

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 Spain.

Deaths on Spanish roads were reduced by 31% during the last seven years; nevertheless there is still a long way to go for Spain to reach the 50% reduction target by 2010. Two main developments in Spain have contributed to this drop: the introduction of a penalty point system in July 2006 and the reform of the penal code so that most serious traffic offences now fall under criminal law.

The Spanish road safety 'Key Strategic Action Plan' considers that excessive and inappropriate speed is a contributing factor in 1 out of 3 fatal accident. Recent studies have also estimated that the percentage of fatal accidents increases by 3% for every kilometer per hour increase in the total traffic speed average in Spain.

Despite the progress, in Spain as in all other EU countries, compliance levels with speed limits are still dramatically low and renewed efforts are needed both in terms of police enforcement but also education to render speeding as socially unacceptable as drink driving.

Antonio Avenoso

Invitation to the 10th bfu forum and 10th ETSC Lecture on 'Speed'

This year, bfu (the Swiss council for accident prevention) is organising its 10th forum jointly with the European Transport Safety Council. Like ETSC, bfu holds an annual lecture event on a current aspect of road safety work. As a member of ETSC, bfu is pleased to issue an invitation to Switzerland. The forum will be an international meeting, which will be held as follows:

Thursday, 25 September 2008, 3.00 p.m. – 5.30 p.m., Stade de Suisse, Berne

This event will look into the most important facts and issues on the topic of «Speed» from a general, technical and psychological standpoint. Please reserve the afternoon now by sending an email to: b.buhmann@bfu.ch.

For more information: <http://www.bfu.ch/English/Pages/ETSC-Lecture.aspx>

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Country News

Belgium

Lowering speed to fight 'SMOG'

Following the example of Flanders, reducing speeds to fight air pollution is becoming an important policy in Wallonia. In Mid-2007 the Walloon motorways administration had started using variable message signs to encourage drivers to voluntarily reduce their speeds to 90km/h in case of smog (see picture).



However, in some areas that are particularly prone to suffer from air pollution it has since been decided to effectively lower the legal speed limits to 90km/h. These new limits are enforced not only with variable messages signs but also through temporary vertical sign posts. The use of such posts has started in May this year.

A map of the roads on which the new 90 km/h limit is applied in case of Smog is available online:

<http://routes.wallonie.be/listeFiche.do?action=1&shortId=1270&axeSec=5>

Germany

First state-wide autobahn speed limit

The northern city of Bremen became the first state in Germany to introduce a speed limit on its motorways in April 2008.

The 120 km/h limit in Bremen will affect just 60 kms of road because the Bremen 'city/state' is very small.

"This is a good day for traffic safety and we are also sending a signal about protecting the environment and climate," said Reinhard Loske, Bremen's environment minister.

"Our goal is to introduce a general speed limit on motorways in the whole of Germany together with other states," added Loske, a member of the Greens who share power in Bremen with the Social Democrats (SPD).

It is very uncertain how successful he will be. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, leader of the Christian Democrats (CDU), has ruled out introducing a national speed limit as proposed by her SPD coalition partners. The SPD had indeed voted at a party conference last year to introduce a speed limit of 130 km/h on motorways to help reduce CO2 emissions.

Ireland

'He Drives, She Dies!' Road safety campaign targets women

Two-thirds of women passengers killed in car crashes are travelling in vehicles driven by men in Ireland. 1,444 women have been killed or seriously injured in cars driven by men in the ten-year period to 2006.

The Road Safety Authority has launched a new campaign called 'He Drives, She Dies' aimed at young women, designed to empower them to say no to getting into a car with a man who drives dangerously. In the recent research, young drivers were shown to be particularly dangerous.

Seven out of 10 female passengers aged between 17 and 24 were killed in cars driven by men in the same age group. Research carried out in other countries show eight out of 10 passengers have felt unsafe in a car.

Speeding was the most common factor causing fear, with many passengers saying they feared the driver would accelerate if they commented on the vehicle's speed.

New cross border anti-speeding campaign launched (Republic of Ireland together with Northern Ireland)

Speed is the biggest contributing factor to road deaths in Ireland.

Excessive speed was a factor in almost 30% of road deaths in the Republic of Ireland between 1996 and 2004 and a factor in 24% of road deaths between 1996 and 2005 in Northern Ireland.

However, evidence shows that every time human error causes a road collision it is the speed of the vehicles which determines the outcome – whether someone lives or dies, or is maimed for life.

So while it is estimated that speed is directly killing an average of 141 people a year on this island it could in fact have an impact on a total of over 500 road deaths a year, making speed the biggest contributing factor to road deaths in Ireland.

This was the disturbing revelation made at the launch of "Mess" a new sixty seconds hard hitting anti-speeding TV advert from the Road Safety Authority, supported by Hibernian Insurance, and from the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland, supported by Norwich Union.

The new advert graphically portrays how the selfish and shameful actions of a speeding driver, wrecks the lives of countless people in a split-second. The central message being – 'The Faster the Speed, the Bigger the Mess'.

Further information on speeding can be obtained in Ireland from the Road Safety Authority by phoning local 1890 50 60 80 or visiting: www.rsa.ie; from the Department of the Environment, Northern Ireland by visiting: www.doeni.gov.uk/roadsafety or phoning 028 9054 0540.

Lithuania

Progress thanks to changes in legislation

Lithuania, the EU Member State with the highest ratio of road deaths per million population (218 in 2007) experienced in 2007 a reduction of almost 3% in the total number of road deaths.

Changes in legislation, particularly against speeding contributed to these positive results. Concretely, the Ministry of Transport and Communications have prepared changes in the 'Traffic safety on automobiles and roads law' and the 'Administrative code' envisaging owner's liability for speeding and other offences (as opposed to driver's liability).

Stricter penalties, bigger fines, driving license suspensions and administrative arrests for speeding, drink driving, and unauthorised driving should also contribute to cut Lithuania's road death toll.

Additionally, to facilitate the enforcement of the new legislation in 2008, the Ministry of Transport and Communications is planning to install 150 speed measuring devices on Lithuanian main roads.

Netherlands

Research on Advanced Cruise Control (ACC)

Advanced Cruise Control, also known as adaptive or intelligent cruise control is an extension of conventional Cruise Control that was brought into the market for the comfort of drivers. ACC maintains the driver-set vehicle speed but also adjusts the vehicle speed to other vehicles on the road through the use of a frontal radar/laser sensor to maintain a safe headway time.

SWOV has investigated the safety of such systems and concludes that it can have both positive and negative consequences on safety:

The main conclusion is that ACC can have a favourable effect on road safety when used on motorways with non-congested traffic and can also have a positive effect on fuel consumption and road capacity. But it can also have negative safety effects if it is used in busy traffic and on roads that are not main roads.

Nevertheless ACC is expected to have a large road safety effect in the future, it has been estimated that if all vehicles were fitted with ACC accidents would fall by 13% on 'provincial' roads and 3,4% on main roads, but only when used in non-congested traffic.

For more information the SWOV Advanced Cruise Control fact sheet can be downloaded (in English) on www.swov.nl

Poland

Using structural funds to purchase safety cameras

The Polish government has successfully managed to include part of the EU Structural Funds budget under a scheme called 'Sectoral Operational Programme Transport' (SOPT) for purchasing enforcement equipment including 50 safety cameras. 'Sectoral Operational Programme Transport' (SOPT) is one of seven operational programmes implementing the Community Support Framework (CSF) for the years 2004 – 2006.

Portugal

Summer Road Safety Enforcement Campaign Launched

Under the slogan "Road deaths, let's brake this drama", the Portuguese Road Safety authority (ANSR) launched on 15th July its summer 2008 road safety campaign.

The campaign is composed of awareness and enforcement measures and will be focused on three main pillars: reducing speeding, drink driving and increasing the use of front and rear seat belts. 2.000 police officers and 40 mobile safety cameras will be deployed

across the main axes and vacation resorts.

United Kingdom

Successful partnerships for speed awareness courses

The UK has seen a fruitful number of exchanges between civil society, companies and local authorities regarding speed awareness courses that have some results in terms of improving drivers' attitudes and behaviours. One example comes from South Yorkshire.

TTC, an experienced driver training Education Company, provides an "off the shelf" speed awareness programme which has been very successful since it was launched throughout South Yorkshire in October 2007. "It is incredibly easy to administer from our perspective and allows us to deliver the courses without having to design them. It allows us to concentrate on our core business without being diverted into providing training and handling cash," said Chief Inspector Bint, head of roads policing.

Part of the administration costs from the courses have been re-invested by South Yorkshire Police into 'Operation Octane', which is a scheme aimed at educating motorcyclists to reduce casualties throughout South Yorkshire.

For more information about driver education visit www.ttc-uk.com

In Brief

Tispol 'Operation Speed' campaign

The European Traffic Police Network (TISPOL) has coordinated a campaign to tackle speeding on European Roads.

The Operation Speed campaign has been delivered from 21 to 27 April and consisted of traffic police in 20 European countries carrying out checks night and day throughout one week.

Using roadside officers and cameras, a total of 764,657 motorists were caught speeding. The largest number caught was in France where 316,338 offenders were detected.

The results come as new research has once again highlighted speeding as the single biggest contributory factor for death on the roads of Europe. On average a 5% rise in speed will result in a 20% increase in fatal accidents and complying with the speed limits could save 5,800 lives a year.

TISPOL President Adam Briggs, who joined officers on roadsides during the campaign, said: 'This campaign highlights the scale of the problem of speeding on the roads of Europe where it is responsible for more deaths than any other factor'.

'Through education and enforcement we must get over this crucial safety message and make speeding as socially unacceptable as drink driving.'

Country Focus: Spain

The number of deaths on Spanish roads was reduced by 31% during the last seven years, nevertheless there is still a long way to go for Spain to reach the 50% reduction target by 2010.

With the objective of speeding the progress made by Spain in the first years of the century, the Spanish Government launched in 2004 the 'Key strategic action plan 2005-2008' in which quantifiable objectives were set up for every area of road safety. Regarding speed, the Key strategic action plan considered that excessive and inappropriate speeding is a contributing factor in 15% of the total accidents and in 1 out of 3 of the fatal accidents that occur in Spain. Recent studies for Spain have estimated that the percentage of fatal accidents increases by 3% for every kilometer per hour increase in the total traffic speed average.

Male drivers between 14-21 and 30-39 are most involved in speeding accidents.

Best practice

In the Road accidents annual report 2007, the Spanish Traffic General Directorate stresses that the average speed on Spanish roads was reduced by 3% between 2005 and 2007. Additionally, the percentage of vehicles driven over 140 km per hour (20 km or more over the maximum speed limit) also dropped from 6.79% in 2005 to 0.76% in 2007.

These figures illustrate the contribution of police enforcement to the reduction in the number of road deaths experienced by Spain in 2007. Two important developments in Spain have especially contributed to this drop: The introduction of a penalty point system in July 2006 and the reform of the penal code so that most serious traffic offences now fall under criminal law.

Since the penalty point system came into force in July 2006, the percentage of casualties has decreased in Spain by 11%. The Spanish penalty point system establishes that a speed offender can lose from two to six points (out of a total of 12 points) depending on the speed excess. During the first two years of application of the new system, 38% of all the points withdrawn and 40% of the reported penalties corresponded to speed traffic offences.

Public awareness on the benefits of the penalty point system has been proved by the fact that 92% of surveyed individuals thought that this system is one of the most important measures developed in Spain to reduce traffic accidents.

Regarding changes to the Penal Code, the organic Law 10/1995 was reformed on November 2007 including the provision of tougher penalties for speeding offences. For the first time, serious traffic offences in Spain fall under criminal law and therefore can lead to imprisonment. By means of this road safety reform, speeding over 200 km/h on motorways, 180 km/h on "vía rápida" roads

(which are high speed roads limited at 100km/h), and 110 km/h on urban roads will be considered a traffic crime. Reckless drivers will be sentenced to prison from 6 months to 5 years and can also have their licence withdrawn between 1 to 6 years.

The Future

The Spanish Government is taking road safety seriously, although further improvements in terms of police enforcement (raising the number of safety cameras and police controls) and action against recidivists should be prioritised.

Vulnerable road users should also be taken into consideration. In fact, the Road accidents annual report 2007 estimates that the number of deaths on motorbikes increased in Spain by 84% between 2003 and 2007!

The introduction of "Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA)" systems should also be encouraged by Spanish public authorities. This system would allow not only for a reduction of average speeds but also would contribute to reduce pollutants and fuel consumption.

Finally, public campaigns contributing to behaviour and attitude changes should be pursued. In May 2008 a 'DGT' enforcement campaign broadcasted speed awareness advice on the radio to warn drivers about the consequences of speed.

ETSC News in Brief

The ETSC Fact Sheet investigating the relationship between speed and penalty points was published in June and is available online:

<http://www.etsc.be/documents/Speed%20Fact%20Sheet%202.pdf>

The 2nd Road Safety PIN Annual Report was also published and launched at the PIN annual Conference on 23rd of June. This Publication notably includes the latest PIN ranking on 'Reducing Older People's Deaths on Roads in Europe', but also a country ranking of the progress towards the EU target with the latest figures available:

http://www.etsc.be/documents/copy_of_copy_of_2nd%20PIN%20Annual%20Report%202008.pdf

ShLOW! Show Me How Slow:

This project is running in 10 European countries through the work of committed young students who will be encouraged to run local campaigns or concrete actions to fight excessive speed.

Examples, among others, will include running an Intelligence Speed Assistance demonstration, lobbying local municipalities to install traffic calming devices, running a small scale awareness raising campaign or approaching fleet operators to incite them to develop speed management policies.

The first phase of the project will be a series of Lectures on Speed Management conducted from September 2008 to February 2009 across 50 universities to recruit students and motivate them to participate in the project.

For more information regarding ShLOW! please contact Gabriel Simcic: gabriel.simcic@etsc.be

Members

Accident Research Unit - Medical University Hannover (D)
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European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (Int)
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