



UDKAST TIL TALE

til ministeren

til brug for modtagelsen af "Road Safety PIN Award" 2013

1. Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by thanking the European Transport Safety Council for this award.

It makes me very proud, that you have decided to give the award to Denmark.

And I am even more proud of the reasons why Denmark is getting the award.

Increased road safety and further reduction of deaths and injuries in the Danish traffic is a key priority for the Danish Government.

We are fully aware, that the Danish success has only been reached through many years of hard and dedicated work.

In fact, the former Ministers of Justice, former and present Ministers of Transport and changing chairmen of the Danish Road Safety Commission should be standing here with me today. They have all played an important role in developing the Danish Road Safety.

For several reasons, I am very grateful for this Award.

First of all, I am more than pleased, that we reached the national target of less than 200 road deaths in 2012.

Every death and casualty, that we manage to avoid, saves the lives of the people involved, their families and the society for the severe impacts of traffic accidents.

Furthermore I am grateful of the fact that this award is a recognition of the systematic, long term road safety work in Denmark, which began in 1989 with the first National Road Safety Strategy.

The award is given to us by a very important road safety institution in the European road safety field – the ETSC – and it will be an inspiration to keep up the good work and results for everyone in Denmark who is involved in road safety.

2. As you all are well aware, enhancing road safety is a complex challenge. A wide range of actors in both public and private sectors need to be involved and work together to make progress.

The positive Danish results are not a natural development. No, it is to a high extent created by a long term 12 year Road Safety Strategy and the effort that actors in both public and private sectors put into achieving the targets within this strategy.

But how could it be, that we in Denmark managed to have less than 200 road deaths in 2012?

Of course the overall economic situation has an influence of the number of cars in the traffic. But the positive results are also created by a solid accident knowledge based on good accident data and research, which has helped us to determine the major risk factors.

This has helped us to develop a number of improved road constructions, which has been carried out on a lot of the Danish roads to prevent accidents in the so-called “black spots” and accidents in roundabouts.

The research also gave us the necessary knowledge to put focus on the road user because research showed that in more than 9 out of 10 serious accidents, human fault is the crucial factor.

Furthermore it was clarified through the research that especially drink driving and speed are two major risks, so these factors were – among others – specifically targeted in the Road Safety Strategy.

Some of the key measures used to tackle these risk factors were – and still are – information and campaigns, where the public's attention is drawn to the many risks of speeding and drink driving.

As an example, I can mention that the Danish National Police has made a number of changes in the regulation concerning driver education. Those changes involve a more detailed information on how alcohol and drugs affect your ability to drive.

Furthermore, the good results have also been achieved by combining the campaigns with intensified and highly visible police checks.

We can see that the campaigns have been successful because there has been an overall change in the way that the Danish population views drink-driving. Earlier, drink-driving was generally accepted, but today it's socially unacceptable in Denmark to drive under the influence of alcohol.

Information and campaigns will continue to be of great importance. A further improvement of the figures will require that we get even more road users to drive carefully and with full attention.

To be more specific on speeding, I can mention, that speeding is estimated to be a contributing factor to the cause of the accident in 42 percent of the road deaths in Denmark in 2010 and 2011.

It is well established that an increase of police control – and thereby a larger risk of detection – gets the people who speed to slow down.

Therefore in 2012 the Danish Government launched a new traffic safety plan which among others includes a massive increase of automatic traffic control. Hereby the effort against speeding is strengthened.

We will increase the number of traffic control vehicles from 25 to 100, and we will use the increased number of vehicles more efficiently, based on better risk analysis to get a much higher degree of control.

We, as the legislators, must do our part of the job and provide a proper legal framework. In this connection it is important for me to say that we do not only focus on sanctions, we also focus a lot on preventive measures.

As an example, I can mention that the Ministry of Justice has improved the driver education for young moped drivers, and the government has introduced a bill which aims to improve the safety for mechanics and other persons, who carry out repairs on crashed vehicles on the Danish motorways.

3. But unfortunately there are still people who speed, and also people who drive under the influence of alcohol.

There is, however, only so much that we can do through legislation.

Achieving better road safety is also very much about changing the attitude of each road-user. We need to foster a culture of sound traffic behavior. This requires a continuous effort in local communities, schools, companies et cetera.

That is why it is so important to continue the information and the campaigns with focus on the consequences of drink driving and speeding.

In this work, it is important to have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. In the campaigns the Danish Road Safety Council has been – and will continue to be – a very important partner for the government.

I will like to use this opportunity to send a special thanks to the Danish Road Safety Council.

For many years this organization has kept on fighting for higher road safety and today it stands as one of the central and most credible actors in Denmark when it comes to knowledge on road safety.

The Danish Road Safety Council has recently focused specially on entering into partnerships with individual Danish companies who want to promote road safety.

The Danish Road Safety Council wants to help each company to set individual goals and action plans, describing how their goals are achieved through the participation of each employee.

In this way road safety emerges from a public responsibility to a common and personal issue involving private companies and citizens.

4. However, every person killed is one death too many. The positive development Denmark has experienced over the last decade, may therefore not be a pretext for doing nothing.

We must keep on working to reduce the numbers of road injuries and road fatalities. In every positive way.

That is why it is important to continue monitoring the road safety situation, so we can adjust the strategy with new initiatives if and when the development calls for action. And we must be very aware of all new technological breakthroughs that can help us achieving the goals.

Recent studies have shown that inattention of the driver is now one of the primary causes of traffic accidents, so naturally such lack of attention is addressed in the new Danish Road Safety Strategy.

There are many different ways to address this risk factor. Some of the suggestions in the new Strategy are the use of in-vehicle technologies and campaigns with focus on the consequences of inattention.

I can – as an example – mention that The Danish Road Safety Council in cooperation with a major Danish business corporation earlier this year established a campaign on inattention in the traffic with a simple but essential slogan. “Drive your car, when you drive your car.”

5. Finally you might ask: Is it possible to continue the positive development?

I can answer that question very clearly: “Yes”.

I am convinced that we will reach the newly formulated targets for 2020 in the National Road Safety Strategy launched in May this year. Two of the targets are less than 120 road deaths and less than 1.000 seriously injured in 2020.

This new Strategy has set up realistic goals. That is, if we use the toolbox described in the new Strategy, that holds more than 70 specific tools to reduce the number of killed and injured. In fact, it has been calculated that it is realistic in time to reach less than 50 road deaths a year in Denmark.

And to finish off for now, on behalf of Denmark I would again like to say:

Keep up the good and impressive work in ETSC!

Thank you for the Award!