

SWOV-VVN visit to Hungary

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**Report on the visit of a SWOV-VVN delegation to Hungary on
June 20th till 23th 1993**

1. Headlines

The delegation, Mr. J. Goos, director VVN, Mr. P. Wesemann, research manager SWOV and Mr. R. Wittink, project manager education SWOV, was the guest of the Hungarian National Council for Road Safety, that is connected with the Hungarian Police Headquarters and part of the Ministry of Interior Affairs.

Visits were made to the Headquarters and to the Traffic Department of the Hungarian National Police, to the Ministry of Transport, Telecommunication and Water Management, to the Research Institute KTI, to the Technical University of Budapest, and to the Dutch Embassy.

At the Department of Traffic of the Hungarian National Council for Road Safety, we were received by Dr. S. Pongor, Deputy Head, Mr. M. Miklós, Mr. D. Antal and Mr. T. Dóber.

At the Headquarters of the Hungarian National Police Headquarters, Mr. A. Túrós, Deputy Chief of Hungarian National Police Headquarters and Director-General of Public Safety and Mr. J. Goos, Director VVN signed an agreement on coöperation. Mr. G. Császár, Deputy Head of the Division of Roads and Road Vehicles of the Ministry of Transport, Communication and Water Management, welcomed cooperation between Hungary and the Netherlands in the field of road safety, especially between KTI and SWOV and expressed the willingness of the Ministry to co-finance projects of mutual interest.

Mr. G. Ecsedy, director of KTI, offered a draft agreement for cooperation with SWOV. KTI has handed over the draft National Road Safety Programme in english.

Prof. Dr.-ing. S. Koller received us at the Technical University of Budapest.

2. Elaboration

The draft **National Road Safety Plan** is in discussion between Ministries. It is expected that in a short time final decisions will be made, which make it possible to send it to parliament.

In the introduction it is stated that it is not correct to consider road safety as an inevitable consequence of motorization, looking at foreign experiences. Reference is made to the World Bank Report on Hungary. The WB will provide a loan of \$ 90 million for the financing of the Hungarian road network development programme, of which \$ 7 million would be assigned to the improvement of road safety. Granting commences on several conditions. In this context, some measures have already been taken, such as the reduction of the speed limit in built-up areas to 50 km/h and improvement of police enforcement and traffic safety information. Other conditions will be realised as a consequence of the plan.

The **National Council for Traffic Safety** has three main activities: publicity, young drivers, and competitions for road users. The police is the basis of the council, and 25 organisations are member, such as insurance, health organisations, motorclubs. The council is organizing the same structure of cooperation on regional and local level. There are connections now with the Ministry of Environment. One year ago the first regulations were introduced regarding traffic and environment.

Priorities for the future are:

- better equipment of the police
- publicity campaigns
- school programmes
- young drivers
- emergency medical aid
- competitions.

The staff members of the council we spoke with asked SWOV and

VVN for information about child restraints, air bags, breath analysing devices, the educational system, railway crossings, and the system of traffic rules or highway code.

They look forward to cooperating with VVN and they would like to utilize expertise from SWOV in that context.

In the visit to the **Ministry of Transport**, where Mr. Császár was accompanied by Mr. P. Lányi, it was mentioned that besides improving the motorway network a programme will be on improving the bicycle network. A Dutch publication which comprises design criteria for bicycle infrastructure and that will be published soon, could be very important to them. We will find out if this has already been published.

Standards of roads should be upgraded, routes improved not only with regard to the road surface but also by engineering, and especial attention will be paid to level crossings because of severe accidents. In general, the severity of accidents in Hungary is relatively high.

The last accident data show improvement, but there has also been a sharp decrease in fuel sales (-25%). The presence of traffic police on the streets shows improvement after the sharp reduction because of the political reform.

Road safety measures will in future partly be financed by road-users when they pay for a licence, fines, insurances, vehicle check ups and fuel. The plan will also cover safety on rivers (etc.) and railways. Vehicle, human and infrastructural standards will be integrated. The Department of Traffic Safety will be responsible for planning and control, coördination of ministries and coördination of private institutions. The National Council for Road Safety will remain closely connected to the police.

New legislation with regard to the speed limit of 50 km/h has been accompanied with the obligatory use of seatbelts on rear seats outside built up areas and the obligatory use of running lights during daytime outside built up areas, except on motorways. The legislation provoked much discussion. The exceptions were a consequence of this, but now people are

asking what the reason is for these exceptions. There is a lack of expertise in human behaviour and of expertise to integrate the relevant disciplines for road safety.

The director of KTI, Mr. G. Ecsedy, is heading a research institute with a staff of 220 people. KTI has been in operation since 1971 but the predecessor was founded in 1938. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Transport, Telecommunication and Water Management, KTI is a national transport centre. About 60% of the income of the institute is generated by government work, the remainder comprises work commissioned by companies and municipalities. Its task is to study and examine the technical, economic, and social aspects of transport; and to work out, disseminate, and implement new technical, economic and organizational methods and techniques. (An example: KTI developed a catalysator for two-stroke motors to use unleaded fuel). In the past decades, the road safety division was minimized.

After the visit to Mr. Ecsedy, we spoke with Mr. P. Hollo, engineer, who is working on road safety. He explained the main road safety topics for the institute at the moment:

- accident analyses, also analysing manoeuvres that lead to the accident
- data collection on traffic and speed
- information systems, connection to IRTAD (Brühning, Bast)
- conflict analyses (in cooperation with the University of Lund, Sweden)
- introduction of a point demerit system
- daytime running lights (increase from 40% to 90% useage on roads where it is compulsory, increase in useage to 70% on motorways although not compulsory, slight decrease in useage in urban areas where it was already no more than 20%)
- level crossings
- simplifying traffic rules (comparison with Germany, Switzerland, Austria, and the USA)

- economic costs of traffic safety
- the human factor (at present KTI has not itself a psychologist as employee; they make use of two private psychologists)
- bicycles.

SWOV will provide in the short term additional information on various subjects. It will be decided where and when the Agreement of Coöperation between KTI and SWOV will be signed. Meanwhile SWOV will prepare a proposal for a report on the point demerit system in relation to the young driver problem and a provisional driving license. SWOV will present an overview of the background of the problems, and possibilities for improvement. SWOV will also present an overview of international experiences, especially with regard to the point demerit systems, on the basis of the work SWOV has already performed. It is proposed to present and discuss this expertise at a mini conference in Hungary with policy makers, researchers and potential executive organisations, to combine the international experience with the actual and practical situation in Hungary. From this a final report will be made. The Hungarian Ministry of Transport will be asked for co-financing and to request together with the research institutes for financial support from international bodies. Another conference could be held in the autumn to decide about the contents of other research projects in which KTI and SWOV will cooperate. Besides the topics already mentioned, the elaboration of a long term road safety plan for regions and municipalities, a methodology for evaluation of countermeasures and in general exchange of knowledge and expertise (research and policies) could be important themes.

Prof. Dr.-ing. S. Koller from the **Technical University** explained that pedestrians and cyclists must be important target groups for road safety policy. He works since 1963 in the field of road safety. Recently he compared the accident situation of cities in different countries. He was critical of the SWOV prognosis (by Koornstra and Oppe) of increasing road

deaths in Hungary.

Koller pleaded for a selective use of cars. In Budapest 80% of the people use public transport but the share of cars is rising. Most of the cars are 10 years old, even if they are from western origin. Many people do not use their car during winter.

Mr. J. Kalhorn, Counsellor for Transport, Public Works and Water Management at the **Dutch Embassy** in Budapest, welcomed our visit to Hungary. He offered support for cooperation between the two countries, for example in establishing other contacts, such as with international financial organisations. To this end it is necessary to formulate projects in a broad framework, based on agreements between Hungarian and Dutch parties. Priority is given more and more to projects that deliver concrete results.

This report will be sent to:

Dr. A. Túrós, Dr. S. Pongor, Mr. M. Miklós, Dr. D. Antal, Mr. T. Dóber of the Hungarian National Council for Road Safety;
Mr. G. Császár and Dr. P. Lányi of the Division of Roads and Road Vehicles of the Ministry of Transport, Telecommunication and Water Management of Hungary;
Mr. G. Ecsedy and Mr. P. Hollo, KTI, Budapest;
Prof. Dr.-Ing S. Koller, Technical University of Budapest;
Mr. J. Kalhorn, Counsellor for Transport, Public Works and Water Management at the Dutch Embassy in Budapest;
Mr. J. Goos, VVN, Hilversum, the Netherlands;
Mr. J. Busstra, Directorate of Traffic Safety of the Dutch Ministry of Transport and Water Management.