

Speed Monitor

ETSC's Newsletter on Speed Policy Developments in the EU

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Editorial

This seventh edition of the Speed Monitor brings you speed management news from across Europe, and a country focus on Greece.

In February ETSC held its conference entitled "Future Directions in Speed Management". A number of experts were invited to put forward the message that every component of the road transport system can be improved to reduce speed, and that action in this field can be taken at all levels of society. The conference was also an opportunity to present awards to the best students involved in the ShLOW project "ShLOW Me How SLOW" that just came to an end. Students involved in ShLOW ran concrete actions at the local level to demonstrate how speed reductions can be achieved. All presentations can be accessed online on www.shlow.eu/shlow-award-ceremony/.

ETSC is also pleased to announce that it will run a follow-up named STARS "Students Acting to Reduce Speed" in the following countries for the next 18 months: Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Romania and Spain. STARS will require students to run concrete actions to demonstrate how speed can be reduced.



European Transport Safety Council

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Country News, and European Union

Austria

Section Control on Work Sites

As the Austrian Motorway Management Company the ASFINAG is improving sections of the Inn ring motorway, section control is being used to reduce speeds along the sections of the motorway where works are going on. Since 18 December 2009 section control is used on a 6.9 km section. The main aim of this is to reduce collisions in the area of the works by reducing speeds. The mobile section control covers traffic going in both directions with two lanes. The vehicle's number plate is recorded as the vehicle enters the section along with the time it enters. On exit the vehicle is registered along with the time of exit. After comparing the time and the distance travelled, including a measuring tolerance, if the speed limit has been broken the data is saved, if no speed limit is broken then the data is deleted automatically. Section control can differentiate between cars, HGVs and buses. Thus speed limits can be monitored depending on the different speed limits for different vehicle classes.

For more information, visit: www.asfinag.at/index.php?idtopic=1509

Estonia

The city of Tallinn is looking to reduce the speed limit to 40 km/h in its city center

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, suffers from a poor road safety record compared to other European Capitals, and also other traffic problems such as congestion and environ-

mental pollution. For that reason the Municipality has approved a new Road Safety Action Plan for Tallinn, which includes numerical targets, but also a number of measures to be introduced to improve road safety.

Among these measures the possibility to implement a general speed limit of 40 km/h in the city centre has been raised and is now being widely discussed. The experiences of lowering speed limits in the city of Helsinki in Finland, where road death risk is about 3 times less than in Tallinn has been highlighted as a good practice.

Among positive responses a number of criticism and negative comments were also raised. Stratum Consultancy in cooperation with Tallinn University of Technology was therefore chosen to perform a survey with the aim of estimating the effects of this potential measure. The survey was conducted in 2009 and experts analysed a number of indicators, including travel times, delays, speed behaviour patterns of private and public transport drivers, and the potential safety effects of this measure. A number of different methods and data sources were used and combined, including running speed measurements using GPS receiver in cars and public transport vehicles, and urban traffic simulations.

The main results of this survey show that lowered speed limit in the centre could potentially result in a decrease of the number of injuries and fatal crashes, especially accidents involving pedestrians, at least by 5 to 10%, while the effects on congestion, environmental pollution, and

on travel times through smoother traffic are estimated to be minor.

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France

Fourteen new road safety measures announced by the French Prime Minister

On 18th of February, the French Prime Minister announced 14 new road safety measures prepared by the Interministerial Road Safety Committee. In 2009, 4,262 people died on the road in France, so there is still significant progress that needs to be achieved to reach the target announced by the French President Nicolas Sarkozy in 2007: to have not more than 3,000 deaths per year by 2012. In the field of speed two new measures are to be introduced.

New rules and signs to eliminate the sudden braking and reacceleration effect currently observed on spots where there are fixed cameras:

- On sites where there are still numerous collisions despite the presence of a speed camera (a survey of such sites will be required from the regional authorities), there will be the possibility for the regional authority to install a second fixed speed camera or periodically deploy additional mobile cameras. In such case a sign saying "contrôles radars fréquents" (frequent radar control) will be posted between 1 to 2 kilometers before the site.

- For every new fixed camera installed there will be a signpost announcing "contrôles radars fréquents" (frequent radar control) instead of "pour votre sécurité contrôles automatisés" (for your safety automatic controls) as before. The new signs will be placed between 1 to 2 kilometers before the speed camera, whereas the previous signs were always installed precisely 400 meters before the camera.

The introduction of "Section Control":

From 2011 onwards 100 average speed camera systems will be deployed to detect the average speed of drivers on particularly dangerous sections of roads. In particular this will be sections like tunnels or road-work zones where collisions can lead to particularly harmful consequences.

To read the press release announcing all the new measures visit: www.securite-routiere.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/DP_CISR_2010_cle73e141.pdf (in French).

Germany

German Traffic Law Day: Discussion over Owner Liability in Germany

The German Traffic Law Day recently investigated owner liability in Europe. Speeding, along with other traffic offences are the cause of death and injury. A special Working Group on Owner Liability at the conference concluded that the sanctioning of these offences are an important part of road safety work. They concluded however that constitutional boundaries exist in Germany when following up sanctions committed in moving traffic (in contrast

to stationary traffic - parking offences). In the case of moving traffic the principle of 'no offence without guilt' must be applied when sanctioning the offender. This is also relevant when collecting fines for traffic offences. According to the Working Group it would be possible to extend the cost obligation of Article 25a of the Road Traffic Act and the government has been asked to investigate this possibility. Today the owner has to pay the expenses only in cases of parking offences when the driver couldn't be investigated. These expenses are not higher than the fine. Moreover the existing law was also highlighted. This requires, in case of a speeding offence that the owner records in a log book all trips taken and the name of the driver.

United Kingdom

Following a call for comments on the revision of speed limits circular, the Department for Transport is preparing a revision to its guidance on 20 mph speed limits. The new policy will be outlined in a "Speed Limit Circular" sent to all local traffic authorities and replacing previous guidance issued in 2006.

The consultation says: "we want to encourage highway authorities to introduce, over time, 20 mph zones or limits into streets which are primarily residential in nature and into town or city streets where pedestrian or cyclist movements are high, such as around schools, shops, markets, playgrounds and other areas where these are not part of any major through route." It also references the previously reported success in Portsmouth where a town wide 20mph limit is in place: "early research from the area-wide 20 mph limits in Portsmouth suggests that greater reductions

can be achieved through signed only limits where previous average speeds were significantly above 20 mph."

To view the proposed amendments to the circular and read the response from the Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety visit: <http://www.pacts.org.uk/responses-to-consultations.php?id=34>

EU Policy

The European Commission is preparing the upcoming 4th Road Safety Action Programme. New measures that ETSC hopes will be adopted in this framework should include as a matter of priority guidance to Member States to tackle traffic law enforcement of speed as well as a new Cross Border Enforcement Directive. The in vehicle Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) technology and their supporting digital speed maps should also be developed, as well as EU Guidelines to reduce speed via traffic calming measures.

Trends in driving speeds show that overall there is little progress in Europe. Average speeds and speed

limit violations remain high with encouraging signs only in a few countries. In most societies speeding is still considered more socially acceptable than drink driving, and the risk posed by so-called 'minor speeding' is also grossly underestimated: in fact it is estimated that at any one moment about 35% of drivers exceed speed limits outside built-up areas and as much as 50% in urban areas. The fact that speeding is so common poses a very significant threat to safety.

ETSC's next PIN Flash will provide an update on driver behaviour including speed, and will be launched in April 2010. <http://www.etsc.eu/PIN-publications.php>

Country Focus: Greece

Section Control on Work Sites

Excessive speed is one of the main causes of road accidents in Greece. The analysis of the accident data of the years 2008-2009 showed that:

- Speed violations for the year 2008 corresponded to 44.4% of the total traffic violations in Greece, while for the year 2009 speed violations represented 46.7%.
- The fatal accidents caused by inappropriate speed corresponded to 11% of the total during 2008 and to 12.7% during 2009.
(Source: Greek Traffic Police)

Existing Measures

In Greece the revised Road Code, which came into force on April 2007, imposes fines up to 350 EUR for speed violations and driving license suspension up to 60 days. According to the Article 20 of the Road Code the speed limit in built-up areas for all vehicles is 50 km/h. For cars the speed limits are: 130 km/h on motorways, 110 km/h on rural main roads and 90 km/h on rural secondary roads. The same limits are also applicable for motorbikes bigger than 125cc. For motorbikes smaller than 125cc the speed limits are: 80 km/h on motorways, 80 km/h on main roads and 70 km/h on secondary roads. According to the same Article local authorities are able to reduce the speed limits on the networks of roads that are under their supervision. They may do so following a relevant study for the specific road. For motorways and highways, according to the Road Code, the speed limits can be modified only by the Ministry of Infrastruc-

ture, Transportation and Networks. This is not applicable though for the highest speed limit. The highest speed limit can only be changed by a common decision by the Ministry of Infrastructure, Transportation and Networks and the Ministry of Citizens Protection.

The Road Code penalties are both financial and point penalties. The measures also include suspension of the driving license. More specifically, for those drivers who drive up to 20 km/h above the speed limits the financial penalty is 40 EUR. For those who drive up to more than 20 km/h above the speed limits the financial penalty is 100 EUR and 5 point penalties. For those who drive up to 30 km/h above the speed limits, as well as for those who drive more than 150 km/h on motorways and more than 120 km/h on highways, the financial penalty is 350 EUR and suspension of the driving license for 60 days.

In addition, a bid is under way for the placement of speed monitoring systems in the main axis of Greece in order to record the vehicle speed and detect offenders. In specific road segments, where a lot of accidents have occurred, special equipment is used in order to inform drivers of their driving speed or the speed limit at this section. The photos made by the electronic devices show the back side of the car and the vehicle owner is liable for offences detected.

The Greek Road Safety Institute "Panos Mylonas" (R.S.I.) will conduct a pilot program and study in cooperation with the Greek Government and the Traffic Police in order to handle better speed

Country Focus

management issues. The pilot will commence within the next months when all equipment will be in place and will take place in two risk sites/regions where a high number of deaths has been reported.

Further, radio and TV campaigns, are also used to incentivise drivers to adopt the proper driving behavior regarding speeding.

Administrative set-up in Greece for Road Safety

According to the new Minister of Infrastructure, Transport and Networks the two Strategic Plans for Road Safety of 2001-2005 and 2006-2010 did not achieve their goals. For that reason the new Government will launch a new National Plan for Road Safety for the period 2011-2020 targeting to reduce road deaths to at least 100 per year. There were 1,550 deaths in 2008, and 1,463 in 2009 (5.6% reduction).

Apart from the Greek Parliament's Special Permanent Committee on Road Safety that already existed, the Government has established an Interministerial Committee on Road Safety. The participant Ministries are:

- Ministry of Infrastructure, Transportation and Networks
- Ministry of Citizens Protection
- Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity
- Ministry of Education, Lifelong learning and Religious Affairs
- Ministry of Interior, Decentralisation & Electronic Government
- Minister of Economy, Competitiveness and the Marine

Moreover the Government announced the establishment of the National Council for Road Safety. This Council will constitute a tool for public dialogue concerning Road Safety and it will be composed by scientific and social institutions, experts and representatives of the Local Authorities. The Road Safety Institute Panos Mylonas will be included in this National Council.

What is needed for the future?

The new Government's initiatives show that Road Safety constitutes one of the priorities. But, in order to have a safe outcome, we still have to wait to see the results of the Government's measures following the establishment of the Interministerial Committee on Road Safety and the National Council for Road Safety. What seems a necessity, for the reduction of the speed violations occurring, is stronger enforcement. Enforcement plays a major role for the reduction of speed violations and the efforts and regular controls of the Traffic Police should be supported with modern equipment in order to further assist in this difficult task. Further efforts must be done to reestablish the profile of the Traffic Police as a force that is there in order to protect citizens and not to punish them. Last but not least, a change in drivers' behaviours and attitudes is also necessary in order to achieve better results. This is something that can be achieved through education starting from an early age.



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