

MOTORCYCLISTS HELP OUT UKRAINE

Motorcycle brands across the spectrum of biking are coming together to assist people affected by the Russian invasion of neighboring Ukraine, while multiple manufacturers have announced they will no longer sell bikes or supply parts to people in Russia, including Harley-Davidson, Suzuki, and Honda, which is donating one million Euros to the Japanese Red Cross as humanitarian support for Ukrainians suffering through the enemy occupation.

Joining in on a growing list of economic sanctions, Yamaha, BMW, and Polaris have also halted exports to Russia in the wake of the ongoing crisis.

Ural publicly called for an end to the hostilities, while Timur Sardarov, the Russian CEO of MV Agusta, described the "horrific atrocities... conducted by the Russian regime" as the "biggest tragedy in his 40 years of existence" in an open letter. Both incredibly brave moves by Russian owned businesses.

There have also been moves from motorcycling groups from around the world to condemn Russia's militaristic actions. Europe's FIM (The Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme) has suspended all Russian and Belarusian riders' licenses, with the British ACU (Auto Cycle Union) joining them in applying the same suspension for the UK. The FIM have also cancelled three MXGP rounds of racing that were due to take place in Russia.

E.U. BANS MOTORCYCLE EXPORTS TO RUSSIA

The European Union officially enacted additional trade restrictions on exports to Russia, in light of the latter nation's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, including a ban on the export of European motorcycles and/or parts with values over 5,000 Euros. The measure comes as part of a list of additional prohibitions and restrictions on Russia as it continues this assault.

The motorcycle pronouncement, along with other decisions, were published in the Official Journal of the European Union on March 15, 2022 and, in accordance with the E.U.'s rules of governance, these rules immediately went into effect as of that publication date.

The new rules address energy sector concerns, importation of iron and steel products, and matters concerning European luxury goods and their export to Russia. "Motorcycles" specifically come up on the "luxury goods" list, which also includes horses, wines, cigars, perfumes, clothing, jewelry, precious metals and stones, electronics, and yachts.

U.S. TRAFFIC FATALITIES / FATALITY RATE HIGHEST IN A DECADE

On March 2, 2022, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration released its 2020 Annual Traffic Crash Data, revealing the highest number of lives lost on U.S. roadways since 2007, despite fewer miles traveled.

While the number of crashes and traffic injuries declined overall, fatal crashes increased by 6.8%, with 38,824 fatalities nationwide. The fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled increased to 1.34, a 21% increase from 2019 and again the highest rate since 2007.

In some good news, the estimated number of police-reported crashes in 2020 decreased by 22% as compared to 2019, and the estimated number of people injured declined by 17%.

In 45% of fatal crashes, the drivers of passenger vehicles were engaged in at least one of the following risky behaviors: speeding (up 17%), alcohol impairment (up 14%), or not wearing a seat belt (up 14%).

Fatalities amongst all vulnerable road users was up across the board; Motorcyclist fatalities up 11% (highest number since first data collection in 1975), Bicyclist fatalities up 9.2% (highest number since 1987), and Pedestrian fatalities up 3.9% (highest number since 1989).

Obviously 2020 was a uniquely anomalous year, with a global pandemic affecting every facet of everyday life, but it's troubling to see such increased carnage even with less travel.

Total vehicle miles traveled (VMT) decreased by 11% in 2020, from 3,261,772 million to 2,903,622 million.

ARIZONA LEGISLATURE APPROVES LANE FILTERING

Lane Splitting and Lane Filtering bills are popping up more frequently, and if Senate Bill 1273 is signed into law by Arizona's Governor Doug Ducey (R), it would be a welcome relief for riders stuck in Phoenix traffic on a 110-degree day.

While "Lane Splitting" allows motorcyclists to ride between moving lanes of traffic, like California has allowed for many years, the term "Lane Filtering" allows riders to move between stopped traffic such as riding to the front of traffic at a stop light.

Arizona's neighbor, Utah, made headlines in 2019 when it adopted lane filtering, and Montana legalized filtering in March of last year. Oregon came close to legalizing filtering last year, but the bill was stopped by the governor's veto.

The allowed filtering described in Arizona SB 1273 is similar to Utah's, with riders able to filter to the front on multi-lane roads, between two lanes going in the same direction, where the speed limit is 45 mph or less and surrounding traffic is stopped, and riding no faster than 15 mph.

Arizona's bill, passed by the state legislature and awaiting their governor's approval, is the latest in a trend towards Utah-style lane filtering over California-style lane splitting. This popular compromise allows motorcyclists to move through the worst parts of traffic, but in a milder method than the lane splitting practiced in many other parts of the world.

NEW HAMPSHIRE LEGISLATOR CLAIMS BEING PROFILED FOR RIDING A MOTORCYCLE

While testifying in support of House Bill 1000, which would prohibit profiling of motorcycle riders by law enforcement, House Speaker Sherman Packard suggested he was profiled during a traffic stop several years ago in New Hampshire.

Packard (R-Londonderry), who is the highest-ranking member of the Republican majority, testified in the Public Hearing that he was stopped on Route 1A in Rye, N.H. about nine years ago. "I was in a pack of motorcycles and was the only one stopped by an officer," he testified.

Packard said he was told by the officer he had passed a car on a double yellow line. He said he denied it, and the officer then told Packard he was riding on the double yellow line, which he again denied doing. He said he was detained for about 20 minutes, indicating he felt it was a case of profiling because he was a motorcycle rider. He also said he did not know why the other motorcycle riders he was with were not stopped.

Sherm Packard, a longtime motorcycle rider and champion of bikers' rights, was a founding member of the NCOM Legislative Task Force and developed the National Coalition of Motorcyclists' informational brochure "A Biker's Guide to Getting Elected to Public Office".

Packard is also a cosponsor of HB 1000, which was voted out of the House on March 11 with an "Ought to Pass" recommendation.

MOTORCYCLES ARE GOOD FOR YOUR BRAIN AND BODY

A new study shows that motorcyclists are less stressed and more fulfilled than car drivers.

The scientific study originally set about trying to find out if bikers were constantly riding in fear of being involved in an accident, but inadvertently proved the opposite! The results center around a certain hormone called Cortisol that is released in the brain when we become anxious, finding that bikers produce 28% less Cortisol during testing than drivers on the same course.

The study was conducted by The Institute of Neuroscience and Human Behaviour (INHB) in a controlled manner, with 50 motorcyclists and 50 car drivers making their way around a closed course for 20-minutes. During this time, the team measured the user's heart rate, Cortisol, and adrenaline levels, and monitored brain activity.

Results indicated that when riding, the subjects experienced increased sensory focus and resilience to distraction. Riding also produced an increase in adrenaline levels and heart rate, and a decrease in Cortisol levels -- the kind of results you often get after a light exercise session, which also is a stress reducer.

The news regarding the mental well-being of motorcyclists goes hand in hand with a study that found that riding a motorcycle can burn anywhere between 170-600 calories an hour -- as much as an hour at the gym -- making motorcycles good for your mind and body!

SMART MOTORWAY FAILS

Within days after the Stopped Vehicle Detection system (SVD) failed to prevent a fatal crash on England's M25 smart motorway, a series of internal emails from Highways England paint a horrifying picture, with sections of the road described as effectively blind to stopped vehicles.

The problem stems from the SVD system that should detect a stopped vehicle in a live lane, alerting the control room to close the lane with red 'X'.

The Daily Mail reports that transportation staff are plagued with similar outages on the smart motorway network, with staff seeing errors and outages so much, they don't actually have the time to report the error. Indeed, at the time of the M25 outage, a bug prevented an alert from being broadcast to the staff, meaning they had no warning of an incident they could react to.

As the catalog of failings grows and the death toll mounts, the cry for smart motorways to be scrapped altogether grows louder and louder. And it isn't just the public that is outraged, as politicians on all sides have called for the 'fatal' scheme to be axed, once and for all.

2022 NCOM CONVENTION - NEW DATES & LOCATION ANNOUNCED

Mark your Ride Calendar NOW for the upcoming 37th annual NCOM Convention to be held June 17-19, 2022 at the Embassy Suites by Hilton, located at 10 Century Blvd. in Nashville, Tennessee (615/871-0033 for room reservations).

Concerned riders from across the nation will attend, to learn and share information and experiences regarding mutual topics of concern. All motorcyclists are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the many meetings, seminars and group discussions that focus on legislative efforts and litigation techniques to preserve Freedom of the Road.

Agenda items will cover legal and legislative issues, with Special Meetings for Veterans Affairs, Women in Motorcycling, Clean & Sober Roundtable and World of Sport Bikes, as well as the Christian Unity Conference and Confederation of Clubs Patch Holders Meeting.

So, plan now to be part of one of the largest gatherings of motorcyclists' rights advocates in the world. For more information, or to pre-register, call the National Coalition of Motorcyclists at (800) 525-5355 or visit www.ON-A-BIKE.com.

H-DAY FOR EUROPEAN TRAFFIC PATTERNS

In a stunning joint international transportation announcement, all countries in Europe will begin switching over from left-sided driving to the right.

Per the cooperative trade agreement, effective midnight April 1st, on H-Day (for Högertrafikomläggningen, Swedish meaning "right-hand traffic"), all Cars and Trucks in every European foreign country will immediately pull to their right and henceforth drive on the right-hand side of the road like we do here in America.

If successful, in a carefully orchestrated 2-step governmental rollout period, the following April First all buses and motorcycles will switch sides too. =)

Hey, don't get FOOLED by Fake News, on April Fool's Day or anytime; enroll to receive timely and factual NCOM Biker Newsbytes monthly in your In Box for free by e-mailing "Subscribe" to the editor at NCOMBish@aol.com.

By the way, in reality, the islands of Britain, Ireland, Malta and Cyprus are the only four European countries still sticking to the left, and historians think the archaic lefty rule of the road originated in the eighteenth century with the prevalence of right-handed swords.

QUOTABLE QUOTE:

"Have an open mind, but don't let your brain fall out." ~ Bazooka Joe (1952-2012), Topps Candy Co.