Drug Driving in Europe: Policy Measures for National and EU Action

Regulating Drug Driving to Protect All Road Users

Paris, 10 May 2019

ANTONIO AVENOSO
ETSC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

European Transport Safety Council
✓ A science based approach to road safety
✓ Secretariat in Brussels
✓ 60 member organisations from across Europe
✓ More than 200 experts contributing to ETSC’s work
✓ The European Commission, Member Organisations, Member States and corporate sponsors are funding our work
2014-2018 bad years for road safety
CHANGE IN ROAD DEATHS (%) 2010-2018

-50%
RELATIVE CHANGE (%) IN ROAD DEATHS 2010-2018

Desired progress to be on track with the target: -42.6%

EU 28 average: -21%

Data source: European Commission
25,300 people died in road traffic in the EU in 2018.
INTRODUCTION

- What do we mean by psychoactive drugs?
  - Illicit and Licit (medicines)

- Psychoactive drugs have a negative effect on the ability to drive
  - Cognitive behaviour
  - Psychomotor functioning

- Drug driving is not as well understood as drink driving
  - A wide variety of substances: illicit and licit, established and emerging
  - Less prevalent than drink driving: less information

- Our knowledge is growing, but still limited
  - Need more knowledge of drug driving and how to prevent it
HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE USING DRUGS?

- General Population:
  - 25% of 15-64 year olds in EU have tried illicit drugs at some point

- Driving population:
  - 1.9% found with illicit drugs/1.36% found with licit drugs (DRUID)
  - Self reporting figures are higher:
    - 11% said they had driven after using illicit drugs at least once in past year
    - 22% said they had driven after using medication (with a driving warning)

- What factors affect this?
  - Age/Gender
SELF-DECLARED BEHAVIOUR

(Achermann Sturmer, Y. (2016). Driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. ESRA thematic report no.2. ESRA project (European Survey of Road users’ safety attitude). Bern, Switzerland: Swiss Council for Accident Prevention, p22.)
1. Legislation and Enforcement

I. Legal limits/’per se’ laws
   - Establish a fixed substance limit – similar to BAC levels. Any driver detected with a substance reaching or exceeding the legal limit is considered to have broken the law.

II. Zero tolerance laws
   - Set legal limits with a concentration set at the lab limit of detection. Any driver with a detectable amount of a relevant substance is considered to have broken the law.

III. Impairment legislation
   - In each case it must be proven that the skills of the driver were adversely affected by a specific drug. Signs of impairment are usually observed and recorded by the police when they stop a driver.
COUNTERMEASURES

1. Legislation and Enforcement

- **Penalties**
  - Withdrawal of the licence
  - Fines
  - Prison

- **Enforcement**
  - Legislation *needs* to be enforced
    - Roadside screening
    - Post-collision forensic testing

- **Unlimited fine**
- **Up to 6 months in prison**
- **Minimum one-year ban**
2. Education and Campaigns

- In school, the workplace and in public
- Targeting high risk groups
  - Young people (school, social media)
  - Males
- Helps to increase social disapproval
- Education for professionals particularly important
  - Healthcare/policymakers/legislators/judiciary
3. Rehabilitation and Healthcare

- **Drink driving schemes used as a basis**
  - Shown to be effective and reduce recidivism
  - Help restore mobility in a safe way
  - Little evaluation of drug driving schemes

- **Healthcare strategies**
  - Dealing with general drug use
  - Relationship between medical professionals and licensing authorities

---

In 2014 Denmark extended drink driver rehabilitation to drug drivers
- Four three-hour classes
- €430
- Must complete to regain licence

- Forbidden to pass on information
- Compulsory to pass on information
- Drug dependent drivers must pass on themselves
**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. **Legislation and Enforcement**

- A zero tolerance system for illicit psychoactive drugs
- Consider the potential ramifications of drug legalisation on drug driving
- Development by the EC of common standards for roadside drug driving enforcement
- Ensure police forces are properly trained in when and how to perform drug screening

For action at national and EU level
2. Education and Campaigns

- Incorporate drug driving education into school based road safety initiatives, alongside drink driving education

- Target education and campaigns at high risk groups
  - Young males

- Incorporate the issues relating to psychoactive drugs and their effects into professional driver education
3. Rehabilitation Programmes

- Integrate rehabilitation schemes in the national countermeasures system
  - Drug offenders should be treated separately from alcohol offenders
  - Distinguish between non-addicts and addicts

- Assessment and rehabilitation should be regulated according to criteria/common standards

- Licence reacquisition for known drug users could be regulated
  - Different approaches across Europe
4. Research and Data Collection

- Research into the effects of common psychoactive drugs on driving behaviour must continue
  - Countermeasures must remain fit-for-purpose and keep in line with evolving drug use and drug driving behaviours
- Research into the effects of new psychoactive substances on driving behaviours
- Research into the effectiveness of countermeasures
- Continue investing in development of detection technology
- Encourage greater and improved monitoring of drug use in traffic
  - Standardise monitoring methods
  - Standardise and maximise post-collision data collection
Thank you!

European Transport Safety Council
www.etsc.eu  @etsc_eu

Antonio Avenoso
Executive Director
antonio.avenoso@etsc.eu

PREVENTING DRUG DRIVING IN EUROPE
Policy measures for national and EU action
March 2017