

TO:

Commissioners Bienkowska, Bulc, Katainen, Timmermans and Šefčovič

CC:

Karima Delli, chair of the transport committee  
Vicky Ford, chair of the internal market committee

EU transport ministers

**RE: review of the General Safety and Pedestrian Protection Regulation**

The European Commission will soon 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 top priority and to come forward with ambitious new vehicle standards by the end of 2017 – as has also been requested by eight Member States in a joint letter earlier this year.

The cities that sign this letter are all engaged in efforts to promote walking and cycling. We do this because we strive to make our cities more liveable but also to improve public health and protect the environment. A vital part of this effort is to ensure the safety of our citizens - and their children – in traffic. We are improving roads, reducing vehicle speeds and investing heavily in traffic education. However, our efforts cannot be successful if we do not also improve in parallel the safety of the cars, vans and trucks.

When it comes to safety standards for vehicles, the EU has great power. It 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're needed, for example, to supply retailers and for construction projects. But today's trucks are very ill-designed for urban environments. They have poor direct vision and therefore huge and deadly blind spots. If crashes occur they are usually fatal. Fortunately, there are solutions: many European manufacturers already supply low entry cabin trucks that have excellent direct vision. Many cities are encouraging their use 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.

This is why we urge you to introduce a European direct vision standard that would make safer designs compulsory, at least for trucks most commonly used in urban areas, and ambitious direct vision requirements for other types. With appropriate differentiation between truck types and, if necessary, a phase-in period, we believe mandatory requirements can be realistically introduced from the early 2020s.

Road safety is a top priority for our citizens and so it should be for the European Commission. The European Commission's review of the General Safety (EC/661/2009) and Pedestrian Safety (EC/78/2009) Regulations is long overdue. We therefore ask you to speed up the review process and make a proposal for new and ambitious safety rules, in particular mandating standards for direct vision, by the end of 2017. This will give us a welcome opportunity to support the Commission's work and point out the benefits of EU action to our citizens.

Signatories

**✘ City of  
✘ Amsterdam  
✘**



**CITY OF COPENHAGEN**

**MAYOR OF LONDON**

