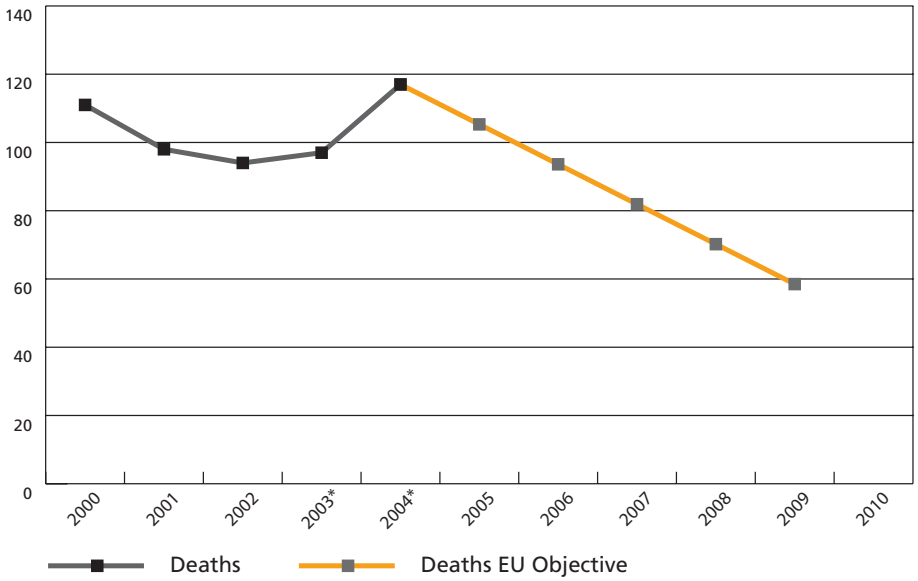
6.3 CYPRUS



General Road Safety: Cyprus has an above average fatality rate of 154 deaths per million. Although deaths were dropping they increased by 20 in 2004. Cyprus's first strategic Plan for Road Safety 2002-2005 has been followed up by a new Plan for the period of 2005-2010. Cyprus also has a Council of Road Safety which meets every 2-3 months to co-ordinate road safety activities. The Council is chaired by the Minister of Communications and Works and comprises of police, Ministries of Health, Education, Finance, the Department of Road Transport and Public Works and the Legal Service. Other relevant authorities' stakeholders and NGOs also attend the meetings as observers.

Enforcement is co-ordinated through the Traffic Department of the police who has the main responsibility. Every year an enforcement plan is drafted with guidelines on enforcement priorities. This is then implemented within the six provinces of Cyprus by the local traffic branches. Although local Commanders can set different priorities if they see fit, most adhere to the outlined priorities of the police traffic department. Increased enforcement activities for speeding, drink driving and seat beat and crash helmet use were launched two years ago. Enforcement particularly targets young drivers due to their high accident rates.

Speed: Cyprus currently employs approximately 200 mobile laser devices to enforce speed limits. In autumn 2005 a new speed management pilot scheme was adopted. This introduced 7 mobile cameras and 33 fixed speed and red light cameras. This number is planned to be increased to around 500 over the next five years depending on the experience with the first safety cameras. Speeds are currently being monitored at points where cameras will be introduced. Difference in speeds will also be communicated to the public after the installation of the cameras. Enforcement is targeted to high risk accident sites.

Alcohol: In Cyprus the legal blood alcohol level was recently reduced from is 0.9 mg/ml, the highest in the EU to 0.5 mg/ml. The new law reducing the BAC limit to the European average took effect as part of Cyprus's effort to reach the 2010 target of reducing road deaths by 50%. A special 0.2 mg/ml BAC limit for new drivers (first three years) will soon be considered by the Road Safety Council.

Random and evidential breath testing is undertaken with the benefit of roadside testing equipment. Drink driving enforcement is carried out at all times but is more frequent during evening, night time and early morning and at high risk accident sites.

Seat belts: A proposal to double the fixed fine for non use of seat belt is also planned. Currently, between two and four penalty points can be given and in exceptional circumstances the police officer may also use discretion to only issue a warning.

Seat belt checks are undertaken in combination with other checks on all roads at all times. The shift in focus is now to enforcing rear seat belt wearing rates and especially also to focus on child restraints.

Follow-up of offences: All detected alcohol and seat belt offences are followed up. Sanctions are given according to severity and previous convictions are taken into account. For speeding offences detected by safety cameras, the legal responsibility will rest with the owner of the vehicle where recognition problems arise.

Information: Campaigns are run by the Traffic Department of the police with the media. Since the start of 2005 regular twice yearly campaigns focussing on seat belt use, especially the rear, speeding and drink driving are run in conjunction with increased enforcement by the police. These are also linked to the European calendar of campaigns co-ordinated by TISPOL. Drivers will be alerted by appropriate warning signs of the presence of fixed safety and red light cameras. Cyprus has a Road Safety Park, inaugurated last autumn, which is located next to the police headquarters in Nicosia.

In conclusion, Cyprus sustained its drink driving checks and offences increased between 2003 and 2004. Cyprus does not conduct separate seat belt checks but offences doubled. Yet, seat belt wearing data are not collected and a comparative impact is not possible. Speeding offences also went up slightly from 2003 to 2004.

Recommendations:

- Further extend an automatic speed enforcement network and increase speed checks at high risk sites.
- Conduct separate seat belt checks.