

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(93) 348 final

Brussels, 23 July 1993

Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

on the creation of a Community data base
on road accidents

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

Facts - Annual road accident figures for the Community:

± 50 000 deaths
± 1 500 000 injured

A. INTRODUCTION

As long ago as 1986 (Road Safety Year) when it adopted a resolution on common measures to reduce road accidents,¹ Parliament wanted to set up a Community data base on such accidents. The Commission later announced the creation of a data base of this kind in its communication entitled, "Road Safety: A priority for the Community",² and a high-level group of experts espoused the idea in a report entitled "Towards a European Road Safety Policy" (Gerondeau Report, February 1991).

The setting up of a Community road accident data bank was also one of the priorities agreed by the high-level working party of representatives of the Governments of the Member States established at the Council's request to implement a Community programme of practical measures designed to put into effect new common initiatives and compare existing national experience in different areas of activity and research relating to the campaign against road accidents and the consequences for the victims of such accidents.

B. GENERAL GROUNDS

a. What are the aims of the measures under consideration, and what obligations would devolve upon the Community as a result?

The proposal is to create a data base containing all the statistics on road accidents in the Community resulting in injury or death. It will be made up of the 12 national data bases so interconnected by a computerized system as to permit centralized interrogation. The main objective is to provide the Community with a tool that will enable it to conduct a more effective campaign to make the roads safer.

1 OJ No C 68, 24.3.1986, p.35.

2 COM(88) 704 final, 9.1.1989.

The Community road safety data base offers the major advantage of considerably widening the range of cases which could be studied and of gathering and entering data on an accident by accident (disaggregated) basis, which means that the information extracted is more telling. With this kind of data base it is also possible to measure the size of the problems and estimate the added value and pertinence of Community action.

- b. Does the Community have sole jurisdiction in respect of the measure under consideration or is jurisdiction shared with the Member States?

Jurisdiction is shared.
Article 213.

- c. What is the Community dimension of the problem (for instance how many Member States are affected and what solutions have been applied so far)?

At present each Member State gathers data on accidents resulting in injury or death and these figures show up major differences in levels of road safety. The differences may be due to any of a multitude of factors (infrastructure, rules of the road, population density, cultural factors, the state of vehicles in general), all of which generate different problems and elicit different responses from the various States - some more appropriate than others. Although national data exist, they are not available internationally and cannot therefore be used by those wishing to carry out studies, do research or benefit from the positive experience gained in other countries.

Consequently, in its White Paper on the future development of the common transport policy³ and its communication on an action programme on road safety⁴ the Commission states that one of the first priorities in campaigning against the lack of safety on the roads must be to encourage the exchange of information and experience and to set up a Community data bank for the purpose.

- d. What is the most effective way of comparing Community methods with those of the Member States?

The creation of a Community data base would entail harmonizing statistical definitions and data collection methods, but the costs would be huge and national administrations (notably statistical institutes and the police, who would have to gather the data) could not in present circumstances be expected to shoulder such a burden.

3 COM(92) 494, 2.12.1992.

4 COM(93) 246, 9.6.1993.

The Commission will take a gradualist approach. The first step will be a three-year pilot scheme that will involve incorporating existing national data bases in a common computerized structure with centralized interrogation. Together with the Member States the Commission will then examine methodological and technical problems with a view to achieving increasingly consistent data over a period of time. At the end of the trial period and on the strength of the evaluation of the pilot project the Commission will report to the Council so that a decision can be taken on how to proceed and what further action should be taken. This may entail proceeding to the operational phase.

The only action required of the Member States, will be to transmit their current files to the Statistical Office of the European Communities (SOEC) once a year.

With good coordination, it will thus be possible to combine the efforts of the various Member States, to make significant headway and solve the difficult and important problem of analysing the causes of accidents.

e. What specific value would the Community measure under consideration add and what would be the price of taking no action?

(1) A wider range of information

There will first of all be a quantitative increase in information. Using data for twelve countries means that the results will be more precise as they will be drawn from a broader statistical base.

Secondly, the quality of the information will be enhanced. Collecting data on countries with disparate structures will afford each country access to data on situations encountered less frequently at home than in other Member States. For instance, a country with low average traffic density will have difficulty in extracting from its own statistics precise results relating to the few areas of high traffic density occurring there whereas such results will be easily found in the statistics of a neighbouring country. Likewise, pooling statistics of several countries may enable one of them to obtain information on the effectiveness of measures that have already been taken in other countries and whose introduction it is itself contemplating.

Thus the diversity of situations encountered in each Member State will give the Community data base considerable breadth and depth.

These more plentiful, precise and reliable figures will redound to the benefit of inter alia:

- (a) authorities responsible for drawing up and monitoring national policies. They will be able to use the data base as a source of studies and information on experience in other countries;
- (b) regional and municipal authorities, who will be able to make comparisons with regions or towns in other countries that have no parallels in their own country. There is heightened interest on the part of local authorities in such comparisons as efforts to reduce accidents are also boosted by finely-tuned action at local level;
- (c) road safety research institutes. Anyone who has worked for this kind of body knows to what extent the quality of research findings or even the scope for conducting research in the first place depends on the existence of reliable statistics;
- (d) motor manufacturers and insurance companies, who may be both suppliers and requesters of information.

The Commission could benefit directly from this data base, particularly in the context of its common transport policy of which safety is a key facet. It could gather statistics that would help it carry out its various tasks, for instance in industrial policy relating to road vehicles. In implementing such policies the objectives defined should wherever possible be based on studies carried out on like principles. In addition, it entails monitoring the effectiveness of the measures taken, which in turn requires detailed information on a Community basis. So this entire policy hinges on the existence of a Community data base containing reliable statistics.

(II) Disaggregated data to facilitate the exchange of experiences

The beauty of the proposed data base compared with present and previous efforts by international bodies is that its data are disaggregated, i.e. they treat each accident separately. The investigation potential of this kind of data is well known in all statistical studies, particularly in connection with transport and traffic studies and it would also be useful in the field of safety.

Using disaggregated data it is possible to obtain all the classic indicators, such as total number of people injured, fatalities and a breakdown of these numbers into categories such as the type of surroundings, the time of day and the driver's age. Trends over time can then be established and causal relations inferred.

Disaggregated analysis, which makes for a much more precise study of causes, thus also makes it easier to apply the findings from one situation to another and hence transfer them from one country to another.

Moreover, the availability of disaggregated data allows greater flexibility in compiling aggregate data and allows data to be aggregated in many different ways.

Finally, creating a disaggregated data base means less work for the Member States as all they have to do is transfer their existing data base.

(III) Basis for true international cooperation

The introduction of such a data base will facilitate the transfer of experience from one country to another and avoid the duplication of research effort. It will also help international bodies and committees to draw up standards and regulations relating to road traffic, motor vehicles and integrated road safety policies.

Creating a Community road accident data base does not merely entail having and being able to exchange information; it should also provide a basis for international cooperation and create an environment conducive to greater road safety in the Community.

Finally, centralizing the data will make work easier for national administrations since the Commission, in conjunction with the Member States, will be able to supply on-line data to international bodies such as the United Nations, the ECTM and the OECD, acting as far as possible in line with current international recommendations and at the same time seeking to avoid duplication of effort.

f. and g. What type of action is available to the Community (recommendation, financial support, regulation, mutual recognition, etc.)?
Is uniform regulation necessary or would it be sufficient to issue a directive setting out the general aims and leaving implementation to the Member States?

Coordination and pooling of existing national data base would be sufficient to achieve the aims of the measure. However, since disaggregated road accident statistics are not in the public domain, this will require a Community instrument making it mandatory to transmit the data to the SOEC and establishing certain management rules to ensure that the data base operates satisfactorily.

A Council Decision leaving implementation to the Member States and the Committee on Statistical Programmes of the European Communities set up in 1989 is therefore justifiable. The provisions of this proposal for a decision will not require any changes to existing national legislation.

Special considerations

re Article 1

Article 1 defines the coverage of the data base, i.e. only those statistics relating to road accidents resulting in injury or death and not those involving only material damage.

Owing to the seriousness of such accidents they should be given priority treatment. The sheer volume of figures relating to them makes for valid statistical analysis.

re Article 2

This article provides for the transmission of data once a year to the Statistical Office of the European Communities (SOEC). It also provides that the confidentiality of certain data deemed by Member States to be sensitive should be safeguarded, especially information on the identity of persons, which could be removed from the files transferred.

re Article 3

This article sets out the principles governing the transmission of data and the technical arrangements for cooperation between national administrations and the Commission.

re Article 4

Access to the base will initially be limited so that dissemination of the data can be monitored. It is essential to:

- ensure that the system is reliable before opening it up to a wider range of potential users;
- prevent certain sensitive data (e.g. on accidents under the influence of alcohol or relating to the wearing of seat belts) from being used out of context and without the necessary precautions being taken to ensure that they are correctly interpreted.

re Article 7

Experience gained when setting up the data base will make it possible to determine what further steps should be taken.

re Article 9

From the Member States' point of view the creation of the data base merely involves transmitting existing files, so the provisions of this Decision could be put into effect immediately.

proposal for
a Council Decision on the
creation of a Community data base
on road accidents

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 213 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission,¹

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament,²

Having considered to the resolution of the European Parliament on the adoption of common measures to reduce road accidents,³

Whereas the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 21 June 1991 adopted a resolution requesting the Commission to draw up and implement a Community programme of practical measures designed to put into effect new common initiatives and compare existing national experience in the areas of action and research relating to the campaign on road accidents and the consequences thereof for the victims;⁴

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3 OJ No C 68, 24.3.1986, p.35.

4 O.J. n° C 178, 9.7.1991, p. 1

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Whereas the creation of a Community data base on road accidents is one of the priorities selected by the high level group of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States;⁵

Whereas in its White Paper on the Future Development of the Common Transport Policy⁶ and its communication for an action programme on road safety⁷ the Commission considers that, bearing in mind the significant differences in the levels of road safety of the different Member States, a major priority in this area should be to promote the exchange of information and experience and set up a Community data base;

Whereas the Member States gather statistics on road accidents occurring on their territory and centralize the data in national computerized files but whereas there is at present no common data base allowing access to these individual bases and use of the data therein;

Whereas a data base created and managed at Community level would make it possible to identify and quantify the problems, evaluate the efficiency of any measures taken and determine the relevance of any Community action;

Whereas the Member States acting separately cannot create a data bank of this type and whereas the Community, in line with the principle of subsidiarity, will not intervene except to ensure that the national data bases on statistics are centralized, to guarantee close coordination between the Member States and, therefore, the smooth operation of the Community data base;

5 "Priority fields for action and guidelines for a Community Road Safety Programme" - Final report (April 1992 point 3.1.3.)

6 COM(92) 494 of 2.12.1992, V.2.373

7 COM(93) 246, 9.6.1993.

Whereas it is necessary to decide on the practical aspects of transmitting existing national data to the Commission, particularly the intervals, the deadlines and the medium to be used for such transmission;

Whereas any analysis of road safety problems should concentrate first and foremost on accidents involving death or injury and should not include material damage, but whereas for the purpose of such an analysis it is not necessary to identify the persons involved;

Whereas the Commissions should take steps to ensure that confidential statistics are protected,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

1. The Member States shall establish statistics on road accidents resulting in injury or death that occur on their territory.
2. For the purposes of this Directive, "accident resulting in injury or death" means any collision between road users involving at least one vehicle in motion on a public highway normally open to traffic and causing injury to and/or the death of one or more of the road users.
3. The data collected shall be centralized in a national computerized file.

Article 2

1. The data on accidents resulting in injury or death for a given year stored in the national computerized files shall be communicated to the Statistical Office of the European Communities (SOEC) as soon as possible and not later than six months after the end of the reference year in question.
2. Data referred to in paragraph 1 above which are protected by national laws on the confidentiality of statistics shall also be transmitted to the SOEC, which shall treat them in accordance with Council Regulation (EURATOM,EEC) No 1588/90 of 11 June 1990.⁸

The Commission, in consultation with the Member States, shall determine what information should not be included in the files transmitted.

⁸ OJ No L 151, 15.6.1990, p.1.

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Article 3

1. The data shall be transmitted on a readable medium whose type and format shall be decided by the Member States in consultation with the Commission.
2. If the statistics are corrected by the Member States after transmission to the SOEC, the Member States shall communicate to it a complete copy of the updated file.
3. Member States wishing to change the form or content of their data file shall do so in consultation with the Commission. Where Member States make changes to files already transmitted to the SOEC, the amended version of the files in question shall also be transmitted to the SOEC.
4. Each Member State shall be responsible for the quality of the statistics it provides.
5. The Commission shall be responsible for processing the data received.

Article 4

1. The Commission shall be responsible for disseminating the data received. It shall decide, after consulting the Member States concerned, on the procedures for access to the statistics on accidents resulting in injury or death centralized by the Commission, on any publications, and on any other information conducive to the smooth operation of the Community data base.
2. In consultation with the Member States, the Commission shall examine any methodological or technical problems arising in connection with the establishment and transmission of the statistics or the way they are collected in order to find solutions which will gradually lead to the data from the Member States being as consistent and comparable as possible.

Article 5

For the implementation of the consultations provided for in Article 2(2) and Article 4(1) and (2) above, the Commission shall be assisted by the Statistical Programme Committee established under Council Decision 89/382/EEC, Euratom of 19 June 1989,⁹ in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 6 hereafter.

Article 6

The representative of the commission shall submit to the Committee a draft of the measures to be taken. The Committee shall deliver its opinion of the draft, within a time limit which the Chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter, if necessary by taking a vote.

The opinion shall be recorded in the minutes; in addition each Member State shall have the right to ask to have its position recorded in the minutes.

The Commission shall take the utmost account of the opinion delivered by the Committee. It shall inform the Committee of the manner in which the opinion has been taken into account.

Article 7

Three years after the entry into force of this Decision the Commission shall present to the Council:

- (a) an evaluation report on the results obtained in implementing the measures referred to in Articles 2, 3 and 4;
- (b) the conclusions stemming from that report on the continuation of the project provided for by this Decision.

⁹ OJ No L 181 of 28.6.1989, p.47.

Article 8

1. The appropriations allocated each year to this project shall be determined as part of the annual budgetary procedure.
2. The budget authority shall determine the amount of appropriations available in each financial year.

Article 9

Member States shall take the measures necessary to comply with the requirements of this Decision by 31 December 1993 at the latest and shall notify the Commission forthwith that they have done so.

Article 10

This Decision is addressed to the Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the Council,
The President

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT

PRELIMINARY NOTE

Respective responsibilities of DG VII and the SOEC

- (i) This draft proposal for a decision on the CARE project will be presented jointly by Mr MATUTES (DG VII) and Mr Christophersen (SOEC).
- (ii) The Statistical Office shall be responsible for the collection, validation and dissemination of the statistics.

The proposal for a decision makes this quite plain (see the sheet giving details of the DG responsible and Articles 2 and 3 of the proposal for a Decision).

However, as this statement covers a pilot scheme that requires confirmation after a running-in period (see Article 7) it has been agreed that DG VII will take care of the preliminary studies and getting the project off the ground under the guidance of the SOEC.

If the Commission and the Council agree to continue the project and to make the data base operational beyond 1996 the SOEC would take over its management subject to the allocation of funds to be decided on in a new financial statement.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

A. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

1. Title of the operation: Transport safety measure: pilot scheme prior to the creation of a Community data base on road accidents.

2. Budget heading involved: B2-7020

3. Legal basis:

Article 213 of the Treaty

Article 75 of the Treaty, as amended and confirming Community competence in transport safety matters

Resolution of the Council of 21 June 1991 on a Community programme of action on road safety (OJ Nr C 178 of 9.7.1991, p. 1)

Resolution of the European Parliament on the adoption of common measures to reduce road accidents (OJ C 68, 24 March 1986).

4. Description:

4.1. Objective : to improve road safety in the Community (see explanatory memorandum)

4.2. Duration : unspecified
review in 1996 (see Article 7 of the proposal for a Decision)

4.3. Target population : Commission, representatives of the Member States, and road safety experts

Extension to other users after running-in period

5. Proposal for classification of expenditure or revenue

5.1. non-compulsory

5.2. non-differentiated

5.3. type of revenue involved: N/A during the period covered by this statement
Right of access may be granted in the long term (after 1996) to certain users (e.g. car manufacturers, insurance companies)

6. Financial impact on appropriations for operations

6.1. Schedule of commitment and payment appropriations

| | Commitment (ECU '000) | Payment (ECU '000) |
|------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1993 | 546 | 546 |
| 1994 | 480 | 480 |
| 1995 | 344 | 344 |
| 1996 | to be determined | to be determined |

The above figures reflect the Commission's assessment of the funds needed to complete the proposed project. The appropriations made available in practice will be decided as part of the annual budget procedures, taking account of the medium-term spending limits laid down when the Interinstitutional Agreement is renewed.

6.2. Share of Community financing in total cost of the operation: 100% for the creation of the data base proper.

The entire cost of gathering the data, which is considerably higher, will be met by the national administrations. In adopting this proposal for a decision the latter undertake to transmit these data.

7. Financial implications on the budget

SECTION 1 Part B of the budget - operational expenditure

7.0. Synoptic table of operating expenditure

| Type of operation Budget heading | 1993 B2-7020 | 1994 B2-7020 | 1995 B2-7020 | 1996--> (to be updated) |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Creation, development and maintenance of the data base | 86 | 37 | 37 | |
| 2. Confidential data modules | 152 | 148 | - | |
| 3. Training of users | 65 | 27 | 27 | |
| 4. Validation of historical data Adjustment of statistical variables/ definitions Changes to definitions and methods Study and creation of tools to interrogate the data base Evaluation and analysis of the causes of accidents Drawing up statistical reports | 202 | 189 | 201 | |
| 5. Study of the consistency of definitions and methods | 51 | 79 | 79 | |
| TOTAL at constant prices (ECU '000) | 546 | 480 | 344 | |

7.1. Method for estimating the overall cost of the pilot scheme

The overall cost was estimated taking account of the conclusions and work done as part of the feasibility study carried out by the Information Technology ("Informatics") Directorate and by estimating, for each operation, the volume of work multiplied by the following unit costs:

- analysis: ECU 12 000/person/month
- programming: ECU 8 000/person/month

Needs for 1996 and beyond will be reviewed in the light of the evaluation provided for in Article 7 of the proposal for a Decision.

Estimate of needs by type of operation:

| Operation Year | Analysis | Programming |
|----------------|----------|-------------|
| 1.93 | 2 | 6 |
| 1.94 | 1 | 2 |
| 1.95 | 1 | 2 |
| 2.93 | 7 | 4 |
| 2.94 | 6 | 6 |
| 2.95 | - | - |
| 3.93 | 4 | 1 |
| 3.94 | 2 | - |
| 3.95 | 2 | - |
| 4.93 | 6 | 12 |
| 4.94 | 5 | 12 |
| 4.95 | 6 | 12 |
| 5.93 | 4 | - |
| 5.94 | 6 | - |
| 5.95 | 6 | - |

SECTION 2: ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE

1. Will the proposed operation involve an increase in the number of Commission staff?

NOT in the course of the pilot scheme covered by this statement. To be updated after 1996 following the evaluation provided for in Article 7 of the draft decision.

Once the pilot scheme has been completed and if it becomes a permanent operation it will be necessary to release the funds required to cover the administrative expenditure occasioned when the data base project moves into its operational phase.

2. Indicate the amount of staff and administrative expenditure involved in the proposed operation:

NONE.

SECTION 3: COST / BENEFIT ANALYSIS

1. Cost-effectiveness and subsidiarity

- (a) As already mentioned at point 6.2 of this statement one of the key aspects of the data base, namely the collection of data on accidents, is being taken care of by the Member States. The resources required to create the Community data base constitute but a tiny share (investment in the data base as a tool) and represent the cost of work that only the Commission can carry out.

There is no question of Member States ceding to an "outside" body the responsibility or right to centralize their national data.

- (b) The project will have a knock-on effect, especially as each Member State will have access to eleven other data bases in addition to its own.
- (c) As disaggregated statistics on road accidents are not made public, a binding Community act in the shape of a decision is necessary to ensure that the data are transmitted to the Commission and to set out certain management rules so that the data base is run satisfactorily in the eyes of the Commission and the Member States.
- (d) The benefits stemming from the creation of a Community data base are set out in the explanatory memorandum, as are the economies of scale that can be made at Community level.
- (e) For the reasons already set out in point (a) above there is no other data base that can be compared with the CARE project.

The only statistics available at international level are very general and incomplete as they were gathered in a rough and ready way by international organizations and shed no light on the nature of the accidents or their causes.

Such figures can be found in publications of the UN, the ECTM and the OECD. See also point B.e.iii), § 2, of the explanatory memorandum.

- (f) One of the key reasons for launching the CARE project is to provide the Community with a tool that will enable it to administer effectively the powers bestowed on it in the field of transport safety by Article 75 of the Treaty (as amended).

The CARE project should help to identify road safety problems in order to determine the legislative and other measures to be taken at Community or national level and subsequently to measure their effectiveness.

2. Quantitative benefits

- With the data base at its fingertips the Commission will not have to pay for other sources of statistics which would not bear comparison with those of the Commission in terms of quality or availability.

For instance: subscribing to the OECD's IRTAD data base (which is incomplete and contains only very general figures) costs ECU 60 000 a year.

- Most of the DG VII studies dealing with road safety include a statistical component which costs on average around 30% of the total cost of the study, i.e. around ECU 120 000 per annum.
- As the ultimate goal is to enhance road safety, it is reasonable to express the benefits to the Community in socio-economic terms. The most recent studies on the socio-economic cost of road accidents (e.g. COST 313) put the cost of a fatality at around ECU 500 000 and the cost of an injury at around ECU 12 500 on average.

Road accidents result each year in around 55 000 deaths and more than 1 500 000 cases of light or serious injury, so the overall socio-economic cost can be put at approximately ECU 46 billion a year.

Judicious use of the CARE data base should have a positive impact on road safety in the Community and thus more than justifies the proposed investment.

3. Evaluation of the project

Article 7 of the proposal for a decision explicitly provides for an evaluation. The findings will be presented in a report to the Council taking stock of the pilot phase of the project and recommending what further action should be taken.

Regular monitoring of the project by DG VII and the SOEC during the pilot phase will make it possible, where necessary, to review certain components of the project and the impact on the resources required.

IMPACT EVALUATION STATEMENT

EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL ON BUSINESSES, PARTICULARLY SMALL AND
MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES (SMEs)

Title of the proposal: Draft proposal for a Council decision (EEC)
on the creation of a Community data base on
road accidents

Doc. ref. No: VII/252/90, Rev.3

NOT APPLICABLE

Agreement of DG XXIII obtained on 26 March 1993

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