



SPAIN STUDY VISIT ON DRIVER TRAINING



A Bulgarian delegation, accompanied by ETSC, participated in a study visit on the topic of driver training in Madrid on 29-30 January 2024. The visit was hosted by the Spanish Directorate General for Traffic (DGT).

Led by the Deputy Minister of Transport, Dimitar Nedyalkov, the Bulgarian delegation included representatives from the State Agency Road Safety (SARS) and the Executive Agency Automotive Administration.

On the first day of the visit, the Bulgarian delegation visited the DGT Móstoles Centre, where theory exams and practical exams on closed circuits are held for the area of Madrid.

Here, they met and discussed with the DGT experts on driver training and trainers from the center, who explained their work in detail. Participants experienced first-hand the driver examination process for PTW and truck drivers.

The hosting partners presented in detail the driver training policy in Spain and the driver examination process. Representatives from DGT also provided an overview of driving schools' minimum requirements, certification and inspection procedures. The Bulgarian delegates had specific questions on these topics in view of planned modifications to their national framework.

Later, the delegation visited one private driving school covering all driving categories and additional training courses for professional drivers. They were briefed on the process of preparing learner drivers for examinations, with discussions looking at practical and theoretical training aspects, the management of training schools, and content-related topics. The facilities of the driving school were presented to the delegates.

The second day was hosted at the DGT Headquarters in Madrid. It started with a round table discussion, reflecting on the learnings of the first day and delving into the main differences and similarities of the driver training frameworks between the two countries. Participants discussed ways to improve driver education and examination and a good practice from Spain on supplementary driver education post-driving licence was presented, with explanations on the incentives provided for drivers.



To complete the visit, participants received a tour of the Traffic Management Centre hosted in the same facilities, getting explanations and demonstrations of the licence plate recognition technology, the traffic management procedures, and the positive implications for road safety of running such an automated system.

Both the Bulgarian delegation and the Spanish hosts expressed eagerness to continue sharing best practices in improving driver training, with an agreement to focus on specific developments in the near future. Participants appreciated the role of the exchange project in pushing forward progress and finding solutions to common issues.

[More information](#)



NEW REPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY OBSERVATORY: FOCUS ON DISTRACTION

Road Safety: Focus on Distraction

Car drivers are involved in distracting activities for about half of driving time !

- Holding & using your phone while driving makes you about 2.5 times more likely to crash.
- Young drivers are more likely than older drivers to use a mobile phone while driving.

Possible countermeasures

- Better enforcement of bans on holding and using a phone while driving
- New vehicle technology
- Driver education
- Awareness-raising campaigns

European Commission | #RoadSafety

Source: European Road Safety Observatory Thematic report: Extract 01 - 2023

The European Commission with the active contribution of NTUA, SWOV and KfV has launched a safe mobility promotion activity focusing on driver distraction. According to three new Reports from the European Road Safety Observatory, mobile phone use is one of the most common sources of driver distraction and the usage of a hand-held phone increases the crash risk by around 2.5 times. These Reports also highlight effective measures against distracted driving, which include: strict enforcement of not using handheld devices, building rumble strips into road infrastructure, awareness campaigns, driver education through licensing and in-vehicle technology that warns or intervenes when departing from a lane or approaching too close to a vehicle in front.

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BELGIUM NOW ROUTINELY TESTING DRIVERS FOR DRUGS AFTER A CRASH

The Belgian authorities have begun systematically checking drivers for drug consumption after all crashes. Georges Gilkinet, the Belgian Minister of Mobility said: “After having reduced the tolerance threshold for alcohol consumption leading to the temporary withdrawal of the driving licence, we are tackling another aspect of driving under the influence: drug consumption. From now on, in the event of a road collision, our police officers will systematically check for possible

drug consumption. Too many lives are lost on the roads in Belgium and this is unacceptable. Everything must be done to combat dangerous driving behaviour and to reduce the number of victims of road danger. Carrying out drug driving checks more often plays a part in this”.

According to government-quoted figures, 5% of drivers admit to having already gotten behind the wheel after using drugs in Belgium. The phenomenon is significantly worse among young drivers with 1 in 7 young people having already driven after taking illicit substances.

When a road crash occurs, people either responsible or who contributed will be subject to a three-step drug test. Each of the successive steps can only be carried out if the result of the previous step is positive:

- 1) A standardised checklist, which includes around thirty indicators allowing the driver’s condition to be quickly assessed and whether recent drug use is suspected.
- 2) A saliva test, making it possible to detect or not the presence of an illicit substance.
- 3) A blood test, mandatory to confirm with certainty the consumption of the narcotic and pave the way for sanctions.

In Belgium, zero tolerance is applied to driving under the influence of illicit drugs. In addition to immediate confiscation of the driving licence if the result of the saliva test is positive, the driver risks disqualification from driving, a heavy fine and, in the most serious cases, a prison sentence.

[More information](#)



PROGRESS IN REDUCING DRINK-DRIVING AND OTHER ALCOHOL-RELATED ROAD DEATHS IN EUROPE



This report aims to provide an updated overview of the drink-driving situation in Europe, covering 30 countries: 25 Member States of the European Union together with the United Kingdom, Israel, Norway, the Republic of Serbia and Switzerland. It looks at country-by-country progress in reducing road deaths attributed to drink-driving over the past decade. The report highlights specific legislation and enforcement

measures from across Europe.

A range of recommendations for further tackling drink-driving are included for national governments and the EU institutions throughout this report.

[More information](#)



URBAN MOBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Expert Group on Urban Mobility (EGUM) of the European Commission has recently delivered its first set of Recommendations. These Recommendations focused on three pillars: how to ensure prioritisation of public transport in urban areas, how to increase public transport inclusiveness and how to deal with the worker shortage and evolving skill requirements of the public transport sector. Road safety was an important issue in these Recommendations.



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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF WALKING AND CYCLING IN CITIES



This report examines the current conditions of walking and cycling in cities. It reviews the literature on the potential benefits of active mobility, highlighting the importance of moving away from car-centric development. It also explores how cities developed into car-centric environments, with a particular focus on moto-normative assumptions. The report offers recommendations for re-centring

mobility spaces on people to improve the quality, enjoyment, utility and safety of active mobility.

This report draws on the deliberations of an ITF Roundtable, Increasing Cycling and Walking in Urban Mobility.

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ARE CAR HEADLIGHTS TOO BRIGHT?



If you've ever been dazzled by an oncoming car's headlights, you certainly aren't alone.

A 2023 study by the RAC found that 89% of drivers think some or most car headlights on the UK's roads are too bright, with 91% saying they get dazzled by them while driving. And 85% of

motorists polled say the problem seems to be getting worse...

In the RAC survey, 64% of drivers said they believe some headlights are so bright they risk causing accidents. This is backed up by the most recent data published by the government, which shows that dazzling headlights do play a part in accidents on our roads every year.

WHY ARE CAR HEADLIGHTS SO BRIGHT?

One of the main reasons car headlights are appearing to get brighter is because of advancements in lighting technology. Newer cars use LED headlights, which are more vivid than traditional 'yellowish' halogen bulbs. Although LED headlights for cars have many benefits because they illuminate the road more clearly and improve visibility, they can be blinding for other drivers, especially those approaching from the opposite direction. Another reason for bright headlights is the increasing popularity of cars that sit higher in the road, particularly SUVs. This causes a more direct and intense beam of light, which can be blinding to motorists in cars that sit lower in the road such as hatchbacks and estates.

THINK ABOUT OTHER DRIVERS

Just as you should take steps to reduce the chances of other drivers dazzling you, it's also important to reduce any glare you might be causing. It's worth seeing if your car automatically adjusts its headlights based on the weight of the load you're carrying. If not, you can manually adjust them yourself by consulting the manual. That's important because the aim of the headlight beam changes based on the weight in the car. So, if you don't adjust it, you could be dazzling other drivers without realising it.

It's also a good idea to be extra vigilant when driving with your own full beams on. Be sure to dip the lights as soon as you see headlights from other vehicles approaching.

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TRAFFIC TUESDAY: CITY OF CALGARY USES HILARIOUS SIGNS TO PROMOTE SAFE DRIVING (PHOTOS)

Every Tuesday, the City of Calgary uses humorous messages on select Electronic Message Boards and Dynamic Message Signs around YYC to promote road and traffic safety. According to the City of Calgary, major cities across North America have been adopting funny and topical traffic safety messaging to help reduce the number of fatalities on their roads. Each Tuesday of the month, select message boards and signs in the city display clever traffic safety phrases that have been submitted by Calgarians. The aim is to make traffic safety messages more memorable and help drivers to change their mindset, resulting in safer Calgary roads for everyone. The majority of roadside message boards and signs in Calgary will continue to highlight important information that you're used to seeing, like traffic tie-ups, congestion, and advice on alternate routes when there are major delays or road closures.



Keep an eye out every Tuesday as you're driving around the city – maybe you'll spot one of these humorous messages!

[More information](#)



NEW BUT USED: THE ELECTRIC VEHICLE TRANSITION AND THE GLOBAL SECOND-HAND CAR TRADE



This report analyses the global trade in used cars and how the transition to electric vehicles may impact it. The analysis explores the quality and age of used vehicles traded globally and maps out how they are traded from developed economies to emerging markets. The report reviews recent importer and exporter policy announcements and uses quantitative

analysis, for the first time, to understand how policies may impact the flows of used vehicles between countries. It evaluates potential scenarios of electric vehicle adoption in emerging economies through used vehicle imports.

The transition to electric vehicles (EVs) is gathering pace as a critical pillar for decarbonising the global passenger car stock. However, the speed of adoption of EVs varies significantly between countries. New vehicle technologies are typically adopted first in wealthier regions and only later elsewhere, often as exported second-hand cars.

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DAMAGE TO ROAD SIGNS NOW A SPECIFIC OFFENCE

The parliament of Cyprus has passed a law that makes it a criminal offense to damage, deface or in any way alter a traffic sign. The legislation, amending the Road Safety Law, provides for sentences of either up to six months prison, or a fine up to €1,700, or both running concurrently. The bill was passed by a unanimous vote.



The law prohibits writing, engraving, or drawing on traffic signs using any means – such as spray paint – and also the destruction, removal or defacement of such signs. The legislation was passed to deter “mindless individuals” from vandalizing traffic signs, which can inconvenience the public and sometimes lead to dangerous situations for drivers. The state spends between €200,000 to €300,000 on restoring or repairing traffic signs every year.

The Road Transport Department is now replacing defaced traffic signs with new ones coated with a special foil that allows for vandals’ inscriptions to be rubbed out with a sponge.

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NEW SPEED LIMIT ON NARROW STREETS



Seoul has lowered the speed limit to 20 km/h on 50 streets with a width of less than 8 meters so as to protect minors. The South Korean capital had already designated child protection zones near schools. In these areas, cars must travel at 30 km/h and cannot park.

Now, to further reinforce the safety of child pedestrians, the measure to reduce running speed even further on narrow streets has been approved.

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