

PRESS RELEASE

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EuroTest's First European assessment of pedestrian crossings reveals one in eight fail the safety test

New EuroTest "Pedestrian Crossing Assessment Programme" reveals that across 17 major European cities, one in eight of the 215 pedestrian crossings tested scored a rating of "poor". At a time when one in four pedestrian fatalities occur on pedestrian crossings remedial action is urgently required to upgrade pedestrian crossing infrastructure, equipment and performance. Moreover rules governing users and driver behaviour at crossings needs to be brought in to line everywhere.

In the second phase of this three-year programme undertaken by the major automobile clubs in 17 European countries, all members of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) under the leadership of the Automobile club d'Italia (ACI), the results confirm again the lottery pedestrians face when crossing the street

Brussels, Europe's political capital, home to some the most important European institutions for road safety is the loser with respect to pedestrian crossings. Disappointingly, four of the five of the worst examples identified including the very worst pedestrian crossing were found in Brussels. The losing pedestrian crossing located close to Brussels main shopping street, Avenue Louise, at the intersection between Rue Lesbroussart and Rue Van Elewyck failed completely the test, with negative ratings scored in all the safety categories. This crossing was severely downgraded due to the presence of parked vehicles behind the crossing, to the insufficient sight distance for the turning vehicles and to a residual step of 8 cm on both the access sides of the sidewalks.

London, on the other hand, boasts not only the winning pedestrian crossing (located close to Westminster, at the intersection of Tothill Street and Storey's Gate) but indeed six out of the top ten rated crossings. As examples of best practice London's pedestrian crossings are a reference to be copied everywhere. Good visibility by day and night, use of orange beacons on luminous poles and crossing islands, good accessibility, the absence of obstructions, clear information, good road markings and good sight distance between drivers and pedestrians thanks in part to absence no parked cars in the vicinity of the crossing were all features of these winning crossings.

Across the 17 major European cities included in the test, as many different pedestrian crossings as possible were selected within comparable geographic areas possessing common characteristics: high tourist interest; good transport facilities, busy traffic and similar size of area covered.

“The findings of this assessment,” said Caroline Ofoegbu, FIA European Bureau, “underline the urgency of the European automobile clubs’ demand that pedestrian crossings be made safe places for pedestrians to cross the street. 8,000 pedestrians in Europe are killed in road accidents annually. One in four of these fatalities occur on or close to pedestrian crossings. Sadly it is the most vulnerable of this vulnerable group of road users that are most at risk, children, the elderly and those with disabilities. Any pedestrian fatality is unacceptable. Action is needed to curtail this problem.”

EuroTest’s pedestrian safety observatory reveals that in 2006 Slovenia topped the ranking of pedestrian fatalities (on and outside pedestrian crossings) with a ratio of 18.0 per 1 million people. Spain, Austria and Italy followed with a ratio of 13.7, 13.3 and 12.6 respectively. In terms of fatalities on pedestrian crossings Luxembourg, Finland and Norway scored the highest rates.

Observing this critical situation EuroTest partners recommend that not only city planners, and administrations act to improve pedestrian crossings but also that politicians and legislators should look to develop common traffic rules governing behaviour on and around pedestrian crossings for both pedestrians and drivers. A common understanding of rights and duties among Europe’s citizens currently cannot exist. Areas in need of improvement include:

- **Planning of pedestrian crossings**, both location and layout are key to a comprehensive system of pedestrian mobility within the framework of the entire urban mobility planning. Planning should aim at solutions to the safety needs of pedestrians.
- **Good visibility** at pedestrian crossings should be one of the design guidelines.
- Pedestrian crossings should be systematically maintained in good conditions, meeting high requirements of safety.
- **Conflict resolution** between pedestrians and other road users, in particular cyclists and trams.
- **Common behavioural rules** to be adopted Europe wide
- **Simpler and better regulations** governing the pedestrian/driver relationship in order to avoid confusion and potential dangers for tourists and foreign visitors. A European citizen, of British nationality, for example, knows that at home, he has the right of way from the moment he is standing on a sidewalk, waiting to cross. However, a Brit adopting such behaviour in Italy would be in very danger since drivers are obliged to yield the right of way only to pedestrians who are already crossing the street.

In support of this campaign and to alert both pedestrians and drivers to the best practices to be adopted on and around pedestrian crossings, EuroTest is launching “Walk Safe” a new leaflet containing tips for both drivers and pedestrians.

For more information about the EuroTest Assessment of Pedestrian Crossings visit <http://eurotestmobility.com/eurotest.php?itemno=278>

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Notes to editors

1. The pedestrian crossings test was between July and September 2008 in 17 major European cities: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Ljubljana, London, Madrid, Munich, Oslo, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Vienna, Zagreb and Zurich. Overall results showed that 28 crossings out of 215 (one in 8) failed the test, achieving a “poor” rating. Just more than half crossings (118) were rated positively. Only two crossings earned a “very good” rating. 69 crossings were considered “Acceptable”.
2. A marked finding of this survey was the very wide degree of variation in the quality of the pedestrian crossings examined in each city is reflected in the range of ratings given. Cities such as Berlin and Brussels receive rating ranging from “poor” to “good”.
3. The study has established a Europe wide quality and safety benchmark for pedestrian crossings which allows for further assessments to be conducted in the future.
4. The methodology developed by ACI – Italian Motoring Club and “la Sapienza” University of Rome aimed at assessing the safety levels of single pedestrian crossings. Crossings were selected inside well defined areas of each city according to: high touristic interest, good transport facilities, existence of critical traffic situations and similar dimensions of the areas. The tests tried to cover all kinds of crossings (signalised/non-signalised, intersection/road link, one-way/two way roads, and one lane/multi T lane per direction) and were conducted during both day and night time. Each crossing was assessed for its safety taking into account its peculiarities in terms of spatial and temporal design, day and night time visibility and accessibility for all road users.
5. The results published here represent the second phase of a three year study co-financed by the FIA Foundation that aimed at develop a full assessment programme for examining the quality and safety of Europe’s pedestrian crossings.
6. This three year project produced in year 1, a “State of the Art” overview of the current situation of pedestrian crossings in Europe (task lead by TCS in collaboration with ACI). In years 2 and 3, pedestrian crossings facilities in major European cities will be assessed (task lead by ACI in collaboration with TCS).
7. For more on the statistical findings on pedestrian fatalities visit: <http://eurotestmobility.com/eurotest.php?itemno=278>
8. Through EuroTest, 18 automobile clubs in 17 countries, members of the FIA, have been putting the quality and safety of mobility in Europe to the test since 2000 for the benefit of their members and all mobile consumers in Europe. The EuroTest partners have constantly called for a Europe where the mobile consumer can circulate freely using quality infrastructure and in safety.

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