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Speed Monitor

ETSC's Newsletter on Speed Policy Developments in the EU

Editorial

ETSC's new activities to fight speed

Excessive and inappropriate speed is the number one road safety problem in European countries and deserves a sepcial focus. Speeding - which encompasses excessive speed (i.e. driving above the speed limits) and inappropriate speed (driving too fast for the prevailing conditions, but within the limits) – is the cause of about one third of fatal accidents and an aggravating factor in all accidents.

Managing speed is therefore the most important measure to reduce death and injury on our roads. Addressing speed will also reduce other adverse impacts and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, vehicle noise, and disruption to local communities, as well as energy consumption.

Yet there is little progress in Europe. Excessive speed is still a widespread social phenomenon and compliance levels are extremely low. The OECD estimates that at any given time 50% of drivers are exceeding the speed limits. As experiences from a few frontrunners in Europe have shown, reducing speed is possible. However, the European Institutions and most of the EU Member States have failed to make speed reduction a priority.

Against this background, the European Transport Safety Council has set up a new programme with the aim of contributing to the reduction of speed-related road deaths and injuries through the identification and promotion of best practice. The Speed programme will raise awareness amongst policy makers, the private sector as well as key opinion leaders for a systemic approach to reduce speeding in road transport.

With this triannual newsletter (ie: one every four months), ETSC will keep the road safety community informed about the latest road safety developments in fighting speed. Each edition will focus on a particular country and on progress made in different Member States. Our Monitor will, of course, also give you a regular update on ETSC's own activities on speed.

After having introduced ETSC's new programme, the current issue gives an overview of ETSC's policy recommendations; the latest developments in speed related road safety policies in the EU; and a particular focus on speed management in the UK with an interview with Robert Gifford from the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety.

Jörg Beckmann
ETSC Executive Director

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European Transport Safety Council

ETSC's Speed Programme and Policy Recommen-

ETSC's Speed Programme

The objective of this new programme at ETSC is to contribute to reducing speed-related road deaths and injuries through the identification and promotion of best practice and recommendations to EU and national policy makers. There is not one single measure to reduce speeds. It rather takes a combination of measures including credible speed limits, enforcement and education, combined with 'self-explaining' roads and vehicles. ETSC's approach to speed reduction is a systemic one addressing measures related to infrastructure, vehicle engineering and behaviour.

The programme will benefit from the work ETSC has carried out in relation to traffic law enforcement and safety performance indicators. Apart from regularly monitoring speed related policy with the Speed Monitor, the Programme includes a project entitled SHLOW (Show me how slow) that will invite students from across 10 European countries to run a local speed management action. The Programme will also publish a Policy Paper on Speed, a series of Fact Sheets on speed management and an advocacy event bringing together stakeholders (European Transport Safety Lunch).

ETSC's Key Policy Recommendations

To the European Institutions

Enforcement:
Turn Commission Recommendation 2004/345 on enforcement of traffic rules into a Directive.

Adopt a Directive on cross-border enforcement.

In-car enforcement technologies
Extend the obligation to fit speed limiters to N1 vehicles (vans).

Adopt European legislation including technical requirements and a timetable for mandatory fitting of European cars with informative or supportive Intelligent Speed Assistance systems in the type approval procedure for cars.

To Member states:

Member States should monitor speed compliance at the national level and the progress towards national targets.

Enforcement:
Prepare enforcement plans with yearly targets for compliance with speed limits.

Ensure an appropriate level of traditional police enforcement and automatic speed control, which targets all road users.

In the case of automatic enforcement, provide a system that makes the vehicle owner legally responsible for the violation when the driver cannot be identified.

Ensure proper follow-up of offenses:
☐ Introduce a set of fixed penalties for minor speeding offences.
☐ Work towards a low level of appeals for fixed penalties for speeding violations.
☐ Include speeding offences in penalty point systems, where they exist (or develop such a system).
☐ Introduce rehabilitation programmes to address recidivism.

In-car enforcement technologies:
As a first step, promote the industry's efforts by supporting additional research and standardisation, by introducing tax cuts as incentives to install ISA and becoming first customers of ISA technology. As a second step, require informative or supportive Intelligent Speed Assistance systems by law.

Authorities in charge of the road network management should, possibly in co-operation with the private sector, develop a digital database of all the speed limits on the network and make this database available for GPS application as a pre-requisite to the implementation ISA systems.

Infrastructure:
Set safe speed limits that are credible in the light of the road and the road environment.

Adapt infrastructure to indicate safe driving speeds.

Education and information:
Accompany enforcement programmes with wide public communication campaigns and social marketing.

Set up a transparent system for the allocation of revenues generated by fines and channel revenues from camera enforcement back into road safety work.

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Country News

Austria

Tougher penalty for speeding:

Austria will introduce tougher penalties for speeding. A working group was recently set up by the government to introduce new road safety measures, and its proposals on drink driving, the use of cell phones while driving, and speeding have been accepted by the government. Regarding speed, drivers exceeding the limit by 30 km/h will have to pay at least 72 EUR (up from 32 EUR at present, and valid across all road types). This new minimum fine will allow the cross border enforcement of financial penalties according to the EU Framework Decision (COPEN 24). The new fine is planned to come into force on 1 January 2008.

Belgium

More cameras for Wallonia:

The Walloon Vice-President and Minister for Transport, André Antoine, set up a plan to help local authorities in Wallonia to install speed radars and announced that he wishes Wallonia to be equipped with 100 fixed radars. Wallonia lags far behind Flanders in terms of speed enforcement equipment but now seems determined to catch up.

Finland

Local authorities to enforce speed limits:

In October 2007 the Ministry of Justice started to prepare a plan designed to allow local authorities to enforce compliance with speed limits. The idea is for municipalities to help the finish police force by taking the following actions: installing camera equipment; producing data on offenders and producing and mailing warning letters and fines directly to vehicle owners. This more localised system should help achieve better enforcement levels. The cost of these activities will be covered by the income generated from fixed camera fines as inspired by the U.K. model.

Finland to test section control:

A pilot programme to test the effectiveness of time over distance cameras (section control) will be carried in Finland in 2008. Following the success of the Netherlands, Austria, and lately Italy in implementing this technology, there is scope to hope that this pilot will demonstrate significant safety benefits.

France

More radars, new update of radars' locations:

France continues to increase the number of its speed radars. There will be 1950 radars in total by the end of 2007 (2/3 of which will be fixed radars). The map of fixed radars across the French territory has just been updated (on 25th of October) and can be viewed online: http://www.securiteroutiere.equipement.gouv.fr/data/radars/francentiere.htm

Paris: 50 km/h everywhere along the Seine:

In Paris the maximum speed will soon be brought to 50km/h on all roads along the banks of the river Seine. Some stretches along the banks are currently limited at 70km/h, but they are all set to disappear. This will come into force as soon as all new signalisation is ready. The confusion caused by different limits along these roads has been the cause of numerous accidents. The measure will also improve the safety of cyclists using these roads whose number is increasing (thanks to Paris' 'Vélib' programme).

In 2006 the Parisian Greens went as far as to propose that all roads within Paris be limited at 30km/h and the 'Boulevard périphérique' (the ring road around Paris) at 50km/h (currently at 80km/h) but this was not taken on by the current administration.

Germany

The debate over speed limits on motorways continues:

The introduction of a national speed limit for motorways has been on the political agenda of different road safety and environmental groups for decades. The debate has gathered pace over the past year. The Federal Environmental Agency repeated its recommendation for such a regulation in early 2007. The SPD, the German Socialist Coalition partner of the government, supported a motion to introduce such a limit at their Party conference in October. This was followed by an announcement by the German Chancellor Merkel that she would not back such a legislative proposal. Instead she called for drivers to take their own responsibility and praised the recent reduction in deaths on Germany's roads. Legally, the German federal states (Länder) and even local authorities have the legislative power to introduce speed limits. This has been done in some places such as in Rhineland-Palatinate where over a decade ago a statewide binding speed limit of 130 km/h was put in place. The district of Cologne has also posted a speed limit on the heavily frequented Cologne Beltway.

During 2006, 600 people (of a total 5091) died on Germany's motorways, 338 of these deaths were caused by speed. Moreover of these 600, 70% of these deaths occur on motorway sections without speed limits (German Statistics Agency).

On September 24th German Greenpeace activists demanded a speed limit of 120 km/h on the Autobahn to cut C02 emissions by placing 120 Speed limit signs in front of the German Ministry of Transport.

New alliance for speed limits:

On 5 November a new coalition advocating a speed limit on motorways was launched in Germany. The new alliance 'Pro-Tempolimit' brings together environmental and transport organisations as well as Police experts. It seeks to act as a social platform for other groups and individuals interested in reducing excessive speeds on German motorways by introducing a mandatory speed limit.

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Country News (continued)

Ireland

A new camera scheme for Ireland:

The new Road Safety strategy for Ireland for 2007 to 2012 was published in October by the Irish Road Safety Authority (RSA). The document identifies Speed as a priority action and announced the introduction of a Safety Camera Network system. New cameras will be located on collision sites following an investigation that will allow optimal deployment of the safety cameras and hours of operation to achieve the compliance rates set out in the new strategy. Implementing a successful Safety Camera Network will require a new integrated technology system that links the camera output to the vehicle and license databases and to the courts administration system. The operation of the Safety Camera Network will be supported by a high profile and continuous public awareness campaign to ensure drivers are aware of the role of safety cameras in enhancing their safety. The system will be implemented by the second quarter of 2008.

Italy

New sanctions for speed offenders and a ban on powerful cars for young drivers:

A new law decree containing a number of measures to reduce road accidents by addressing drivers' behaviour was adopted this summer in Italy. Two of the measures are intended to bring about significant speed reductions on Italian roads:

Excessive speed: for speed offenders, an increase in the level of fines and license suspension periods will take place. Anyone who exceeds by 40km/h, but not more than 60Km/h the limits will have to pay a fine of between 370 and 1.458 EUR and have his/her license suspended for a period of between 3 and 6 months. If this person is caught speeding again within the following two years the new suspension will last for a period of between 8 and 18 months. If speeds are exceeded by 60km/h or more, the fine to pay will cost between 500 and 2.000 EUR and the driver will have his /her license suspended for between 6 and 12 months or possibly withdrawn altogether.

Ban on powerful cars for young drivers: during the first 180 days after obtaining a driving license, young drivers will be forbidden from driving cars more powerful than 50kw/t. The measures entered into force on the 4th of August.

Section Control a big success:

Italy's new Section Control programme 'Tutor' celebrates its 1st anniversary, Auguri!

A report unveiled on October 17 bears witness to the success of 'Tutor': death rate on the 1.120 km of the Italian road network equipped with section control speed checks has decreased by 50,83% and injuries went down by 34,75%. Mean speeds on sections controlled also decreased by 16km/h. This success will lead to an extension of the system to 1.700 km of the Italian road network by 2008. Section control has also been in place in the Netherlands (for 12 years) and in Austria (for 10 years) with positive results.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg is set to improve its road safety record further thanks to the tougher sanctions on speeding that entered into force on October 1st. On 130km/h motorways offenders will have to pay 145 EUR when caught at 161 km/h and have their license withdrawn when detected at 202 km/h. On 110km/h motorways (i.e: same motorways when it rains) they will be fined 145 EUR when caught at 141 km/h and lose their license when caught at 171 km/h. The new legislation also allows for license withdrawal 'on the spot'. These measures are sure to discourage drivers who want to speed.

Earlier this year, Luxembourg's transport minister had announced that 100 fixed speed cameras will be installed in 2008 (a big number for such a small country).

U.K.

In a new report – beyond 2010 – a Holistic Approach to Road Safety released on the 16th of October, the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety (PACTS) calls for the implementation of 20mph (32 km/h) zones in towns. The report notes that a 20mph zones survey across the UK and in other European countries found child road accidents fell by 67% and cyclist accidents by 29%.

PACTS also recommends that all fleet vehicles be fitted with intelligent speed adaptation (ISA) systems to improve road safety. PACTS director Rob Gifford said ISA systems, which also automatically reduce a vehicle's speed in poor weather or at night, could result in a dramatic cut in fatal crashes. "We could see a 55% reduction," he said. Fleet drivers are targeted because between a quarter and a third of all road traffic incidents involve at-work drivers. Finally the report also calls for a new generation of speed cameras working through section control.

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Speed Management in the U.K.

Exceeding the speed limit and traveling too fast for prevailing conditions still cause a large proportion of accidents in the U.K. (26% of fatal accidents in 2005). These figures probably underestimate the true role of excessive speed (Tomorrow's roads – safer for everyone – the second three-year review, February 2007). According to RAC Motoring two-thirds of people break the limit daily. There has been a marked improvement in recent years in compliance with the 30 mph limit (48km/h). However, inappropriate speed remains a major problem on rural roads. Some two-thirds of deaths occurred on rural roads in 2005, with 28% of these deaths involving a driver or rider exceeding the speed limit or traveling too fast for the prevailing conditions.

The promotion of safe and considerate driving and encouraging road users to adopt appropriate speeds are major elements of the government's work to reduce road traffic collisions. New guidance to traffic authorities on setting local speed limits in August 2006 have been published, and traffic authorities have been asked to review the speed limits on all of their A and B roads and implement any resulting changes by 2011 in accordance with the new guidance. In particular, the guidance strengthens the importance of self-explaining limits where the road's function, traffic mix and characteristics determine an appropriate speed limit reflecting what the road looks like to the road users.

"Netting off" – allowing police forces to retain fines from speed cameras to undertake more camera activity; and changes to the penalty point structure under the Road Safety Act 2006 are other positive innovations.

The Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety also encourages the implementation of 20 mph limits and 20 mph zones in urban areas (32km/h), and 30 mph speed limits in rural villages (48km/h); the installation of Intelligent Speed Adaptation systems on all fleet vehicles and the use of section control speed checks.

The U.K. is also a leading country regarding research on ISA. Numerous projects and field trials have been carried, demonstrating that ISA is a mature technology. The latest scenario analyis demonstrated that ISA can bring enormous benefits in the long term: in a market driven scenario, ISA has the potential to reduce serious crashes by 20%. In an authority driven scenario (i.e.: legislation on ISA), once the fleet is saturated with voluntary ISA (overridable systems) the reduction is 40%. Finally, with compulsory usage of mandatory ISA (non-overridable systems), a rise to 70% reduction in serious crashes can be obtained (ISA UK final report – University of Leeds and MIAR, 2007). These figures are very impressive for a country that already has a good road safety record.

Interview with Robert Gifford -Executive Director of PACTS:

ETSC: The U.K. has been a forerunner in Europe in terms of road safety for a number of years now, is this reflected in its efforts to curb speed?

RG: I'm not sure that the UK has been so prominent in curbing speed compared to the rest of Europe. There are still plenty of locations where engineering measures could be implemented and on rural roads our record is not very good. It is perhaps our focus on cameras as a tool for reducing speed that differentiates us from the rest of Europe.

ETSC: What have been the most recent legislation changes in the U.K to curb speed?

RG: The two changes most relevant are the introduction of "netting off" – allowing police forces to retain fines from speed cameras to undertake more camera activity and changes to the penalty point structure. The former ran from 2001 until April 2007 under a law known as the Vehicle (Crimes) Act. The latter, introduced under the Road Safety Act 2006, will introduce a scale of penalty points from 2 to 6 instead of the current 3 linked to seriousness of offence and severity of consequence. It has yet to be implemented.

ETSC: What is the U.K. still missing today to achieve compliance with speed limits?

RG: Our compliance rates in urban areas (30mph/50kph limits) is far better than a decade ago: 51% of drivers in free flowing traffic now comply. However, we have yet to win the publicity argument: too many commentators in the media deny the link between speed choice and crash potential.

ETSC: Do you foresee new measures in the near-future to improve the situation? Do PACTS recommendations stand a good chance of being implemented (more 20mph zones/ ISA on all fleet vehicles/ time-over-distance cameras…)?

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RG: 20mph zones are certainly becoming more widespread. I think that this chimes with public opinion that wants to see improved safety for children and for vulnerable road users. Time over distance cameras are technically deliverable: they need to be approved by the Home Office. Intelligent Speed Adaptation could also be introduced as a benefit to climate change and to journey reliability. So, I think the mood is right for all three proposals.

ETSC: Do you believe that the U.K. has something to learn from other European Member States in terms of fighting speed?

RG: I'm sure it has, especially in the area of enforcement where France seems to have been very successful. Perhaps ETSC could help the UK here.

ETSC News

PIN ranking on speed: little progress but great potential

ETSC set up in April 2006 the Road Safety Performance Index (PIN) as an instrument to spur European countries to greater efforts to enhance road safety. During the first year, the Road Safety PIN measured countries' performance in contributing to the EU target and in improving road user behaviour in the three key areas: seat belt use, drink driving and speed.

The ranking on speed published in the Annual Report in June 2007 compared European countries' trends in driving speeds. It showed that, overall, there has been little progress in Europe. Average speeds and numbers of speed limit violations remain high across Europe with only few encouraging signs, notably from France, but also from Belgium and Switzerland, where speeds have recently decreased across all types of roads (motorways, urban and rural roads).

The study also revealed that only three quarters of countries measure speed levels on (part) of their road network and that the different ways of collecting and processing the relevant data do not currently allow international comparisons of compliance levels.

For more information www.etsc.be/PIN

ETSC Speed Task Force

The new ETSC Task Force dealing with speed management has met for the first meeting in Brussels on 29 August. The meeting was an occasion to discuss the scope and first outline of a Policy Paper on speed, which is expected to be published beginning of 2008. The paper will set forth the need to combat speed and the progress made by European frontrunners. The review intends to identify recommendations for European and national policy makers.

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2. Austrian Road Safety Board (KfV)(A)
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4. Automotive safety centre (UK)
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