ROAD SAFETY PERFORMANCE
IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Peer Review by
ECMT, WORLD BANK AND WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

ADDRESS TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL ON ROAD SAFETY

Jack Short
Secretary General
European Conference of Ministers of Transport

Moscow, Russia
26 April 2006

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of ECMT or those of its Member Countries.
ROAD SAFETY PERFORMANCE IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Peer Review by the ECMT, the World Bank and the World Health Organisation

On behalf of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport, the World Bank and the World Health Organisation I would like to thank the Russian Government for the opportunity to address this important first meeting of the Intergovernmental Council on Road Safety. We would like to congratulate you on setting up such a body and wish it great success in its activities.

We are pleased to be issuing today a Review of the Road Safety Policies in the Russian Federation carried out jointly by the three organisations aided by a team of experts from different Countries.

This Peer Review was undertaken at Russia’s request. Russia’s interest in the process shows that there is a growing willingness to consult, to discuss and to learn from the experiences in other Countries.

The Report is founded on analytic and statistical work prepared initially by experts from Russia. The Review Team then visited Russia and held meetings with all key actors. The preparation and compilation of the report was carried out in discussion and consultation with Russian experts and authorities. We would like to thank sincerely the Russian partners and authorities who contributed openly and honestly to the completion of this work and in particular the Ministries of Transport and the Interior. This Review is available in English and Russian and we hope it will be of use to you as you go forward on this important topic.

Background and Context

- The Review occurs at a time of enormous economic and social change in Russia. Mobility and trade are growing rapidly and, for example, car ownership has increased threefold since the early 1990s. Unfortunately these positive developments have been accompanied by a serious deterioration in safety. And fatalities have increased more than 25% since 1998. As you know, every day there are 100 fatalities and almost 800 serious injuries in the Russian Federation.

- These deaths and injuries have a very high cost, estimated to be equivalent to 2.5% of GDP. They reduce life expectancy, deprive Russia of young educated people, put enormous pressure on the medical and health systems and cause untold loss and suffering in thousands of families.
In international comparisons, Russia has one of the poorest records, with accident rates 10 times higher per vehicle than for example, Germany or the United Kingdom. Pedestrians pay a particularly high price, and the proportion of pedestrians among the fatalities is the highest in ECMT or OECD Countries.

**Analysis and Recommendations**

- The analysis of the experts identifies a combination of weak performance goals, an intrinsically unsafe road system and fragmented institutional processes. The rapid motorisation points to a growing road safety crisis in the Russian Federation and therefore, it is completely appropriate that strong new initiatives are being taken to redress the situation.

- A summary of the recommendations for priority actions can be found pages 18 on and 19 of the report. Many of these ideas are not new to you or your experts, and indeed many of them have been made already. So, what is needed is a major, sustained effort which is supported politically and financially, to implement these measures in an effective way.

- For this politically high level audience, I put the accent on three strategic ideas:
  - The first is for strong, consistent and longlasting political leadership. The political priority for road safety needs to be set at the highest level. Recent speeches and interviews of President Putin and Minister Levitin are encouraging in this sense. It is important that Ministers, parliamentarians and senior officials across government work to increase awareness of the problem, to get people to understand the risks, to help change behaviour and to motivate the private and professional sectors to engage fully. The creation of this Interministerial body and the commitment of the Deputy Prime Minister is a very positive step in this direction and our congratulations and best wishes are offered for its success. A key part of this leadership role is to develop a vision, to draw up numerical targets and a clear plan for implementation.
  - The second message is that road safety cannot be the responsibility of a single Ministry, nor merely a central government function. It is a multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral area of activity. But leadership from the top is needed so that the aims are shared across all sectors and at all levels. Long-term partnerships, including with the road construction industry, vehicle manufacturers, importers, mass media and other stakeholders are part of finding the solutions.
  - The third message concerns resources. It is essential that increased levels of funding are made available. Some of these funds can be provided in the context of the transport plan that is now being implemented. But additional funds are needed for safety campaigns, for education, for research and data improvement. All of the international work shows that these funds will provide very good value for money.
Apart from these broad political and strategic recommendations the report identifies specific priority measures: I mention four:

- First, enforcement needs to be greatly improved; it needs to be based on a respect for road traffic law. Credible penalties need to be introduced without opportunities for abuse. Mechanisms, such as an elite road police force, with higher salaries and a supervisory role are one way to encourage higher standards and reduce the risks of abuse.

- Second, it is essential to reduce speeds. Among a variety of measures, the introduction of a maximum general urban speed limit of 50 km/h and 30 km/h zones in residential areas would greatly improve pedestrian safety and would bring significant benefits.

- Third, special measures are needed for high risk groups. Especially important here are pedestrians which account for 42% of your fatalities. Young male drivers are also a high risk group. Here, graduated licensing systems, with step-wise access to licences and a variety of restrictions (including a maximum blood alcohol limit of 20mg/100ml) are worth studying for an introduction in the Russian context.

- To avoid drinking and driving, a maximum legal limit of 50mg/100ml should be introduced for the general driving population with high-visibility police enforcement and publicity.

We are pleased to know that the new road safety plan for the Russian Federation has been adopted and that it contains several of these ideas and other recommendations from our review.

**Follow-up actions**

- The creation of this Commission is a very significant step with enormous potential benefits. To achieve positive results soon will be important and some of the measures mentioned above can reduce fatalities quickly. The work of the Commission should help to increase public awareness and to achieve support for safety measures by the public, it is important that it reports openly and regularly on its actions.

- As part of the new programme, the launch of a demonstration project in a specific region or area of Russia could present a showcase of a range of effective road safety activities which could lead to a broadening of activity in other regions. This pilot could bring together many elements of “best practice” in road safety.

- The multi-disciplinary nature of effective road safety programming requires technical expertise in many spheres both for the content and the implementation of policy. To organise technical assistance and professional capacity development, the ECMT, the World Bank and the WHO are willing to assist in every possible way.
- **Financial support** might also be provided through international financial institutions, through national partnerships with industry and other potential partners.

**Conclusion**

The ECMT, the World Bank and the World Health Organisation are very grateful for the opportunity to present the Review’s findings to this new body. We hope that it can contribute to improving safety in Russia and we are ready to help in every way with further discussions and analysis. But the difficult task is yours and we wish you every success.