

Press release

Leidschendam, 12 November 2009

10 years of Sustainable Safety: Considerable decrease in fatality rate and number of traffic fatalities

Analysis of the development of the numbers of traffic casualties and the fatality rate indicates that the measures that were taken in the period 1998-2007 and that fit within the Sustainable Safety vision have in all probability been successful.

In the period 1998-2007, the number of traffic fatalities in the Netherlands decreased with an average of 5% per year. In this period, the measures that were implemented resulted in a decrease of 300 to 400 traffic deaths, which is more than 30%. The fatality rate also went down. The decreases were steeper than in the preceding period and larger than was expected.

These findings can be found in the report [*Ten years of Sustainable Safety; Road safety assessment 1998-2007*](#) published by the Institute for Road Safety Research SWOV.

The aim of the Sustainable Safety vision is the prevention crashes and where this cannot yet be achieved, to practically exclude the risk of serious injury. To this end, the human being with his limitations is taken as a starting point. Late 1997, the Dutch Ministry of Transport and the decentralized governments have signed the Covenant about the Start-up Programme Sustainable Safety and from 1998 onwards the intended measures have been implemented on a large scale.

Now, more than 10 years after this Start-up Programme commenced, SWOV has evaluated the results. In the period 1998-2007 many measures were implemented, especially measures concerning infrastructure (e.g. construction of 30 and 60 km/h roads, construction of roundabouts) and measures which combined traffic enforcement with public information. The measures emanate from or fit within the Sustainable Safety vision. There have also been many improvements of vehicle safety, but these are mainly the result from European policy and initiatives by vehicle manufacturers.

Overall, SWOV concludes that the measures that emanate from or fit within the Sustainable Safety vision have in all probability contributed to the decrease of the number of traffic fatalities in the period 1998-2007. The measures have shown to be socially cost-effective; the benefits are four times higher than the costs.

The decrease of the number of in-patients remains considerably behind on the decrease of the number of traffic fatalities. Further study is required to determine the underlying causes.

The implementation of Sustainable Safety can be called successful, also because the Ministry of Transport, police, judicature, municipalities, provinces and water boards enthusiastically embarked upon the implementation.

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About SWOV

The Institute for Scientific Research SWOV has been carrying out fundamental and anticipatory research into road safety for over 45 years now and has a position of knowledge and information centre on this subject. It aims at road safety improvement by making use of the results from scientific research.

More information about SWOV is available on its website www.swov.nl

