

# Speed Monitor

ETSC's Newsletter on Speed Policy Developments in the EU

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## Editorial

In this edition of the Speed Monitor you will find news about recent speed policy developments and speed management initiatives in EU Member States, and a country focus on the Czech Republic. With the exception of the year 2007, a bad year for many European countries, the Czech Republic has had constant reductions in the number of road deaths, and recorded 1,076 road deaths in 2008. This represents a 19% reduction compared to 2001 (1,334 deaths) the year the European road safety target was launched. Speeding is by far the most common cause for road deaths, thus indicating a real need for action in that field. Indeed, according to police statistics in 2008 excessive speed (432 road deaths) and inappropriate speed (273 road deaths) claimed 705 lives together. Successful speed management measures include infrastructure improvements through the use of traffic calming measures, but significant progress remains to be made in the field of enforcement and driver education about speed. A long-lasting political debate on the increase of speed limits to 160 Km/h on some stretches of motorways, a proposal that is fortunately unlikely to come to fruition, is also symptomatic of a lack of awareness and commitment to road safety among a wide segment of society and decision makers.

Also you will find an important update on last edition's extensive coverage of the Polish legislation proposal submitted in 2008 concerning a new automatic speed detection system set to reduce the death toll on Polish roads. Regrettably there have been some major drawbacks since: despite being approved in both houses of Parliament, the Polish President refused to give his final signature to this law and sent it to the constitutional court for review. Also, in the package of measures included in the law that has been approved, a very unfortunate decision to increase speed limits in non built-up areas was included. Despite the recent enthusiasm triggered by the creation of a parliamentary committee on road safety and the efforts made to prepare an automated speed enforcement system, it therefore seems that Poland is still failing to provide safer road transportation to its citizens.

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## Country News

### France

#### Proposal to ease penalty point sanctions for 'minor' speeding offences rejected

In France no tolerance is foreseen for drivers exceeding speed limits beyond the estimated technical error margin for speed checks: 5km/h or 5% of the speed if it is above 100 km/h. It is the efficiency of the automated speed control system in combination with the French penalty point system that has in great part led to the fall in road deaths from 8.250 in 2001 (the year prior to president Chirac declaring road safety a national priority) to 4.274 in 2008.

However, Mr. About, member of the French Senate had recently made a proposal for the abolition of penalty point deductions for 'minor' speeding offences (5km above the speed limits). As a result the French 'association prevention routière' has been very active informing the rapporteur for that proposal of its dangerous consequences had it been approved: it is not the reduction of most extreme speed violations that has caused the tremendous success of the recent French road safety record, but the behaviour change of the vast majority of drivers who used to commit so-called 'minor' offences. Indeed, all evidence points to the fact that even minor mean speed reductions have great safety benefits. Given the error margin that already exists, that proposal would have meant that drivers could have exceeded speed limit by up to 10 km/h and not received any penalty point deduction. Such a proposal would have been in stark contradiction with the French road safety policies that have been implemented since 2002. During a recent plenary session the French Senate rejected this proposal.

#### A proposal to confiscate vehicles in case of severe offences

On the week of 25th of May the French media extensively covered the submission of a new legislation proposal regarding the confiscation of vehicles for a number of severe offences. This includes drivers who are caught driving despite not holding a valid driving

licence, who are already banned from driving, or who commit very severe traffic offences (heavy drink driving and speeding). Regarding excessive speed, recidivists who violate speed limits by over 50 Km/h would have their vehicles confiscated (given the error margin foreseen for speed checks this would mean that vehicles could be confiscated for a speed of 189 Km/h on the motorway). At present judges are free to decide whether to confiscate vehicles or not on a case by case basis, but this new proposal would render the confiscation of vehicles for such offences automatic. Judges would then be allowed to revoke the confiscation but only if they have good grounds to justify that decision. It is still unclear whether this proposal will be adopted.

### Germany

#### A Renewed Case to Introduce Owner Liability in Germany

Owner liability is a difficult issue in Germany when it comes to the case of following-up speed offences. In Germany but also in other European countries full owner liability is still not in place. At the annual Traffic Police conference in Münster in May Professor Dr. Gerit Manssen of Regensburg University made the case for its introduction in Germany on the basis of pursuing a road safety improvement objective. At present the constitutional court only allows owner liability for non moving traffic offences (illegal parking). Many of Germany's neighbouring countries including the Netherlands, which excel in road safety, have full owner liability. He argues that without the introduction of owner liability the cross border enforcement of traffic fines in Europe will also be difficult to achieve in the long term. Professor Manssen argues that the German Constitution also includes in its 2nd Article a duty of the state to protect life and prevent bodily harm and that the state is failing in its task with the annual traffic death toll in Germany. Excessive speeds are a main cause of crashes. He argues that the State is neglecting its protection duty as regards tackling inappropriate speed due to the combination of different factors, including comparatively lower fines for speeding, but also the lack of owner liability and an inefficiently functioning speed enforcement system. At present

the automatic speed enforcement with cameras has a problem according to current rules to find the responsible driver in that up to 50% of cases the photos are unusable.

## Hungary

### The number of speed measuring devices set to increase

The number of speed measuring devices used in Hungary is continuously increasing. The most important legal prerequisite for their use was the introduction of 'owner liability' (the owner as opposed to the driver of a vehicle is responsible for the offences caused by that vehicle.) This rule was approved on the 1st of January 2008, but entered into force on the 1st of May 2008.

The number of speed measuring devices is about 120 which still is relatively low. One third of them are installed in cars, while the remaining are roadside devices.

From 2006 onwards there are eight points for speed measurements (boxes for cameras) on the motorway M1-M7 and M1 where two cameras are used, their place changing continuously.

In 2009, five new measuring points were also installed on the M0 Ring Road, for which 2 cameras are used alternatively.

At present there is a tender in force for new speed measuring devices. The plan is to install another 500 fixed speed cameras on main roads and 80 mobile and 30 fix cameras on motorways.

## Ireland

### Delay in implementing speed camera programme

Despite the commitment of the Irish Government to introduce a system of automated speed enforcement by the summer of 2009, it looks like this target will be missed. While the introduction of a speed

camera system in the Republic of Ireland is one of the main features of the Irish Government's road safety strategy, it has been hit with delay after delay.

The latest hold up comes after the Republic's Minister for Finance confirmed in late 2008 that a 10 million Euros budget was being provided for the introduction of a speed camera programme in 2009.

Ireland has set a target of implementing automated speed enforcement systems to deliver in the region of 6,000 hours enforcement per month. While the Republic of Ireland has improved its road safety performance in recent years, particularly in the area of drink driving, the failure to control speeding reduces the country's ability to further tackle road trauma.

Interestingly since the country first identified the use of automated speed enforcement, many other EU countries, including new member states have pushed ahead with the implementation of these systems.

## Lithuania

### Initial success with speed cameras, and plans to introduce more

Lithuania is looking to reduce road crashes significantly thanks to the deployment of additional automatic speed enforcement devices. Lithuania has already achieved significant results thanks to the deployment of 12 "VITRONIC" stationary cameras, and the "PoliScan" enforcement system featuring laser-based devices that can capture images of speeding vehicles on up to three lanes in a single direction. The system can operate in temperatures between -30 C and +45 C and features mobile components in protective stationary boxes. Thanks to both systems vehicles can be measured for speeds up to 250 km/h, recently over a six months period 10 000 violations were detected and 300 000 EUR worth of penalties were imposed.

Most importantly, a contract agreement for the installation of a further 139 stationary and 11 mobile ROBOT speed cameras was signed. The first 50 stationary "Multaradar" speed cameras will start to

function in 2009 and they will remain operational for the 10 years to come.

## Poland

### **One step forward, two steps back: president Kaczynski reluctant to give his final go-ahead for the automated speed cameras system, and speed limits may be set to increase outside built-up areas**

The last edition of the Speed Monitor had covered extensively the legislation proposal submitted in 2008 concerning a new automatic speed detection system set to reduce the death toll on Polish roads. The proposal was based on the French example and included a change from driver to owner liability and the setting up of a center for the automated recognition of number plates and the following-up of offences.

Regrettably there have been some major drawbacks since: despite being approved in both houses of Parliament, the Polish President refused to give his final signature to this law and sent it to the constitutional court for review instead. While it still remains uncertain what the court's decision will be, this sends a clear political signal that the president is reluctant to back the implementation of a fully automated speed camera system and also delays its implementation further. This is all the more regrettable given that European Union funds are foreseen to cover a big part of the expenses for the installation of that system, but the possibility to use such funds is time constrained. Missing the deadline to apply for such funds might compromise further the chances of seeing the automated speed control system come to light.

Further, in the package of measures included in the law that has been approved by both houses of parliament a very unfortunate decision to increase speed limits in non built-up areas was included. The proposals that have been approved by the Parliament and Senate are as follow:

- Motorways: 140 Km/h (previously 130)
- Express dual-carriageway: 120 Km/h (previously 110)
- Express single carriageway roads and dual carriage-

- way roads with at least two lanes on each direction: 110 Km/h (previously 100)
- Other roads: 90 Km/h (no change)

Members of Parliament and Senate who supported the changes believe that given the technical standards of these roads higher speeds will not affect the safety of drivers. This is completely inconsistent with the Polish EuroRap (European Road Assessment Programme) data and would almost certainly impair the effectiveness of the new system should it come to light.

Clearly this demonstrates that a real road safety culture is still lacking among decision makers. A new automated system of speed cameras is desperately needed and the efforts made in that direction are laudable. However, the message that a stricter enforcement of traffic rules can be balanced out by taking popular measures such as increasing speed limits is set to knock off all efforts made to raise the public awareness of the risk they are exposed to in Poland on a daily basis: in 2008 there were nearly 5500 road deaths (5437), an average of 15 deaths a day. Unlike most other European countries Poland has therefore not made substantial progress since 2001 where almost the same number of people were killed (5534). Alone Poland's road death toll represents over 1/8th of all EU 27 road deaths.

## Spain

### **Campaign for motorbike drivers during the Motorbike Racing Grand Prix**

A campaign targeting bike drivers was run during the Motorbike Road Racing Grand Prix in Jerez (Andalucía). In 2006, 8 bike drivers died in the vicinity of the circuit and on their way to attend the race. In 2007 another 4 died and in 2008 another 2.

In order to tackle this, the Spanish Traffic Police developed a special operation between Thursday April 30th and Sunday May 3rd, as 130.000 people and 55.000 motorbikes were expected in the area during the week-end. 600 police officers were designated for that special operation (including 20 teams for alcohol checks) and 110 speed cameras were put into opera-

tion in the whole region of Andalusia (mobile and fixed cameras).

In cooperation with the Spanish Royal Automobile Club (RACE) and the Association of Non-alcoholic Drink Manufacturers (ANFABRA), the DGT (Dirección General de Tráfico) developed a campaign targeting motorbike users. One of the messages of that campaign was "the road is not the circuit".

An evaluation of this campaign is not yet available, however according to newspapers although 7 bikers died that week-end in the entire country (Friday 1st of May was a bank holiday) there were none in the vicinity of the Jerez circuit.

## United Kingdom

### Progress towards ISA in London

Transport for London (TfL) continues exploring possibilities with Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA). In 2008 TfL had made an advisory ISA software available on the TfL website for users of Tom Tom devices (for information visit: [www.tfl.gov.uk/isa](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/isa)).

TfL also plans to install the system in a taxi and 16 of its own fleet vehicles, and is currently trialing ISA on a bus. The aim of this is for TfL to test the practical uses of the technology for several months after which a report will be submitted to the Mayor of London and the technology could also be made available to external organisations. Southwark Council has already expressed an interest in fitting ISA on its fleet vehicles.

Chris Lines, Head of TfL's road safety unit, said: "We know the technology works, and now we want to know how drivers in all types of vehicles respond to it".

"ISA is intended as a road safety device, but if Londoners embrace this technology we may well see additional benefits including reduced congestion as a result of collisions, and reduced vehicle emissions, as drivers adopt a smoother style."

### Making Britain's roads the safest in the world: New consultation for beyond 2010

"A safer way: Making Britain's road the safest in the world": under this ambitious tag the UK has launched a new consultation on April the 21st that seeks views on the vision, targets and measures for improving road safety in Great Britain for the period beyond 2010.

The document lists a number of actions concerning speed, especially regarding lowering speed limits, including the following points:

- We will amend our guidance on speed limits recommending that highway authorities, over time, introduce 20 mph zones or limits into streets that are primarily residential in nature, and which are not part of any major through route. Similarly, we will encourage local authorities to consider introducing 20 mph or zones in town or city streets, such as around schools, shops, markets, playgrounds and other areas where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high.
- We will revise our existing guidance to highway authorities to assist the ongoing review of speed limits. We will recommend that they prioritise the review of 'A' and 'B' class national speed limit single carriageways, given the high proportion of traffic and casualties on these roads, and encourage the adoption of lower limits wherever the risks are relatively high and there is evidence that a lower limit would reduce casualties.

The document also announces points regarding ISA:

- We will support the development of the key building blocks needed for Intelligent Speed Adaptation (ISA). We expect that industry will take forward the technology in response to consumer demand and we will look to support this process in the following ways:

a) Availability of accurate speed limit data is crucial for ISA. We will develop, consult on and publish a voluntary framework for local authorities to use for collecting electronic speed limit information.

## News in Europe

b) Pilot ISA schemes: we have already agreed with one local authority that they will take forward a pilot on voluntary ISA and we will monitor the project with interest as it develops.

### **Bilateral agreement between France and Switzerland coming into force**

A bilateral agreement that was signed between France and Switzerland in 2007 will come into force this summer. This agreement will facilitate the enforcement of traffic rules and follow-up of traffic offences committed by drivers of one of the two countries in the neighbouring country. While France and Switzerland were already collaborating and exchanging information on traffic offences since 1998 thanks to a previous agreement, this new agreement will facilitate the follow-up of offences further, notably thanks to the setting up of an automated system to exchange data concerning vehicle ownership.

France and Switzerland being very well equipped in terms of safety cameras, this should have a particular impact on drivers who commit speeding offences when traveling to their neighbour country. The entry into force of this new agreement is being communicated to the public through media coverage, and it is hoped that it will discourage traffic offences and speeding offences in particular. Switzerland has a comparable agreement in force with Germany and is working on one with Italy. Such examples set inspiring standards for other European countries that still lack cross border cooperation in the field of traffic safety. A comparable EU wide cross border cooperation is still lacking due to the lack of progress on the EU Cross Border Enforcement directive proposal dossier.

The Franco-Swiss agreement also contains other elements, such as the collaboration between traffic police forces of both countries during post-accident interventions.

### **European speeding operation catches more than 600,000 drivers**

A week-long operation in April by traffic police across Europe saw more than 636,038 drivers being detected for breaking speed limits. A total of 22 countries took part in the operation, which was held as part of the TISPOL Lifesaver project, an EU part-financed initiative.

Adam Briggs, deputy chief constable of North Yorkshire and the TISPOL lead on speed enforcement, said: "The purpose of this operation was to make Europe's roads safer. It's estimated that complying with speed limits could save nearly 6,000 lives a year. The faster you drive, the less chance you have to react and respond to hazards. Therefore your ability to avoid having a potentially fatal collision is reduced."

The TISPOL Organisation has been established by the traffic police forces of Europe in order to improve road safety and law enforcement on the roads of Europe. Its main priority is to reduce the number of people being killed and seriously injured on Europe's roads.

### **European Directive on Intelligent Transport Systems**

Transport Ministers adopted a progress report on the ITS package on June 11th in their Council meeting. Following an Informal Council devoted to this topic in Litomerice, the Czech Presidency presented a revised draft Directive. This new draft took into consideration the key concerns of the Member States raised in their working group meetings. The remaining questions included what is the right way to deploy ITS across the EU including the possibility of legislation for some ITS measures. Some Member States were also reluctant to accept the reliance in the EC proposal on the comitology procedure (Committee made up of European Commission and Mem-

ber State experts). The question of competence and especially as to whether the Community, Member State or private sector should be responsible for any decision is also one of the other key remaining issues to be resolved. The Commission remains committed to its previous legislative proposal. The Czech Presidency will now pass on the baton to the Swedish Presidency to take these discussions further and reach an agreement in the Council. The European Parliament adopted its Report draft by Mrs. Jensen MEP with an overwhelming majority on the 22nd of April 2009. This report included many important amendments which would strengthen the Directive and enhance its safety aspects.

Of relevance for speed management, and ISA in particular, the "definition of necessary requirements for digital maps" was highlighted by the Council's conclusions at the Litomerice Informal meeting and "informing traffic participants about current speed limits and warning people against exceeding them". ETSC would support these priorities as this will push the way forward for tackling the main cause of road traffic deaths by enabling further use of Intelligent Speed Assistance throughout the EU.

### Swedish Presidency

A big priority for the Swedish Presidency is to achieve a new global deal on climate change at the next UNFCCC in Copenhagen in December. At a national level the government is keen to make progress on reaching its own national targets for a carbon free economy: 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a vehicle stock that is independent of fossil fuels by 2030. The Swedish Presidency should therefore raise the issue that speed reduction on Europe's roads would also directly lower the level of CO2 emissions.

In the EU road transport generates about one fifth of the EU's CO2 emissions, with passenger cars responsible of around 12% and these emissions have risen between 1990 and 2004 by 26%. Efforts to promote 'Eco-driving' and speed limit enforcement can also contribute to reducing CO2 emissions. Fur-

thermore, given that Sweden is setting the example in the field of ISA, the Swedish Presidency should look to promote intelligent speed assistance as a tool to save lives and reduce greenhouse gases in the EU. Legislation which will contribute to reducing speed on Europe's road including the Directive on Cross Border Enforcement must also be fast-tracked within the context of tackling not only safety but also the EU's climate change agenda. The European Union is committed under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and in March 2007 EU leaders committed to a 20-30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions overall by 2020. The Swedish government could use their Presidency as an opportunity to also stress the synergies in linking road safety and the sustainability agenda.

## Country Focus: Czech Republic

The Czech Republic has recently had the lowest number of road deaths in its history, with 1,076 road deaths in 2008, the best result since 1990. The provisional numbers available for the first four months of 2009 suggest a continuation of this downward trend.

According to Police statistics, the highest number of deaths is attributable to excessive (i.e. illegal) speed – 432 deaths (47% of all road deaths). Inappropriate speed with respect to traffic conditions caused 184 deaths, inappropriate speed with respect to the road conditions caused 89 deaths, and "lack of attention" caused 117 road deaths.

Speeding is thus the most important risk factor and cause of fatal accidents. It concerns all motorised vehicles and all road types. But the situation is most dramatic for powerful motorcycles, who run one of the highest risk in the EU. The Czech motorcycle riders are 32 times most likely to be killed on the road compared to Czech car drivers and until recently motorcyclists were virtually the only vehicle category left out of the reach of Police enforcement. One of the few measures taken by the government to tackle this problem were information campaigns targeted at

motorbike drivers.

Since the introduction of the penalty points system in 2006, most penalty points were attributed to drivers for speed limit violations. For example, driving 20-40 km/h above the speed limit in urban areas and 30-50 km/h in rural areas represents 22% of all recorded offences within the penalty point system.

The Czech Traffic Police rely on traditional enforcement methods, based on stopping offenders and imposing sanctions on the spot. Automated speed cameras are however also in use in Prague, typically in tunnels and locations with high speeds and high accident occurrence.

More generally, speed management and the enforcement of speed limits is weak and drivers do not respect traffic rules. Further, progress is deterred by the fact that road safety is not considered a public priority. Choosing one's speed is considered an act of personal freedom and drivers are typically concerned only as much as the problem affects them personally. The problem is rendered even worse by the limited capacity of the traffic police to enforce existing legislation. Moreover, the current law features vehicle drivers' liability (as opposed to vehicle owners' liability) and this poses problems for the implementation of automatic speed camera systems. Since early 2009, the Municipal Police was given the right to enforce speed limits in urban areas. Random speed checks are conducted and communicated to road users with traffic signs where the measurements occur.

Since mid 2008, the traffic Police focus more on high-profile speeding offenders, which together with the penalty point system resulted in a decrease of driving at very high speeds (well above speed limits). The level of excessive speeding however remains in the range of 20 to 30 % on different road types. Speed limits are 50 km/h (urban), 90 km/h (rural) and 130 km/h (motorways).

There has been a long-lasting political debate on raising the speed limit on certain sections of motorways to 160 km/h, but the instability of the last governments meant that this did not come to life. However, the extended media coverage of the issue may have a negative influence on drivers' attitudes and behaviour. The provisional government appointed for the period of May to October is not expected to bring this proposal forward. However if it was adopted, this would definitely increase the number and severity of accidents. The current motorway alignment and design does not allow for such speeds.

So far the most successful work in the area of speed management has been done in the area of road infrastructure improvements. Various measures have been gradually implemented, mostly in urban areas – with the application of various traffic calming measures such as islands, chicanes, information radars (speed activated message signs) and 30 km/h zones. Their effectiveness varies - e.g. chicanes, islands and police officer figurines were found to decrease speed by 5 - 20 %.



Example of awareness raising campaign targeted at motorbike drivers in the Czech Republic





**European Transport Safety Council**

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