HEARING ON ROAD SAFETY

Brussels 14. 09. 2006

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Thank you very much for inviting me. I would like to present my opinion about the causes of delays in the implementation of 3^{rd} EU Road Safety Action Programme (2003) and reflect on what can be done in order to accelerate the decrease in fatalities in member states in the coming years. In my presentation I will spend a little more time describing the situation in the group of 10 new EU members¹, but I have the impression that many of the remarks could refer also to EU 15 countries.

I. Implementation of 3rd Road Safety Action Programme (RSAP) in EU countries in the years 2001-2005.

After four years of implementing the programme according to the European Commission on EU roads there were 41 600 fatalities, i.e. 8796 less than in 2001. This figure implies a 17.5% reduction in fatalities compared with 2001. Therefore we may be pleased with the results for the first four years (2002-2005). Since 2002 the number of fatalities in the European Union has been systematically decreasing and the European Commission has reported that this fall is faster than in the previous decade. However, the registered drop has been lower than anticipated in the EU programme (17.5% instead of 26.6%). In absolute figures this means that there were 4609 too many fatalities on EU roads.

The analysis of accident statistics reveals that individual member states have been successful in limiting road hazards to a different extent. In the years 2001-2005 France has been a leader in reducing dangers in road transport (the decrease in the number of fatalities by 34.6%), Luxemburg (-34.3%), Belgium (-26.0%), Portugal (-25.4%) and Sweden (-24.5%), however it has to be acknowledged that only in the first two countries the registered fall has complied with the conditions stipulated in 3rd Road Safety Action Programme. In Table 1 the forecasts (white colour) and the actual decrease of fatalities in individual EU countries (green colour) have been presented. The last column shows how much the achieved results differ from the ones planned in 3rd RSAP. As follows from the presented figures the credit for a relatively good result in the European Union in the first 4 years goes practically speaking to one country, i.e. France. Apart from Luxemburg all other countries are delayed in the halfway point of the programme implementation. Of particular is the situation in Poland, the United Kingdom, Spain, Hungary, Italy (data for 2001-2004), Czech Republic and Germany.

¹ Situation in EU 15 will be discussed by my colleague from Spain.

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Austria	958	880	816	755	698	646	598	554	513	479	
Austria	958	956	931	878	768						-70
Belgium	1486	1366	1266	1171	1082	1002	928	860	796	742	
Belgium	1486	1306	1241	1162	1100						-18
Denmark	431	396	367	340	314	291	269	249	231	215	
Denmark	431	463	432	369	331						-17
Finland	433	398	369	341	315	292	270	251	232	216	
Finland	433	415	379	375	371						-56
France	8162	7501	6953	6432	5943	5503	5096	4724	4370	4077	
France	8162	7655	6058	5530	5339						604
Germany	6977	6412	5944	5498	5080	4704	4356	4038	3735	3485	
Germany	6977	6842	6613	5842	5361						-281
Greece	1880	1728	1602	1481	1369	1268	1174	1088	1006	939	
Greece	1880	1634	1605	1619	1614						-245
Ireland	412	379	351	325	300	278	257	238	221	206	
Ireland	412	376	337	379	399						-99
Italy	6691	6149	5700	5273	4872	4511	4178	3873	3582	3342	
Italy	6691	6739	6065	5625	-						-352 ²
Luxembourg	70	64	60	55	51	47	44	41	37	35	
Luxembourg	70	62	53	49	46						5
Netherlands	993	913	846	783	723	670	620	575	532	496	
Netherlands	993	987	1028	804	750						-27
Portugal	1670	1535	1423	1316	1216	1126	1043	967	894	834	
Portugal	1670	1655	1542	1294	1246						-30
Spain	5517	5070	4700	4348	4017	3720	3445	3193	2954	2756	
Spain	5517	5347	5400	4749	4450						-433

Tab. 1. The forecast and actual decrease in fatalities in member countries (ECORYS, 2006; Care, 2006)

² Data of 2001-2004

Sweden	583	536	497	459	424	393	364	337	312	291	
Sweden	583	560	529	480	440						-16
United Kingdom	3598	3307	3065	2835	2620	2426	2246	2082	1926	1797	
United Kingdom	3598	3581	3658	3368	3337						-717
Cyprus	98	90	83	77	71	66	61	57	52	49	
Cyprus	98	94	97	117	102						-31
Czech Republic	1334	1226	1136	1051	971	899	833	772	714	666	
Czech Republic	1334	1431	1447	1382	1286						-315
Estonia	199	183	170	157	145	134	124	115	107	99	
Estonia	199	223	164	170	168						-23
Hungary	1239	1139	1056	976	902	835	774	717	663	619	
Hungary	1239	1429	1326	1296	1278						-376
Latvia	517	475	440	407	376	349	323	299	277	258	
Latvia	517	518	532	516	442						-66
Lithuania	706	649	601	556	514	476	441	409	378	353	
Lithuania	706	697	709	752	760						-246
Malta	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	9	8	
Malta	16	16	16	13	17						-5
Poland	5534	5086	4714	4361	4029	3731	3455	3203	2963	2764	
Poland	5534	5827	5640	5712	5444						-1415
Slovakia	614	564	523	484	447	414	383	355	329	307	
Slovakia	614	610	645	603	560						-113
Slovenia	278	255	237	219	202	187	174	161	149	139	
Slovenia	278	269	242	274	258						-56

Therefore the possibility of fulfilling the aim of 50% reduction in fatalities in 2010 is called into question. According to the European Commissioner for Transport, Jacques Barrot, if in the next years the situation changes at the same pace as at present, in 2010 the number of fatalities in EU countries will amount to 32,500, instead of 25,000. Even less optimistic are the forecasts prepared by experts from the Dutch SWOV Institute (ECORYS, 2006). In their opinion, if the present trend continues and all member states and the European Commission keep handling the road safety issue in a similar manner, the number of fatalities will drop not by 50% but only 23%. As a result in 2010 on the European Union roads 13 493 more people

will die than it has been forecast. The key results of these calculations have been given in Table 2.

	Number of	Number of	Expected	decrease	Number of	Forecasted decrease			
	Number of fatalities in 2001	fatalities – in 2010 - target	Figure	%	 fatalities in 2010 forecast 	Figure	%		
EU 15	39861	19931	19931	50	29247	10614	27		
EU 10	10535	5268	5268	50	9444	1091	10		
EU 25	50396	25198	25198	50	38691	11705	23		

Tab. 2. Forecasted decrease in fatalities in the EU in 2010 (Source: ECORYS; 2006).

As follows from the data presented, particular difficulties in achieving the target of the EU programme will be faced by new members of the European Union; SWOV forecasts that in this group of countries the decrease in the number of fatalities compared to 2001 will amount to approximately 20%. EU 15 countries will have a slightly better result (27% decrease), but also in this group the scale of changes will be far from expected.

Hence the present results of implementing the EU programme show that the fulfilment of the ambitious target will be possible only when all countries are mobilised, without any exception. That concerns also EU 15 member states, which have had some success with reducing traffic risks. A particular responsibility will rest on the countries with highest fatality figures in road accidents in recent years. These countries include primarily France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the UK. In 2001 72% (in 2005 - 71%) of all fatalities in the enlarged EU occurred on the roads of these six countries. Therefore the successes of other countries do not seem to be able to counterbalance the losses due to the failure of road safety action plans in these six states.

• Conditions of implementing 3rd RSAP in New Member States

There is no question that new EU members (particularly Poland) have had a major impact on the delays in implementing the target of 3rd RSAP. However, it is worth mentioning that these countries have joined the implementation of the programme two and a half years after its commencement (May 2004) and none of the countries had had experience in implementing the 1st or 2nd Road Safety Action Programme ³, nor have these countries participated in discussions on the shape of the 3rd programme. What is more, in recent years in many countries of this group the transformation process revealed many new problems to be solved, and numerous new areas of social conflict. In comparison, reducing traffic risks is not seen as a priority. Everything also seems to indicate that, paradoxically enough, accession to the EU has not helped road safety so far. The need to bring numerous laws and operating standards in line with the EU solutions within a short time, and the fact that the European Commission practically skipped the road safety issues in the accession negotiations contributed to yet another failed attempt to give road safety an appropriate profile (Buttler I., 2001; Mikulik J., 2004).

³ Although some experiences of these programmes were used while preparing national programmes, e.g. in Hungary and Poland.

Moreover new members of the European Union are more poorly prepared to implement ambitious road safety programmes. The results of the analysis performed upon an order of ECMT (2006b) point to these conclusions.⁴. In Table 2 slightly modified data⁵ from that analysis have been presented.

⁴ This study defines actions that could be taken by governments in order to achieve the target set by ECMT (50% decrease in fatalities in the years 2000-2012). Within the study questionnaires concerning road safety management systems have been circulated among ECMT members. A reference point were 17 factors that facilitate effective prevention in road safety. It is worth mentioning that at the same time experts working within the SEC-Belt programme (ETCS, 2006) proposed a similar method of road safety assessment.

⁵ The Table contains only the data from EU member countries; actions 'in progress' have been awarded 1 point (not 0, as in the ECMT study), and the Table presents the ranking of the best and worst results.

Country	Score	Road safety as public Heath problem	Identification of problems: crash/health statistics	Clear institutional and organizational roles	Effective enforcement systems	Vision	Action plan	Quantitative targets	Research programme	Effective rescue systems	Strategy	Delegate countermeasures responsibility	Integrated transport policies	Political and public awareness	Apply cost effectiveness principles	Follow-up and evaluate results	Government funds for road safety	Collection of safety performance indicators
Denmark	33	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1
Netherlands	33	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2
United Kingdom	32	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0
Austria	31	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2
Ireland	31	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1
Finland	31	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	2	1	2
Sweden	30	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
France	29	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2
Czech Rep.	28	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	2
Spain	28	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	2
Belgium	27	1	1	1	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Poland	24	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	2	0	0
Portugal	23	1	2	2	2	0	2	2	1	2	0	2	0	2	1	2	2	0
Lithuania	23	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	0	1	1	2	0	0
Germany	22	2	2	0	1	0	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	0	2	1	2	1
Italy	19	2	2	0	1	2	0	0	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	0	0	0
Luxemburg	19	2	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	2	0	1	0	1
Greece	19	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1
Latvia	17	2	1	2	1	1	2	0	1	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	1
Hungary	13	1	2	2	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	0	1
Slovakia	12	2	2	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Malta	9	2	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
		39	38 Fst	36 onia	36 Slove	35 nia: N	34 o resp	32	31 Cypr	31	31	30 data	29	29	29	28	23	23

Tab. 2. Progress in implementing the framework for road safety (ECMT, 2006b).

Yes

In progress 1

No 0

The weaknesses of the existing management system in EU 10 come to full light when we analyse long-term changes. Figure 1 shows the percentage changes in the reduction of road accidents fatalities in the years 1990-2005.

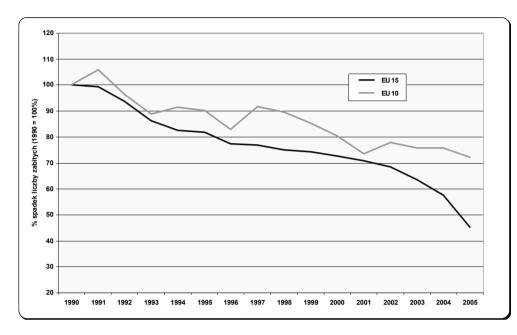


Figure. 1. Percent reduction in road accidents fatality figures in the years 1990-2005 in EU 10 and EU 15 groups (Source: Care, 2006)

As follows from the presented diagram, in the previous decade (1990-2000) both EU 15 and EU 10 countries managed to reduce the number of fatalities in road accidents, however in EU 15 this decline was more considerable and the process was more gradual.

Therefore we have valid grounds to assume that new member countries were set more demanding requirements since the very beginning (the fulfilment of a very ambitious EU target without any previous preparation in a time shorter than 2.5 years, the necessity to take simultaneous preventive measures to reduce the number of fatalities in road accidents and implement projects aimed at the fast modernization of road safety management and adjustment preventive standards to EU requirements). An optimistic aspect is that there have been many positive changes in these countries in the last few years. A good example is the fact that at present most new EU members have road safety programmes and all of them have set measurable targets. In most cases these targets coincide with 3rd RSAP objectives, although in some cases (e.g. Poland, Hungary, Estonia and Malta) the time frame has been extended beyond 2010. Therefore there are good indications that the attitude of state governments in new member states is changing with regard to life and health protection in road traffic, however it is hard to say now if this will be sufficient to reduce the fatalities figures in road accidents rapidly. The experience of EU 15 countries suggests that even in the best prepared countries the reduction of fatality figures in 10 years by 50% is not an easy task.

II. Short-term and long term activity

An attempt to set the action strategy for the European Union in the next 4-5 years seems to be an easy job at first glance. An analysis of documents published in recent years reveals the close similarity in diagnosing the causes of high risk in road transport (see: WHO, 2004; EC, 2005; European Parliament, 2005; ECMT, 2006). Speeding, driving impaired by alcohol and non-use of seat belts and child restraints continue to be major road safety problems in all countries. It is even estimated that fully addressing these three key problems could save up to 50 % fatalities in many countries. Also the views on other major safety problems are similar: excessive exposure of the young and unprotected road users, impact of fatigue as well as roads and vehicles condition. Many studies highlight the insufficient importance attached in safety programmes to hazards in urban areas and the arising problems of aging population of transport system users, drugs and medicine as well as the uncontrolled popularization of ITS devices. Everyone agrees that measures taken within road safety should be integrated and the implemented projects monitored and assessed. Moreover everyone can contribute to limiting road hazards within their competences. After the recent spectacular success in France we all agree that an immediate success can be achieved with actions aimed at increasing the efficiency of police surveillance.

Problems start when a diagnosis has to be transferred into proposals of specific solutions and their implementation. According to specialists this task should not be hard either, as it has been known for years what measures should be implemented to reduce exposures relating to such problems and how this should be done. The value of this experience has been confirmed in several member states. However, in spite of such good experience, many countries have not adopted all the 'best practices' available.

Therefore there are grounds to believe that the key to success in the following years will be a radical improvement and acceleration of the process of adopting efficient and effective preventive solutions in all member states, and the success of this process will depend to a large extent on:

- the content preparation of measures recommended for implementation (properly addressing implementation issues, information about factors underlying the success of a particular solution, problems encountered by the implementing authorities and conditions to be met by a country wanting to apply a similar solution, even information about estimated costs of implementation and results of cost-benefit analyses),
- gaining support for proposed projects among politicians, authorities on various levels, managers and users of the road system and finally the general public.

There is no doubt that the implementation of these programmes will depend largely on the activity of governments in member states, but I have the impression that the policy adopted on the EU level could create more advantageous conditions for this process. However, this would require the modification of 3rd RSAP. Although the Third Union Programme defines the way of perceiving road safety, it also contains a list of 60 different proposed preventive measures. The European Commission intends to implement them either independently or with governments of member states, however (in spite of numerous appeals), it has not set any priorities, a timetable of their implementation, nor does it provide any indexes that might provide monitoring and assessment of their implementation, apart from the chief aim expressed in figures. After the adoption of the 'shared responsibility' principle this programme did not contain any solid proposals of cooperation between the European Commission and the member states governments in the implementation of the programme. The situation has not changed after the announcement of the mid-term RSAP review and the mid-term Transport Policy review. In spite of the awareness that in the coming years 'more has to be done and it has to be done better', the European Commission has not presented any

new proposed measures (EC, 2006c). The solutions included in the '*Mid-term review of the European Commission's 2001 Transport White Paper'* (EC, 2006c), i.e.⁶:

- implement an integrated approach to road safety which targets vehicle design and technology, infrastructure and behaviour, including regulation where needed;
- organise awareness efforts, annual road safety day;
- continuously review and complete safety rules in all other modes;
- strengthening the functioning of the European safety agencies and gradually extend their safety-related tasks;
- continuation of the 2001 White Paper measures and the Safety Initiative;

are so general that one may assume in all probability that they will not have any major effect on accelerating the programme in member states.

To sum up this part of my presentation, I propose in the coming month to consider the extended activity of EU institutions in the implementation of 3rd European Action Programme, to arrange the method of implementing the Programme, supplement it with the offer to cooperate with member states as well as for the European Commission to take a more active patronage of the partnership cooperation of member states ('peer cooperation'). Among more detailed proposals I would like to suggest discussing the following motions:

- 1. Taking into consideration the end to EU Transport Ministers meetings in Verona. Instead I am proposing that Transport Ministers should meet once or twice a year in the countries that are most delayed in the implementation of the EU programme. Such meetings should be publicized widely in local media and representatives of top national authorities should be invited to participate. One of the topics for such meetings could be the assessment of situation in the country and the analysis of how other member states could assist in reducing the delays. Perhaps it would also be a good idea to organize similar working meetings of the Transport Commission members of the European Parliament with representative of national parliaments. Such measures would facilitate the establishment of strong and sustained political will in member states and attach real significant to road safety issues;
- 2. Adopting clear priorities for the measures taken by the European Union in 3rd RSAP. There is no doubt that such a priority in the coming years should be to increase the level of compliance with road regulations within speed, drink driving and the use of safety equipment (see: ICF Consultng, 2003; European Parliament, 2005). For each priority there should be explicit numerical targets. For example it could be adopted that by 2010 every country should reduce the number of speeding drivers by 10-20%, increase the level of seat belts use by 10-15% and limit the number of drunk drivers participating in car accidents by 5-10%⁷. It will also be necessary to issue recommendations concerning the method of monitoring the achievement of such targets, as the data in Table 2 suggests, a number of countries still find it problematic;

⁶ In presentations given by representatives of the European Commission (e.g. Tostmann, 2006) a set of proposed measures looks slightly different (Road Safety Day, Soreboard – Visible Member States Benchmarking, stringent European campaigns, higher visibility for Road Safety Charter, joining forces with the health community – UN/WHO)

⁷ The values given are examples only.

- 3. Allowing for the later commencement of the programme implementation in 10 new members states, the targets to be met by these countries in 2010 should be reduced respectively;
- 4. 3rd RSAP should be supplemented as soon as possible with manuals that provide methods of limiting exposures relating to speeding, drinking and driving and the failure to use protective equipment in cars and how these solutions should be implemented. The manuals should include, apart from the descriptions of measures and achieved results, should include information about the implementation process together with for example information about factors underlying the success of a particular solution, problems encountered by the implementing authorities and conditions to be met by a country wanting to apply a similar solution. In my opinion, information about estimated costs of implementation and results of cost-benefit analyses would be valuable for the countries.

A top priority should be given to the road manual that has been advertised already in 3^{rd} RSAP. A number of EU states are modernising and developing their road network and it would be advisable that while implementing such projects they should not forget to adopt solutions enhancing the safety of users of such systems.

5. Formulating a new EU programme to support the implementation of 3rd RSAP in member states. Its main task would be to shorten as much as possible the process of transfer and implementation of the best practice on various management levels in member states. Within the programme the following measures could be taken: 2-3 day consultation meetings for representatives of administration on different levels, NGOs, etc., in order to present the most effective methods of limiting the abovementioned hazards and discuss the methods of their practical implementation. One day of such meetings should be dedicated to preparing initial projects that could be later on submitted for funding, e.g. with EU structural funds. Perhaps another good idea would be to create preferences for such projects in applying for subsidies from EU and domestic funds.

This type of action will guarantee that the implemented projects will be based on the best practice and at the same time take into consideration the character of the country and its advancement in adopting preventive measures for road safety.

- 6. Modification of the principles applied within the European Road Safety Charter and providing that the proposals of preventive measures submitted by potential signatories should include the priorities set by the European Union to a larger extent and, wherever possible, such measures should be at least partly coordinated with the implementation of the national road safety programmes.
- 7. The promotion of preventive solutions that limit exposures should be included more in education and campaigns. Citizens of the European Union should be informed why such solutions have been selected and what advantages we may expect from their implementation. Such actions should overcome at least partly the social resistance against the implementation of unpopular, and often simply unknown solutions.

All these proposals comply with the principle of subsidiarity, as every member state may resign from the participation in the European Commission programmes or refuse to implement any of the solutions proposed. However, extending the offer presented by the European Commission will give a chance to reduce the delays in the countries less prepared to the implementation of preventive measures.

Finally I would like to say just a few words on the long term activities. The experiences gathered during implementation of three consecutive EU programs indicate that the existence of such program gives the appropriate rank to the problem, motivates also member countries to more pro-active attitude towards this problem. Due to the size of European Union it seems to me it would be worth retaining decade long programs with simultaneously described objective. They should be introduced at the beginning of each decade, which effectively means that publication of such program should take place a year before its official commencement, so that member states could, if desired, coordinate their plans with union proposals. In my opinion, greater emphasis should be placed in the next program on the fact that activities regarding safety areas are our joint, and not shared responsibility. It seems to me, the time has come for the program to have in its introduction or preface more clearly defined what we are striving fore in our activities. Natural solution appears to be adopting Swedish proposal: "Vision Zero" and "safe system" approach as well as accepting that the road transport system should be constructed in such a way, as to ensure its users safety and so that the mistakes they may make, did not have irreversible consequences. This will require change in current road safety culture and acknowledgement of a sharing of responsibility for overall road safety between road system managers, road users and vehicle manufacturers.

New program must also, to a higher degree than now, take into consideration problem of fast development of ITS devices. Initial data gathered by the research indicates, that equipping vehicles with ITS devices will influence road situation perception, drivers decision making process, his behaviour behind the wheels, probably also relationship between the road users (Turetschek Ch., Risser R., 2004) and characteristics of the road accidents. Development of the new ITS systems is undoubtedly very beneficial and it can be expected that some of those solutions will have positive influence on limiting dangers to the road users. The experiences gathered in the past years show however, that in order those opportunities were effectively utilised, it is necessary to control their implementation process more efficiently than so far. ITS devices are neutral from the view point of the road traffic safety and only their introduction creates safety problems (Noy I., 2004). New program should determine procedures of supporting those solutions, which can lead to improvement of the road traffic safety and oppose implementation of those whose influence on the market can be negative.

Ladies and gentlemen

To cover all those safety problems in such a short speech is rather precarious task. Please, therefore treat this as an attempt to indicate few problems, rather than their comprehensive description. I hope that Polish Motor Transport Institute, being represented by me, as well as European Transport Safety Council, which my institute closely cooperates with, will have other opportunities in the future to present our proposals.

Thank you for attention.

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