

ESV CONFERENCE 2009 - ITALIAN GOVERNMENT STATUS REPORT

Dr. Antonio Erario
Head of Division, International Regulatory Affairs
Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport
Department for Land Transport
Italy

ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview of the main results achieved by Italy in the field of road safety during the last two years. It focuses on the follow-up of the “National Plan on Road Safety”, adopted eight years ago and subsequent introduction of new provisions in the “Highway Code”.

After a general descriptions of main road safety results, this paper describes the principal measures adopted during the last period, focusing on regulatory policies and enforcement.

Weak factors and the main unresolved problems are described: regional and local gaps, safety of urban areas, high risk road network, urban crossing roads, two-wheeler safety, vulnerable users.

A brief descriptions of the research activities in the field of vehicle safety is given as well as a summary of the main recommended actions to be taken to improve road safety.

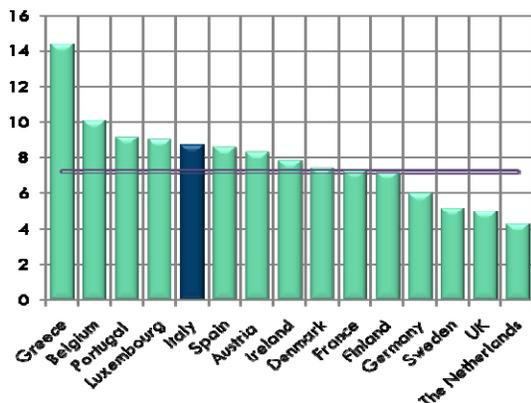
GENERAL

Road Safety in Italy

In the year 2007 Italy recorded a 9.5 % reduction of fatalities which is the best score in the European Union (EU15).

According to a recent report presented to the Parliament by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, Italy is progressively bridging the gap with the other Member States which originated in the period 1990 - 2002 by passing from the 13th to the 11th position in the EU15 chart.

FATALITY RATE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
(DEATHS/100,000 INHABITANTS) - YEAR 2007



In spite of the progress made, Italy remains the European country with the highest number of fatalities (5,131); Therefore, further and continuous improvements are necessary to become again one of the best five countries in Europe.

The present report describes the principle measures adopted at national level to improve road safety in Italy, makes an analysis of the principle problems and suggest some actions to be taken.

THE MAIN ADOPTED MEASURES

The recent improvements in road safety are mainly due to the following factors:

Regulatory policies

The national highway code has been amended several times. In particular two major changes relating to

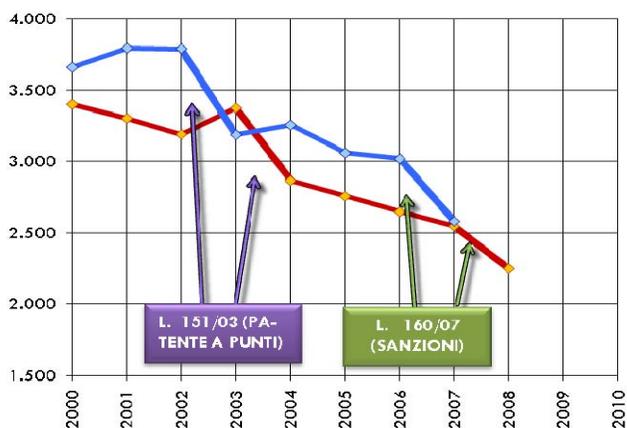
- the introduction of a penalty point system based driving license (law 150/2003) and
- revision of penalties (Law 160/07),

need to be mentioned.

During the first two semesters of application of laws.151/03 and 160/07 a reduction of 1846 deaths has been recorded. This represents about the 86 % of the reduction of fatalities recorded between 1st January 2003 and 30 June 2008.

In the six preceding years (1997-2002) no reduction had been recorded.

THE EFFECT OF NATIONAL REGULATORY POLICIES ON THE FATALITY RATE



— 1st semester — 2nd semester

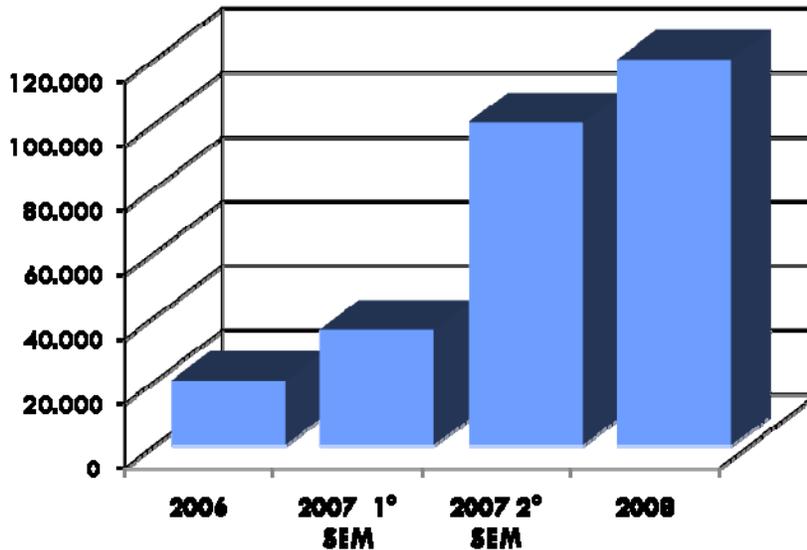
Better Enforcement

Compared to the year 2006, the number of controls carried out on the roads has increased .

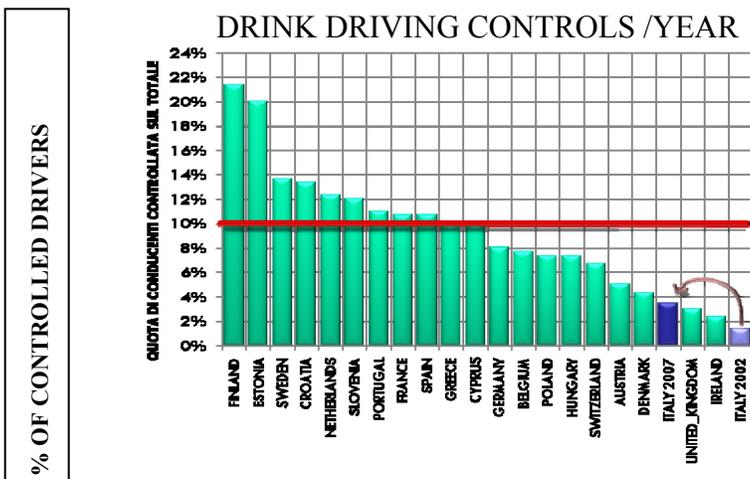
In particular, starting from 2006, the number of checks on drink and driving, compared to the number of driving licence has increased by six times (from 20,000 to 120,000 controls per month).

As for other European countries, automatic controls, made by cameras and radars have been increased and the results are quite encouraging.

CONTROLS/MONTH



The increasing number of controls has allowed to reach the target to make drivers aware of the certitude to be punished in case of high risk behaviour(e.g. drink and driving, speeding, aggressive driving, no use of safety belts and helmets).



On some of the motorways network, the introduction of the “Tutor” system that records the average speed of every vehicles passing through a specific road section, has delivered a 19% accident reduction as well as 51% fatalities reduction.

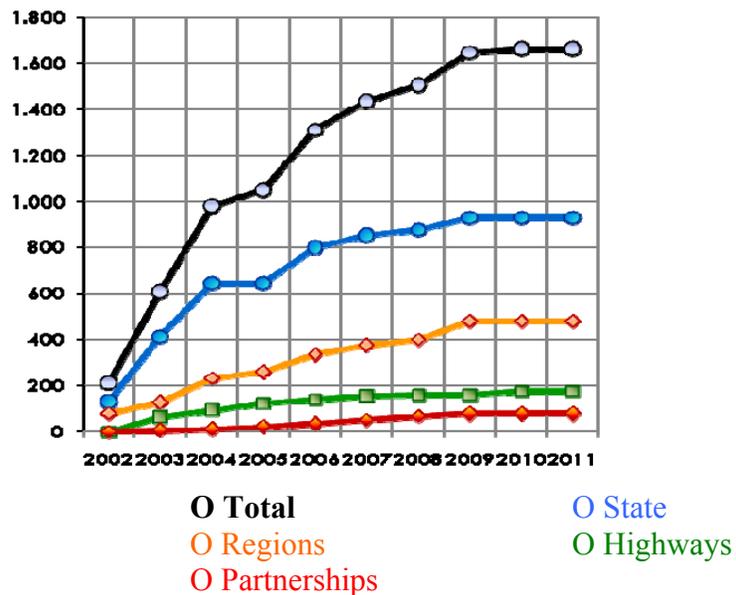
At present the Tutor system is installed on about 20 % of the highway network.



The adoption and implementation of Road Safety National Plan;

The plan, adopted in the year 2002 has been progressively implemented and financed at national and local level..

ROAD SAFETY PLAN FUNDING (MILLION €)



Better road safety risk awareness.

The adoption at national and local level of information campaigns has increased driver's awareness with regard to drink driving, speeding, use of helmets and safety belts.

WEAK FACTORS

Road Infrastructure Inadequacy

The road network is not adequate to the present traffic flows and characteristics.

During the last 30 years we have passed from an average of 50 vehicles/km to 110 vehicles/km.

Italy has the highest vehicle/inhabitants ratio in the EU (846/1000).

Although the number of motor vehicles has increased from 22,1 millions to 51,9 millions the road network has not changed substantially.

Moreover, the quality and the maintenance degree of the existing network (with exception of motorways) needs to be improved as well as the road signs which are not always well maintained and well positioned along the roads.

Traffic regulations

Sign management plans are not adopted in a coordinated way, in urban area as well in rural areas. They should be adopted taking in due consideration road safety analysis (e.g traffic flows, black spots) rather than public opinion requests.

Education

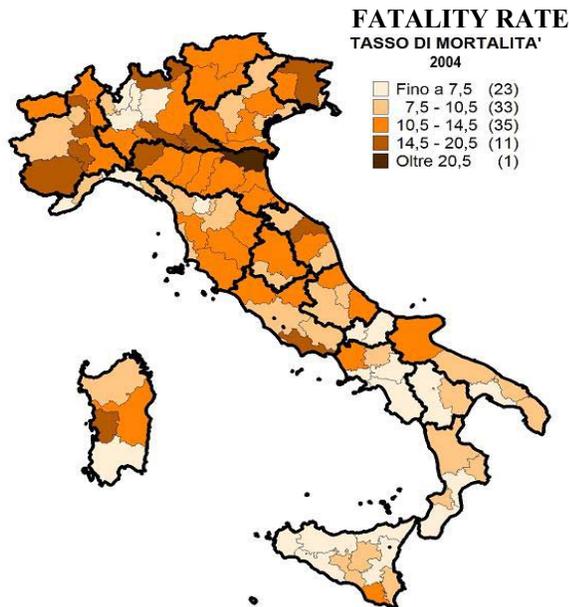
Better education is needed starting at school level and including certain categories of citizens and those people responsible for road safety.

MAIN UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

As already said, in spite of the improvements made between 2003 and to 2007, Italy presents some safety problems which still need a solution.

Regional and local gaps

Road safety risk index varies among Italian cities so that one citizen may have seven times more probability to be involved in an accident according to the region he/she is living in.



The fatality rate varies from 3 to 21 dead per 100,000 inhabitants.

Between 2002 and 2003, 12 provinces recorded an increase of fatalities between + 10% and + 50% while 10 provinces recorded abatements between -30% and -50%. In other terms, one part of Italy has difficulties on maintaining the step of Europe while the other can achieve both, the European and national goals before the year 2010.

Urban areas

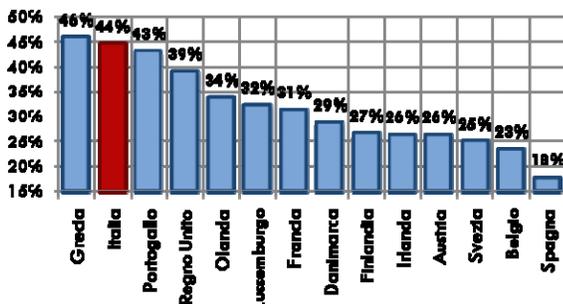
Urban areas represent a major problem since the 44 per cent of fatalities recorded in 2006 happened there. In summary:

2,269 fatalities (44% of total) while the EU average is 34 %

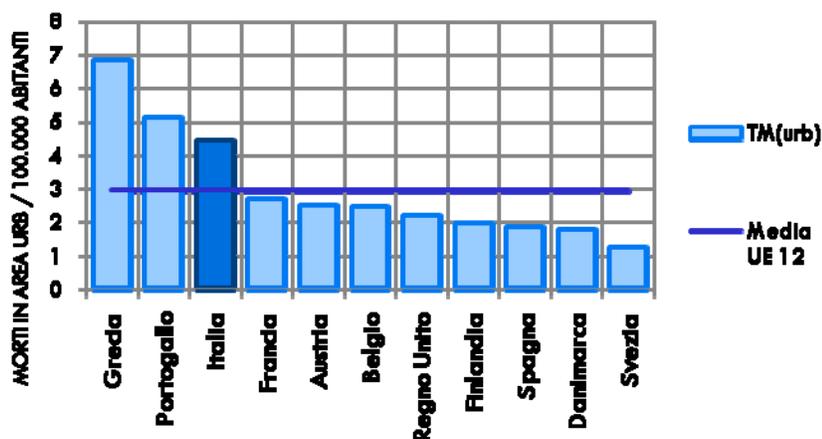
238,718 injured, (73% of total)

20,733 million Euros of social cost (67% of total).

DEATHS IN URBAN AREAS



FATALITY RATE IN URBAN AREAS (deaths/100,000 inhabitants)



High risk road network

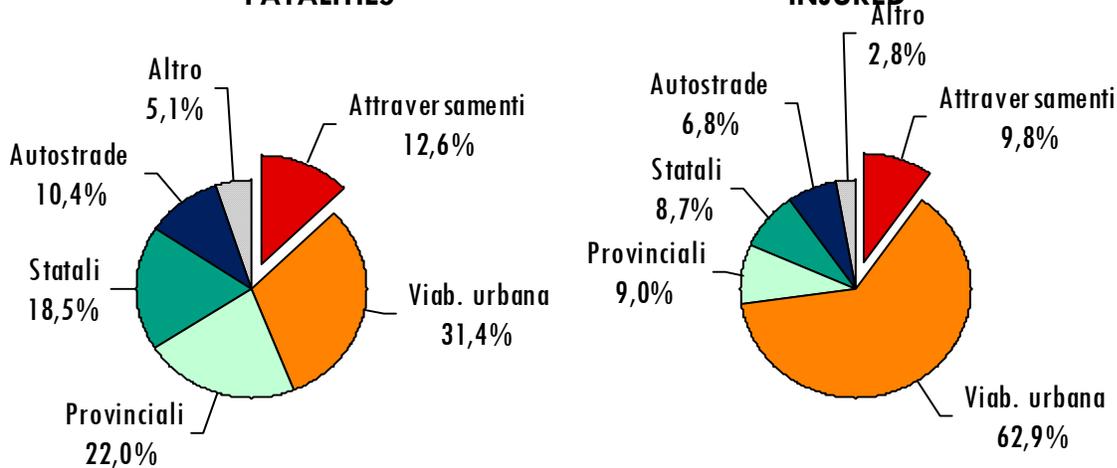
Following a study made by the Italian Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, a network of about 6.000 km roads presenting the highest level of road accidents has been identified; Economic resources will be invested on these selected roads, on the basis of road safety priorities.

Urban crossing roads

A high victims concentration is due to accidents happening on roads crossing urban areas. This is particularly evident on roads crossing villages where road traffic conditions change completely passing from rural to agglomerate areas.

712 fatalities have been recorded in 2006, namely 12,6% of total amount, 32,700 injured (9,8%) with a social cost of 3.399 million Euros (10,5%).

ROAD ACCIDENTS SHARE ACCORDING TO THE TYPE OF ROADS



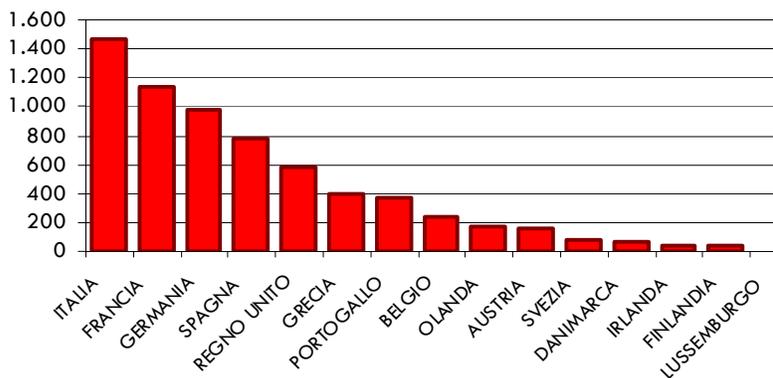
- urban roads
- urban area crossing roads
- national roads
- highways
- provincial roads
- other roads

Two wheeler mobility

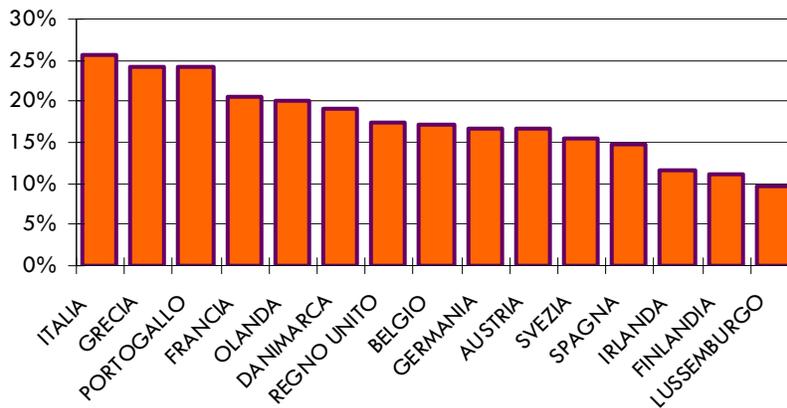
Italy has the highest number of victims in the EU15. In fact, road accident involving two wheeler users caused in the year 2007 1.540 fatalities (about 30,0% of total) and 90,551 injured (27,8%) with a social cost of 8,812 million Euros (28,3%).

About 60% of fatalities and 80 % of injured people are recorded in urban areas; Therefore, a clear link between urban area road safety and two wheeler road safety exists.

Number of fatalities – motorcycles and mopeds



Percentage of fatalities – motorcycles and mopeds



The typical victim of a two wheeler accident is represented by an adult citizen using the vehicle to commute to and from the working place, running on an urban road at low speed.

Pedestrians, cyclists and elderly people

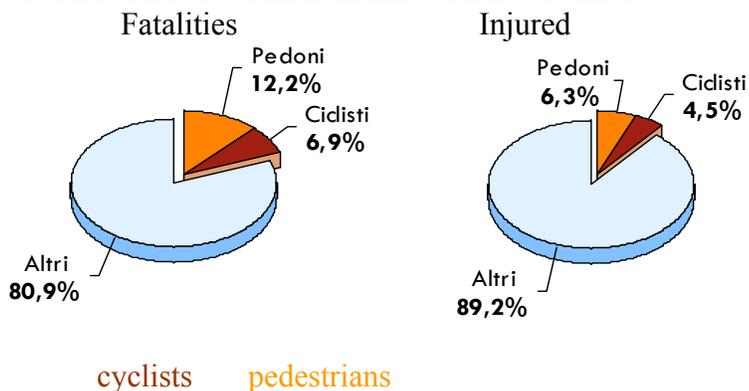
Italy has recorded the highest number of fatalities among pedestrians.

As for two wheelers, these accidents mainly happen in urban areas determining a clear safety link between urban areas and road vulnerable users

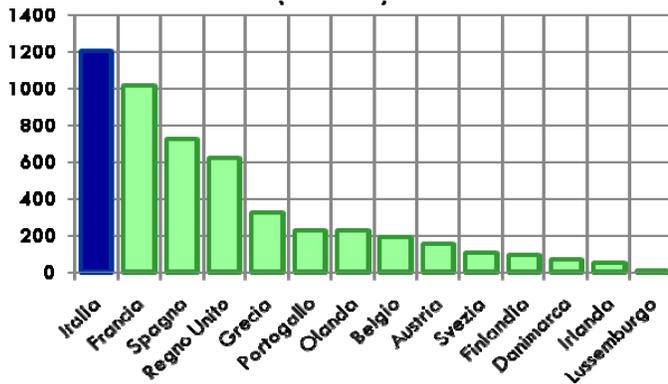
The constant increasing of number of elderly people has made the safety of this category of strategic importance.

In the year 2007 road accidents involving elderly people have led to:
 1,105 fatalities (21,5% of total) which is the highest rate in the EU
 27,000 injured (8,4%) with a social cost of 3.553 million Euros (11,4%).

VICTIMS AMONG PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS



FATALITIES OF ELDERLY PEOPLE

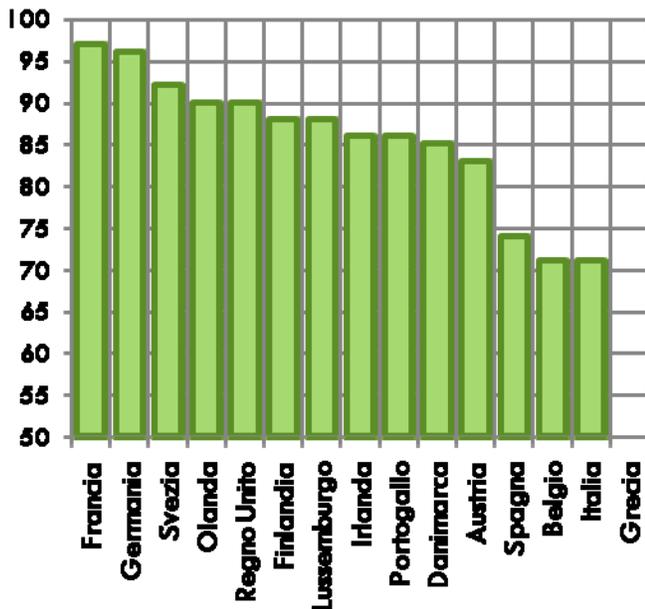


Use of safety belts and helmets

Italy has the lowest rate in EU regarding the use of safety belts (71.6 %)

According to the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) the use of seat belts by all drivers and passengers would save about 800 lives every year.

USE OF SAFETY BELTS (% RATE)



Regarding the use of helmets the gap among regions is quite evident. In the northern and central regions the percentage of use of helmets is quite close to 100 per cent while in the southern regions

the available data show lower percentages which can reach 50 per cent at local level.

VEHICLE SAFETY RESEARCH

Research in the field of vehicle safety is mainly carried out in the framework of the activities of the European Enhanced Vehicle-safety Committee – EEVC of which Italy is member.

Researches conducted by EEVC are taken into account by the European Commission when preparing new legislation on road vehicle safety and by the UNECE which adopts technical regulations under the framework of the 1958 and 1998 Agreements.

The EEVC technical work is made by nine working groups, six of them dealing with passive safety, two with active safety and one with accidentology.

In the future, further progress in vehicle safety is expected more, in the area of active safety than passive safety.

In the field of motorcycles it is worth mentioning the PISa project (**P**owered two wheelers **I**ntegrated **S**afety) aiming at developing and implementing "reliable and fail-safe" integrated safety systems for a range of Powered Two Wheelers (PTWs), which improve the performance and primary safety (handling and stability) and can also lead to safety devices.

This project is managed by a consortium of 11 partners from 5 countries bringing together top-level academic (University of Florence) and industrial expertise in the areas of automotive and human factors research, accidentology, biomechanics research, sensor systems, suspension technology and design, engineering & manufacturing technology for PTWs.

Within the project PTWs, will be fitted with integrated safety systems to demonstrate the potential of such systems to reduce the incidence and severity of up to 50% of PTW accidents. The cost savings in terms of reduction in accidents and injuries will be related to the costs of fitting the integrated safety systems to PTWs.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN

Italy has been experiencing the greatest and most relevant amelioration process in the field of road safety during the last 30 years, which will make it possible to re-align with the other EU countries.

However, with exception of some regions, the European target of halving the road safety victims of 50 per cent by 2010 will be hardly reached.

A series of actions have been recommended by the transport administration and are being considered at political level.

First of all, in order to improve the effectiveness on road safety it is necessary to reinforce the action and ensuring a better coordination at central, regional and local level

In this respect a new Directorate General for Road Safety has been created within the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport. This new organisation is linked to the corresponding regional offices which should make it possible to deal with road safety in a more systematic way.

Secondly, it is clear that the enforcement action is producing positive effects; therefore we expect to continue to increase the number of controls on the roads with a better and dissuasive enforcement of traffic rules.

Another priority will be the creation of a road safety culture, starting from school level with the aim of making the young population more aware of the need of careful and responsible drive. This priority should also concern administrations dealing with road safety in order to train better the existing human resources and prepare the new professionals to better deal with the subject.

The Road Safety National Plan has strongly recommended the adoption of a monitoring network based on local administrations and coordinated at national level. The aim of the monitoring would be to know better the state and the evolution of road safety, to know the road safety measure adopted during the years and the results which have been achieved, to assess the effectiveness of the adopted measures.
