



Minutes of meeting

Bestuurskern

Dir. Wegen en
Verkeersveiligheid
Verkeersveiligheid

Rijnstraat 8
Den Haag
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Date

8 February 2024

Enclosure(s)

SWOV presentation slides

Subject	International session on reversing the upward trend in traffic casualties
Date and time of meeting	8 February 2024 10:00
Meeting location	
Present	Netherlands - Moderator SWOV – National scientific institute for road safety research Belgium (Flanders) Denmark Greece Hungary Luxembourg Netherlands Poland Portugal Slovakia Spain Switzerland

Opening by moderator

The moderator opened the session and outlined the agenda for today.

1. Opening
2. Presentation by SWOV: the Dutch context
3. First block: Infrastructure
4. Second block: Behaviour
5. Third block: Vehicles

The moderator explained the goal of the meeting, which is to have an exchange of good practices concerning measures to reduce the number of road fatalities.

The participants introduced themselves briefly.

Presentation by SWOV: the Dutch context

SWOV gave a presentation on the situation in The Netherlands, and the slides are attached to these minutes. She highlighted a significant decline in traffic fatalities since the 1970s, followed by a recent increase.

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Following SWOV's presentation, several questions were answered.

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A question was raised about which type of policy on mandatory bicycle helmet use was considered in the calculations. SWOV clarified that their calculations focus on the percentage of cyclists wearing helmets, rather than any particular type of policy on how to promote these. Denmark shared its experiences with promoting bicycle helmet use over the past two decades, resulting in 50% of adults and possibly 80% of children now wearing helmets.

There was a question regarding speed limits, law enforcement and the value of Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) in the Netherlands. SWOV noted that the probability of being caught for speeding in the Netherlands is higher than average in Europe. However, increased enforcement, in particular automated speed limitations, could potentially reduce casualties, especially on specific routes.

It was asked if age plays a role in accidents and whether age-specific measures are necessary. SWOV confirmed the high proportion of elderly involved in accidents in the Netherlands, with approximately 60% of injured cyclists being 60 years or older, emphasizing the growing importance of this group.

A question was raised regarding the occurrence of single-car accidents. SWOV explained these are most common on rural roads lacking adequate separation and featuring roadside obstacles like trees, where simple errors in addition to high speeds can lead to severe consequences.

First block: infrastructure

The participants were invited to share their experiences on measures concerning the infrastructure, such as road improvements, separation of lanes, etcetera.

Switzerland emphasized the importance of separating bicycles from motorcycles and cars, especially in shared spaces where accidents between cars and bicycles frequently occur. In situations where separation is impossible, reducing the speed limit to 30 km/h has proven effective. Additionally, Switzerland highlights the particular challenges posed by motorcycles in mountainous regions, where accidents involving motorcycles are of significant concern, for example in blind corners.

Belgium noted that reducing speed limits from 90 km/h to 70 km/h has shown positive effects in reducing accidents. In urban areas, where separation of traffic proved difficult or impossible, lowering the speed limit to 30 km/h is a local decision. Traffic lights sequencing preventing conflicts at intersections is still awaiting conclusive results.

Spain agreed on the importance of separating road users. Spain highlighted its extensive road network, particularly its many motorways. On these motorways accidents occur up to four times less compared to rural roads. Spain mentioned positive experiences with separating traffic flows using road markings, at sections where overtaking is prohibited. Mandatory routes for heavy vehicles on certain

roads, particularly motorways, have also shown positive results. Implementing 30 km/h zones is underway. However, significant infrastructure adjustments, including the installation of rumble strips and forgiving margins, are necessary to ensure effectiveness. Simply reducing speed limits is insufficient without accompanying measures to enhance road safety.

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Portugal's previous efforts focused on constructing new motorways. Currently their focus shifted to improving existing road infrastructure. Initiatives include enhancing automatic enforcement of speeding and implementing guidelines for motorways. In urban areas, Portugal attempts to improve road safety by accommodating vulnerable road users. Retrofitting guardrails to meet updated standards is also underway, with a particular focus on making them more motorcycle-friendly. However, recent research indicates that, despite motorcycle-friendly guardrails, accidents involving motorcyclists still lead to a high number of casualties. Additionally, measures such as speed-activated traffic signals are being introduced, with drivers exceeding 50 km/h approaching urban areas receiving a red traffic light upon entry.

Luxembourg has increased building cycling infrastructure, with the previous minister prioritizing cycling infrastructure development. Deployment of speed measurement radars has been consistent over the past decade. Luxembourg refers to the issue highlighted by Switzerland regarding motorcycles on curvy roads in mountain areas. Specific measures, like painting curves to indicate unsafe areas for motorcycles, have been implemented to improve safety.¹

Denmark emphasizes the importance of conducting an audit prior to undertaking an infrastructure project. The implementation of road safety audits at the local level has been successful, showing a good cost-benefit ratio. The use of these audits has become standard practice before implementing new projects to mitigate potential risks. Furthermore, there has been a noticeable reduction in speeds on highways, despite the speed limits having been the same. The reduction could be caused by external factors. Adjusting speed limits remains a challenge to generate support for. Furthermore, rumble strips have proven effective.

Second block: behaviour

In Spain, the implementation of a penalty point driving license system has had substantial effects. Currently, efforts are underway to improve driving skills, particularly through post-license training and specialized courses for motorcyclists. Initiatives are focused on raising awareness among motorcyclists to enhance their driving behaviour. Additionally, educational programs have been incorporated into school curricula, with an emphasis on bicycles. Spain is also actively working on improving enforcement measures to ensure effective implementation of road safety regulations.

Switzerland offers courses for individuals that are new to electric bikes. However, there are low participation rates and those that attend are usually already familiar with electric bikes. Efforts are being made to explore online alternatives to broaden accessibility. Switzerland's stringent speeding regulations, including the possibility of imprisonment for offenders, have proven effective in reducing reckless speeding behaviours, consequently leading to a decrease in accidents.

¹ <https://www.lessentiel.lu/fr/story/le-nouveau-marquage-pour-les-motards-valide-932505628070>

Influencing the behaviour of road users poses significant challenges, according to Belgium, doubts having been raised about the long-term effectiveness of campaigns. Belgium emphasizes the necessity of punitive measures or less popular interventions to induce behavioural change.

Luxembourg raised concerns about the portrayal of reckless driving behaviour in the media, with calls for greater responsibility in media representations. In response, Belgium notes the existence of a television show that portrays good behaviour. Belgium highlights their efforts to contact broadcasters when negative behaviour is showcased, advocating for responsible representations.

Pre-trip influence campaigns in Portugal, such as those promoting seatbelts and helmet usage, have demonstrated significant effectiveness. Helmet usage is currently exceeding 90% among moped users. However, campaigns targeting behaviours while driving have shown limited success.

Belgium noted that a campaign targeting driving under the influence proved effective. Especially handing over a small present to sober drivers yielded positive results.

Denmark mentioned several examples of successful campaigns, for example promoting helmet usage and discouraging speeding.²

Third block: vehicles

The moderator pointed out that in this area many measures are driven by the international developments, mainly from EU legislation and UN-ECE legislation from Geneva. The Netherlands is interested in the experiences and observations of the participants.

Portugal noted a rise in motorcycle usage in both urban and rural areas. The shift to motorcycles introduces inherent risks compared to cars, contributing to a rise in accidents.

Luxembourg raised concerns about illuminated dashboards in modern vehicles, suggesting they could pose significant distractions.

Portugal asked about the status of Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) implementation in other countries, considering its potential application in public transportation. This relates to the current state of play on ISA application, with informative and open systems still being the standard for all drivers and types of vehicles. Closed ISA limits the speed automatically if the speed limit is exceeded. According to Portugal, urban public transport vehicles could be equipped with closed systems, creating a large group of speed-compliant vehicles, facilitating replication by the remainder traffic. However, implementation is difficult, following reluctance from taxi companies to support this initiative.

² <https://www.sikkertrafik.dk>

<https://video.sikkertrafik.dk/video/66797982/hjelm-har-alle-dage-vaeret-en-god>

<https://video.sikkertrafik.dk/video/9741427/saenk-farten>

Switzerland highlighted the issue of the increasingly complicated cockpit design of the car, as buttons are replaced by touch screen elements. This is difficult to influence. They reported an increase in e-scooter usage and related accidents, prompting questions about measures adopted in other countries to regulate these vehicles. These scooters are known for their narrow tires, instability, and the frequent occurrence of driving under the influence by the users.

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Greece outlined their legislation for e-scooters, including mandatory helmet use and speed limitations.

Belgium introduced new regulations for e-scooters but acknowledged the difficulty in enforcement. Collaboration with rental companies in Brussels has facilitated some measures, but private e-scooters remain a challenge.

SWOV noted that most e-scooters are not legally allowed on roads in the Netherlands.

Denmark mentioned that helmet use is mandatory for these scooters, but effects have not been measured yet. However, usage of these scooters has decreased since the new regulations.

Slovakia mentioned the testing of front brake lights, providing further information on the website.³ This light, mounted on the front of the car, tells oncoming road-users that the car is braking.

Closure

The moderator closes the session and thanks all attendees for their participation during this fruitful meeting. The moderator mentioned that minutes will be made of the session and that these minutes will be publicized.

³ <https://www.frontbrakelights.com/>