

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001405/24
to the Commission
Stefano Cavedagna (ECR)
(23 July 2024)**

Subject: General speed limit of 30 km/h in urban centres

On 16 January 2024, the municipality of Bologna set the speed limit on its roads at 30 km/h, a derogation from the overall limit of 50 km/h in the Italian highway code. The new limit has been set wholesale on a large number of urban roads, some 70% thereof.

This derogation, deemed to be contrary to Italian law since no provision has been made for individual investigations on roads as required by Article 142(2) of the aforementioned highway code, has triggered a public debate and is seen by many as encroaching on personal freedom and as an obstacle to mobility owing to the inconvenience it causes for travel for family- and work-related reasons.

It is feared that this measure may lead to increased pollution due to longer travel times and that a fair balance may not have been struck between the right to mobility and freedom of movement and the need to help ensure safety.

Given the foregoing and the principles of proportionality and reasonableness which characterise the European legal order and which should guide the actions of the public authorities, does the Commission consider that adopting a general speed limit of 30 km/h in urban centres complies with the principles of proportionality and reasonableness, as set out in the TEU and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU?

Submitted: 23.7.2024

**Answer given by Mr Hoekstra on behalf of the European Commission
(1 October 2024)**

The Commission would like to underline that setting and enforcing speed limits is a national and/or local competence.

However, the Commission acknowledges that speed is a major factor in road deaths and serious injuries, particularly in urban areas, where vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists or the users of e-scooters constitute 70% of fatalities.

Safe road use (including speed) is part of the ‘Safe System’ approach which is followed by EU and Member States’ in road safety policies.

Recent research ⁽¹⁾ on the impact of city-wide 30 km/h speed limits in 40 European cities points to significant benefits. On average, these speed limits led to a 23%, 37%, and 38% reduction in road crashes, fatalities, and injuries respectively.

Lower speed limits also yield environmental benefits, with emissions, noise pollution levels and fuel consumption all decreasing. At the same time, the research shows that the impact on travel time is limited and the benefits in terms of improved safety and other factors often outweigh any change in travel times.

National, regional and local authorities are best placed to define the appropriate speed limits and the specific speed management policies reflecting local factors. Many have already taken or plan to introduce speed management initiatives.

The Commission will continue to monitor and support road safety-focused interventions and promote cross-border cooperation and exchanges of best practices.

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/16/11/4382>