

Transport Safety Lunches

"See and be seen! - The role of conspicuity in road safety"

Chairperson: Jörg Beckmann (ETSC)

Panelists: René Jacobs (BRRRC, Belgian Road Research Center), Flor Koninckx (MP, Belgian Senate), Roland Gillebeert (CLEPA), Annie Luchie (CLCCR, Liaison Committee of the Body Builders and Trailer Manufacturers), Jacqueline Lacroix (DVR, German Transport Safety Council), Jean-Paul Repussard (European Commission)

Welcome by: Prof. Herman De Croo MP, (Speaker, Belgian Chamber of Representatives)

To see and to be seen is a fundamental prerequisite for the safety of all road users. The visual capacity of the human eye at night is only 5% of its normal capacity during daytime and visual errors are one of the main contributing factors of crashes. This ETSC Lunch will present ways to improve the conspicuity of traffic signs, road markings, trucks, people being unexpectedly exposed on roads, pedestrians and cyclists¹.

Traffic signs are one of the primary interfaces between the roadway and the drivers and are used to communicate to drivers information that would otherwise be unobvious. To be effective, signs must be designed, built and displayed in such a way that the messages they convey are clear, unambiguous, visible and legible. The lack of traffic signals' conspicuity is often cited as a contributing factor by drivers who are involved in accidents.

Clear and visible **road markings**, coupled with a high level of maintenance, are essential to ensuring a high level of safety on European roads. Road markings must be of the highest quality in order to be visible and lasting and to guarantee a skid resistance that is as good as the one of the adjacent road surface. Studies have shown that safe pavement markings should be visible during the night to a degree that allows the driver an absolute minimum of 2.5 seconds reaction time.

Crash investigations show that nearly 5% of severe **truck accidents** can be traced back to poor conspicuity of the truck or its trailer at night. Trucks can be rendered much more conspicuous by marking their sides and rear using retroreflective marking tape. The tape enables the driver to identify the truck as an object on the road as well as its height and length. The truck is therefore made visible to other road users thereby reducing accidents, specifically rear and side impacts into large vehicles.

Drivers, under various circumstances, might be forced to temporarily leave their vehicle. In such a case, and especially on high speed roads and on motorways, the driver is exposed to an increased risk of accident and should take extra precaution to be visible from the other motorists.

Finally, **pedestrians and cyclists** can be difficult to see in the road traffic, especially at night and in dark weather conditions. Without wearing something reflective a pedestrian or cyclist is only likely to be visible 30 metres away, in low beam headlights. By wearing something reflective they become visible at 150 metres away, thereby giving drivers five times the distance to notice and avoid them.

¹ This Lunch will not deal with Daytime Running Lights (DRL) despite their important contribution to conspicuity. For ETSC's position on Daytime Running Lights, please refer to ETSC (2003), Cost effective EU transport safety measures, <http://www.etsc.be/documents.php?did=4>.



European Transport Safety Council

ETSC's Transport Safety Lunches are the site for openly debating promising and successful European approaches to prevent both accidents and injuries in transportation. They bring together decision makers from the transport sector in Brussels, thus establishing a platform to exchange information and views for all those interested in transport safety.

Following a buffet lunch the experts provide the audience with an insight into innovative transport safety work in the particular country. By addressing the most pressing problems they are paving the way for sharing knowledge and experience of how to best reduce transport-related accidents and injuries. The debates will explore possibilities of how key actors can develop the political and organisational leadership that it takes to implement effective safety schemes.

The Lunches provide good opportunities for both public authorities from all EU countries and private companies from all transport sectors to present their technical and organisational measures for the improvement of safety and security within the different modes of transport.

Speaker, Belgian Chamber of Representatives

ETSC's Transport Safety Lunch

On 29 March 2006 from 12:30 – 15:00

**"See and be seen-
The role of conspicuity in road safety"**

At "Autoworld", Parc du Cinquanteenaire
1000 Brussels - http://www.autoworld.be/en/10_plan.asp

**Free of charge
Limited seats**

For registration: Ms. Graziella Jost, liaison@etsc.be

Please e-mail or fax the following information before **Monday 27 March 2006**:

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