



The Next Stop - Guest Episode Matthew Baldwin

Shownotes

- **[Introduction]:**
- An important part of our project is connecting you, our listeners to the world's foremost leaders in electric mobility. Today's very special episode is split into three parts, with three very special guests talking to us about their ground-breaking work. You can find the links to the other episode on our website at www.bsr-electric.eu and also in the show notes of this episode.
- Our interview partner in this part will be Matthew Baldwin from the European Commission in Brussels.
- This is Arjun Jamil and you're listening of "The Next Stop", the BSR electric Podcast.
- **[Interview]**

Arjun: Thank you Matthew for joining us. To start off, would you mind telling us something about yourself and your work?

Matthew: Yes. Hi everybody. My name is Matthew Baldwin. I'm a formally deputy director general in DG move, which is one of the departments in the European commission, but I have two specific aspects to my job, which may be an interest.

Firstly, I'm the European coordinator for road safety and also for sustainable mobility. And just say a word about those two things. I think in the past, we tended to see them as very different. You know, road safety was about building safer cars and safer roads, and then you had sustainable mobility, which is the kind of crunchy vegetarian hippie thing of trying to get people to cycle more.

Well, in fact, the two issues are one and the same. You know, we are becoming a more urban population and if you look at the deaths and serious injuries in our cities, 70% of them are occurring to vulnerable road users, cyclists and walkers. We need to make a very strong efforts to pull the things together, to encourage people to cycle and walk more, and to make them safe.

So that's what I do, basically. I go around like an old-fashioned preacher. I'm talking to anyone who cares to listen, and thank you for listening, about these two interrelated things and trying to bring down 25 000 deaths a year in the European Union, but at the same time, trying to help cities become safe, sustainable, and livable.

Arjun: Right. That sounds extremely interesting. Correct me if I'm wrong, this is Vision Zero that you're speaking of?

Matthew: Yes. Vision Zero is this wonderful revolution concept invented by the Swedes a while back, and formally speaking, it's about saying "let's go to zero deaths on our roads by 2050".

Given, we have, as I said, 25 000 in the European Union, 1.3 million at global level. Sounds like a tall order until you realize how far we've come: We've reduced deaths and serious injuries per million from over 200 per million in 1972 now around 50 per million in the European union, so it can be done. And Vision Zero says, we shouldn't talk about mistakes causing accidents which cause deaths. Yes, if you make a mistake, this can cause a crash. But there's no reason for people to die on our roads anymore. If your car is safe and well-constructed, that will save you. If it doesn't, the road is forgiving in the way it's constructed, that will save you. And if neither works, we slow people down to reasonable speeds, particularly for people outside the car. And then we need to look at things like post-crash care as well. So, it's a holistic system, layers of protection to protect the human being from the kinetic forces, which kill us. Inside or outside the car.

Arjun: Right. And I was watching a few videos about Vision Zero, where you were talking about a bunch of legislation that that would be technological in a way that would make cars safer for vulnerable road users. Like you said, automated braking and detecting pedestrians and cyclists.

I would assume that they have a very close connection with e-mobility somehow. Could you elaborate on that?

Matthew: They do. Let me say a word about that because I don't know how much you or your listeners know about how the European Union works. We have a concept called competence, which is about legal competence. And because we wanted to build a single market for things like cars, we very quickly agreed that safety also then needed to be cause of that. Single market in terms of vehicle safety, because if you're buying a car in Portugal and it's made in Germany, it needs to meet named safety standards everywhere. This is one of the ways we've made our cars safe in the European Union in the last 20-30 years: by progressive waves of new technology in cars, which mostly, up to now, has been passive safety, like modern seatbelts, airbags to protect people, stronger car structures. But now, we're starting up the curve of active safety mechanisms with new buzzing technology, which will end up in full automation. Things like automated emergency braking, intelligent speed assistance, which if you go through a speed limit, the car will recognize the speed limit and through a haptic reaction in the pedal, it will tell you, you're going too fast. Then you can push through it if you wish. But we've done some very rigorous assumptions and we'll be saving with these types of technologies 25 000 lives across the European car fleet over 15 years of application of this regulation. It's immensely exciting.

You asked about e-mobility: As we start to develop these automated cars, increasingly, they will be alternatively fueled. I say alternatively, because it's not just about electric cars. Initially in cities, I think it very much will be. We are also looking at the provision of much better infrastructure. A million charging points across the European Union by 2025, so the people who hesitated to buy a new vehicle will be more encouraged to do so. But also looking at things like hydrogen, particularly for trucks. And there's no reason for to use the same old fuel. And by the way, if we're going to reduce carbon emissions by 90% by 2050, we're going to have to make a huge investment in these areas. And again, things like CO2 standards for the cars.

All of these things come together in a rich mix of safety and sustainability.

Arjun: Right. Thank you very much for the thoughts on electric vehicles and also infrastructure. One of the key aspects of BSR electric is about alternative modes, for example, e-biking, e-buses e-scooters for the people who are less mobile, and it's also about promoting a more active lifestyle. Would you say that this aligns with DGs future work or current strategy?

Matthew: Sure. I mean, we're not in the alternative vehicle promotion business. We're in the regulatory business. Trying to facilitate pretty much all things which help us make a safer and more sustainable. I mean, we've seen a fantastic growth in a number of things, like e-scooters springing up across Europe's cities. There are some safety concerns about them, that they're quite low to the ground and the wheels are small. I wanted to issue that, but I see them as a part of a new and rich mix. But the key is replacing car trips in cities and not public transport trips. If they're replacing car trips, we start making everyone safer, otherwise a bit less. E-bikes are another fantastic area in terms of bringing us a carbon free logistics where we are pledged to do so as a European Union within the next few years. And there's been some wonderful studies and living lab projects in places like Berlin, looking at how you can blend e-cargo bike delivery services in with conventional parcel delivery. And the big German parcel manufacturers are involved in this project. It's a transformation that's going on before our eyes.

Arjun: Right. This brings me to another aspect of our conversation today. You are, I would say, a key decision maker in this field. I would assume that you've faced many challenges in getting your initiatives accepted by the general public and other decision makers. Could you tell us a little bit more about that? Like what kind of challenges do you face from day to day?

Matthew: Well, firstly, I'm too modest to take the role of the key decision maker. I'm a bureaucratic advisor in the European commission. But the challenges, they've been manifold and for a very long time. Let me just take couple of examples. One is almost 10 years ago, in 2011, we published a new transport strategy, which made moving freight off the roads and onto rail and onto other low carbon forms, such as short sea shipping. We make that an absolute priority. And we haven't delivered. If anything, we had a reverse modal shift. More freight moves by truck than before and the costs of these things are astronomical. When you look at the true external costs, when you look at the pollution costs, the CO₂, of course, the congestion or road safety risks. We've done some studying, not just freight move, but the external costs of all transport at staggering 1 trillion euros a year, 7% of the GDP.

Part of the problem is, the rail has still got some ways to go to become more modern, to become a true competitor to road freight. We're still dealing with the backlog of years of problems in the rail sector. We haven't seen a big shift on the rail yet, we'd still like to see it, and I still believe it's profoundly essential. But partly, we haven't really confronted the challenging in practical terms of getting road freight away. And that is very disappointing, but we're going to have to do it because right now. Sustainability was a strong wish 10 years ago, now it's an absolute imperative if we want to leave the planet in a decent situation for our children. We have to learn why over the last 10 years we failed to know that modal shift, why we haven't seen the big take up in alternatively fueled cars so far, why we haven't seen a decline in the use of privately owned internal combustion engine cars in our cities yet. You learn a lot more from your mistakes or from your failures than by your successes.

And we've had plenty of learning to do it the last decade, that's for sure.

Arjun: I'm sure that a lot of decision makers face issues about new things popping up that their plans didn't account for. And this is a pretty good example. Would you have any advice for our listeners, because they are also decision makers, of overcoming these issues? What could they do that they at least reduce the possibility of them facing these issues?

Matthew: Well, I would try to focus on the huge range of benefits, if you look at these things holistically. Far too often, we tended to say, for example, “we got to do something about cars in cities because they're dangerous”. You look at it from a purely road safety angle. But in reality, if we can reduce the private use of internal combustion engine cars in cities, you make things safer, you improve the air quality, you would reduce CO2, you reduce congestion, you make the city a nicer place. That's an incredible range of wins from one policy action, which is to restrict either by pricing or in some cases pedestrianization of our streets.

So think outside your silos and make connections with other coalitions of policy interests that maybe you hadn't thought of before. Going back to what I said right at the start, the road safety and sustainable communities, were not really connected up. And now I think they are. Every five years we have a big United nations ministerial level conference. We just had ours in Stockholm. A wonderful conference setting strong targets for precisely that, making that linkage between road safety and sustainability.

And the second piece of advice I would give, connected to making that policy linkage, is to make the connections to civil society. In the past, perhaps, we focused exclusively on what the industry can do, but joining up with community groups, increasingly professional NGOs, to drive the message through. Again, making new policy connections really strengthens your chances of succeeding. And then, the final point, if anyone is really interested in directing all of those things, look at speed. Speed is the quickest way of reducing fatalities. The quickest way of making a 50 ????, the quickest way of improving air quality. And one of the things we agreed in Stockholm was that a 30 kilometer/hour default speed limit across the world's cities. If you can make a road super safe and take the bikers and the pedestrian away from that road, maybe then the traffic could move slightly quicker, but the default should be 30 because that's the speed we know we can truly make people safe. That's the speed when are really reducing the dangers of air quality.

Arjun: Right. Great points. Thank you, Matthew. I would like to take a moment to motivate the listeners to connect with you and connect with the DGs initiatives. Do you have a website? Maybe they could email you or connect with you on LinkedIn?

Matthew: I am on LinkedIn. The quickest way of reaching me is on Twitter. That's got that nice public and semi-private stuff. If you want to send a message on Twitter or if you want to respond to what I put out in terms of tweets, you'd be very welcome.

I'm @BaldwinMatthew_ and I'd be delighted if you wanted to pick up on what I'm doing and comment. I learned a tremendous amount of people commenting quite critically on things we're trying to achieve. I think Twitter is a great forum for these things. I'll pick up on LinkedIn as well, and I'll also respond to emails: Matthew.Baldwin@ec.europa.eu. the way I see my job is connecting connected to me. So,

Arjun: Yes, that will be a key aspect of our online learning module: to connect decision makers and researchers together to plan. One last thing: we're having our final conference in Gothenburg from the 2nd to the 4th of June. I would be deeply ingratiated if you could motivate our listeners to attend the conference. There are city visits of various Gothenburg e-mobility initiatives, there are going to be many keynote speakers, it's going to be a fantastic event. So if you could kind of motivate them to come in as well.

Matthew: You shouldn't need motivating. It's a rich menu. Gothenburg is a popular city and Corona virus permitting, there's no better place to be on the 2nd of June. The days go on forever. Surely, a wonderful, vibrant city with a living lab for many of these things. Get to Gothenburg. Hope to see you there.

--**Outro Music**

This episode of The Next Stop was produced by me, Arjun Jamil. Co-produced by George Matthews and technical support and music by Jona Scholz. We're a part of the project BSR-Electric and are proudly funded by the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Electric.

This is one part of a series of 3 episodes. To find more, please access the shownotes and their links at our website, www.bsr-electric.eu.

We're introducing an online learning course for decision makers, researchers and stakeholders invested in the electric mobility revolution, just like you. To find out more, check out our website at www.bsr-electric.eu.

We're also holding our project's final conference online as an Open access resource, meaning it's completely free of charge with interactive presentations, joint learning and networking opportunities. Come join us on the 16th till the 17th of June 2020- to register please follow the latest updates on our website!

Our working team is based out of the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences at the Research and Transfer Centre for Sustainability and Climate Change Management. Thank you for listening in and I hope you tune into our next episode, coming soon!

Here are the links mentioned in the podcast:

- BSR electric's LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/13561920/>
- Matthew's Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BaldwinMatthew>
- Matthew's e-mail: Matthew.Baldwin@ec.europa.eu
- Matthew's LinkedIn: <https://be.linkedin.com/in/baldwin-matthew-move-35000352>