers and for construction projects. But the majority of today's trucks are not fit for urban environments. They have poor direct vision and therefore large blind spots. If collisions occur with pedestrians or cyclists, they are often fatal. Fortunately, there are solutions: a number of European manufacturers already produce trucks with low entry cabins that have excellent direct vision. A differentiated approach would allow manufacturers to introduce new cab designs in the first instance on the vehicles most often deployed in urban areas, such as those used in the construction industry. Many cities are encouraging the use of these direct vision trucks through public procurement or as part of tenders. Others are introducing rules that ban some of the most dangerous trucks. But local initiatives lack the scale to have a significant impact on the availability and cost of safer trucks. Moreover, there is a risk that cities across Europe will adopt different schemes, potentially imposing costs on hauliers and their customers which could be avoided if basic vehicle design prioritised safety.

The European Commission therefore has an opportunity to make a real impact in improving road safety throughout Europe. The European Commission's review of the General Safety (EC/661/2009) and Pedestrian Safety (EC/78/2009) Regulations is long overdue. We would welcome new and ambitious safety rules, in particular the mandating of standards for direct vision, and would fully support the Commission's work in this area.