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IMPACT ECONOMIC

Cost-benefit analysis of road safety improvements

Project details	
Domain	Rules and enforcement
Duration	from until 1/06/2003
Website	
Other sources	 Final report (462 kB)

Every year more than 40.000 people die and over one million are injured in road crashes in the Member States of the European Union. As well as the human tragedy of so many deaths and injuries, road crashes have a substantial economic cost, of the order of 160 billion euros annually. It is the objective of the European Commission, as documented in the DG TREN transport White Paper (European Commission (2001)), to reduce this toll by 50% between 2000 and 2010. Among the many possible actions, the Commission believes that better enforcement of existing road safety laws can make a substantial contribution to meeting this objective. More specifically, the Commission is planning two major initiatives

- Improving enforcement with respect to three important contributors to fatalities in road crashes - speeding, drunk driving and non-use of seat belts
- Improving enforcement of existing European Commission road safety laws relating to commercial road transport, primarily by standardizing and intensifying checks on vehicles, drivers and transport firms.

To this end, the Commission intends to submit to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers a package of two proposals for directives, one dealing with the enforcement of laws relating to speeding, drunk driving, and non-use of seat belts with respect to all road users, and the other consisting of a 'refonte' of existing EU legal instruments dealing with enforcement of EU safety rules for commercial road transport. A Working Paper of the Commission describing the first initiative is reproduced in Attachment A

Before moving ahead with these initiatives, however, the European Commission wishes to analyse and document the benefits and costs of implementing the proposed directives, for the information of decision makers in the Parliament and Council. The analyses presented in this report provide an estimate of the costs and benefits for each of the proposed initiatives. Results from a parallel effort by the legal firm, Clifford Chance, to document road safety laws and enforcement practices in the member states, have been incorporated into this analysis.

Section 2 of the report provides an analysis of the existing road traffic and safety situation in each Member State, extrapolating to the year 2002 from the most recent available data. The situation in 2002 is taken as the baseline for estimates of future traffic levels and crashes, with and without implementation of the proposed safety initiatives.

Section 3 provides a detailed analysis of the costs and benefits of implementing two levels of increased enforcement of speeding, drunk driving and seat-belt-use laws. The two analysis scenarios are:

- Bringing the performance of all Member States up to the performance of the best performing State (UK for speeding and Sweden for drunk driving and seat belt use).
- Applying the countermeasures proposed in the Commission's Working Paper on enforcement in the field of road safety.

Section 4 provides a detailed analysis of costs and benefits associated with the program of more effective and standardised checks of commercial road transport compliance with applicable laws and regulations throughout the EC. The costs of introducing the proposed enforcement measures are compared with estimated benefits from a reduction in crashes and improved social conditions for commercial lorry and bus drivers.

Coordinator
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ICF Consulting (UK)
Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Imperial College Centre for Transport Studies (UK)