Driving change in Europe and the rest of the world

The approach of the new year is a good time to look back at what EuroRAP has achieved in its second major programme of work. The 2005-2006 EuroRAP programme has not only built an internationally accepted standard for measuring the safety of roads, it has also been the springboard from which our Road Assessment protocols have become a truly global force for saving lives by improving the safety of roads themselves.

On page 2 of this issue we look in more detail at the achievements of our 2005-2006 programme, and page 3 features the launch of the second Pan-European Progress Report, which brings our partners, road authorities and Europe’s media up to date with developments over the last two years.

New world-wide partnership

Looking beyond Europe, October saw a major development for iRAP, the world-wide umbrella organisation for safer road initiatives that EuroRAP helped to establish. iRAP and the World Bank have formalised a new five-year global partnership to reduce the number of deaths and serious injuries in low- and middle-income countries around the world by making roads safer. Drawing on our experience in Europe, and more recently in the US and Australia, this new partnership has huge potential to cut the inexorable increase in global road deaths and injuries – see pages 6 and 7.

We need your input

As we look to develop new RAP programmes in Europe and around the world, we are keenly aware of the need to keep our readers and all our partners informed about our activities. To this end, we intend to relaunch this newsletter in the new year, but first we need your feedback. Please click here and give five minutes of your time to complete a short online survey.
Two years of achievements in Europe

EuroRAP will be publishing a major new report next spring to highlight the technical progress of its current two-year programme. Here we look at the overall achievements of the EuroRAP programme during 2005 and 2006.

Over the last two years EuroRAP has successfully highlighted the dangers of poor road design in countries from the Arctic to Mediterranean, work that has been underpinned by new global standards for measuring the safety of roads and tracking improvements.

During this period the EuroRAP programme extended into Eastern European countries, with the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovakia and Hungary all becoming partners during 2005 and 2006. Looking ahead to next year, a fifth Eastern European country, Bulgaria, is due to start EuroRAP work, along with Portugal and Denmark in the west.

New technical reports also emerged from EuroRAP, giving the results of a study carried out in Germany, Ireland, Sweden and Britain showing the crash types that claim the most car occupant lives in built-up areas.

EuroRAP also launched its Safer Roads Save Lives campaign, and supported the Make Roads Safe report by the Commission for Global Road Safety, which was launched by the FIA Foundation.

More recently, EuroRAP launched its second Pan-European Progress Report and Pan-European Risk Map – see page 3 for full details.
Brussels briefing on new EuroRAP results

EuroRAP’s second Pan-European Progress Report – Getting Organised to Make Roads Safe – was launched in Brussels on Tuesday 5 December.

Chaired by Malcolm Harbour MEP, the briefing included a keynote speech by Benoît Le Bret (pictured), who heads the cabinet of Jacques Barrot, Vice-President of the European Commission with responsibility for transport.

In a preface to the publication, Benoît Le Bret welcomes the report and its support for the European Union as it strives to hit its target of reducing road casualties in 2010 to 50 per cent of the 2000 total.

The briefing also included a presentation by Graham Smith, Senior Vice-President, External and Environmental Affairs for Toyota Motor Europe, and results from national EuroRAP programmes in Belgium, Ireland, Slovakia, Spain and Germany.

EuroRAP also launched its first ever Pan-European Risk Map showing the changing risk of death and serious injury that road-users face across Europe’s major road network. The poster-sized map displays results from Great Britain, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland, Italy and Germany, as well as providing commentary on results for those countries where mapping is yet to be standardised. It also shows countries in which density maps have been produced, and where feasibility work will get under way in 2007. EuroRAP will update its new map in April next year.

Included in the new report are EuroRAP country profiles for all 23 of its established and new partners. These profiles, which were produced in the country’s own language as well as English, include information on: road-accident figures, road safety policy, progress and results from Risk Mapping, Performance Tracking and Star Rating, how and where the programme has been communicated, and the ways in which the programme will be extended in the future.

To order a copy of the report please click here.
Spain maps out new action route

EuroRap’s partners in Spain will this month publish the world’s most comprehensive Risk Map. As reported in this newsletter’s last issue, Spain’s Accident Reduction Map will go beyond rating road risks to detail the reduction in crash numbers if high-risk road sections were brought up to an average risk rate for the road type. In addition, the map uses cost information to show where the largest return on financial investment can be expected – an invaluable tool when making the case for road improvements.

After producing standard EuroRap Risk Maps for the last three years, motoring clubs RACC and RACE decided to use their latest map to send out a new and compelling road-safety message to the public and politicians in Spain. Miquel Nadal, Director of International Relations at the RACC, explains: “We wanted to make more use of all the information we have accumulated to clearly demonstrate that measurement can be a real spur for action.”

Key to developing the new map was RACC and RACE’s partnership with Spain’s regional and national road authorities, while all the new data was handled by Prointec, their road-safety engineering consultant.

Drawing on three years experience and data, the map took just three months to produce. “It was costly in terms of finance and all the work involved,” says Miquel. “However, if the map’s information is used correctly, we are sure it will prove a very worthwhile investment in improving Spain’s road infrastructure.”

The clubs launch the map at a press conference on 19 December and will then use its new information to lobby politicians to take action. “A gap exists in Spain between road engineers, who have been using the same methods for years, and the decision-makers,” says Miquel. “We want to show politicians that the process of targeting high-risk road sections is a long-term commitment and requires a more sophisticated approach than the ‘sticking plaster’ method of implementing very localised measures only at known accident blackspots.”
Mobilised by grief

Continuing its theme of looking behind Europe’s road crash statistics, here Safer Roads Save Lives speaks to Manuel Ramos (pictured) whose five-year-old daughter Joana was killed on Portugal’s notorious IP5.

When university professor Manuel got behind the wheel of his Citroën Berlingo to drive along the main trading road between the Portuguese coast and inland Spain he was under no illusions about the dangers posed by his chosen route. “I knew someone who had lost a family member in an accident on this road, so I was very focused on driving carefully and slowly,” he says.

Ironically, the fact that Manuel did not break the speed limit – Portuguese drivers commonly drive at double the speed limit in 50kmph areas – ensured that his car was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

“I was in the outside lane overtaking a truck when I looked in my rear-view mirror and saw a lorry coming at phenomenal speed,” says Manuel. “Had I been travelling at the same high speed as the rest of the traffic on that road, this accident would never have happened.”

The lorry – which was found to have been travelling in a high gear despite going down a long 9.5 per cent angled section of road – ploughed into the back of the Berlingo, smashing it into concrete barriers that had been put between the two lines of traffic but had not yet been connected. Manuel was knocked out in the crash but regained consciousness to see Joana lying face down in the road. “I rushed to her, tried to revive her – blood was coming out of her nose and mouth and ears. I realised there was nothing I could do.”

Joana had been wearing a seatbelt but, seated between her mother and a friend in the back of the car, it only went across her lap. “Until recently in Portugal there was no idea of intermediate seats for children after they grow out of baby seats,” comments Manuel.

The grieving father has turned anger at his daughter’s death in August 1998 into positive action. Within five months of the accident Manuel formed a protest group called Association of AutoMobilised Citizens (click here to access the organisation’s website, which is in Portuguese), which has since been successful in mobilising public and political opinion into addressing one of the worst road accident death rates in Europe.
iRAP has signed an important Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the World Bank, in which both parties commit to a joint five year-programme to make a ‘measurable’ reduction in the number of deaths and serious injuries in low- and middle-income countries around the world.

As part of the agreement, iRAP has committed itself to working with motoring clubs worldwide with a view to RAP programmes being active in 40 or more countries by the end of 2011.

The five-year programme is expected to cost at least €11 million. Through the FIA Foundation, iRAP aims to raise the majority of the funding required for the programme’s initial two-year development phase.

And through the new World Bank Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF), the World Bank aims to fund the majority of the programme’s practical implementations.

Donations from developed countries into GRSF are key to the success of the EuroRAP-World Bank programme. Contributions have already been promised by the Swedish and Dutch governments; elsewhere, motoring clubs are lobbying their governments to provide financial backing for the programme.

See page 7 to find out more about iRAP.
Already adopted in 30 countries worldwide, iRAP is currently transferring know-how into Africa, Asia and Latin America. And with 90 per cent of the world’s road deaths in low- or middle-income countries, iRAP plans to launch pilot projects next year in four low-income countries – Malaysia, South Africa, Costa Rica and Chile. The usRAP team is in Chile, where pilot inspections are planned during January and February, and Costa Rica where inspections will take place in February and March. In South Africa and Malaysia inspections are due to take place in March and April through EuroRAP and AusRAP respectively.

The iRAP programme does not stop at measuring risk, but also uses road-safety professionals to propose the most effective means of reducing casualties. For example, many more pedestrians and two-wheeled road-users are killed than car occupants, so iRAP is focusing on measuring where crucial basic facilities – such as footpaths and safe crossing points – are missing.

iRAP is also currently working on a web-based ‘toolkit’ that will provide information on effective solutions and counter-measures to road safety engineering problems and dangers.

Next year advanced planning will also start in a number of ‘second-wave’ countries. Clubs in Kenya, Jamaica, Peru, Syria and Brazil have already indicated that they would like to take part.

From roots put down in Europe in 2002, the RAP protocols have spread to the US through usRAP and Australia with AusRAP. Now iRAP is making the case for safer roads around the world to address an annual road-death toll of 1.2 million and rising. This umbrella RAP organisation provides a truly global focus on improving the infrastructure of high-risk roads and identifying affordable, high-return safety measures in countries around the world. Here we look at what iRAP has achieved to date and its plans for 2007.
New passive safety award

Two specialist UK-based publishers – TEC (Traffic, Engineering and Control) and Surveyor – have launched a new award to recognise a major contribution to improving road safety through the design of a forgiving roadside.

Any scheme completed during 2006 can be entered for the TEC, Surveyor and EuroRAP Passive Safety Award 2007, which is open to entrants in all EU countries.

It could go to a road authority for its promotion of a scheme that demonstrates exceptional commitment to the forgiving roadside concept or to an individual for personal dedication to implementing crash-friendly principles.

All entries must be submitted by 28 February 2007. To download an entry form please click here and follow the instructions. If you require any further information, please email TEC editor Carol Debell.

The award, which is supported by EuroRAP, will be presented at Traffex 2007 at Birmingham’s National Exhibition Centre in the UK between 17 and 19 April. Click here for more information about Traffex.

2007 DIARY DATES

22-23 January TRB annual meeting, Washington
20 March FIA Make Roads Safe event
17-19 April Presentation of the TEC, Surveyor and EuroRAP Award
27 April European Road Safety Day in Brussels
23-29 April UN Global Road Safety week featuring young road-users
6-8 June G8 in Germany
May EuroRAP Fifth General Assembly in Barcelona
April Eastern European Group workshop in Poland
September Eastern European Group workshop in the Czech Republic