November 06
NUMBER 08

Enforcement Monitor

ETSC's Newsletter on Traffic Law Enforcement in the EU

Editorial

The European target of a 50% cut in annual road deaths by 2010 can only be reached if traffic law is enforced more effectively. Police enforcement of rules covering speeding, drink driving and the use of seat belts alone can prevent 14,000 deaths by 2010, according to Commission estimates. This is why the European Commission adopted a Recommendation on how Member States should improve their enforcement policies. Furthermore the European Commission is now taking the further step of considering an EU initiative on legislation. ETSC continues to monitor progress on the implementation of the Enforcement recommendation in the EU member States.

At the start of November the European Commission launched a proposal on "Respecting the Rules: Better Road Safety Enforcement in the EU". Stakeholders have until 19th of January 2007 to send their submissions to the European Commission. The Commission states its intention to present a proposal on better road safety enforcement in the EU in 2007. This Enforcement Monitor presents a summary of the consultation document. The Consultation notes the failure of the EU Member States to progress on an EU wide introduction of best enforcement methods. ETSC urges all stakeholders to carefully consider the proposed options and contribute to the debate on what a next step should be. In the meantime no time should be wasted in further implementing best practice in enforcement in the EU.

This eighth Enforcement Monitor also presents progress in traffic law enforcement in Sweden in more detail. Sweden has one of the lowest death rates in the EU and also managed to reduce death rate by a further 25% over the past years between 2001 and 2005. A new national Police plan has been adopted this year which aims to harmonise Police activities across its 21 counties. This comes at a time when a new automatic speed control system using speed cameras entitled: "Sweden's new lifesavers" has been introduced. This Enforcement Monitor also gives a special focus on the role of penalty point systems and includes an interview with a Spanish road safety expert, Jaime Sanmartín, giving an analysis of progress since the introduction of the new system there.

Focus: Public Consultation on Traffic Law Enforcement Published

Introduction

The European Commission has published its public consultation on the enforcement of road traffic law. Prior to the possible development of an EU wide initiative, this consultation will enable all stakeholders to submit their views on the options proposed by the European Commission on: "Respecting the Rules: Better Road Safety Enforcement in the EU." Stakeholders have until 19th of January 2007 to send their submissions to the European Commission. Then the Commission intends to present a proposal on better road safety enforcement in the EU in 2007. The Consultation notes the failure of the EU Member States to progress on an EU wide introduction of best enforcement methods. It states that EU action could aim at both setting up an EU wide system for carrying out cross border enforcement and providing a reference framework for convergence towards high quality and fair enforcement practices for road safety.

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Background

The Mid-term Review of the 3rd Road Safety Action Programme published last February is characterised by an increased inequality of road risk across the EU. With less than four years to go, the chances of the European Union to achieve its 50% road death reduction target by 2010 are slim. Progress has been made but only in achieving a 17.5% reduction in road deaths instead of the 25% level which should have been achieved at this half way staging post. If current progress continues the reduction will reach a 35% reduction and not 50% by 2010 as planned.

The European Commission had a cost-benefit analysis carried out on the basis of proposals similar to the Enforcement Recommendation. It assessed that increased enforcement would result in a total annual reduction of 14,000 road deaths and 680,000 injuries in the EU, and in a net benefit of 37 billion Euro or 0.44% of GNP (ICF Consulting 2003). Moreover public opinion supports road traffic law enforcement. Also, recent experiences in countries such as France have shown that enhanced enforcement activities can yield fast results. Between 2001 and 2005, deaths on the roads reduced by 34.5%, from 8,160 to 5,339. The success has mainly been attributed to improved road user behaviour in the areas of speed, alcohol and seat belts - the key focus of French road safety policy since 2002. In particular, improved speed management, based on the new camera system, has contributed about 75% to the overall reduction in fatal accidents between 2002 and 2005.

"Respecting the Rules: Better Road Safety Enforcement in the EU" A Summary

The European Commission's Consultation Paper consists of five parts. The first part defines the problem. It notes the unsatisfactory progress to reaching the EU target of halving road deaths by 2010, the wide gap in best and worst road safety records and the problems of following up traffic offences committed by non-residents.

The second part of the Consultation paper presents the case for community action. It begins with a reminder of how road safety policy is part of the European common transport policy. This is followed by a number of arguments to support the need for complementary EU action on enforcement for certain types of traffic offences under the safety provisions of the Treaty.

These arguments include concerns about the difficulties of cross border enforcement and states the need to ensure that all drivers are treated equally and respect the traffic laws regardless of which country they are travelling in. The progress made since the publication of the 2003 EC Recommendation is acknowledged. However it states that as the Recommendation was not legally binding, it failed to lead to an EU-wide introduction of best enforcement methods. Nor has the necessary co-operation to create an EU-wide system for effectively dealing with cross-border enforcement been set in motion. The relevance of the new Council Framework Decision of 24 February 2005 on the application of the principle of mutual recognition to financial penalties is recognised. Yet so are its shortcomings in not covering all traffic offences both under criminal and administrative law, nor non-financial penalties.

Of the three priorities, speed is singled out as an area where enforcement can work as a powerful means to encourage drivers to reduce speed based on experience in certain countries. The particular problem of following up speeding sanctions committed by non-residents within automatic systems is also presented. The context of the far from perfect patchwork systems of bilateral agreements for following up non-resident offences is also explained as well as the high level of non-resident offences and percentage of accidents. For example, in Luxembourg, non-resident drivers account for 30% of road traffic offences and 23% of fatal accidents. Lastly, the Directive 2006/22/EC on social legislation relating to professional drivers is cited as an example for defining standard enforcement in the EU.

This is followed by the third part: an elaboration of the enforcement framework. The Enforcement procedure from the first step of registering the offence to the final one of executing the sanction is presented. Different penalties are listed ranging from fines to non-financial penalties such as points systems.

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The main bilateral agreements and multilateral agreements that already exist are set out. There also follows an overview of how in the absence of an EU wide approach informal paths have been explored by traffic Police forces through different initiatives such as the TISPOL network and under specific EU funded projects such as VERA. Here the Commission concludes that although there are existing mechanisms, these instruments have been set up for cross border enforcement cooperation in different political and time-related horizons and they have limitations.

The fourth part includes the main elements of a tool box for a well-functioning cross border enforcement system. This section considers the need to improve the quality of enforcement in the three priority areas of speeding, drink driving and seat belt use along the lines of the EC Recommendation on Enforcement.

The consultation's fifth part considers five different policy options for possible Community action on enforcement. The first one constitutes "business as usual" which means leaving everything as it is. The second proposes a more structured exchange of best practice between Member States and more systematic cross border enforcement by all Member States on their territory. This would be through the collection and analysis of data, statistics and reports. The third option builds on the second but includes that with regards to offences committed by drivers of vehicles registered in another Member State, the owners of the vehicles are identified through a new information exchange system established at EU level. Sanctions would be executed in the country where the offence has been committed, under national legislation. The fourth option goes over and above the previous one by transferring the enforcement decisions to the competent authorities in the country where the offender is normally resident. The fifth option requires enforcement methods and measures implemented by Member Sates, to meet common standards and targets established by a regulatory framework. Sanctions are executed by the competent authorities in the country where the offender is normally resident.

Finally, comments are invited in particular in response to six questions:

1. Do you agree with the definition of the problem and the objectives of the intended EU actions?
2. Should EU actions be limited to the TENs network or cover all EU roads?
3. Should EU actions be limited to the three main traffic offences responsible for road accidents and deaths namely speeding, drink-driving and non-use of seat belts, or should they cover all traffic offences?
4. Which one of the five described policy options would have your preference?
5. Are there policy options other than those described in this paper that you would like to suggest?
6. Do you have specific comments on the costs and benefits of the different instruments/measures?

Comments to the Consultation should be submitted no later than Friday 19th of January. The European Commission also intends to publish the comments received. Note also that a consultation meeting in Brussels is planned at the close of the consultation period.
Link: http://ec.europa.eu/transport/roadsafety/enforcement/introduction_en.htm

ETSC believes that traffic law enforcement, in combination with awareness raising activities, is the single most important measure to reach the EU target of halving road deaths by 2010. Given the short time available to working towards reaching the 2010 target, enforcement of traffic law in the three priority areas of speeding, drink driving and seat belt use has been found to be an effective short term measure in leading to a rapid reduction in deaths and injuries and should be applied immediately. ETSC would like to see a Directive including the minimal requirements to ensure that all Member States are aiming to achieve high standards in the enforcement of legislation regarding drink driving, speeding and seat belt use according to the best practice set out in the Enforcement Recommendation. A proposal should also include the cross border dimension and envisage legislation to ensure that drivers respect the traffic law in whichever EU country they are driving.

Penalty Point Systems:

A key part in effective traffic law enforcement is ensuring the follow up of offences. According to the EC Recommendation on Enforcement this follow up should be: "effective, proportionate and dissuasive". One of the ways of sanctioning a driver is through a penalty point system. This is currently

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in use in 19 of the 25 EU countries. Spain and the Czech Republic have recently introduced a new system. Countries who do not yet have a penalty point system in the EU include Belgium, Estonia, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovakia.

In a penalty point system offenders face not only normal monetary fines but also personal merit points to their licence. Systems vary across Europe. Drivers can lose and gain penalty points which result in the withdrawal of their driving licences. Penalty points are not a substitute of financial penalties but are generally coupled to them to support the deterrent effect of violations and enforcement of traffic rules for road safety. Such schemes involve the allocation of points to various types of traffic offences. When a driver accumulates or loses more points, within a specified time limit, than the maximum number of permitted, their licence is withdrawn automatically. The more serious an offence, the greater is the number of points the offender faces losing or gaining. The aim of these schemes is to encourage safe driving. The main added value of a penalty point system compared to common fines is that it takes recidivism into account. This system also includes an element of social equity as the penalty does not only have financial implications and everyone is equal in front of the law. According to research, penalty points systems, especially when they are combined with warning letters and licence suspension, can have a significant impact on reducing accidents (Elvik and Vaa 2004).

In October 2002 Ireland introduced a penalty point system on a phased basis. Speeding was the first offence to be covered. Other offences included in the point system were seat belt offences, careless driving, and driving without insurance. Under the system a driver accumulating 12 points within a 3-year period will automatically lose their driving license for 6 months. Penalty points remain on the license record for a period of 3 years and an accumulation of 12 points at any time within the 3 years will lead to an automatic disqualification for 6 months. Due to the waning of the system's impact since the introduction, Ireland reinforced the system by expanding it to more road traffic offences in spring 2006. Since April 2006 31 new penalty point offences have been introduced. This enlarged the system to 35 offences. Among the new offences are failure to obey Stop/Yield signs or traffic lights, illegal overtaking and failure to wear child restraints.

In many of the countries where penalty point systems have been introduced an immediate impact in terms of a drop in deaths ensues. This effect can also be increased if the new system is combined with other changes in road safety law and is linked to a big campaign and increased Police enforcement. Alongside Ireland, many other countries have up-dated their laws to keep in step with new legislation on the EU child safety restraints. This is again an opportunity to raise the profile of the consequences of a penalty point system and ultimately losing one's licence.

This immediate drop in offences has also been seen now in Spain and in the Czech Republic. In Italy, there was also a drop of between 15 and 25% in deaths for the three month period after its introduction in 2004 compared with the same period in 2005. But, according to researchers, this initial effect can wear off rapidly if the system is not sustained by an integrated approach to road safety (Lewanski 2005). Crucial to keeping the pressure up is well publicised and highly visible enforcement.

The Czech Republic saw a significant increase in the number of sanctions but also a decrease of deaths for the period following the introduction: death rate for the period of July to September from 298 in 2005 to 246 in 2006. This follows the introduction of a new road traffic law on July 1st 2006 including penalty points and higher fines for speeding, drink driving and non use of seat belts offences, day time running lights and the introduction of the use of child restraints.

Since the introduction of the new system, as well as a drop in deaths there has been a dramatic change in driver behavior: more than 90% seat belt use and a greater compliance with speed limits. The majority of drivers support the new rules although a small group of drivers have been protesting against the new rules. Following a change of government a new Minister of Transport, Rebicek, is in place. There were moves afoot by this new government to weaken the law and it proposed an amendment to soften the new road traffic law in the Chamber of Deputies. The amendment proposed to raise the maximum level of points for suspending a driving license from the current 12 to 18. The MPs said that the new system was too strict and therefore open to corruption and harassment. Yet this amendment was not passed.

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At present, as has been reported by ETSC, some countries are moving towards increasing the cross border enforcement potential of road traffic offences as regards financial penalties. Exchanging penalty points between countries is more complicated as different systems exist. Moreover different traffic offences may fall under either criminal or administrative law.

Regardless of these barriers some countries are pushing ahead. The UK and Ireland are planning to introduce a system of mutual recognition of penalty points within the next 12-18 months. This is particularly to address non-residents from the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland some of whom reportedly drive as if they are immune to sanctioning. Here a driver will face gaining points after committing an offence in the other country. Both countries have been storing up the offences since 2001 committed by the non-residents. These could also then be applied once the new system of recognition comes into force.

Another country working in the absence of a common EU system is Luxembourg. It has been very creative in dealing with their non-resident offenders with their so-called 'virtual' driving license. The competent authority in the driver's country of residence as well as the driver themselves are informed by letter of the offence and penalty. If the foreign driver continues to break the law, this is recorded on their 'virtual' Luxembourg driving license on their database. The driver is treated in the same way as a Luxembourgian and if loses all points he will be notified that he has lost his right to drive in Luxembourg.

In conclusion penalty points, if combined with increased Police enforcement and strong publicity campaigns, can have a positive effect in reducing deaths and increasing compliance especially in the short term. It is important to include offences that lead to increased risk including the three priorities of speeding, drink driving and non use of seat belt/ child safety restraints. The need to strengthen EU co-operation in the area of penalty points must be considered under the current discussions on any EU legislative action to ensure a workable model for cross border enforcement.

Penalty Point system in Spain-Three Months On

In Spain, a new penalty point scheme started operating this July. The system is modelled on the French one. Drivers received an initial credit of 12 points and lose between 2 and 6 points for different types of traffic offences including speeding, drink driving and seat belt use. Three months after its introduction ETSC conducted an interview with the accident data analysis expert, Professor Jaime Sanmartín of INTRAS (Institute of Traffic Safety at the University of Valencia).



What has been the immediate impact of the Penalty point system so far?

The first data obtained on road deaths during the summer, after the introduction of the penalty point system, is encouraging for the time being. The first effect of the immediate impact of the system has to be considered as an absolute success. Although this first start is encouraging, caution is needed to ensure that the system's final objectives can also be guaranteed. Moreover, when talking about the accident rate evolution, it will only be possible to draw proper more global conclusions after a longer period has passed.

The first data for the three month period of July, August, September has even exceeded some of our expectations, given the fact that there has been a drop of 16.6% (159 deaths less). Even though these data must be seen in the context of a falling trend of traffic deaths: 16.5% drop during summer 2004

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(140 deaths less) and a minor fall of 6.2% during summer 2005 (44 deaths less). This is put within the longer period trend of a fall in average deaths. Between 1977 and 2003 we had an average of 14 deaths per day, in 2004 and 2005 it has fallen to 11.8 and 10.8 and for the current year the average is at 8.5 for the moment.

This shows that the penalty point system is having a clear effect; but that we also have to bear in mind the effects produced by a sum of new measures such as changes in legislation and road safety campaigns.

What has been the role of the Police?

The role of the Police in the introduction and development processes of the Penalty point system has been crucial to its success, especially in the cases where the driver is stopped and fined in person. In this case it has been very important to tell the driver both the reason and the danger that his offence entails and the points that they will lose. The introduction of the penalty point system has not meant an increase in the number of Policemen, although they have been supported by a new and extended fixed camera network controlling speed. This has freed up their capacity to focus on other offences that can involve a greater interaction with the driver. The data on offences for the first two months (July & August) gives us a profile in which the more critical aspects of road safety have been stressed: no use of the seatbelt or helmet (24%), speed (20%), alcohol (16%) and mobile phone use (13%). Despite these great advances, more effort needs to be undertaken at a local level; both in terms of the introduction and fulfilment of the standardisation processes in urban areas by the municipal Police and in the standardisation of the offences by the local administration of the new penalty point system. For the time being, the General Directorate for Road Traffic (DGT – State authority for traffic and road safety) has signed agreements with 800 out of a total of 1,217 larger municipalities (66%). These represent municipalities in Spain that are of a size large enough (over 5000 inhabitants) to be able to process the complaints. The agreement includes ensuring the computer connection to upload digitally to the DGT. This will gradually replace the old system of data transfer via fax and post.

What has been the role of the media?

The DGT has developed a wide broadcasting campaign on the penalty point system reaching a high level of diffusion amongst the media. Moreover, the DGT has also been publishing specific figures of all kinds (accident rate, controls, offences, points) which have accompanied the development of the new system's development in detail. This has resulted in wide media coverage, which has been the source of several debates and, sometimes, controversial interpretations made by some people or entities that wanted to seize the opportunity to increase their public standing. But the outcome has been nevertheless positive because even throwing exaggerated, wrong or even confusing ideas or interpretations has led to a greater debate and consequently to a greater awareness and clarification of the road safety issue. It is also important to point out the role played by the automobile clubs and other associations related to road safety.

What has been the reaction of the public?

The reaction of the public remains positive even after its introduction. The opinion polls prior to the introduction foresaw a good level of acceptance and the first survey carried out by the DGT in July after the introduction shows that 72% of those polled approve the introduction of the penalty point system and 76% of those polled think that the system will not harm them.

But it is not just a question of opinions; other indicators are showing that as well as the accident rate falling, behaviour is also changing. In fact, during July and August the average traffic speed dropped between 3% and 4%. On the other hand, in August 2005, 3% of the controlled vehicles were reported for speeding while this figure dropped to 2.4% in August 2006. This phenomenon was already accelerated in 2005, as talks about the penalty point system became increasingly serious. The use of the seatbelt in the back seats has also improved. In July the level was at 58.3% in towns and at 74.6% on motorways, at the start of February results were 46.2% in towns and a 51.2% on motorways (DGT).

What must be done to ensure a long lasting impact of the new system?

Spain is also looking to other countries for inspiration as to pre- and post- introduction of the new system. Regarding maintaining the first positive effects, we have already seen how in other countries, such as France for example, it has been useful to carry out an important effort in enforcement.

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We have to think that the success of a system that intends to educate the driver has to go through an information and awareness phase, but also through strengthening behaviours and daily habits by establishing control mechanisms. These may include sanctions and negative reinforcement if necessary. These elements, even if nobody likes them, are essential in any education system. In this case, it is particularly important that the driver does not detect any element of injustice or disproportion, but at the same time, the procedure has to be fast and without too many bureaucratic ins and outs. Furthermore, what is important is to follow the evolution of its effectiveness in detail in order to respond to the changes and adaptations of each new system.

What advice do you have for other countries considering introducing a new penalty point system?

The Spanish experience shows how several things have been done properly and also that other things that were not done should be done now. Among the aspects that have to be emphasised, there is the involvement that has been achieved from other social actors as well as from important automobile clubs and road victim associations.

Yet, although there was a level of involvement of high level political leaders, this could have been even more intense, given the number of deaths lost annually in Spain. An aspect that makes things quite difficult are the legal questions as well as the private data protection concerns. In that regard, it might be particularly important to take these details into account, considering that even if the legal principles are clear, a hurried development of the rules may hinder the system's performance. Some other points could also have been included, such as having an evaluation of the points depending on how the seriousness of the offence is perceived by the driver. Some drivers have different interpretations of the actual safety implications of their actions. It should have also been important to adapt the system through which we have to detect those people that have particular problems with alcohol, drugs, delinquency, and psychopathologies and ensure that they should be removed from the road while these problems remain serious.

Finally, I think that further research should be carried out in Europe, aiming to evaluate the different systems in order to draw conclusions that would help the countries that have not yet introduced the penalty point system. Moreover, it would be particularly important to harmonise some of the main principles of the penalty point system in the EU. If we want European drivers to have a consistent system, it should include the sanctions enabling a penalty point system that should be able to accumulate and even transfer points from one country to another. The possibility of having a harmonised EU system would favour the credibility and the awareness of drivers, and this would favour its overall effectiveness in changing road user behaviour.

Country focus Sweden: Although frontrunner, still improving

Sweden can be seen as a frontrunner in road safety and has continually improved its road safety performance in the past decades. Although the country had one of the lowest fatality rates per million population in the EU at 440 in 2005, it will be difficult to reach the 2007 target of 270. Sweden's long term road safety objective within the transport system is that ultimately no one should be killed or seriously injured using the road transport system. This so called Vision Zero was approved by the Swedish Parliament in 1997. An 11 point programme on improving road traffic safety was published in 1999 and set a 2007 target for reducing road deaths and accidents.

The Police are vested with the authority to develop new strategies and modify existing ones for the enforcement of traffic rules. In April 2006, a new Swedish National Police Plan was presented. The so-called "Police Accident Prevention Measures" act as enforcement guidelines to harmonise the activities of the Police in the 21 counties. Since then, each county has started to set up more detailed regional plans within this framework.

Speed

The Automatic Speed Control System using speed cameras has proven to have had very positive effects on road safety and will therefore be continued. Speed limits are currently being reviewed by the National Road Administration in order to adjust them to Vision Zero. For example, on nearly all roads without a median barrier the speed limits have been reduced. Sweden employs a mixture of

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mobile laser and fixed camera devices to enforce speed limits. The automated camera system was extended to 700 cameras in 2006, compared to approximately 400 in 2005. The cameras are clearly conspicuous and are directly connected to the National Police Board. Tests between 2001 and 2002 showed that the road death rate on some road stretches was reduced by up to 60%.

Alcohol

Sweden has a long tradition of testing a high percentage of its drivers for drinking. Every driver who is stopped for whatever reason is automatically breath tested. Improvements have been made recently with better technology for roadside checks which have been introduced to some Police patrol cars. Currently approximately 50 mobile evidential breathalysers exist. In 2005, 7,400 new breathalysers were bought for the Police. Extra financial means from the Swedish Road Administration have been allocated to reach the 2006 target of 2 million tests. The government also plans to introduce higher sanctions for drink driving offences which have resulted in personal injuries.

Alcolocks

An inquiry team was appointed in 2005 to examine the possibility of introducing a requirement that all new cars will be equipped with alcolocks by 2012. The possibility of introducing alcolocks earlier for certain categories of vehicles is also under consideration. A proposal was brought to the parliament in June 2006. But due to elections in September 2006 and a new government things are uncertain at the time of writing. Moreover, it is planned to examine whether alcolocks can be used for rehabilitation for drivers with alcohol-related problems.

Seat belts

Although seat belt checks are not the top priority of the Police due to the high level of wearing rates in Sweden, seat belt campaigns linked to enforcement are undertaken nevertheless. These have led to further increases in wearing rates. Driver seat belt wearing rates increased from 91.8% (2004) to 92.4% (2005). Seat belt checks are undertaken in combination with other checks on all roads at all times. Enforcement is concentrated in urban areas where the seat belt wearing rate can be as low as 60%. So-called "blitz" enforcement actions of one week are repeated in Sweden every 6 months. Currently higher fines for seat belt offences are being discussed (from 600 SEK to 1,500 SEK). Moreover a driver responsibility for passengers is under discussion as well as to follow-up all seat belt offences.

Campaigns

Campaigns are run by the National Society for Road Safety, Road Administration, the Police and local authorities. In 2006, the extent of the new speed camera system was accompanied by an information campaign presenting the cameras as "Sweden's new lifesaver" by the Swedish Road Administration and the Police. It has consisted of nationwide TV and radio spots, different advertisements and the dissemination of publications. A "Don't Drink and Drive Campaign" has been run by the Swedish National Road Administration 2003-7 targeting young people. The Police also conduct two seat belt wearing campaigns linked to enforcement annually. Sweden has also participated in the EU Euchires campaign aimed at increasing safety restraint use of young children. The Police also communicate the impact of their enforcement activities and results in for example higher seat belt wearing rates and saved lives to the media.

Conclusion

In summary, Sweden can be seen as a role model for achieving improved road safety through its enforcement in all three priority areas linked to information campaigns. It should be applauded for its high profile campaign to tackle speeding: But, nevertheless, it is important that the country doesn't let up on its efforts to improve as it will be difficult to reach the 2007 target. Further improvement can still be made in the area of speeding by introducing owner liability. It should also invest more resources into the widespread use of evidential breathalysers to equip Police to do all they can to combat drink driving.

News

National Approaches

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Belgium has made good progress towards reducing its road traffic deaths between 2001 and 2005 according to new figures prepared by ETSC in September. At a press conference the Belgian Federal Minister for Mobility Renaat Landuyt said that Belgium was on track in achieving its part of the 50% reduction of road traffic deaths by 2010. He attributed the progress made to a revised set of road traffic offences, campaigns and increased traffic Police controls.

According to new research undertaken by SWOV, in the Netherlands, better compliance with key road safety rules contributed at least 25% to the spectacular progress of 2004/2005. Non-compliant behaviours such as speeding (by 16 km/h and more), drink driving (up to 1.3‰) and the non-use of seat belts went down significantly over these two years, accounting for the survival of an estimated extra 40 people. SWOV assumes that the extra decrease as a result of seat belt use, alcohol consumption, and speed behavior is not temporary, but will be of a permanent nature, provided that the efforts concerning enforcement and information maintain at least the same level.
De essentie van de daling in het aantal verkeersdoden. SWOV, 2006.

In **Italy**, the newly elected Minister for Transport, Alessandro Bianchi, has called on the Ministry of Interior for more Police forces on the Italian roads and for increased enforcement. He has also suggested that the Government might reduce the current speed limit of 130 km/h on the most dangerous stretches of the motorway network and during the night hours.

Galicia, a region of **Spain** with 2.7 million inhabitants, has recently adopted its own road safety plan which includes a strong focus on enforcement of priority areas including speed, drink driving and seat belts by its Police forces. It sets out its commitment to contributing to the EU's 2010 target by aiming to reduce fatal accidents by 25% during 2006-2010 period (based on 2004). The Guardia Civil Police will have five extra new mobile radars for speed enforcement and 2000 breath testing devices. The Guardia Civil Rural will be increasing its enforcement efforts on secondary roads. By the end of 2006 a further 8 new safety cameras will be fixed to enforce speeds. New research will also be undertaken to improve road safety in the region with particular attention being paid to high risk accident site treatment.

Enforcing Speed Limits

During 2006, a speed limit audit is being undertaken by the French authorities to ensure that a more coherent speeding signage and classification is placed in the French regions. The préfêts have been asked to examine the limits that are no longer adapted to compliance levels. With the new policy of "zero tolerance", the speed limit should better reflect the reality of the infrastructure. Stakeholders will also be invited to participate in this.

Spain ran another speed campaign during a two week period in August. The campaign included a doubling of speed controls by Police and focussed on 2 lane roads. Its slogan was: "Two lanes: twice the care". During this period the Guardia Civil of traffic controlled 1,900 stretches of road. And detected 684,706 offences. According to research 75% of fatal crashes occur on the road. TV and radio spots, billboards, use of variable message signs and a press campaign supported the work of the Police. The Ministry of Interior, also used the opportunity to draw attention to the new penalty point system and the sanctions incurred for speeding offences.

Prime Minister Villepin announced in July 2006 a further extension of the fixed camera network in **France**. This will bring the total number up to 2,000 units by 2007. A first set of digital cameras was introduced in late 2003, and 1,000 cameras (700 fixed and 300 mobile) were in use by the end of 2005. There are plans to extend this number to 1,500 (1,000 fixed and 500 mobile) by the end of 2006.

New guidance has been proposed by the Department of Transport to local authorities in **England** on setting local speed limits. Similar guidance will also be sent to **Scotland** and **Wales** by their devolved authorities. The guidance aims to promote greater clarity and consistency for setting local speed limits on single and dual carriageway roads where drivers should adopt a different speed to the national limit. The new guidance takes account of important road safety developments over the last decade including speed limits in villages and 20 mph speed limits and zones. The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) supports this new guidance yet stresses the need to

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allocate additional funding for highways authorities in order to carry out changes. Without sufficient resources to implement these guidelines, the casualty reduction benefits of improving safety through speed management will not be reaped.

In **Great Britain,** Department for Transport figures based on accidents at which a Police officer attended (estimated at 80%) showed that exceeding the speed limit or going too fast for the conditions were said to be a contributory factor in 15% of accidents and 26% of fatal accidents in 2005. Eight times more male than female drivers or riders involved in accidents were said to be speeding. Exceeding the speed limit was the sole factor in 5% of all accidents and 12% of fatal accidents in 2004.

A new fixed and mobile camera system has been rolled out in **Cyprus** this autumn. Cyprus has introduced 26 fixed red light cameras, 6 fixed speed cameras and 7 mobile speed cameras. The red light cameras also monitor speed violations. This is the first pilot phase of a five year project during which about 440 units will be installed. New legislation also demands warning signs ahead of the camera. The fixed cameras have been installed at high accident risk locations mainly in urban areas. The mobile speed cameras will be used at high accident risk locations on the main road network in urban areas and in the country. Speeds were monitored at points where cameras were introduced. Difference in speeds will also be communicated to the public after the installation of the cameras. The introduction of the camera scheme was accompanied by a speed enforcement campaign as well as a two week grace period before enforcement commenced. Cameras not only monitor speed limits but also speed and red light violations on intersections. The legislation demands that warning signs are placed ahead of the cameras. It also states that the owner of the vehicle violating the law is responsible to identify the driver who committed the violation.

The **Dutch** government has launched a new road safety campaign entitled: "Travel with your heart". The annual campaign's first phase coincides with the return to school and the second follows up to remind shortly afterwards. Police will be running specific speed enforcement activities focusing on speeding in urban areas on 30 km/h and 50 km/h roads. The main target is the safety of child pedestrians and cyclists and specific high risk sites. The campaign is running TV and radio spots, and a poster campaign. The **Dutch** road safety organisation Veilig Verkeer Nederland is coordinating the running of different campaigns by schools via their regional offices. The 2,000 participating schools are working together with relevant stakeholders such as the local politicians, Police, parents and pupils and raise the interest of the press. The schools are supported with educational materials for children specially developed by Veilig Verkeer Nederland. Children will be able to award a sticker to drivers who are keeping to the speed limits and respecting pedestrian crossings.

In **Italy** section speed control has been extended last summer to some other high risk stretches of the Italian motorways. The system checks a vehicle's average speed in a section of approximately 15 km. If the average speed indicates a violation of the speed limit a speed ticket is issued. Section control is now in operation on 45 km of the Italian motorway network. In addition to the extension of the section control, the summer has also witnessed the introduction of speed cameras in road work zones, areas that had shown a higher than average accident rate. Both in the case of section control and of work zones, the presence of speed cameras is communicated to the drivers in order to encourage them to slow down.

Research undertaken by the Hasselt University in **Flanders**, has been undertaken analysing the effects on road safety of speed enforcement on a main road in the province of Vlaams-Brabant. After a descriptive accident analysis, the 'N8' was selected as one of the most unsafe roads, mainly with regard to speeding violations. By the end of 2002, a comprehensive speed enforcement programme was set up for the N8. The speed enforcement strategy consists of increased Police control, installation of automated speed cameras, reduced speed limits and information campaigns. Taking into account accident data of a 12 year pre-period and 3 year after-period, the study shows that the effect of the programme on the number and severity of road accidents, adjusted for the trend and regression-to-the-mean, is significant. The empirical analysis reveals a reduction of 35% for the total number of accidents, 43% for the total number of accidents minus the collisions with parked vehicles, 25% for accidents with material damage only, and 19% for injury accidents. This study also takes a closer look at the impact of different post-implementation periods using accident data of 1 or 3 years after the implementation of the speed enforcement programme on the calculated effectiveness results and warns researchers about the possible severe overestimation when only a one-

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year period is used. For more information contact: klara.vrolix@uhasselt.be

Enforcing Blood Alcohol Levels

In **Germany**, the federal government and the Bundesrat are planning to introduce an alcohol prohibition for novice drivers. It is planned to prohibit any alcohol consumption for particularly young drivers during the two year probation period. The Federal Ministry of Transport announced to change the current road traffic act (Strassenverkehrsordnung) before the end of the year to allow the new legislation to be introduced at the beginning of 2007.

The annual analysis of casualties on the **UK**'s roads show a slight 1% drop in road deaths to 3,201 in 2005. Although the number of people killed in drink-drive accidents were reduced by 3% from 580 to 560, little progress has been made in the trend, since the mid-nineties. This is particularly concerning because it is estimated 17% of all road deaths occur when someone is driving whilst over the legal limit for alcohol. The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) is concerned that the failure to undertake higher numbers of breath tests is contributing to the lack of progress, as the number of tests has been declining while positive results have been rising.

The **Czech Republic** launched a nation wide anti drink driving campaign targeting young people and teenagers at a pop concert in Northern Bohemia. The campaign follows the principle of the designated driver 'BOB' campaigns and runs under the slogan: 'Let's Agree on' ('Domluvme se'). Various tools such as posters, leaflets and a specially made hip hop music video called 'Be Aware' alerting young people to the dangers of drink driving, alongside not wearing their seat belts or speeding will support the campaign. This annual campaign will run for two months and is supported by increased Police enforcement across the Czech Republic. The report can be downloaded from: http://www.90bpm.sk/c/1943-kampan-domluvme-se-skladba-davej-bacha-na-download-report-z-natacania-sprievodneho-klipu

Enforcing Seat Belt Wearing

As the new European legislation on seat belt and child restraint use came into force across the EU, thirteen EU countries (**Slovenia, Czech Republic, Poland, Portugal, Finland, Germany, Spain, Austria, The Netherlands, Lithuania, Italy, Luxemburg and Belgium**) have participated again the armadillo campaign. The Belgian Road Safety Institute which is coordinating the EU armadillo campaign stresses the importance of multiplication and exchange of best practice between different EU countries. The Institute's Director Mr. Derweduwen stated that: "As major problems of road safety such as speeding, drink driving and not wearing a correct safety restraint do not stop at borders, EU countries must focus exchanging best practice. It is therefore vital to join together in reaching the EU target of reducing deaths in the EU by 50% by 2010."

In **Belgium** the child safety restraint "armadillo" campaign was launched by the Belgian Road Safety Institute in conjunction with P&V Insurers company. The campaign forms part of the "I support" national road safety campaign engaging with the public on different road safety issues including now child safety restraints and the implementation of the new legislation. Alongside a poster and TV spot media campaign, primary schools are being encouraged to participate. Teachers are distributing pledges to be properly secured which children and parents must co-sign. The reward is either an armadillo toy to be added to the safety restraint or a measuring poster. During the two month campaign Police are also participating in increased enforcement activities and rewarding all correctly secured children with an armadillo toy. As of the end of October non-compliance will carry a 50 EUR fine. The Belgian Minister for Transport states: "Increasing the use of seat belts and child restraints undoubtedly improves road safety. We need to progress on a number of fronts including: changing the legislation, raising public awareness, and increasing the risk of being checked." This campaign is ticking all the boxes.

Latvia has changed its penalty point system as of the 13th of October 2006. New penalties can be incurred for the non use of child safety restraints. Points can also be gained for the transportation of a group of children without an accompanying adult in buses. A special campaign to profile this issue was also ran in the summer.

In **Ireland**, a cross-border seat belt campaign was launched jointly by the Road Safety Authority in Republic of Ireland and the Department of Environment in Northern Ireland. The campaign uses

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two television advertisements entitled 'Selfish' and 'Get it on', press and radio advertising. The campaign is aimed at improving seat belt wearing, particularly by back seat passengers, who are still less likely to use a restraint. The campaign was accompanied by intensive Police checks on the use of seat belts, which led to a significant risk of detection by the road users.

The new seat belt legislation also came into force in the **UK** on the 18th of September. A campaign to raise awareness on the need to use child safety restraints and seat belts in coaches was launched by the UK government's THINK! Road safety campaign ahead of the deadline of when the new legislation comes into force. Part of the campaign included not only advice on the correct child seat but also a list of tips as to how to persuade, especially unwilling older children to use the correct restraint. This was also supported by increased Police enforcement of the new legislation: a £30 fixed penalty applies for non-compliance. Special information sessions run in conjunction with car seat retailers including fitting advice were run across the country. According to the UK's Department for Transport a total of 2,000 child deaths and injuries could be prevented per year with this new legislation. The new legislation also introduces a new obligation for seat belts to be worn in buses and coaches. Vehicle operators are obliged to notify passengers of the need to use seat belts and if possible include a poster informing passengers of this new requirement: http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk/campaigns/childcarseats/images/2006law-white.jpg

In **France** new legislation for the differentiated use of child restraints and introduction of the rule of complying with new EU legislation of "one child, one place, one restraint system" will come into place on the 1st of January 2007. This is likely to pose problems for large families as it is impossible to place three child restraints next to one another on one back seat and this will thus have serious monetary implications. The Prévention Routière has prepared material to inform parents about ensuring the correct child restraint for their child. http://www.preventionroutiere.asso.fr. Also in France, following an increase in sanctions for non seat belt use in 2003 seat belt wearing rates continue to rise slightly into 2005 in both the front (97%) and back (77%). In 2005, the number of detected offences dropped by 18%. This can be evaluated as a positive proof of more compliance due both to enforcement efforts and information campaigns.

The **Malta** Transport Authority together with the Ministry for urban development and roads has been running a number of information campaigns under the heading: "Safety First". These are also run in conjunction with its enforcement officers, and constant liaison with the Police and warden agencies. May saw a campaign launched on the importance of the use of rear seat belts and child safety devices. A recent study conducted by the ADT reveals that although usage of front seat belts is still very high approximately 97%, the use of rear seatbelts is very low at 26% adults, 15% children.

Vehicle Technology

Alcolocks

The successful alcolock rehabilitation programme in the region of Haute Savoie in France is being extended in 2006-2007. The past programme saw a 0 recidvism rate after the end of the programme. If there is no recidivism then there is no judicial sanction and no prison, yet if the offence is repeated the driving license is confiscated and a prison sentence ensues. A further 200 participants will take part in the programme. It will last six months and will take place in the two French regions of Haute Savoie and Savoie. Other departments are also being encouraged to participate in taking up this measure. Time and sufficient resources are needed in order to train and manage the technical and psychological parts of the programme. In a parallel development a French MP Merville will propose a change to the law this autumn enabling the extension of the penal law to include alcolocks as a rehabilitation measure.

Seat Belt Reminders

ETSC has launched a new Policy Paper on "Seat Belt Reminders – Implementing advanced technology in Europe's cars" at the end of October. The paper brings together evidence on how the development and introduction of seat belt reminders can contribute to saving lives in Europe. It aims to promote this innovative enforcement solution amongst manufacturers and policy makers, showing that it clearly helps to maximise casualty reduction. The paper was launched together with a ranking on the widespread penetration of seat belt reminders in new cars across Europe. This showed Sweden, Luxembourg and Germany reach highest penetration rates of more than 60%. The paper can be downloaded here: http://www.etsc.be/doc-

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uments/ETSC_Seat_belt_reminder_oct_06.pdf

Road Infrastructure

The European Commission adopted a new legislative proposal in October: a Directive on road infrastructure safety management. Member States will be asked to prepare guidelines for the introduction of road safety impact assessment, road safety audit, network safety management and safety inspections. The Directive will only be applied to the TEN roads network. Member States will be able to extend the application of these guidelines to the rest of their national networks. Another requirement will involve the preparation of a full accident report for every accident involving one or more deaths or severe injuries. This report will need to contain inter alia information about the alcohol level and the use of safety equipment or not. It is estimated that the Directive, if approved, could reduce the number of EU citizens dying in this part of the network by more than 600 deaths per year. ETSC welcomed the proposal but regretted however that the European Commission has opted for adopting guidelines, leaving the details of their implementation to the Member States. Only a proposal setting stringent infrastructure safety management standards in all Member States would make an impact in countries where road safety levels are below average. At the same time, this option would not be problematic for the countries with higher levels of road safety.

Cross Border enforcement

In France cross border enforcement of speeding offences is taking place only with Luxembourg. A new agreement has been prepared with Germany which is due to come into force at the end of 2006. Negotiations for two new ones are underway with France's other neighbours: Spain and Belgium. However a European approach is favoured to help France deal with their transit traffic in a more efficient, coherent and comprehensive matter. Continued high level of mobile speed checks is also important precisely in order to also intercept speeding non-residents.

Police throughout Europe joined forces for the week long "Operation Excess Speed' organised by TISPOL - the European Traffic Police Network. Operation Excess Speed saw Police forces in 17 European countries carry out checks using both officers on the road and static automatic cameras during October 9-15th. A total of 261,165 drivers overall were detected for speeding. Police targeted the whole range of vehicles from motorbikes to trucks; private cars to public transport. The Netherlands checked the most drivers with 46,000 checks undertaken during the one week period.

European Action

The European Commission has adopted a Strategy on Alcohol Harm Reduction. The new Strategy recognised that: "A combination of strict enforcement and active awareness raising is a key to success". It also included as an aim: "to contribute to reducing alcohol-related road deaths and injuries." The Alcohol Harm Reduction strategy rightly identifies tackling drink driving as a priority, but ETSC stressed the need for concrete action to increase Police enforcement and to introduce new technologies.

EU Research

The EU funded research project: Police Enforcement Policy and Programmes on European Roads (PEPPER) has a new web-site: www.pepper-eu.org. The objective of the project is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Police enforcement of road traffic.

A new EU funded project VERA 3: (Video enforcement for road authorities) was started in August 2006. Enforcement agencies in France, the Netherlands, Spain, Austria and the UK will be proposing to develop and demonstrate eNFORCE in an operational environment. eNFORCE was developed in detail as part of VERA 2 and includes a formal network of agencies and organisations responsible for coordinating and managing the 'operation' of cross-border enforcement as well as monitoring its progress and ensure the robustness of the services it supports. The focus of VERA 3 will be on the exchange of violation information and notification of non-resident violators allowing for the delegation of authority to enforce financial penalties. It will also consider how vehicle owner information can be exchanged. The project will consist of 7 partners, led by the KLPD.

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