

# NGO

## 'Brussels Declaration'

**Recommendations to Governments from NGOs  
advocating for road victims and road safety  
for the 'Decade of Action for Road Safety'**

In May 2009, more than 100 representatives of 70 NGOs from 40 countries came together for the first time in Brussels at a meeting hosted by the World Health Organization. Using their unique expertise and perspective, participants compiled 33 recommendations to improve road safety



— Summary of NGO recommendations for the 'Decade of Action' —



Advocacy NGOs representing road victims and road users have a particular interest in an improved road safety situation, indeed a fatality free global road transport network. Many such NGOs were set up by people who have suffered bereavement or injury through a road crash and who were motivated by their personal suffering to help other victims or engage in road safety activities.

In May 2009, more than 100 representatives of 70 NGOs from 40 countries came together for the first time in Brussels at a meeting hosted by the World Health Organization. Using their unique expertise and perspective, participants compiled 33 recommendations to improve road safety in five subject areas. Below is a summary of their key recommendations to Governments.

**GENERAL APPROACH**

**The road is a public domain as well as a network to link people. Therefore NGOs call on Governments to:**

- change drastically transportation policy, giving top priority to safety and sustainable mobility
- address traffic-danger related injuries and mobility as a public health and human rights issue
- design roads taking account of the role of the public space and rights and needs of vulnerable road users
- Avoid use of the word "accident" to the extent possible as it implies an event which happens without apparent cause

**PREVENTION**

**It is our duty to reduce road casualties to as close to zero as possible. Therefore NGOs ask Governments to:**

- lead by example in managing risks
- provide resources for research and strict enforcement and reform of traffic laws
- establish a sustainable financing mechanism for road safety
- adopt global standards for traffic police training, driver training and licensing

**POST CRASH RESPONSE**

**Serious post crash response is a vital component of effective road safety policy and includes: immediate rescue interventions, thorough investigations, criminal and civil proceedings if appropriate, long-term rehabilitation and support.**

**Therefore NGOs expect Governments to guarantee:**

- improved emergency services and early rehabilitation to minimize road trauma
- national standards of social, medical and legal care to injured victims and bereaved families
- thorough investigations in order to identify all preventable causes and ensure justice for victims
- an effective, proportionate and deterrent response to traffic law violations involving death or injury

**WORLDWIDE LEARNING**

**It is essential to return to sustainable mobility modes in face of the enormous cost in human lives and the effect of pollution on climate change.**

**Therefore NGOs ask that Governments pay particular attention to:**

- accommodating and integrating all different modes of mobility in the design of all roads
- providing safety and comfort for vulnerable road users

**JOINT INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS**

**NGOs offer Governments their cooperation, expertise and joint initiatives, in return for partnership, secure funding, and support for their work.**

**The NGOs propose:**

- national advocacy networks – to ensure nationwide advocacy for road safety and road victims
- joint observance of the World Day of Remembrance, a Day initiated by victims, as an opportunity for highlighting the consequences of road danger and impact of road death and injury
- establishment of a national memorial to road victims in the capital city of every country
- establishment of an International Coalition Against Road Trauma (ICART), made up of national Coalitions Against Road Trauma

**Appeal from National and International NGOs working for better road safety and rights for road crash victims - to have their proposals, based on hard-earned experience on the ground, included in the Moscow Ministerial Conference's plan of action to end the road death and injury epidemic.**

**Considering that:**

The road death and injury epidemic, which started over a century ago, has so far claimed over 30 million lives worldwide, with an untold number of people who have suffered injury.

Road deaths and injuries shatter lives, but traffic danger has a further major impact on the lives and life-quality of families and communities: it intimidates and restricts movement, and contributes significantly to impact upon climate change, the major challenge facing the world community.

The growing worldwide road casualty toll has led – 108 years after the first road death\* – to the launch by the WHO of the World Report on Road Injury Prevention in 2004 and the consensus that more must be done.

Recognition of the tremendous cost: loss of young lives – the future of families and countries, health- and many other costs, has resulted in this collective agreement.

Ministers and other delegates at the 1st Ministerial Conference in Moscow are pledging actions aimed at reversing the predicted upward spiral of road traffic deaths and injuries\*\*.

As especially interested stakeholders, National and International NGOs\*\*\*, who for years have worked and advocated for better road safety and rights for road crash victims, welcome and fully endorse these proposed actions, some campaigned for by them in the past.

In addition to endorsing the proposals of the Ministerial Declaration, these Road Victim and Road Safety NGOs have vital recommendations to add - from their unique perspective as victims or campaigners and expertise based on years of dedicated work to make the world a safer and more caring place. Particularly crucial are proposals relating to the protection of vulnerable road users and the post crash area, the latter often overlooked as an important road safety component.

The 70 National and International NGOs from 40 countries, having met in Brussels for the 1st Global Meeting of NGOs Advocating for Road Safety and Road Victims on 7-8 May 2009, hereby add a series of recommendations for the 'Decade of Action for Road Safety' (2010 – 2020), which we believe can bring effective and enduring improvements to the world's roads and streets and the health and safety of families and communities the world over.

\*A woman named Bridget Driscoll was the first person in the world to be killed by a car. The year was 1896 and the place London. At the inquest, the coroner expressed the hope that 'such a thing' would never happen again, yet 108 years on the worldwide road death toll exceeds 30 million, increased each year by more than a million with the forecast of the scale increasing.

\*\* Despite sustained efforts at reduction, the global road casualty toll continues to escalate. This has led to a global consensus that much more must be done to stabilize and reverse the trend. Global cooperation started with the launch of the 2004 World Report: the UN Road Safety Collaboration Forum set up by WHO in the wake of the report has propelled road safety higher up the political agenda: several UN resolutions were adopted, important meetings held, various WHO publications produced and the Make Roads Safe Campaign launched. This Conference of Ministers is a further manifestation of the growing importance accorded to road danger and its terrible consequences.

\*\*\* Advocacy NGOs representing road victims and road users have a particular interest in an improved road safety situation, indeed in a fatality free global road transport network: many were set up by people who have suffered bereavement or injury through a road crash, motivating them to help other victims or engage in injury prevention activities. Other organisations were created by people concerned about road danger or inequity in the road transport network, or by governments who were keen to charge an organisation with responsibility for road safety in their country.

**The NGOs recommend the following for the Decade of Action for Road Safety:**

**A GENERAL APPROACH**

**The primary function of the road as part of a network is to connect people: to each other, to activities, to vital resources, to work, to school, and for the transport of goods.**

**Therefore we urge that governments:**

1. drastically change transportation policy, according top priority to safety and sustainable mobility
2. recognize that traffic danger has a significant impact on people's quality of life, restricting movement through fear, especially for children and the elderly
3. consider traffic danger related injuries and mobility as a public health and human rights issue, including for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, who require special protection
4. take account of all road traffic related diseases – including those caused by pollution and car-based sedentary life-styles, not only deaths and injuries in crashes
5. commit to using more appropriate and correct terminology such as Crash, Collision, Injury or Casualty, instead of "Accident", in order to change the public mind-set
6. adopt a global vision statement in order to stimulate and drive change and mobilize the media in all countries - in the pursuit and realization of that vision

**The secondary function of the road as part of the public domain is for people to meet and interact and to enjoy nature, culture or urban complexity.**

**Therefore we urge that:**

7. multi-functionality be considered in road design, not only by simply adopting strict speed restrictions where appropriate, but as a global concept on infrastructure of the public space
8. a clear hierarchy be imposed on the overall road network, whereby the rights and needs of the more vulnerable users and the needs of motorized traffic be equitably balanced in all categories

**B PREVENTION**

**The current road death and injury epidemic, which started over a century ago, has so far claimed over 30 million lives worldwide, with the toll increasing by 1.3 million deaths a year, and an untold number of injuries. Even though we rationally have to accept that all activities carry risks and that due to the world's need for mobility we will not be able to avoid all crashes, it is our duty to be wise and use all available measures to reduce fatalities and serious injuries to as close to zero as possible.**

**Therefore we call upon governments to:**

1. commit to leading by example by carefully managing risks, adopting proven low-cost casualty reduction measures, allocating sufficient resources and marshalling political support for research and for strict enforcement and reform of road traffic laws as appropriate
2. establish a permanent sustainable financing mechanism for road safety
3. formulate and integrate into transport policy National Road Safety Action plans, to include
  - a. priority for walking, cycling, and use of public transport
  - b. a civil compensation system based on driver liability
  - c. improved enforcement and investigation capacity
4. design roads and traffic systems with safety and sustainability as primary objectives, incorporating:
  - a. best practice holistic training for town planners and road construction engineers, to ensure in particular the safety of vulnerable road users – pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists
  - b. Vehicle and Road Assessment programmes
  - c. adoption of active safety technologies (prioritized according to their effectiveness in reducing casualties caused by the major risk factors - speed/alcohol/non-seat belt/or helmet use - across all modes of transport and road users, together with appropriate legislation for their timely application by the motor industry.
  - d. international benchmarks to ensure high standards and quality
5. adopt global standards for traffic police and driver training and for licensing (including for fleet

transport), support the establishment of special national training institutions for road safety specialists and promote sharing of international knowledge and experience

6. engage and involve road safety practitioners, road victims and their (NGO) representatives as equal partners in government consultations and debates on road safety and road victim-related issues
7. promote courtesy, common sense and a lifelong learning programme on road use – in order to raise road user awareness of risk factors and their potentially fatal consequences, both to the risk takers and other road users
8. recognize the tremendous economic and social costs of road danger: medical and rehabilitation costs, costs to government and business caused by traffic delays and disruption, the burden on social funds for the support of grieving, often destitute families, the loss of future generations as young lives are lost or permanently blighted by disability

## C POST CRASH RESPONSE

**Serious post crash response is a vital component of effective road safety policy and demands that once a fatal or injury crash has occurred, two parallel actions take place:**

- a. thorough investigation, followed by measures to prevent a recurrence, along with criminal and civil proceedings where appropriate
- b. immediate short-term rescue interventions and longer-term rehabilitation and support for those who sustained injuries and their families and care-givers, as well as for the relatives of those killed

**Therefore, we recommend that governments:**

1. accord priority to improving emergency services and the immediate post-crash response (golden hour) and the adoption of a global emergency telephone number
2. provide early rehabilitation to minimize emotional trauma, especially in children, and ensure social, medical (psychological and physical) and legal care for injured victims and bereaved families to satisfactory national standards, for as long as this is needed
3. conduct thorough investigations of crashes, especially fatal and injury crashes, in order to identify all causes and employ all available measures to prevent their recurrence, drawing upon existing research and proven reduction measures from other countries – ‘no need to re-invent the wheel’
4. award settlements to victims, based on a fair and proportionate assessment of short and long-term effects suffered by them, independent of the insurance status of the person or vehicle that caused the crash and according to transparent and timely procedures
5. provide automatic compensation to the most vulnerable users, except in cases of proven gross negligence by them; i.e. apply strict liability law, based on the principle that the party with the greatest “uncontrolled kinetic energy concentration” is likely to cause greater damage, and therefore bears the greater responsibility
6. apply an effective, proportionate and deterrent legal response to road law violations and death and injury caused thereby, commensurate to the offence of endangering life, taking a life or affecting quality of life, with procedures and verdict delivering justice for road crash victims
7. conduct national situational reviews to monitor road collision investigation capability, number of criminal prosecutions in cases of road death and injury and standard of services for crash victims

## D WORLDWIDE LEARNING

**Many of the currently existing roads follow old, sometimes even medieval, pedestrian routes. In high-income countries, development and prosperity were often confused with unlimited motorised mobility, and the original unpaved footpaths, shared between pedestrians and carriages, became paved streets or roads, shared between pedestrians, bicycles, motorcycles, cars and trucks, evolving all too frequently into the monopolisation of the limited space by motorized traffic, especially in less urbanised areas.**

**The negative result of this development is that pedestrians are viewed as a nuisance. They in turn, motivated by fear for their lives, aspire to escape into the perceived protection of a vehicle. This leaves the most deprived and vulnerable to fend for themselves and often paying for using the current roads with their lives. The imperative is to evolve sustainable modes of**

**transport which safely and equitably accommodate all road users, minimize the carbon emissions leading to irreversible climate change and reduce the enormous loss of human life from crashes and related traffic pollution.**

**Therefore we suggest that governments pay particular attention to:**

1. applying the lessons learnt in best practice countries when building or improving road infrastructure in low- and middle-income countries
2. correcting all unsatisfactory road danger situations in whichever country they occur
3. accommodating different modes of mobility in the design of new or modified roads
4. providing safety and comfort to vulnerable road users by either designating special zones for vulnerable road users, which exclude motorized traffic, or in their absence introduce strictly enforced speed limits for the entire road, the limits dependent on the type of road

## E JOINT INITIATIVES AND ACTIONS

**The NGOs pledge to collaborate with each other, to collaborate with their governments and other stakeholders, whom they offer their expertise, hard work and passion towards the common goal of:**

- \* roads that can be used without fear or danger
- \* a minimum number of casualties and
- \* a serious response to all those deaths and injuries that could not be avoided, including support for injured road crash victims and the bereaved.

**Several global initiatives, existing or proposed, offer an ideal opportunity for participation by politicians, institutions and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the devastating consequences of crashes, as well as for NGOs to connect with each other through shared events and actions.**

**Therefore we propose that:**

1. NGOs working in the areas of road danger reduction and road victim advocacy and support are considered and treated as equal partners and ensured secure funding
2. the establishment of a national advocacy network, consisting in the main of NGOs, is supported, to ensure nationwide advocacy for road safety and road victims
3. the World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims – a Day held on the 3rd Sunday of November and adopted by the UN - is officially recognised and observed in every country, since it offers all governments and organisations the opportunity to highlight the consequences and impact of road danger, acknowledge the suffering of families and communities (concentrating on remembrance) and give thanks to emergency personnel and all others affected by road trauma
4. a national memorial to road crash victims is established in the capital city of every country – as a reminder of lives lost and a focal point for remembrance and other gatherings or actions
5. a Global Road Safety Day or Week is established and supported, ideally to be held well apart from the World Day of Remembrance - to give a further opportunity for highlighting the consequences of road danger, but with a special focus on prevention
6. support is given to a National Coalition Against Road Trauma, which would involve national organisations and individuals working in the post crash areas, in particular members from the health community, and be part of a worldwide network - International Coalition Against Road Trauma (ICART) – with the common aim of minimizing road trauma

***Change doesn't just happen, it is propelled by men and women whose spirits are provoked and inspired to make a difference.***

Olanrewaju Osho, Safety Alliance, Nigeria, one of the NGO signatories of this Appeal

## Signed

Amend.org, USA, Ghana and Tanzania  
ArriveSAFE, India  
Asia Injury Prevention Foundation, Vietnam  
ASIRT, Kenya  
Asociación para el estudio de la lesión medular espinal (AESLEME), Spain  
ASOTRANSITO, Venezuela  
Associação de Cidadãos Auto-Mobilizados (ACA-M), Portugal  
Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT), USA  
Association nationale des Victimes de la Route (AVR), Luxembourg  
Association of Road Victims (VVS), The Netherlands  
Association Tunisienne de la Prévention Routière, Tunisia  
Associazione Italiana Familiari e Vittime della Strada (AIFVS), Italy  
Campaign for Travellers Safety Trust, Tanzania  
Chariots of Destiny Organization, Kenya  
Deutscher Verkehrssicherheitsrat e.V. (DVR), Germany  
Dignitas, Germany  
Drive Alive, South Africa  
El-Elyon Associates, Nigeria  
ESY- PROTA, Greece  
European Cyclists' Federation, Belgium  
European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR), United Kingdom  
European Transport Safety Council (ETSC), Belgium  
Familiares y Amigos de las Víctimas de la Tragedia de Santa Fe, Argentina  
Families and Victims of Traffic Accidents (FAVAT), Argentina  
FIA Foundation for the Automobile and Society, United Kingdom  
Fundación Gonzalo Rodríguez, Uruguay  
Gesellschaft für Ursachenforschung bei Verkehrsunfällen e.V. (GUVU), Germany  
Global Road Safety Partnership, Switzerland  
Handicap International, Belgium  
Hellenic Action Against Cancer, Greece  
Hellenic Association for Road Traffic Victim Support (E.Y.ΘY.T.A ), Rhodes-Greece  
Hikmat Road Safety, Jordan  
International Federation of Pedestrians, Switzerland  
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)  
johanna.be, Belgium  
Justice & Jane Foundation, Cameroon  
La Prévention Routière Internationale, The Netherlands  
LASER International, Senegal  
Luchemos por la Vida, Argentina  
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Canada  
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), USA  
NAH Zorg, The Netherlands  
No A Conducir Ebrio (NACE), Mexico  
ONg FON DEI MA BORI, Niger  
P(A)T- AP(A)T – Asociación de Prevención de Accidentes de Tráfico, Spain  
Parents d'Enfants Victimes de la Route (PEVR), Belgium  
Project C.A.R.E.S., Philippines  
Prompt Assistance to Victims of Road Accidents (PATVORA), Nigeria  
Research Group for Health Psychology, Belgium  
Responsible Young Drivers, Belgium  
Road and Safety Association, Poland  
Road Tears, Romania  
RoadPeace, United Kingdom  
Safe Journey Institute (Zavod Varna Pot), Slovenia  
Safety Alliance, Nigeria  
Salim and Salimah, Safe and Sound/Al Mustadaama Sustainability, Sultanate of Oman  
SECURROUTE, Cameroon  
South Africans Against Drunk Driving, South Africa  
STOP ACCIDENTES, Spain  
Suat Ayöz Traffic Victims Association, Turkey  
The Royal Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents, United Kingdom  
Traffic Accident Victims Net (TAV), Japan  
Udruga Obitelji osoba stradalih u promet, Croatia  
Ukrainian Road Safety Association, Ukraine  
Uwaba Cyclists Group (Umma wa Wapanda Baisikeli Dar es Salaam), Tanzania  
Veilig Verkeer Nederland, The Netherlands  
Victimas de Violencia Vial AC., Mexico  
Vida Urgente, Brazil  
You Are What U Do – Kostas Kouvidis, Greece  
Youth Association for Social Awareness, Lebanon  
Youth Task Force, India

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Brigitte Chaudhry coordinated the drafting, agreement with text by the various NGOs and design of the 'Brussels Declaration', from 1st draft to final document.  
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