

PRESS RELEASE

Leidschendam, 2 November 2005

Advancing Sustainable Safety: SWOV argues for more policy renewal and more quality care in road traffic

On 2nd November, Holland's Minister of Transport received the first copy of the updated road safety vision. It is entitled: '*Advancing Sustainable Safety*'. The founder of this vision, the Institute for Road Safety Research SWOV, indicates how the number of traffic casualties can be further reduced during the coming years. Among other things, SWOV argues for policy renewal and improving the implementation quality.

The number of fatalities has already been declining for several decades. In 2004 the rate of decline was as much as 19%, to 881 fatalities. However, there is still the ambition to reduce this number even further. The Mobility Memorandum expresses the ambition to reduce the number of fatalities to 580 by 2020. An ever-increasing traffic volume makes it necessary to continue our efforts in order not to end up in another negative trend of increasing casualties. SWOV sees many possibilities and presented them in *Advancing Sustainable Safety* on 2nd November

Updating

Advancing Sustainable Safety is an update of the original Sustainable Safety vision that has been the basis of road safety policy in the Netherlands since 1992. Sustainable Safety aims at preventing crashes, and if that is not possible, at reducing the number of people being severely injured as much as possible. This vision has been successful. Just to name a few successes: the numbers of 30 km/hour zones and rural 60 km/hour zones have increased considerably and more attention is paid to education and public information. With regard to enforcement, a number of regional projects have commenced. In the meantime, the first phase of Sustainable Safety, known as the Start-up Programme, has been completed. It is now time for a sequel.

Large changes in road safety policy

In the meantime, the context of the road safety policy has changed considerably.

- decentralization has led to a large number of parties working independently;
- road safety can be less and less regarded as being separate from other policy sectors such as spatial planning, urban development, and pollution;
- new possibilities are emerging (e.g. ITS).

Responding to these changes, additional initiatives are needed. SWOV argues for a number of new developments to make for a successful road safety policy again:

- attention for policy renewal;
- more uniformity in the implementation of road safety measures;
- a coordinating road traffic quality system.

Renewal of road safety policy

For further achievement of a sustainably safe road traffic, it is necessary to renew policy. The measures from the past cannot just simply be copied. More is necessary. What is also needed is the embedding of the Sustainable Safety vision in other policy areas, such as mobility and infrastructure. Sustainable Safety should be an integral and continuous part of the traffic and road safety policies at all government levels. This supports those advocates who already exert themselves to achieve this. SWOV proposes that the Ministry of Transport fills in the role of policy innovator and takes it upon itself.

Quality care

Many different parties are involved in the implementation of road safety policy. Besides the numerous road authorities, also included are haulage companies, car manufacturers, police, ITC companies, and driving instructors. Without mutual harmony, such a variety of stakeholders can lead to solutions that are ambiguous, different, and even inconsistent. This could, for example, cause road users in different cities in the Netherlands to be confronted with different road layouts. If road authorities make clear agreements

about an unambiguous implementation this can be avoided. This way recognizability is created and the road user knows what is expected from him/her.

This is why SWOV argues for more quality care. With regard to how this is to be realised, road authorities can define expertise demands for their employees, careful procedures for preparing and implementing plans, guidelines for road design, assessment procedures, and analysis of crashes and near misses.

Such a system is particularly intended to make clear which quality demands are being made on all those involved, both inside and outside road traffic. There is no intention of harming the autonomous authority of government bodies.

The proposed quality care seems revolutionary because it is new for road traffic. However, there are many sectors and organizations, both inside and outside government, where something comparable already exists. Examples are aviation, railways, at work, and in health care.

Appeal for cooperation

SWOV calls on all parties who are responsible for the road safety policy of the Netherlands i.e. governments and social organizations, to join forces and to work together more than in the past. *Advancing Sustainable Safety* shows how we can avoid crashes. *Advancing Sustainable Safety* offers plenty of inspiration that can be converted into concrete activities. This is the only way to realise road traffic with a Sustainable Safety and to further reduce the number of traffic casualties.

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Advancing Sustainable Safety (in Dutch with a summary in English) can be studied at www.doormetduurzaamveilig.nl. A complete English translation will soon be available.

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About SWOV

The Institute for Road Safety Research SWOV has been conducting fundamental and anticipatory road safety research for more than 40 years, and functions as a road safety knowledge and information centre. Thus it developed into being the main Netherlands road safety research institute. Our goal is to promote road safety by using research results. More information about us is to be found on our website in the section "[About SWOV](#)".