

# Drink Driving Monitor

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

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## Editorial

Across some European countries progress is being made on introducing rehabilitation programmes to deal with drink driving offenders. Many of the Member States are due to introduce alcohol interlocks as part of these programmes whereby offenders can apply for special licences which allow them to drive, on the condition that they have an alcohol interlock. ETSC introduces a new barometer tracking the progress in the countries. Finland is clearly in the lead being the first to have introduced new legislation in July. France and Sweden are hard on its heels with proposed legislation out. Other countries such as the UK, Belgium and the Netherlands should be soon behind them in the next year or 18 months. As more countries follow suit ETSC thinks that some EU Guidelines to help those countries setting out legislation dealing with this tricky area of road safety would be helpful.

This Drink Driving Monitor brings its regular news from across the EU of steps to further prevent drink driving: a morning after campaign in Poland, proposals for alcolocks in Austrian school buses and the results of the European Traffic Police TISPOL's drink driving campaigns.

The Drink Driving Monitor also includes a special focus on Belgium. There new legislation is on the horizon for the introduction of alcolocks for recidivist offenders and easing their use in a commercial context. Experts cite the need for urgent improvement of data, both on levels of checks and on the level of drink driving as cause of death. ETSC also reports on exciting progress in Finland where following a successful pilot project new legislation for treating repeat drink driving offenders with an alcolock came into force this July. We interview Pasi Kemppainen of the National Traffic Police who explains why he believes this targeted focus on drivers who have a drinking problem will help to bring down alcohol related road deaths.

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# EU News

## EU News

### TISPOL Bus Checks Find High Level of Drink Driving

During its one week operation in 9 countries to check buses including holiday coaches across Europe TISPOL found 202 bus/coach drivers over the drink drive limit. The operation ran from the 21st to the 27th of July and saw 25,194 vehicles stopped and checked. As a result, 6,604 offences were detected: 208 drivers did not hold a driving licence having previously been disqualified for offences.

### TISPOL Summer Drink Drive Campaign

More than 2,000 motorists a day were found to be over the limit in Europe's biggest ever Drink Drive safety campaign so far. TISPOL's Operation Alcohol/Drugs saw officers in 18 countries carry out 859,516 checks during the week ending June 8th. In countries where technology and legislation allows, checks were also carried out for drivers under the influence of drugs. Overall 14,645 (1.7%) of drivers stopped were found to be over the legal limit for alcohol but there were wide differences from country to country. In Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland under 1% of those stopped were found to be breaking the law. In Switzerland the figure was 6.65% and in the UK 6%. The highest number of checks was carried out in France with 4,835 (2.17%). Countries taking part in the operation were: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy Lithuania, Moldova Republic, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and UK.

### MEPs Back Cross-Border Enforcement of Driving Fines

The European Parliament transport committee gave on 9th September its green light to a law aimed at identifying and fining drivers, who commit an offence (including drink driving) in another EU state. A total of 49 MEPs (out of 50) voted in favour of the plan to deliver more effective cross-border enforcement of penalties. According to Spanish Socialist Inez Ayala Sender, who is steering the dossier in the European Parliament, the main goal of the legislation is to put an end to unequal treatment of foreign and

local drivers when they have committed similar offences. In addition, MEPs backed the idea of intensive checks on the roads and proposed a further amendment to the Commission's proposal for guidelines for minimum numbers of checks especially in those countries where the death rates stands above the EU average. The report is due to be adopted in the Plenary on the 17th of November.

### Transport Ministers Balk at Supporting a Cross Border Enforcement Directive

Ministers of Transport have expressed far greater scepticism than the European Parliament about the European Commission's proposal for a Directive. With many Member States questioning the legal basis proposed by the European Commission (Article 71 Transport Safety of the European Community Treaty). Transport Ministers met for the first time following many pre-meetings that have been taking place since the summer between Member State officials and experts. The Council meeting conclusions stated that the Member States would continue to meet to discuss the possibilities under the chairmanship of the French Presidency. The issue should be back on the agenda at the next Transport Council in December.

### Support for Public Transport and Enforcement to Fight Drink Driving: Survey Results from Young People in EU

Drink driving was evaluated as the most dangerous of driving behaviours in all countries in a recent survey which polled approximately 4,800 young drivers aged between 18 and 25 in 8 EU countries: Germany, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, UK and Sweden. The survey was commissioned by the French Association Prévention Routière and the French Insurers (FFSA). Between 1% (Sweden) and 16% (France and Italy) drove after one or two alcoholic drinks during or returning from an evening out. Again between 1% (Sweden) and 10% (Italy) drove after more than two drinks either during or returning from an evening out. Average distances for an evening out vary between 37 and 46 km. When asked if they systematically designate a driver when they are out for an evening between 49% (Italy) and 28% (the Netherlands) always do and between 16% (Italy) and 5% Poland never do. During the last 12 months drivers were reported to have been checked for drink driving at least once: highest levels in Spain (40%) and lowest levels in the UK (8%). Between 23% (France) and 4% (UK) have checked their al-

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cohol levels with an alcoltest before driving. Young people support as a top priority the development of public transport for getting home (81-90%) and second more police controls (between 75-85%).

### A New Database Promotes Best Practice in Traffic Enforcement: Including Drink Driving

A new database containing good practice information on many aspects of traffic enforcement including drink driving is now freely accessible via the TISPOL web site. Known as CLEOPATRA (Collection of Law Enforcement Operations and Police Activities To Reduce Traffic Accidents), the database currently contains good practice information concerning Police traffic enforcement from Germany, France, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The easily accessible information covers many aspects of enforcement, such as legislative issues, the use of technology, planning, evaluation of results and cooperation with other road safety stakeholders.

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### France: New Legislation on Alcohol and Cross Border Co-operation on Fighting Drink Driving

Legislation to introduce a drink driving alcolock offender programme and to introduce alcolocks in all school buses is making progress in France. This follows an opinion poll on French attitudes to road safety where 22% of those polled favoured action to develop alcolocks as their number one priority. In a speech at a special seminar organised in September on co-ordination to fight for higher levels of road safety in Europe by the French Presidency, the Minister Marie France-Alliot Ministry of Interior, stressed that "alcohol is the first cause of deaths on French roads and I am personally engaged in putting alcohol interlocks into place in France." She also stressed the importance of enforcement of drink driving and co-operation at a European level. "We must go further. We must now create a real tool for operational co-operation to fight for road safety." Alongside a Directive on Cross-Border Enforcement the French also proposed to set up a new EU co-ordination structure of Police which would meet under every

EU Presidency to set up concrete joint actions on traffic law enforcement.

### UK Awaits Consultation on Drink Driving

The UK is still waiting for the much delayed consultation which should include measures to tackle drink driving. The Road Safety Minister Jim Fitzpatrick has stated that this will not include a reduction of the 0.8 limit at the TISPOL annual conference in Harrogate at the start of October. The Association of Chief Police Officers, the British Medical Association and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents all support a reduction to 0.5. Research by University College London found that lowering the limit for all drivers to 50mg would prevent 65 deaths and 230 injuries a year in Britain. It would also save the economy £119 million a year by reducing medical costs and lost working time. The UK along with Ireland and Malta is one of the last countries in Europe not to implement the EC Recommendation on Drink driving of a 0.5 BAC limit.

Mr Fitzpatrick said that the consultation would focus instead on better enforcement of the existing limit. Police could gain new powers to stop and test drivers at random. At present to breathalyse a driver, the Police have three justifications: involvement in an accident; committing a moving traffic offence; or suspicion that the driver is driving while under the influence of alcohol. Drink driving checks rose again in 2006 following a drop in previous years and an increase in drink driving related deaths. Jerry Moore, ACPO Police Liaison Officer at the Department for Transport, made the strong case at the annual TISPOL conference for the need for a Government commitment to Drink and Drug enforcement with the investment in more human resources to enable Police to increase drink driving checks. Also in the UK the courts may gain new sentencing powers to require repeat or serious offenders to have "alcolocks" fitted to their cars after they have served bans.

### Information to Drivers on Alcohol Consumption in Italy

In a bid to tackle the rising number of alcohol-related road accidents and deaths on Italian roads the Italian government has issued a decree (30th July 2008) mandating the displaying of information posters on the allowed BAC in all bars and public places where alcohol is served. Bartend-

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ers will be responsible for placing the posters and ensuring for their clear visibility.

The posters will show:

- an estimation of the BAC linked to different alcoholic drinks (beer, wine, spirits) and the weight and sex of the person.

- a description of the effects of alcohol on body performance.

The measure has faced fierce criticism for the lack of scientific accuracy about linking alcohol consumption and body weight. The reaction to alcohol is linked to many other personal factors and health conditions. The message should be simple: don't drink and drive. Critics also point out that other measures such as an increase in enforcement would lead to much quicker reductions in drink driving related deaths.

### Ireland targets Women to Stop Male Drink Drivers

In Ireland the Road Safety Authority launched a new campaign this summer called 'He Drives, She Dies' aimed at young women, designed to empower them to say no to getting into a car with a man who drives dangerously. Research carried out found that more than half interviewed said they would accept a lift from someone who had been drinking. Two-thirds of women passengers killed in car crashes are travelling in vehicles driven by men.

### Higher Sanctions for Drink Driving in Germany

As of 1st of January drink driving sanctions will be increased in Germany, alongside higher fines for other traffic offences including speeding. A driver with a BAC limit of over 0.5 will face a 500 EUR fine and up to 1,500 for a third offence. As Germans were preparing for their Oktoberfest celebrations a prominent Bavarian politician in the middle of his election campaign managed to stir up a media fury following a remark that it was "all right to still drive after 5 or 6 hours of Oktoberfest celebrations and one or two Maß or litres of beer." The German Road Safety Council (DVR) was one of many from the road safety community including the health experts and the Police to react strongly to this unfortunate remark. The DVR stressed the need

to separate drinking and driving and also drew attention to the morning after effect and the need to take care the next day.

### Zero Alcohol Tolerance for School Bus Drivers proposed in Austria proposed by KfV

The Austrian Road Safety Board (Kuratorium für Verkehrssicherheit) proposed a 0.0 BAC limit for all school bus drivers, regardless of whether they are driving a bus, mini van or car. Moreover a traffic psychological test should be undertaken as a precondition to taking up this responsible job. At present a 0.1 BAC limit exists for drivers transporting children in D-Class busses but not yet those of cars or mini vans. Higher sanctions for drink driving are also planned for January 2009 in Austria. Fines will increase to 500 EUR for an offence of driving over 0.5 BAC and 800 EUR for 0.8 and 1,200 for over 1.2 BAC. Rehabilitation courses are also foreseen.

### Evaluation of Sweden's Drink Driving Referral Programme

Sweden runs a nation-wide programme called the "Joint Action against alcohol and drugs in traffic" in 85% of the municipalities. It aims to reduce the number of drink and drug drivers by giving them the opportunity to take up the advice of medical services. Once a driver has been stopped by the Police they then give them this option. The Swedish National Road and Transport Research Institute (VTI) is currently evaluating the progress and impact of this programme. Here we present some preliminary results from one part of the evaluation, the questionnaire study. Based on just under 100 answers, the research found that in 86% of the cases, the social services received information within 24 hours.

A reasonably high number (75%) of Police and social services respondents find the initiative to be beneficial. To generate a higher take up of the offer some Police commented that it would be good for Police to have special training on "motivational interviewing". Police respondents maintain they have more success if they have the support of their leaders. Over half of the Police believe that this project has led to more drink drivers taking up contact with the social services. But 35% don't know about the impact that they have had due to confidentiality. Some

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feedback from them includes suggestions that it would be useful for them to have an idea of the take up rate whilst maintaining anonymity of the offending drivers. Based on the evaluation of 143 of the cases, 10% accepted the offer of a meeting with the social services immediately, 26% after "a while" and 27% would think about it and the final 37% declined the offer altogether. Police reported that the average extra time to make this offer was only 2 minutes (a figure based also on those who answered the same amount of time). A further remark was that the Police wanted to see the paper work simplified. The final report will be published in January 2008. What would improve impact further would be a compulsory referral of all drink and drug driving cases to the social services.

### Don't Drink and Drive Day in Sweden

Sweden held its sixth annual "Don't Drink and Drive" Day on September 25th. This action included a whole variety of actions to raise the profile of fighting drink driving with a special focus by the Police on increased enforcement and media work. Different government ministries, the Swedish Road administration and NGOs such as the NTF (Swedish National Society for Road Safety), the MHF (Swedish Abstaining Motorists) and MADD (Mothers Against Drink Driving) co-operated on this day. Police conducted intensive checks and stopped 65,069 drivers for breath tests picking up 135 drink drivers who were over the limit with the region of Skåne, closely followed by Stockholm County, checking by far the most drivers. The enforcement activities also included testing for drugs. Sweden has a zero tolerance approach to drug driving. A concert was held in the centre of Stockholm to launch the day with speeches also from the Minister of Justice Mrs. Ask. Minister Ask stressed different actions on drink driving including upcoming legislation on alcohol interlocks to treat drink driving offenders. A further 100 meetings gathering different actors in the regions were held all over Sweden to focus on the issue of fighting drink driving.

### Alcolock Drink Driver Offender Legislation Proposed in Sweden

In Sweden the government launched in early October its consultation on legislation for introducing a nation-wide

alcolock drink driver offender programme. Following the stakeholder consultation the proposal is expected in 2009. The proposed system is that all drunk driving offenders can apply for an alcolock as a condition to keep their driving license instead of facing a driving licence revocation. For people in the high risk group (over 1 promille BAC, relapsing offenders and persons with a diagnosed alcohol problem or addiction to alcohol) the condition will be to drive for 2 years with the alcolock. In order to get a license without an alcolock after that, they would have to prove that they live a sober life (a minimum of 4 blood tests during at least 6 months).

### Czech Designated Driver Campaign DOMLUVME SE!

The autumn and winter part of the Designated Driver campaign DOMLUVME SE! (Let's agree!) started on October 20th with a concert of the popular Czech band CHLNASKI in Jablonec nad Nisou. The campaign DOMLUVME SE! (Let's agree!) is a variation of the Designated Driver concept targeted at drinking and driving among young people. At special concerts the frontmen of bands send a clear message against drinking and driving to the visitors of their concerts and special promotional teams offer the chance to be voluntarily breathalysed. If a controlled person is clearly sober, they receive a small gift, e.g. a T-Shirt. The campaign is one of the main activities of the Czech Ministry of Transport, Road Safety Department (BESIP) and is supported by FORUM PSR (Responsible Spirits Producers) and the Responsible Brewers Initiative.

### Morning After Enforcement and Media Campaign in Poland

Police in Poland have launched a special campaign this October targeting drink driving on the morning after. This was started by Police in Warsaw where on Monday mornings "breath checks" are made on Warsaw streets. The action is carried out by Police using traffic jams on the streets. The traffic is already slow and additional drink driving checks can be made.

# ETSC News and Country Focus: Belgium

## ETSC News

In mid October ETSC and one of its Polish Members, the NGO "Road and Safety" organised a "Safe and Sober" Talk in Poznan to discuss drink driving in Poland. This was also in the framework of the celebration of "Road and Safety" 10th anniversary celebrations. A representative group of stakeholders from central and local government, research, the Police, industry and a number of Poland's active road safety NGOs as well as national media participated.

In Poland the number of detected alcohol offences dropped by 20% between 2006 and 2007, which is believed to have been contributed to by Poland's change in its traffic offence penalty regime and the accompanying publicity. Currently a proposal is being discussed that every driver stopped by Police for whatever reason should be tested for alcohol by 2009. At present on average only 35% of drivers who are stopped are checked. Representatives of the National Traffic Police from the Ministry of Interior also explained the drop in drink driving checks between 2006 and 2007 had been due to a change in Poland's follow up regime and the 24 hour courts. This had been taking more of Police time in the courts and pulling officers off the streets.

Campaigns in Poland are run by the National Road Safety Council (NRSC) and supported by many NGOs, also with roots in the powerful national Catholic Church. Ilona Butler of ITS Poland gave a presentation on drink driving in Poland and called in particular for better co-ordination between the many different anti drink driving campaigns and work of NGOs in Poland. Danuta Gut of the Polish Brewers presented their labelling campaign: "I never drink and drive" which one can find on all Polish beer cans and bottles. Jaroslaw Giemza also intervened on behalf of the Global Road Safety Partnership and presented their project of targeting drink driving in the town of Olsztyn. One of the clear conclusions was that more resources for both more traffic police on the roads and equipment are sorely needed and that following good results there is no room for complacency in Poland.

ETSC will host its next Safe and Sober Talk in Paris on the 2nd of December in co-operation with our French member Association Prévention Routière. France's new proposed measures for legislation to tackle drink driving such as the use of alcohol interlocks will be on the agenda.

ETSC also published its "Blueprint for the 4th Road Safety Action Plan" including many ideas, new and old, for tackling drink driving in Europe for the next decade. Recommendations to the EU included proposing a Directive for 0.2 BAC limit for commercial and novice drivers thus stressing the seriousness of drink driving amongst these two target groups. ETSC also proposed the launch of an initiative for commercial organisations to consider drink driving by their work forces within the context of their business model. Alcolock technology is also in focus with a proposal to adopt uniform standards for alcolocks in Europe, and provide assistance to reduce the workload for those countries that wish to introduce the technology without having the appropriate legal framework in the short run. In the long-term they should work towards having what are likely to be in 2020 very non-intrusive alcolocks mandatory in all vehicles.

## Country Focus Belgium: Drink Driving

Some 300 fewer people die in road crashes in Belgium today than in 2001 (ETSC, 2008). There has been a 27% decrease in road deaths between 2001 and 2007, down to 1,080. Belgium has seen a yearly 11.7% progress in alcohol-related road death reduction over the past decade, which is the second best result among the EU countries. Road deaths from drink driving dropped 9.4% faster than deaths from other causes over this period in Belgium (ETSC, 2007).

The proportion of drivers found over the 0.5 BAC limit decreased from 3.3% in 2003, when the Police and IBSR started bi-annual measurements of drivers' alcohol level, down to 2.1% in 2005. However, the figure goes up to 7.6% on week-end nights, which is a worrying signal that more needs to be done here to prevent so-called "Saturday night" fever (IBSR/BIVV).

In Belgium, road safety has gained a higher priority since May 2001 when all relevant stakeholders were brought together in an États-Généraux meeting at the highest level. Consequently, the EU goal of halving road deaths by 2010 was adopted for Belgium, and a new strategy elaborated to achieve this target. At the heart of the new

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strategy there were measures to improve driver behaviour, including an increase in alcohol checks by 10% per year. Concrete sub-targets related to drink driving were also adopted. According to the targets adopted in 2007 every year one driver in three must be checked which is at about 2 million checks a year.

## Drink Driving Legislation

A 0.5 BAC level is in force for all drivers. New legislation introduced in 2004 included higher sanctions for traffic offences. Minimum fines, for drink driving was increased to 137,50 euros. New legislation under preparation has faced some delay due to the crisis facing the government in Belgium. Nevertheless two pieces of legislation are in the pipeline. The first one for implementing an alcolock drink driver offender programme. That project will probably be discussed and voted in the first months of 2009. The Parliament will also in the next months discuss a second proposal of law that allows companies to introduce alcolocks in their cars and trucks and buses. At present this is possible but difficult as the employment and privacy law pose legal barriers. A taxi firm in Mechelen already launched its first trial in May this year. This legislation would 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 fleet.

## Case study

In Belgium a taxi firm has started a small alcolock trial in April supported by the alcolock supplier ACS Belgium. This is within the context of the development of new legislation. N Taxi is based in Mechelen and has a zero tolerance policy towards alcohol and drugs. All taxi drivers have to sign the house rules and commit to this policy on alcohol and drugs. Three drivers have voluntarily agreed to have alcolocks in their cars. In the first place the company wants to build in safety for the drivers as well for the customers. Alongside fitting in with their zero tolerance policy the firm had a problem with a driver who lost his job due to an alcohol problem. Preventing a repeat of this was a further motivation for them to take up alcolocks.

If a drink driving offence is detected by the alcolock the head of the firm talks to the driver and gives them a warning. So far this has not occurred and the drivers

are positive about this. N Taxi is convinced that this also has had a positive effect on their business image and they have led to customer satisfaction. This has sent a positive message to the rest of the taxi world.

There has been a 20% increase in the company's business since the introduction of alcolocks. The biggest customers of N Taxi (Dupont De Nemours, Procter & Gamble, Tibotec) have supported the project and have commissioned more work for the small taxi firm. The taxi firm owners will extend the trial by keeping the current locks in the cars and introducing more alcolocks to other taxis. The firm thinks that the government should also initiate discussions with Trade Unions and the insurance industry to engage in the development of the alcolock as a preventative tool.

## A lower limit for young drivers?

There has also been some discussion in Belgium but no proposal to date on introducing a lower BAC limit for young drivers. However, data considering the tested drivers in killed and seriously injured accidents in 2006 show that the problem age group is rather the 25 to 34 years and 35 to 44 years and not the youngest 18 to 24 years age group. Johan Chiers of the Belgian NGO Responsible Young Drivers points to this and rather proposes other measures to target drink driving amongst young people. Most effective is increasing social pressure. They also recommend the introduction of drink driving education in driver education and to focus communication activities on times and places when young drivers are at risk, such as night time and weekends.

## Enforcement – Drink Driving

In Belgium, traffic law enforcement is the responsibility of local Police forces and the Federal Police, which controls the motorway network and some larger regional roads. All Police forces set up yearly action plans with target figures for controls in all areas including speeding, drink driving and seat belts. Moreover, local Police zones signed for the first time in 2004 a yearly Road Safety Convention with the Ministers of Transport and of the Interior, in which they committed to a set of road safety measures.

Alcohol checks are undertaken at random and on suspicion by the traffic Police. These checks are taken at high

# Country Focus: Belgium

risk accident sites close to bars and restaurants at all times including prime times such as at night and at the weekend but also in the week and in the mornings. The number of screening tests, conducted during the yearly BOB campaign, has also increased from 83,500 in 2002/2003 to 157,000 in 2005/2006 (BIVV/IBSR). However, this falls short of the required 2 million tests a year covering a third of all drivers. Moreover many of the checks occur during targeted campaigns, whereas alcohol checks should be extended to cover the entire traffic flow and not only limited to the times of campaigns.

## Campaigns

Belgium is home to the Bob campaign advocating safe, responsible and alcohol-free driving. The Bob campaign has been present in Belgium since 1995. Fifteen EU Member States have copied it or have adapted it to their specific situation. Bob is the name of a person who does not drink when (s)he has to drive and who brings his/her friends home safely. The aim of the campaign is to convince people not to drink and drive. It strives to make drink driving socially unacceptable. An important element of the campaign is the support by the alcohol industry. The Bob campaigns are always combined with more extensive enforcement during the campaign period. The campaign has both permanent elements (e.g. the Bob website, the Bob van, leaflets, key rings, t-shirts) and periodic elements (e.g. road side billboards and TV and/or radio advertisements). The Belgian Bob campaign is a joint project of the Belgian Road Safety Institute (non-profit organisation) and the Arnoldus Group of the Federation of Belgian Brewers (industry SAO).

In addition, the Police support the campaign with extra road side breath tests. After each Bob-campaign, post-test have been carried out to measure the impact of the campaign and its appreciation by the public. The Bob-campaign is highly appreciated. Around 35% of the respondents say they have "been" Bob and around two thirds of the people say they know someone who acts like Bob. During the campaign period (information + enforcement) the percentage of drunk drivers drops to around 4%, whereas outside the campaign period, it is about 9%. (<http://www.bob.be/index.htm>)

## Follow Up of Offences

In Belgium, offences are dealt with by a number of different authorities. Moreover, public prosecutors in the various Police districts enjoy a high level of autonomy, which leads to differences in the follow-up of offences. At present there is no effective system in place to discourage repeat offenders. In fact, repeat offenders will not even be recognised as long as they have not been caught and fined in the same district. This needs to be addressed as a matter of priority in helping to rehabilitate recidivist drink drivers.

## Collecting Data

One of the other underlying problems is that drink driving accident data in Belgium remains incomplete and patchy, with blood test results available in only 45% of fatal crashes (BIVV/IBSR). This is an improvement on 25% registered in 2004. However, IBSR concludes that the national data reflect under-registration and recommends that all injured drivers should be tested as a matter of routine as soon as possible.

## Conclusions

In conclusion, alcohol checks should increase to reach the target of testing 1 driver in 3. Data on Police enforcement activities must be improved to evaluate this progress and their activities need to be communicated systematically. Enforcement activities should not be limited to specific drink driving campaign periods but cover the entire traffic flow. Also all drivers involved in injury accidents should be tested. Finally, drink driving needs to be seen as a medical health problem and the follow up system must be better co-ordinated to allow for the identification and treatment of repeat offenders.



# ETSC Interview

## ETSC Interview

### New Alcolock Legislation in Finland

Ellen Townsend in conversation with Mr. Pasi Kemppainen, Chief Superintendent of the National Traffic Police of Finland on drink driving in Finland and new alcolock offender legislation.



**ETSC:** What does Finland do to prevent drink driving?

**Mr. Pasi Kemppainen:** We have an 0.5 BAC limit and apply random breath testing and also check a driver every time a driver is stopped. In 2007 we undertook 2 million tests: this is one of the highest per population levels of checks in the EU. Nevertheless, approximately 23-25 % of road deaths are caused by drink drivers. Mostly, drink drivers kill themselves or their passengers. It is quite rare that they kill other road users. The Finnish Government Resolution on Traffic Safety and Police Traffic Safety Strategy clearly spells out the important aim of decreasing the number of drink drivers in traffic.

**ETSC:** Why has Finland decided to go ahead with legislating for the use of alcohol interlocks as part of its drink driving policy?

**Mr. Pasi Kemppainen:** We apply very powerful and successful methods of drink driving enforcement and also have other good countermeasures to tackle drink driving in Finland. Yet, even if we are conducting best practice to tackle the drink driving problem, we haven't been able to cut down drink driving related road deaths or deal effectively with the so-called "hard drinking culture" that is dominant in Finland.

Whatever the reasons for this drinking culture are, I have to say that the high level of drink drivers alarms us in Finland. This is why we have to be creative in finding other ways to tackle this problem. We believe that one way to stop people driving under the influence is the use of an alcolock.

We know some basic facts:

1. approximately 60% of detected drink drivers' BAC limit is over 1,2 per mille.
2. 88% of alcohol related road deaths are caused by this kind of driver.
3. From 8 to 9% of drink drivers get caught more than once in a year and even 23% of them get caught again during next five years.
4. These drivers cause 35 road deaths every year in Finland.
5. It is estimated that drink drivers are quite rarely caught. Our best estimate is that only every second hundred drink driving offence time leads to a detection.

These statistics indicate to us that Finnish alcohol related road deaths are mainly caused by drivers with a drinking problem. These people do not comply with any rules when they are drunk. On the other hand, most of these same drivers are willing to comply with the rules quite well when they are sober. That is why we believe alcolocks could make the difference.

**ETSC:** Who is eligible for the programme?

**Mr. Pasi Kemppainen:** Legislation allowing the use of alcolocks came into force on the 1st of July 2008 following a three year pilot programme. Once a drink driver has been identified they are given the option to regain their right to drive by having an alcolock installed in their car and committing to the terms of a conditional right to drive. This is granted to a drink driving offender, who is permanently residing in Finland, and has not had a driving ban for any other reasons and has a valid driving licence. This conditional right to drive can be given by the Police even before court proceedings. However, the court is the body which takes the final decision about the conditional driving right.

The alcolock must be used for the time period ordered by the court, at least for a year and no more than three years.

**ETSC:** How does the programme work?

**Mr. Pasi Kemppainen:** In order to receive an alcolock driving licence the driver must see a doctor or another health care professional to discuss their use of alcohol and drugs, the health impacts, and opportunities for rehabilitation. The driver must request a certificate stating the purpose of the visit and submit it to the Police.

The alcolock driving licence will provide the right to drive cars referred to in the vehicle register and fitted with alcolocks only. That is why after the installation the car needs to undergo a modification inspection. Certificates of the installation and of the modification inspection must be delivered to the Police of the driver's place of residence.

*ETSC: How much will it cost?*

**Mr. Pasi Kemppainen:** The costs for using the alcolock are approximately 110-160 EUR a month and are carried by the driver. The alcolock is serviced every two months and within 24 hours if an infringement has occurred.

*ETSC: what happens afterwards?*

**Mr. Pasi Kemppainen:** At the end of the alcolock period the special alcolock driving licence is returned to the Police. The driver can then remove the alcolock from the car or leave it in. In most cases the driver has bought an alcolock to be able to get the conditional driving license.

*ETSC: What are your hopes for the future for improving the legislation?*

**Mr. Pasi Kemppainen:** We think that alcolocks could reduce the drink driving deaths by between 25-28% a year in Finland. We'd like to see EU legislation on extending the use of alcolocks to stop drink driving. Progress has to be made swiftly on the alcolock type approval process to help this along. I'd like to see alcolocks as a standard equipment in all new cars. Especially as they are undergoing rapid development all the time and prices are coming down. In Finland we are waiting for a consultation document from the government where alcolocks are made an obligatory measure for all recidivist drink drivers as opposed to an option as at present. We also know that young male drivers are over represented in our fatal alcohol related accidents and believe that an alcolock could be good as a preventive measure for them.

## Alcolock Legislation Barometer

ETSC is introducing a new addition to our Drink Driving Monitor: an alcolock legislation barometer which will appear whenever the "weather" for new legislation on introducing the use of alcolocks either within the commercial or rehabilitation context changes.

	Pilot project ongoing	Legislation in preparation	Legislation in discussion in Parliament	Legislation in implementation	Rehabilitation	Commercial Transport
Finland				X	X	
Sweden	X	X			X	
Netherlands	X	X			X	
France	X	X			X	X for school buses
UK	X	X				
Belgium	X	X				
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