

## **EUROTAP 2006- LATEST TUNNEL TEST RESULTS OUT.**

**FROM THE ARTIC TO THE MEDITERRANEAN EUROPEAN TUNNELS ARE STILL FAILING TO MEET EU MINIMUM STANDARDS BUT THINGS ARE IMPROVING.**

At the half way stage, EuroTAP, the three year European Tunnel Assessment Programme has inspected 101 major road tunnels, totalling 202 km in length and located in 16 countries in Europe from the artic to the Mediterranean. The latest tunnel test results published today show that 22 of the 49 road tunnels inspected this year were rated “very good” with the winning tunnel found to be on the M12 approach road to the airport in Madrid.

**“We have developed and adopted the Directives and Recommendations on how to build and operate safe road tunnels. Now we need to educate road users”**, said Dr. Reinhardt Rack, MEP at a EuroTAP briefing held in the European Parliament last October. Dr Rack was referring to the Directive on “Minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the Trans-European Road Network (2004/54/EC) for which he was Rapporteur of the European Parliament’s Opinion.

Over the next 18 months of EuroTAP major milestones regarding the Tunnel Safety Directive have to be achieved. From 1<sup>st</sup> May 2006 all newly built tunnels henceforth have comply with this directive. Older tunnels have to be retrofitted to comply by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Member States also have to prepare national risk assessment plans by 2007. As tunnels that do not meet the minimum standards of the EU Directive are rated “poor” or “very poor” by EuroTAP, interest in the initiative across the Member States is increasing.

Since EuroTAP’s launch in January 2005, the key objective for European motoring and touring partners has been to translate EU legislation on minimum safety standards in road tunnels, into practical user-friendly measures: on-going systematic benchmarking of major European road tunnels; demonstration of safety improvements over time, and provision of informative and educational tools targeting improved tunnel safety awareness and behaviour among Europe’s mobile consumers. These EuroTAP goals have been pursued by the partners since 1999. By 2007 and the end of EuroTAP, the experience of 300 tunnel inspections, test results published across a range of different media, recommendations to tunnel operators and authorities about identified failings and improvements will feed into a major tunnel audit report.

EuroTAP’s focus on tunnel testing and raising consumer awareness campaign is both unique and practical. Information products for consumers include online “Tunnel info sheets”, the interactive pc game “Safe in the Tunnel”, the “Safe in the Tunnel” driver training DVD and the EuroTAP information leaflet. Informed tunnel users contribute significantly to improved tunnel safety. And already the messages are getting through. In Catalonia, Spain last December, a tunnel fire was reported in the press because there were no fatalities, tunnel users knew that they should leave their vehicles and escape as quickly as possible.

EuroTAP is a good model of the legislature working with citizens to improve road safety. In the light of the EU Directive on minimum safety standards in tunnels, the EuroTAP strategy is to monitor continuously tunnel safety standards and inform and educate tunnel users while driving improvements in standards by tunnel operators, ideally faster than legislation. In the San Juan Tunnel in Spain, tunnel inspections have led to four million euros of investments and an improved assessment from “poor” to “good” in just three years. However, the practical and consumer oriented approach to tunnel safety adopted by EuroTAP is in no way a substitute for the obligations that Member States and tunnel authorities must meet under the EU Tunnel Directive. EuroTAP has already been recognised and supported in recent road safety reports by the European Parliament, and Commission which also co funds the programme.

Indeed, a fruitful dialogue on EuroTAP has been developed with those responsible for assuring the safety of Europe’s tunnels: government tunnel infrastructure authorities, public and private tunnel operators and tunnel expert bodies such as the World Road Safety Council (PIARC), the Conference of European Road Directors (CEDR) and the European Commission’s Tunnel Safety Committee which advises on the implementation of the EU Directive. Over the last 18 months EuroTAP has been on the agenda of various international and national Road



and Tunnel infrastructure congresses, workshops and events. This on-going dialogue has benefited the assessment methodology used by EuroTAP to inspect and rate tunnels. The 2006 EuroTAP tunnel test assessment has been refined in line with stakeholders’ comments. A new “Safety Pillars” module has been developed to enhance the assessment of individual tunnels. This is based recognition of the contribution of the various categories of criteria examined to the four key pillars that underpin tunnel safety: prevention of incidents, early detection of incidents, the escape and self rescue of tunnel users and the mitigation of an incident. “Knock-out” (K.O) criteria have been defined so that if essential tunnel safety failings are found in a tunnel, such a finding will automatically downgrade the overall safety potential result that a tunnel could achieve.

The benefits to consumers include greater transparency and consistency in the EuroTAP “Tunnel Info” evaluation sheets provided about the individual tunnels tested. For tunnel authorities, this refinement improves EuroTAP qualitative assessment and systematic benchmarking of European Tunnels.

At the halfway stage, EuroTAP is meeting its objectives. According to Robert Sauter, EuroTAP project leader, **“Test results plus publicity are effective, with governments and operators often reacting swiftly to improve tunnel safety.”** Moreover, it is already clear that in terms of national legislation adopted, many Member States have gone beyond the minimum requirements of the EU Directive.

To wrap up EuroTAP, nine years of tunnel testing experience will be used to develop a major audit report analysing trends, developments and improvements in tunnel safety as well as identifying best practices and solutions developed by those responsible for the road tunnel network across Europe from the Arctic to the Mediterranean.

### **Major EuroTAP Events:**

<b>19th January 2005</b>	<b>EuroTAP launched in Munich at ADAC Conference on innovations in tunnel safety</b>
<b>April 2005</b>	<b>Europe wide - Launch of EuroTAP Tunnel Test Results</b>
<b>22nd April 2005</b>	<b>EuroTAP presented at the Tunnel operators Forum, Glasgow</b>
<b>30th May 2005</b>	<b>Stuttgart, Germany, EuroTAP presented at the International Congress Safe Highways of the future</b>
<b>June 2005</b>	<b>EuroTAP presented to the Swiss Road Authority</b>
<b>30th August 2005</b>	<b>Paris, France, EuroTAP presented to the Conference of European Road Directors (CEDR)</b>
<b>17th October 2005</b>	<b>European Parliament, Brussels, EuroTAP EU Briefing</b>
<b>7th February 2006</b>	<b>1st EuroTAP International Advisory Workshop with national experts from the Member States, the European Commission, UNECE and PIARC</b>
<b>2-3rd March 2006</b>	<b>Bregenz, Austria, Informal Meeting of Transport Ministers - Distribution of the Safe in the Tunnel PC game and DVD</b>
<b>7th March 2006</b>	<b>London , UK EuroTAP methodology presented to the Highways Agency and UK tunnel operators</b>
<b>30th March 2006</b>	<b>Zagreb, Croatia, Presentation of EuroTAP at the Auto Salon</b>
	<b>Lisbon, Portugal EuroTAP presented at the 4th Portuguese Road Tunnel Conference</b>
<b>6th April 2006</b>	<b>6th April 2006 Brussels, Presentation of EuroTAP to European High level Tunnel Safety Committee</b>
<b>27th April 2006</b>	<b>Europe wide - launch of 2006 EuroTAP tunnel Test results</b>
<b>30th May 2006</b>	<b>Lausanne, Switzerland, Presentation of EuroTAP at the inaugural symposium of ITA COSUF</b>