



**European
Enterprise Alliance**

Press Release

21 June 2022

Brussels

The event "Vision Zero- road to a safer children transportation" took place on June 1st in the European Parliament. The discussion about Vision Zero European Commission's road safety document and children as particular road transport users was held under the auspices of the ECR Group. Adopting the report on the EU Road Safety Policy Framework 2021-2030 Vision Zero by the European Parliament to eliminate road accidents with children ignited public debates. The report underlines the role of safe infrastructure in assuring maximum safety for road users. Article 27 calls on "establishing standards for information requirements on the safety parameters of child restraint systems". The purpose of the 1st June debate was to evaluate the current state of the child restraint systems (CRS) use, its importance and available information for this crucial element of children's transportation.

Event speakers:

MEP Kosma Złotowski- ECR Group, European Parliament

Katarzyna Kurek- Consumers Forum, Warsaw

Jenny Carson- European Transport Safety Council, Brussels

Agata Boutanos- European Enterprise Alliance, Brussels

Bartłomiej Witucki- Safjan Witucki Law Office, Warsaw

Łukasz Zboralski- BRD24.pl, Warsaw

Moderation: Kamila Sotomska, Union of Entrepreneurs and Employers, Warsaw

Summary of the debate

The debate was started by **MEP Kosma Złotowski**, author of article 27 in the report on the Vision Zero of the European Parliament. Achieving a vision of zero requires, according to the MEP, a great deal of concerted effort if the ultimate goal is to significantly reduce the number of fatalities on Europe's roads. However, *"the European Commission has not forwarded the European Parliament's recommendations to the body responsible for regulations in this area for seven months"* i.e., the UNECE. There are significant loopholes for consumers that prevent access to information on the safety of child restraint systems (CRS). This was a motivation to call on the EU to set standards on information requirements on the safety performance of child restraint systems. *"Children are the most vulnerable road users, and it's our responsibility to ensure their safety. This concerns not only parents but also manufacturers and other interested parties"*, stressed MEP Złotowski.

Consumers Forum Foundation have launched a dedicated European Initiative for Children Safety in Transportation (www.childrensafety.eu) to increase the awareness, access and transparency of child safety in transportation regulation. **Katarzyna Kurek** representing the organization explained why the topic of children restraint systems is important from a consumer perspective. The choice of the CRS must be based in full and authorized information since the product is concerning a special EU consumers safety- children. *"As a consumer organization we call for transparency of CRS information, for instance CRS dedicated safety KPIs. This will enforce information standards and proper assessment of their safety"* - she said. In the case of CRS, the available information on the results of overload tests is still incomplete, while many studies show that some devices may be simply dangerous because they do not meet the minimum safety parameters. Establishing standards for information requirements on the safety performance of child restraints that will benefit different groups of consumers is also in line with the principles of the EU consumer directives that impose public access to product safety information in the single market.

Jenny Carson from the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) underlined the organization's observation of the road safety performance across 32 countries in Europe. The recent ETSC's report found that the child road deaths are decreasing more quickly than the rest of the population. This positive fact is related to the use of this safest passive protection system on roads and inside vehicles. Still, *"the problem of correct CRS on the market and their correct use needs to be tackled"*- she called. Data and information of use or misuse of the CRS is greatly missed across the EU and that is needed to achieve the Vision Zero. ETSC recommends to set up a European child seat consumer information scheme providing i.e. information on the CRS safety performance.

European Enterprise Alliance represented by **Agata Boutanos** brought up the differences in the road safety conditions in Central, Eastern and South Europe in respect to the Western EU member states. She highlighted those socio-economic factors are as important as regional differences in the number of road fatalities. *“CRS carries the greatest potential to compensate for these EU regional differences in road safety statistics”, she observes. “Only innovations and research of the CRS will reduce children’ deaths on roads (...) Full information of the safety parameters from the crash test have to be made public to trigger the competition for the maximum CRS safety”, it was concluded. EEA called the European Union for dedicated CRS policies. That is how road safety in the CEE regions can quickly improve.*

Attorney **Bartłomiej Witucki** from the law firm Safjan Witucki argued that access to the results of safety tests serves both the protection of consumer rights and the development of innovation, and consequently the increase of competitiveness. *“The interests of the child as the weakest member of society and the interests of consumers as the weaker participants in economic transactions require special protection measures. The lack of information and the lack of protection against misleading information is simply dangerous. Just like the lack of full transparency of the law-making process, or the use of the right to de facto block innovation”, warned Witucki.*

Road safety information platform BRD24.pl represented by **Łukasz Zboralski** introduced CRS life cases to the discussion. *“We need data from road accident causes investigations (...) How to plan Vision Zero policy or set new safety targets without knowing the road accidents data?”* As a solution, he urged the European countries to compare data from police and accidents investigations to have a complete fatalities picture. *“Nobody has information about safety test parameters of the CRS including specialized media. Producers must start showing this information openly for policymakers, road safety journalists but above all for the EU consumers”- he emphasized. “Otherwise, accidents like the recent one where a child in the CRS still fell out the car window will continue”.*

Event participants agreed that is the highest time for concrete steps to regulate access to product safety information for the CRS. Children road safety topic has united the EU politicians and lawmakers- as it is uniting various civil organizations already. The debate outcomes called the European Commission for taking road safety prevention steps leading to the Vision Zero targets. It has been agreed that children road safety depends on further regulations tightening. Improvement of safety passive infrastructure such as the CRS devices is conditioned to eliminate these malfunctioning. Public information about the CRS safety test results is the first step. Next steps include establishment of database of accidents causes across the EU. It will introduce transparency in information exchange between road safety policymakers. These necessary steps pave the vision zero road to a safer children transportation in the EU.

Recording of the debate is available here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BB2xcKygg5l>.