



MAG Ireland

The Irish Motorcyclist's Action Group

PRESS RELEASE

20/09/2011 Immediate Release

“IRISH BIKERS PLAN A WEEKEND OF DEMONSTRATIONS”

Opposition to EU & RSA proposals grows

MAG Ireland’s “Think Bike” Demo will take place on Saturday 24th September. This is the first of a series of protests which will be taking place over the weekend of 24th and 25th September to highlight Irish bikers opposition to the increasingly dogmatic & bombastic pronouncements from both the EU & our own Road Safety Authority.

MAG Ireland, in conjunction with other riders rights organisations across Europe, today highlights the unjust and unproven alleged safety proposals being touted by non-riders who simply have no understanding of motorcycles.

Here are four key examples of such disconnected thinking;

1. Mandatory “High visibility” clothing for riders & pillion passengers - A home-grown RSA proposal which places the blame squarely on motorcyclists for the failure of drivers to look properly. This proposal goes against research funded by the EU¹ which shows that high-visibility clothing has a very limited effect on accident rates. Fewer than 13% of accidents in the study involved dark upper and/or lower garments, while a full 5% had bright garments.

2. An NCT type test - A hugely expensive way of making the minimal possible impact² on the less than 1% of accidents caused by mechanical failure in a mode that itself is less than 3% of Irish road traffic. The MAIDS report³ shows that just 0.3% of motorcycle accidents could have ‘Vehicle Failure’ classified as the primary cause. Having a piece of paper saying your vehicle is safe doesn’t mean it is, as vividly demonstrated in a recent documentary on RTE television.

3. Anti-tamper legislation - An EU proposal which has the potential to criminalise those who customise their bikes with aftermarket parts, and limiting who can service the motorcycle thereby driving up costs and reducing competition.

4. Type Approval - Compulsory ABS, daytime running lights, stringent emissions limits, etc. largely designed to protect the market share of big manufacturers from emerging far eastern competitors but with the associated additional costs borne by end users.

Riders are concerned because these and other proposals are usually based on dogma and blind faith rather than on proper scientific research. Riders are angry that they are not being listened to while vested interests are. Riders have had enough of being marginalised, ignored and ostracised.

It’s high time those in high places started to “Think Bike” and stop playing politics with the lives - and indeed livelihoods - of those who would prefer to think for themselves.

¹ See: <http://www.maids-study.eu> - Table 8.1.3

² See: http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/Road%20Safety/Motorcycles/National_Motorcycle_Action_Plan.pdf - Section 4.2.8

³ See: See: <http://www.maids-study.eu>



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MAG Ireland, as the only Irish riders rights organisation, has been highlighting many of the issues faced by riders for almost two decades now. Despite making progress in some areas, the drip, drip, drip of anti-bike proposals continues unabated, both here at home and at EU level.

Deliberate exclusion of motorcycles from policy planning - such as demonstrated by the National Transport Authority in the Vision 2030 strategy⁴ - is combined with active demonisation of riders & perpetuated by a "Motorbikes are Dangerous" message from officialdom. This is despite the dramatic falls in casualties over the past decade⁵ against the backdrop of a steep increase in motorcycle use.

MAG Ireland is totally opposed to the imposition of unproven so-called "safety" measures which have no basis in scientific research. ***Dogma is simply not good enough.*** Irish riders deserve better than the short sighted and hostile attitudes displayed at local, national & EU level.

On the 24th & 25th of September, Irish riders will take that message to the public by taking to the roads all over the country. With starting points in Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick, Wexford, Monaghan, Westmeath as well as several locations in Northern Ireland, Irish riders will assert their rights when they stand up and say "***Hands off biking***".

About MAG Ireland:

MAG Ireland (The Irish Motorcyclist's Action Group) was set up in 1985 and represents the interests of Ireland's 30,000+ motorcyclists, scooter and moped users.

Areas tackled by MAG Ireland include road safety, training, road conditions, technical harmonisation, tax issues, consumer issues affecting riders, licencing and insurance.

MAG Ireland offers a wide range of benefits to its membership including discounts at many retail outlets and events, a quarterly newsletter and information services. See <http://www.magireland.org> for more.

⁴ See: <http://www.magireland.org/2011/responses/nta-response/>

⁵ See: <http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2011/0512/1224296752810.html>