



BACKGROUND NOTE

“The Future of Road Tunnel Safety” - European Parliament Dinner Debate 9th May 2007

The European Parliament and the FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile) have pledged to support the European Commission in its efforts to raise the importance of road safety and to realise its top priority of halving the number of deaths on Europe's roads by 2010. The FIA is the representative body of mobile consumers worldwide. Through its affiliated members, national motoring and touring organisations, the FIA is present in all 27 member countries and has over 40 million European citizens in membership.

Since 2005, FIA clubs have been implementing EuroTAP with European Commission funding. Developments within this project during the last three years have been watched with high interest by the European Parliament.

Key achievements so far include:

- Raised awareness among tunnel users (via tools such as an interactive PC-game and driver training DVD)
- Annual benchmarking of European tunnels; noting improvements and failings
- Fruitful co-operations with national tunnel authorities as well as tunnel operators in implementing and refining the EuroTAP methodology and its impact

The results of the 2007 EuroTAP tunnel test (due end of April 2007) will be presented. Assuring the safety of road tunnels requires more than benchmarking performance. Where shortcomings are identified they must be addressed appropriately in order to prevent further tunnel accidents. Tunnels are an important establishment not only to the economic viability of some states additionally their role in providing solutions to urban congestion is becoming increasingly evident. Incidents that cause their closure are disastrous not only in terms of human suffering but also for the economy and the environment.

EuroTAP has focused on all EU-countries possessing networks of major tunnels. The aim of the third and final year of the programme is to carry out an audit of all assessments conducted during the programme, identify key findings, draw up conclusions and communicate the results of this programme as widely among stakeholders as possible.

The European Parliament Dinner Debate on 9th May 2007 is intended to kick-off this process of evaluating the benchmarks regarding safety and quality of road tunnel infrastructure on the Trans-European network as well as identifying issues requiring more attention between now and 2015, when the Directive should be fully implemented EU wide.