



**12 February 2004**

## **SWEDEN FIRST IN EUROPE TO APPLY STAR RATING TO ROADS**

The first 1 300 km of the Swedish road network is now classified according to a new European safety standard. The “star rated roads” are parts of E4, E20 and RV 40.

Motormännens Riksförbund, in accordance with the European safety programme EuroRAP (European Road Assessment Programme) inspects and promotes Swedish road standards in close co-operation with EuroRAP International, Swedish National Road Administration and The Swedish Road Traffic Inspectorate.

At our inspections we divide the roads into four safety classes, from one star to four stars. A four star road is today the absolute highest safety class. Among the road sections we inspected the E4 north of Jönköping going north to Gränna, is an example of a good four star road, says Niklas Thorslund, Project Director at Motormännens Riksförbund. In comparison the E20 close to Vårgårda only received one star.

The purpose of EuroRAP is to identify significant safety problems on our road networks that can be fixed relatively simply and quickly. It also aims to create a long-term co-operation between the authorities who are responsible for a safe traffic system. The inspections examine road features such as median barriers, safety zones at the side of the road and junction design.

At EuroRAP we have created an important tool to reduce the number of deaths and seriously injured on our roads. The knowledge of how dangerous the road is, is important information to the road-users. Then you can increase your awareness and drive more carefully. Through the system of star rated roads the road-user also has the advantage of being able to choose safer roads with more stars, Niklas Thorslund says.

The Zero Vision concept envisages a traffic safety system with a shared responsibility between the manufacturers, road authorities and drivers, unlike the former view that all accidents in principle were the drivers fault. By the creation of EuroRAP focus is now put on our roads at the same time that the road authorities have been given a rigorous quality protocol to star rate their roads.

EuroRAP is a sister programme to EuroNCAP, which crash-tests new cars and awards them stars for safety. EuroRAP awards stars in accordance to how well the road protects the road user when an accident occurs. The Swedish members of EuroRAP have developed the Route Protection Score programme to a higher level than any other country in Europe. In other countries such as Germany and the Netherlands intensive

efforts are also being made to implement the scoring techniques. Leading authorities in road safety are working across Europe to refine and develop the programme as experience grows.

A specially equipped car is used for the inspections, with an inspector recording the different elements of the road and its surroundings. The records are collated according to a manual that gives information on the scoring system applied to the road according to the features present. Motormännens Riksförbund is planning to inspect approximately 8000 km of the National road network during 2004.