



The Association of Drivers against
Daytime Running Lights
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To: EC DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR ENERGY AND TRANSPORT

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Copies to all EU Transport, Industry Committee members and UK MEP's

Medical Evidence against Vehicle Daytime Lights

The European Commission in their studies to justify the use of headlights in good daylight, have paid scant attention to medical opinion and in particular expert ophthalmic advice about the prolonged effects of glare upon a driver's eye. As many vehicles are now fitted with the powerful High Intensity Discharge headlamps the problem is exacerbated.

New research in the fields of ophthalmology covers retina, sensory physiology and electrophysiology. Related phenomena are Change Blindness, Inattentive Blindness, cognition psychology and brain function. This research is producing evidence that increasing use of vehicle daytime lights is potentially causing accidents.

Dr. Peter Heilig, the world renowned Professor of Ophthalmology at the University of Vienna, is actively researching these negative effects. Visual Short Term Memory loss is a term in frequent use by Dr. Heilig and refers to the fact that we are not as aware of all of the objects in our visual field as we intuitively think we are.

Distracters such as daytime lights exacerbate this phenomenon so that objects can actually vanish from our field of vision for a brief period. According to Dr. Heilig, this is the reason why after an accident, many people say 'I didn't see the other car, person etc'. It is not that they are inattentive in every case, but due to these physiological effects on the Visual Short Term Memory.

The following site will serve to illustrate this effect: www.michaelbach.de/ot/mot_mib/index.html

Such a profusion of light will lead to other conditions variously called change blindness, inattentive blindness and inattentive amnesia.

According to Dr. Heilig, trying to draw attention to one particular object or vehicle by using daytime lights will cause the inadvertent effect of having the other road users becoming 'invisible' for a brief period of time but long enough for an accident to occur. This is evidenced by the increase in motorcycle accidents in the USA, cyclist accidents in Britain and pedestrian fatalities in Austria.

When daytime lights were first implemented over 30 years ago, there were no such studies in cognitive behaviour or of the effects of light on the retina. Now however, there is an abundance of medical evidence to show that the use of daytime lights is going to greatly increase the danger of driving on our roads through the mechanisms of these newly described dysfunctions.

Danish studies show a clear negative result for pedestrians, the most vulnerable of all road users. It is not acceptable to increase hazards for pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists they have no defences in a collision with a motor vehicle.

This, alone, is a clear reason to not mandate daytime lights on the Hippocratic principle of "First Do No Harm".

The final point is that there is no need of science or statistics:

Daytime Running Lights attract attention thereby putting everybody and everything else at risk.

Further support for false daytime lights regulation against better judgement will have legal implications.

In proposing daytime lights, the European Commission are violating their legal and ethical duty of OBLIGATION OF PROTECTION to the European Community.

Endless claims for compensation can to be expected.

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The Association of Drivers against Daytime Running Lights

The British Motorcyclists Federation

The Motorcycle Action Group

The Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations

Living Streets – The UK Pedestrians Association

Federation of European Pedestrians Associations

European Cyclists' Federation

Cyclists Touring Club

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals

The Ramblers Association



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