TISPOL organisation

TISPOL [1] has been established by traffic police forces of 27 European countries in order to improve road safety and law enforcement on Europe’s roads. Its main priority is to reduce the number of people being killed and seriously injured. To achieve this, TISPOL brings together the traffic police forces in Europe to work together and exchange best practice. European-wide operations concentrating on the main causes of accidents (speeding, drink-and-drug driving, seatbelt, trucks, buses) are coordinated. TISPOL encourages enforcement and education and provides an informed and co-ordinated opinion on road safety issues.

Currently, the project “Lifesaver” which is funded by the European Union (EU) is being conducted by TISPOL. It includes seminars on the strategic, middle-management and operational level as well as seminars focusing on special topics. Furthermore, the project comprises an exchange programme for traffic police officers, the development of a handbook for operational police officers and the implementation of a media strategy.

Europe’s road safety policy

The EU has set itself the aim to halve the number of fatalities from 2003 (50,000) until 2010 (25,000). To realise this aim, the EU has formulated its aim in a “White Paper” [2]. A road safety action programme [3] describes concrete measures to reduce the number of road deaths and seriously injured. Rules and regulation have been implemented like the use of blind spot mirrors. However, a mid-term review [4] has shown that the achieved results lack behind expectations. But Europe believes that improvement opportunities lie in strengthening the combination of enforcement, education and media work.

Europe’s best practices

The exchange of best practice is believed to be central key success factor. Most of the best practice examples relate to the main causes of severe accidents, i.e. speeding, drink-and-drug-driving and the non-wearing of seatbelts.

- Unmarked police cars and motorbikes (video enforcement) have proved to be one way to tackle dangerous driving, tail-gaiting and serious speeding offences, particularly for motorcyclists.
- Drug testing devices that can be used at roadside controls are another case in point. Drug-related accidents often have fatal or serious consequences. Enforcement related to drug-driving is necessary since the estimated number of unidentified cases is very high.
- Non-wearing of seatbelts is not a cause for accidents but it influences the consequences. Therefore, concerted seatbelt campaigns contribute to reduce the number of accidents with fatalities and seriously injured. There is a significant correlation between concerted seatbelt campaigns and use rates.
- Currently, intensive research is being conducted concerning the problem of fatigue as a cause for accidents, esp. for a not inconsiderable amount of severe truck accidents. To make identifying fatigue easier at roadside checks, technical devices have been developed.
- To raise awareness, influence driver behaviour and achieve a long-lasting effect, videos of heavy accidents are shown in driving schools and at roadside checks.
- In Europe, police forces sometimes organise multi-agency controls with partners, e.g. Technical Inspection Agency, Customs etc. in order to detect traffic as well as criminal offences. These large scale operations can also be organised as cross-border activities.
- To improve the selection procedure of vehicles, technical devices as brake measure on the move and weight-in-motion systems have been introduced.
- Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems identify stolen and uninsured vehicles; moving patterns can be established.
Conclusions

The number of road deaths and seriously injured people has decreased in Europe over the last years. However, progress has slowed down in 2007 and Europe has not met its reduction target. From a law enforcement perspective, a holistic approach combining enforcement, education and media work shall be chosen. Enforcement must be intense, enduring and intelligence-led. Strategies have to take into consideration arising road safety problems like motorcycle accidents. Networking with other road safety stakeholders on a European, country-wide and local level is regarded as a key success factor. Cross-border cooperation is believed to have of a synergetic effect.

References

1. www.tispol.org