

EuroRAP Releases First Progress Report



EuroRAP looks at how specific improvements to road design can reduce the risk of injury.

The European Road Assessment Programme (EuroRAP) published its first progress report in December 2005. Entitled From Arctic to Mediterranean, it provides a detailed account of the efforts made by the countries involved to make their roads safer.

EuroRAP provides an independent system to measure the safety of Europe's roads, to track how quickly improvements are made, and once in place, to evaluate their effectiveness. In 2001, pilot EuroRAP results were available for just four countries. Since then significant progress has been made and the new report describes the work EuroRAP has done or is planning to do in nearly 20 countries.

Many of the 40,000 deaths that occur on Europe's roads every year could be avoided by making simple changes to road layout and design. EuroRAP looks at how specific improvements to road design can reduce the risk that a particular type of crash will occur or lead to injury.

Chairman of EuroRAP, John Dawson, said: "We must not allow everyday driving errors to be punished by a death sentence. Roads can be designed to reduce the likelihood of mistakes, and when mistakes do happen, to be more forgiving – by preventing the high-energy collisions that kill and maim. Putting things right sometimes needs little more than the cost of a stretch of fencing, or paint to improve road markings."

The benefits of the road assessment programme are manifold. Some experts believe safer roads can reduce road deaths by as much as 80 per cent and can be as effective as improvements to vehicles and driver behaviour. EuroRAP's colour coded risk maps and star ratings provide road users with greater knowledge and understanding of the different threats presented by different types of roads.