

MEDIA RELEASE

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“Zero Road Deaths” study wins International Road Safety Award

A new report setting out a radically new approach in road safety has won the 2016 Special Award of the prestigious Prince Michael of Kent International Road Safety Awards. The Award will be presented today by Prince Michael during a ceremony at the Savoy Hotel in London.

The award-winning study by a group of 30 international road safety experts from 24 countries, convened by the International Transport Forum at the OECD, reviews the experiences of countries that have made it their long-term objective to eliminate fatal road crashes.

Originating in Sweden, this “Vision Zero” is not utopian, but demonstrably realistic:

- ▶ 88 European cities with a population above 100 000 have not had any road fatalities over the course of a whole year. The biggest among them are Nottingham in the UK (pop. 289 000), Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen) in Germany (pop. 260 000) and Espoo in Finland (pop 259 000) ([link](#))
- ▶ 16 European towns above 50 000 inhabitants experienced no road deaths for five years running: 9 in the United Kingdom, 6 in Germany and one in Norway ([link](#)).
- ▶ Not a single child died as result of a bicycle crash in Sweden in 2008 ([report](#), p. 40)

Countries, cities and companies around the world are adopting zero road deaths as their aspiration:

- ▶ New York City launched an action plan in 2014 to eliminate road deaths ([link](#))
- ▶ Volvo Cars’ objective is that no-one should be killed or injured in a new Volvo by 2020 ([link](#))

Still, 1.25 million people are killed by traffic every year, according to the World Health Organization.

- ▶ Road crashes are the leading cause of death worldwide for young people aged 15 to 29.
- ▶ Traffic is the ninth leading cause of death overall, killing more people than malaria.
- ▶ 90% of road deaths occur in low-income countries, where rapid motorisation drives up fatalities.
- ▶ In many developed countries, the progress made over the past decades has stalled.

The International Community has set itself the objective to halve global road deaths by 2020 in the UN Sustainable Development Goals. To make progress towards this ambitious goal require new thinking.

The award-winning ITF report “Zero Road Deaths and Serious Injuries: Leading a Paradigm Shift in Road Safety” offers guidance for leaders that want to drastically reduce the road deaths in their communities and sets out how a “Safe System” approach to road safety can underpin this goal.

Congratulating ITF on the award, **Prince Michael of Kent** said: *“The new report comes at a time when the world needs to change up a gear or two to accelerate efforts to reduce the unacceptable toll of death and serious injury on our roads. It is a most welcome addition to the all-important bank of knowledge available to governments and a fine example of the leadership shown by ITF.”*

José Viegas, Secretary-General of the International Transport Forum, said: *“No-one should pay with their lives as the price for a mobile society. Road safety policy can do more than limit the collateral damage; it can make roads and vehicles fundamentally safe for all. In occupational safety, machinery and processes have long been conceived as a ‘Safe System’ built to avoid death and minimize injury in the first place. Our new report wants to entice countries and cities to embark on this journey and turn their road traffic into such a Safe System. This prestigious award is a fantastic encouragement for us.”*

Iain Cameron, chairman of the ITF Working Group which prepared the report, said: *“We must accept that people make mistakes in traffic if we are to stop the death and serious injury epidemic on our roads. We need a paradigm shift in the way we view and approach road safety policy, and we need it now. It is unrealistic to expect that education and enforcement alone will bring the needed step change. Even road users who know and follow the rules make mistakes. A Safe System creates an environment in which simple mistakes will no longer kill people.”*

The [award-winning report](#) highlights **four principles** for policy and design to achieve a Safe System:

1. People make mistakes that lead to crashes.
2. The human body has a known, limited ability to withstand impact forces.
3. There is shared responsibility for safety among those who use, design, build, operate the system.
4. All parts of the traffic system must be strengthened to multiply the protective effects and ensure that when one part fails the others will provide protection.

The report’s **core recommendations** to policy makers and the road safety community are:

- ▶ **Be ambitious - think safe roads, not just safer roads:** The conventional approach to road safety seeks incremental improvements to current practice. A Safe System works backwards from the vision of zero road deaths and creates new perspectives on how to do it.
- ▶ **Be resolute - foster a sense of urgency and lead the way:** In communities that have adopted a Safe System, innovation occurred where political leaders strongly felt that the current approach no longer delivered. Nothing will change in road safety without strong leaders.
- ▶ **Be inclusive - establish shared responsibility for road safety:** Today, avoiding crashes is the responsibility of the road user. A Safe System requires everyone with a role in the traffic environment to recognize this role and assume responsibility for making traffic safe.
- ▶ **Be concrete - underpin aspirational goals with concrete operational targets:** Establishing milestones that are attainable for clearly defined groups or issues show that the overall vision of zero road deaths is long-term but realistic.

The Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards recognise achievement and innovation in road safety. Launched by Prince Michael in 1987, the awards are made to organisations and companies in recognition of their enormous contribution to reducing the toll of road death and injury across the world. More information at www.roadsafetyawards.com

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ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM

Who we are

The International Transport Forum is an intergovernmental organisation with 57 member countries. It acts as a think tank for transport policy and organises the Annual Summit of transport ministers. ITF is the only global body that covers all transport modes. The ITF is administratively integrated with the OECD, yet politically autonomous.

What we do

ITF works for transport policies that improve peoples' lives. Our mission is to foster a deeper understanding of the role of transport in economic growth, environmental sustainability and social inclusion and to raise the public profile of transport policy.

How we do it

ITF organises global dialogue for better transport. We act as a platform for discussion and pre-negotiation of policy issues across all transport modes. We analyse trends, share knowledge and promote exchange among transport decision-makers and civil society. ITF's Annual Summit is the world's largest gathering of transport ministers and the leading global platform for dialogue on transport policy.

Learn more: www.itf-oecd.org