Drink Driving Monitor

ETSC's Newsletter on Drink Driving Policy Developments in the EU

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Editorial

President Sarkozy has already proven himself as a headline grabber. But will he also follow in the footsteps of Chirac's and cement his road safety legacy? It seems ambitions of his government are there. Changes are afoot in a country that has already proven itself as leader in turning the tide in halting deaths on the road. France has brought about nothing short of a revolution in reducing speed related road deaths with rolling out an extensive enforcement programme. Now the attention turns to alcohol and the measures that were recently proposed by its government are ground breaking. If they are to be implemented alcolock rehabilitation programmes for all recidivists and alcocks in school buses and possibly then amongst other target groups could really help to bring about work to further reduce drink driving related deaths. Stronger sanctions including car confiscation are also on the cards for those found to be much over the limit.

Of course, we need to watch carefully and see both how these proposals fare in their passage through Parliament and how they will work on the ground. However tackling drink driving deaths head on and stopping the dangerous mix of alcohol and driving would be another big step forward.

It is Sweden though who has led the field over the past decade in promoting the use of alcolocks as part of the solution to preventing drink driving and saving lives. Alcolock developers have to some extent not even been able to keep up with the demand of the market. Much can be learned from their forward thinking work dealing with convincing the sceptics both in the media and amongst transport suppliers, drivers and the public. In the Monitor one of the CEOs from the Swedish Post explains why alcolocks have been such a successful part of their own business model.

Sweden is also likely to push forward with a nationwide rehabilitation programme for drink drivers using alcolocks. France and others should look to Sweden for inspiration and their 'can-do' attitude. Equally Sweden should take heart that another country will soon join them in their efforts to prevent drink driving. Initiative from the highest level of government can really be a force for change and has proven to reap the benefits for France. Swedish Prime Minister Reinfeldt and other EU leaders should also take this large political leap of faith. Both take up the EU Presidency in the coming 18 months and the EU can only benefit from this dynamic duo setting the European agenda. This current issue gives an overview of the latest developments in alcohol related road safety policies in the EU with a particular focus on Sweden and France.

The French government announced ground breaking news to combat drink driving in France on 13th of February. Since 2006, alcohol has become the number one contributor to road crashes: if all drivers respected the 0.5 BAC limit 26% more lives could be saved. The package of measures covers different areas of road safety including alcohol. Rehabilitation programmes with the installation of mandatory alcolocks for a fixed period for drink drivers will be introduced. Prévention Routière has already run a pilot programme in the Haute Savoie region. They reported a four to five level lower case of recidivism amongst those who had participated in the alcolock programme than others who had not participated. This new proposal would envisage rolling this out to the rest of France. Secondly, all school buses will have to have alcolocks from the start of the new school year in 2009 onwards.

One third of people killed in drink driving related crashes are from the 18 to 24 age group in France. The government has proposed that night clubs will have to install 'alcotests' so that drivers have the opportunity to test their BAC level before driving. Lastly the sale of alcohol will be prohibited in all petrol stations 24 hours a day. At present the sale is only allowed between 6 am and 10 pm.

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EU and Country News

Also in France, in the field of enforcement the government will also ask each department to prepare an enforcement plan showing where and when activities will be undertaken to prevent the most serious offences responsible for crashes such as alcohol, speed and seat belt use. The results of these enforcement plans will also be analysed and published. Sanctions will also be tightened up with the introduction of supplementary penalty of confiscating the car from the driver in the case of certain offences including recidivist drink driving. According to the Prévention Routière: "These measures are a good balance between the reinforcement of sanctions and preventative measures which were demanded by the associations petition: "Drink driving: Young people have suffered enough."

In Cyprus, the introduction of driver rehabilitation lectures including the dangers of drinking and driving are planned by the Police. This is pending the adoption by the Parliament of a new bill, which will allow the reduction of penalty points in return of attending the lecture and passing a subsequent test. They will be available to drivers with 8 or more penalty points, in return to deduction of 3 points. Each driver will be able to apply for participation in such a lecture, only once every 3 years. Previous efforts ran into difficulty as the participation was run on a voluntary basis. Lectures were offered to offenders who were close to losing their licences. But these did not have much response, as no tangible return was offered to the offenders invited. It is hoped that this change will bring about both greater take up of the lectures and a change in behaviour. Cyprus also dramatically upped both the number and the target of its drink driving checks in 2007 to cover even more of the population. Most of the checks were carried out during night time, on weekends, close to night clubs and generally at high risk areas.

In Germany there are plans to introduce new evidential breath testing instead of blood tests to determine the level of alcohol in drink driving offences. Last December's meeting of the Interior Ministers proposed to the Ministers of Justice that they consider a change of the law enabling the recognition of evidential breath tests as the basis for establishing if an offence has been committed or not. The introduction would greatly simplify the procedure for the driver suspected of being over the legal limit of 0.5. The system at present means that if during a breath test the driver is over the limit the suspect is taken back to the Police station for further tests where a doctor takes a blood sample. The results take several days. With a new evidential breath tester the BAC level is immediately clear and the waiting time and costs for the blood tests vanish.

The Clean Parties Project is supported by European Commission and consist on organising 10 events without any alcohol or drugs in four European countries. It started last November in France (Lille and Paris) and Belgium (Brussels) and will continue till 2009 through Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The project initially founded by Voiture & co is now organised with the support of the Responsible Young Drivers. The parties took place on the same night in Brussels, Lille and Paris. The events were a great success with 450 participants per city. The aim of the evenings is to communicate the strong message that it is possible to have party without alcohol.

The UK's annual drink drive campaign including an eyecatching young man trapped inside a giant pint glass toured the UK in the run up to Christmas to raise awareness of the consequences of a drink-drive conviction. The giant glass was taken to key city-centre locations and leaflets were handed out to the public. The message of the event, which was by the Government's THINK! campaign, was 'Don't let a drink-drive conviction come between you and Christmas'. The campaign was launched by 20 yearold Luke Noon, who lost his licence, job and girlfriend after his drink-drive conviction in 2006.



Belgium is developing legislation which will allow its commercial vehicle companies such as hauliers', taxi and bus firms to fit alcohol interlocks. At present this is possible but difficult as the employment and privacy law pose legal barriers. Two Christian Democrats (CDV) MPs Carl Devlies and Jef Van den Bergh announced a bill at the start of January. The idea stems from a meeting the MPs had with taxis firms in Leuven. Reactions from stakeholders have been mixed. The Transport Organisations such as the FEBETRA (Federation Royale Belges Transporteurs et des



Prestataures de Service Logistique) support this and even call for a 0.0 BAC limit for commercial drivers. However support in the Parliament seems strong and the proposal has quite a fair chance of making it through the Parliament and could be in force before the end of 2008. This legislation will be a step towards enabling more use of alcohol interlocks in Belgium it will not however mandate the introduction of compulsory use in all commercial vehicle fleets.

Bulgaria also runs regular anti drink driving media campaigns with the local and regional press which are linked to more intensive police checks. In 2007 a national campaign was run in March and April on the initiative of the largest newspaper "24 hours" and the national TV channel with the support of both the Ministry of Transport and Interior under the motto: "If you're drunk, get out of the car! I want to arrive alive'. The campaigns also engaged the support of many ministers, artists, sportsmen, celebrities and businessmen who wrote in a column against drink driving. Hotlines were opened for citizens to submit their ideas on how to limit drink driving, and how legislation should be changed. FM+ Radio (with 4 million listeners) also organised a nationwide campaign "I Don't Drive When I'm Drunk". This campaign was supported by some of the most prominent Bulgarian pop and rock artists, actors and others. Stickers were also part of both of these campaigns and handed out to drivers.



EU level news:

The long awaited legislation on cross border enforcement was published on the 19th of March. The main objective of such a Directive will be to set up a system of communication and transmission of administrative or judicial decisions on traffic offences. This would apply road safety enforcement measures in the priority areas of drink driving alongside speeding and non use seat belts for non-resident traffic. It is limited to cross border enforcement and will not touch upon the application of best practice in the Member States.

TISPOL's Europe-wide clampdown on drink driving saw police check over 880,000 motorists in a single week. Checks were carried out night and day in 23 countries between December 10th and December 16th. The results suggest drink driving – one of the major causes of death on European roads – is on the rise. Results show that out of 884,361 drivers checked, 22,089 or 2.5% proved to be over the legal drink drive limit for that country. The largest number of alcohol checks were carried out in Spain where 188,499 drivers were checked with 1% proving positive.

ETSC News

Road safety experts gathered in the Houses of Parliament in London to discuss strategies to prevent drink driving this February. The event was co-organised by ETSC and the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS).

Between 1997 and 2006 the number of deaths related to alcohol remained guite constant at around 550 deaths every year. This clearly shows the need for lowering the BAC limit from 0.8 g/l to 0.5 g/l as well as the introduction of targeted breath testing. The number of roadside screening breath tests in the UK decreased from 815,000 in 1998 to 607,000 in 2005. Ten years ago the then government proposed both a lower limit and the introduction of random testing in the frame of a former consultation. This was stalled though in part to the strong rural pub lobby. Now it is thought that the context is different with the rise of binge drinking and growing support from the Scottish Government to change the limit. It is hoped that the UK government will soon take the courageous and necessary step of proposing these changes in its upcoming consultation on the issue.

ETSC will also organise a Transport Safety Dinner debate on 'Preventing drink driving amongst young and novice drivers' on 9th April 2008 from 18.30 to 20.00. Participants will discuss how to tackle the problem of drink driving amongst young and novice drivers. Young and novice drivers are greatly over-represented in crash and road death statistics. They pose a greater risk to themselves, their passengers and to other road users compared to other drivers. Alcohol is a key element in many young driver crashes, particularly when combined with other factors such as speeding or night-time driving. Speakers include Michael Hübel (DG Health and Consumer Protection, European Commission), Johan Chiers (Responsible Young Drivers), Ad Hellemons, (Dutch National Police Agency/TISPOL), Bill Georges (Diageo) and Jean-Pascal Assailly (INRETS) To participate please register before the 2 April 2008: timmo.janitzek@etsc.be



Country Focus: Sweden

Sweden has one of highest levels of road safety in Europe with one of the lowest death rates at 49 per million population. The over-arching approach to road safety in Sweden is Vision 0. This is the aim to have no deaths or severe injuries as a result of traffic accidents. A new Vision 0 strategy and proposed target for 2020 are due for publication this spring this will also include performance indicators as a way of evaluating progress including one on alcohol.

Every day 0.24% of journeys which are made by car in Sweden are under the influence of alcohol or drugs according to a recent report from VTI. Alcohol is the cause of approximately 125 deaths annually. Despite efforts to tackle this problem the number of fatally injured drivers of passenger cars, with BAC > 0.2 promille (legal limit) has increased from 21% in 1997 to 27% in 2003. Since then this has averaged out to make up 23% of the total number of deaths (TrafikInspectorate).

One possible contributing factor could be that since Sweden joined the EU in 1995 its restrictive alcohol sale policies have been liberalised, this has led to an increase in total consumption. Sweden's approach to the drink driving problem can also be singled out in Europe. Dealing with drink driving in Sweden is becoming to be seen as a health issue. Although there is more room for increasing action on this approach, drinking is recognised as an illness that needs to be treated and not merely punished.

Enforcement

Levels of drink driving checks in Sweden are exceptionally high and have been increasing since a dip a few years ago. A total of 2.5 million tests were undertaken in 2007. In its new Road Safety Policy adopted by the Swedish Police in 2006 drink driving was picked out as one of the four priority areas for the Police's accident prevention measures with a target of at least 2 million breath tests a year, already achieved in 2006 and 2007. Next steps should include a more targeted breath testing approach focussing on times and places where drink driving takes place. Every driver who is stopped for whatever reason is automatically breath tested. Currently every police office has a breathalyser and approximately 50 mobile evidential breathalysers exist which are deployed for special drink driving enforcement efforts.

'Joined up thinking' on treating Drink Drivers

The Police are also one of the stakeholders which take part in the Swedish Road Administration's nation-wide programme called the "Joint action against alcohol and drugs in traffic". The aim is to reduce the number of drink drivers and to give people with drink and drug problems an opportunity to deal with their problem. Key actors alongside the Police include the Parole and Probation Department of the Swedish Prison and the County Administrative Board cooperate. Drivers stopped and charged by the Police under the influence are immediately offered a consultation which should take place within 24 hours. This is the time when alcohol dependent drivers have a high motivation to do something about their problem. In the introduction talk with the client, individual needs and requirements for rehabilitation are discussed such as counselling or medical treatment. Currently this model is being used in 82% of the Swedish municipalities. A further evaluation of the broader scheme, undertaken by the VTI, is expected in the autumn and will also be reviewed in a later Monitor.

Government Initiative on Alcolocks

In the past decade Sweden has been a pioneer in rolling out the use of alcolocks. The current Swedish government adopted a new Alcolock Strategy in 2007. In the field of rehabilitation, Sweden has been running an alcolock pilot programme for convicted drink drivers since 1999. The government recently launched an enquiry to prepare new rules about alcolocks as a condition to get the driving licence back after drink-driving. Its conclusions are expected by this October.

In the commercial area the government strategy recommends that alcolocks should be fitted to all new commercial busses and lorries. Although this is laudable, this is a step back from the previous government which had pledged to investigate overcoming EU internal market restraints and legislate for the introduction of alcolocks in commercial vehicles by 2010. However compulsory rules are planned for the use of alcolocks (as part of mandatory criteria for environment and safety) in all government vehicles. In 2004 the Swedish Road Administration and eight other public authorities were instructed

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to install alcolocks in new or leased company vehicles and to use this in all procurements involving trucks. All eight authorities believe that it will be possible to have alcolocks in most of their vehicles by 2010.

The momentum to have Sweden as a trial country for mandatory alcolocks in all vehicles in the EU, as proposed by the NTF in 2007 has slowed with the new government. Progress by the government towards further introducing them to two key target groups: (commercial drivers and recidivist drink drivers) is nevertheless being made. The new strategy though not as ambitious as the commitments of the previous government, identifies a number of milestones for action and is meant to be realistic and enforceable.

Alcolocks in commercial transport?

The scope of the problem

In Sweden a total of 20% of all road deaths occur in collisions with heavy good vehicles and more than a quarter of all fatal work accidents in Sweden are road accidents (Working Environment Authority). An accident involving a heavy vehicle will often have serious consequences, it is thus doubly important to increase the use of alcolocks in this sector. Moreover this is a large target group which could also set an example for the potential further roll out of alcolocks in the future and lead to a better level of knowledge amongst the wider society.

First steps

Alcolocks began to be introduced to the commercial fleet in 2000 in Sweden. There are now an estimated 30,000 alcolocks in use in the commercial context in Sweden. This is of a total fleet number of approximately 200 000 commercial vehicles (heavy good vehicles, buses, taxis and some light trucks and company cars). Between 2000 and 2002 the Swedish Road Administration began a national large scale trial with three companies and almost 300 alcolocks: a taxi firm, a bus company and a truck company.There were some important lessons learnt. It is crucial to get early information to employees and to union representatives to inform them about the alcolocks. Secondly, its' important to use alcolocks of high quality. An action plan is needed for their implementation and also to ensure proper follow-up procedures. Moreover the company must also plan for rehabilitation, if a drink driver is identified. Communication with the customers or clients is also crucial in generating support for the alcolock use. The results of this first trial were positive, in particular passengers supported their use. In the end of the project the transport purchasers were cautiously more supportive of alcolocks then at the start and also said that they would even be asking for them to be included in their future transport contracts.

How are the alcolocks being promoted?

There are a number of initiatives in this area to encourage both demand of the transport purchasers and supply by the transport providers. The alcolock is one tool in the work with Quality Assured Transports. This is a voluntary scheme that the SRA is conducting with far-sighted players who can influence transports. It applies both to organisations that procure transports and to those who carry them out. Experiences from this systematic work show that alcolocks are an effective instrument to guarantee sober traffic.

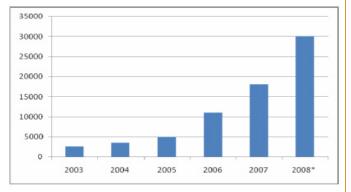
Another initiative is the NTF 'Safe Bus' campaign. The NTF surveyed all charter bus companies on different safety criteria including whether or not they had alcolocks fitted to their buses. According to the survey 15% could offer one bus fulfilling all the criteria. The NTF has developed a consumer Guide for customers who are looking to charter buses. This is a further way of providing an incentive to the companies to increase alcolocks.

A further initiative is run by the Swedish Abstaining Motorists Organisation (MHF) which tours Sweden's regions to inform them about alcolocks. Part of the tour also includes trailers which present various approved alcolocks.

ETSC

Country Focus: Sweden

Development of the Number of alcolocks in Sweden



MHF Alcolock news *estimated

Alcolocks in a rehabilitation contextConclusions

The Swedish Road Administration has been co-ordinating a programme for drink driving offenders since 1999. A pilot project was extended across Sweden in 2003 and will run until 2009. It is enabled through temporary legislation offering participation in an alcolock programme to drink driving offenders. The participation is voluntary and does not have an effect on the penalty of the crime. The 2-year programme includes regular medical check-ups (during year 2 the offender has to verify sober living) and controls of the alcolock device. The offender is personally responsible for all registrations in the alcolock during the two year period. The main reasons for participating are keeping the driver's licence, continuing to be able to work and also getting help with their alcohol problems.

The Swedish Road Administration and later on also other road safety stakeholders such as the NTF have been promoting the idea that doctors are able to prescribe alcolocks to patients with alcohol problems. This would be a way of preventing drink driving from occurring in the first place.

Campaigns

The major campaign in Sweden is the "Don't drink and drive" a nationwide programme which raises awareness among youths on the risks with alcohol and drink driving. The activities within "don't drink and drive" rely upon collaboration between a number of stakeholders – the law enforcement, schools, sports organisations among others. The problems of drink driving are brought to light through films, exhibitions and lectures – where the victims themselves step forward.

Conclusions

A concerted effort is still needed to address the drink driving problem in Sweden. Alcohol consumption patterns have thrown up new challenges. Political courage is needed to push ahead with tackling drink driving in Sweden. Both for a new and improved rehabilitation programme accessible to all and in incentivising the wider introduction of alcolocks in the commercial context. The Police should keep up their high levels of checks and work together with other stakeholders in identifying and preventing alcohol related crashes also by targeting high risk sites and times. Sweden is a front runner but must work hard in keeping up with the evolving drink driving problem.



ETSC Interview

ETSC interview Cary Larsson CEO of Poståkeriet, which is part of Posten Logistics (the Swedish Post) on their efforts to prevent drink driving



ETSC: 1. What are the main elements of your company's policy to prevent drink driving?

Cary Larsson: Poståkeriet is part of Posten Logistics and is Sweden's largest haulier, with around 2,500 vehicles and 3,700 employees. Road safety issues have long been a priority for us. We have now had a road safety policy in place for several years and the company also has an alcohol and drug policy. This is part of the company's general health policy. Other elements include regular health checks for those over 40 years of age and First Aid training.

The alcolock, or keybox, is one of several important aspects to our working environment and road safety work. For several years now we have also been carrying out random drug tests on all employees, both for long-term and new employees. Other prioritised areas include speeding and the use of seatbelts.

In addition to our own follow-up work we also co-operate with the National Society for Road Safety, NTF, who conduct impromptu seatbelt and speed checks at several different locations around the country.

We aim to have a high level of road safety so that our customers, drivers and fellow road-users can operate in a secure and safe environment. Our working environment should also be alcohol and drug-free. Employees are not permitted to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or to use alcohol or drugs at our places of work. By drugs we mean narcotics, the non-medical use of medicines and anabolic steroids.

Suspected or actual cases of alcohol or drug abuse are dealt with in accordance with special action programmes. We endeavour to put an end to the behaviour, but keep the employee.

Every employee and contractor is informed of the policy and is expected to adhere to it. Training and information are continually provided in order to equip managers, supervisors, union representatives and other key staff working with alcohol and drug issues with the necessary knowledge and tools.

ETSC: 2. How is your company working with alcolocks?

Cary Larsson: We have a specially designed "keybox", where drivers blow into a breathalyser and swipe their ID card in order to gain access to their vehicle keys. The same procedure is repeated when the key is returned. Drivers' ID and the keys that are removed and returned are registered continuously in the system.

The system is extremely secure, since all drivers pick up and return their vehicles at the workplace before and after their shift. The system has also offered us a cost effective solution, since we have avoided having to fit each vehicle with an alcolock.

ETSC: How do you prevent driver from circumventing the al-colock?

Cary Larsson: Every driver is assigned a particular key linked to their ID card. The computer system also issues a warning system if the system is tampered with. One way could be one driver blowing in the breathalyser for a colleague. However drivers agreed that they would not want to run the risk of being held responsible for a possible crash caused by a drunk colleague by covering for a colleague by blowing in their place.

The driver must also blow at the end of a shift, which is on average eight hours long so it is not possible to drink during the shift and pass the breathalyser test.

ETSC: When did you start and how many alcolocks are there now being used?

Cary Larsson:We began testing the keybox 3 years ago. After a positive evaluation we installed the keybox in 2007 at all major sites across the whole country.

ETSC: What motivated you to start?

Cary Larsson: Alcohol and drugs are a social problem that in purely statistical terms affects all larger places of work. We are a major employer and our brand is associated with high quality and security. We must therefore make every effort to provide assurances to our customers and fellow road-users that our drivers are not under the influence of alcohol or drugs. The technique is working well and both employees and union organisations are positive towards the use of the keybox.



ETSC: What is the procedure if you identify a drunk driver?

Cary Larsson: If the employee is under the influence at work, the supervisor will ensure that he/she leaves the workplace. The supervisor is responsible for making sure that the employee gets home or to a hospital safely. The incident is recorded and reported to the line manager.

The following day the line manager will conduct a personal discussion with the employee in question at the workplace or at the employee's home. The company's policy will be high-lighted and the employee will be offered help and support. The manager will document the conversation and inform his/ her superior, the company health service and the union or-ganisation. The bottom line is that if the driver does continue to drink and drive then they will risk loosing their job.

ETSC: How many cases of drink driving have you had?

Cary Larsson: Since the introduction of the key boxes across the country we have only had a few isolated cases.

ETSC: What has been the opinion of the drivers? Are they supportive?

Cary Larsson: Most of our employees are positive and think that it is good that we, as an employer, are clear and display zero tolerance towards the use of both alcohol and drugs. We have also had a positive dialogue with the union organisations throughout the whole process.

ETSC: What have been the lessons learnt and what would you advise to other companies considering going forward with this?

Cary Larsson: Start by developing a clear alcohol and drug policy. Our experience also shows that there is much to gain by having an open discussion on the issue at an early stage, both with the union organisations and directly with the employees in various forums. We regard this as being an extremely important work environment issue.

ETSC: What has the consumer feedback been?

Cary Larsson: We have had a great deal of publicity and interest from the media due to our extensive road safety work, which has naturally led to a lot of feedback from customers. On the other hand we have not actively made use of this in our marketing. We see it first and foremost as an important work environment issue.

ETSC: Has this also presented a new business opportunity?

Cary Larsson: The alcolock is a requirement in certain public procurement processes. When it comes to business opportunities in general, it is our experience that paying attention to road safety and environment issues, and having an alcohol and drugs policy in combination with ISO certification 9001, 14001, are all important aspects. We would welcome the development of a ISO standard on road safety management.

ETSC: What are the next steps that you would like to see from the Swedish government?

Cary Larsson: We do not currently have any formulated demands, but in the event of any future legislation on this issue we would like the alco keybox to be considered as a perfectly adequate alternative to alcolocks fitted in vehicles



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