

## RESOLUTION NO. 92/3 ON DECENTRALISED ROAD SAFETY POLICIES

[CEMT/CM(92)4 REV]

The Council of Ministers of Transport of ECMT, meeting in Athens on 11 and 12 June 1992,

**HAVING REGARD** to the report on trends in road safety policies;

**BEARING IN MIND** all the Resolutions adopted by ECMT in connection with the orientation of road safety policies, more particularly Resolution No. 48 (1986) on ways of influencing human behaviour with a view to improving road safety and Resolution No. 55 (1989) on road safety;

**BELIEVING** that the number of road accident casualties in ECMT Member countries is unacceptable;

**NOTING:**

- That the policies pursued in most of the Member countries since the early 1970s have led to a downtrend in numbers of both road accidents and casualties.
- That these policies, which had previously focused primarily and individually on regulatory measures, road infrastructure and vehicle safety, had subsequently begun to integrate all these aspects.
- That the structures set up and the degree of central government involvement in shaping and conducting these policies differs from one country to another and that no single model can be recommended as valid for all.

**CONSIDERING:**

- That it is a prerequisite for an effective policy to mobilise all concerned, especially those closest to the public as road users, for the purpose of conducting a diversified and co-ordinated programme of action.
- That the policies currently adopted in many countries do satisfy this requirement by means geared to the relevant administrative structures and have shown their effectiveness in the light of the results achieved.

**RECOMMENDS** the Member countries to pursue and step up their efforts to prevent road accidents, and in particular:

- To set an attainable but ambitious objective in quantitative or qualitative terms on which the relevant measures can be focused.
- To take any legislative measures that may still be called for.
- To make the concern with road safety an issue of national importance and a part of general transport policy.
- To promote a range of measures to change user behaviour by means of education, training and information but also by means of an effective policy of enforcement and penalties, while at the same time continuing to improve both infrastructure and vehicles, due account being taken of any interaction between these diverse measures.
- To identify all the various partners from national down to local level, including elected representatives, administrations and the private sector, who may participate in these efforts to prevent road accidents.
- To enable these bodies to work together, each at its own level and with respect to its own responsibilities and areas of concern, in order to draw up and implement a diversified and co-ordinated action programme.
- Establish the structures whereby all concerned can be mobilised and experience may be exchanged.
- To develop instruments for monitoring and assessing these policies.

## COVER NOTE ON DEVELOPMENT OF ROAD SAFETY POLICIES

### CEMT/CM(92)4/REV

Following an international seminar on decentralised road safety policies which was held in Aix-en-Provence in October 1986 in the context of the EEC's Road Safety Year, the Road Safety Committee decided at its 78th Session to put on its agenda the question of the devolution of responsibility for road safety work to the regions.

Since the early 1980s many countries, more particularly those with the greatest propensity to centralise, have been developing road safety policies which have involved all the various levels of administration, including local authorities, the essential aim being to step up efficiency by facilitating the mobilisation of all political and administrative authorities to combat the lack of safety on the roads and to develop forms of action as close as possible to the general public, the actual road users.

The Aix-en-Provence Seminar highlighted both the diversity of the approaches adopted in the various countries – mainly owing to differences in governmental and administrative structures, and the positive results achieved with decentralisation.

Instead of simply describing the different cases, it would seem useful to examine the way in which road safety policies almost everywhere have been moving from the national to the local level over the past two decades and to consider the instruments that have accordingly been developed along with these policies.

#### **1. Pattern of development of policies over the past two decades**

As pointed out in the OECD publication “Integrated road safety programmes”<sup>1</sup>, there is an astonishing similarity in the patterns of development of the road safety situation in OECD countries (as in all countries with *high* levels of car ownership) and, with a certain time-lag, in those countries in which car ownership is developing.

The spectacular increase in the number of motor vehicles after the Second World War was unfortunately accompanied by an equally spectacular and disastrous increase in the number of accidents and, accordingly, in the number of casualties. What had been a sporadic and relatively mild phenomenon, comparable to the accidents involving horse-drawn carriages in earlier decades, became an endemic disease which on its own claims as many lives as some of today's most dreaded diseases, especially among the younger members of our populations, thus cancelling out much of the progress made in the fight against infantile diseases.

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1. Integrated Road Safety Programmes, OECD, Paris, 1984.

Towards the end of the 1960s the scale of the problem was such that the public could no longer accept it, and all the governments of countries with high levels of car ownership then developed comprehensive preventive policies and set up administrative structures whereby road safety issues could be dealt with more effectively.

In the early 1970s national governments introduced legislation with respect to the four factors that seemed to be most decisive in terms of the number and severity of accidents, namely, alcohol, speed, and the wearing of seat-belts and helmets. The measures taken were designed to limit the perverse effects in the case of alcohol and speed and promote the benefits in the case of seat-belts and helmets, thus effectively curbing or even reversing the steadily rising trend in the number of casualties recorded in the preceding years.

The first laws were accordingly laid down to make the wearing of belts in front seats and of helmets compulsory, to penalise drinking and driving (establishment of a legal limit for the blood/alcohol level) and to set speed limits on all networks.

At the same time, research was stepped up with a view to getting a better understanding of accidents and of driver behaviour. Similarly, major programmes were developed for the improvement of road infrastructure, the construction of the motorway network being one of the most spectacular features. Meanwhile, the motor manufacturers were bringing out increasingly reliable and collision-proof vehicles, although these were also capable of increasingly high speeds.

Significant results were achieved immediately and, once these nationwide legislative measures had been taken, all countries recorded a sharp fall in the number of accidents and casualties, while the number of vehicles and volume of traffic on the roads continued to increase rapidly.

This general realisation that the lack of safety on the roads was unacceptable – which has made this problem one of the most crucial of present-day society – has also been one of the factors conducive to the downtrend in the accident rate since, convinced of the advisability and soundness of the constraints imposed, many people were well disposed to comply with the new regulations.

In addition, enforcement measures were stepped up, penalties were brought into line and national information campaigns were developed at this time to keep the problems in the public eye and bring them to the attention of those who still needed to be convinced of their gravity.

**Since that time, while the road safety policy pursued may be qualified as national and legislative,** it has been found that if the policy is to be effective it must be **integrated** with other matters of concern in the sphere of road transport such as personal mobility, the smooth flow of traffic and environmental protection – as clearly demonstrated in the OECD report<sup>2</sup> – and be **diversified** to include all the fields identified as being able to make a direct or indirect contribution to the improvement of road safety in the short or longer term.

### *Example of integration*

The attempt to improve the fluidity of traffic provides an example of the integration of concern for safety with other aspects of general transport policy.

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2. Report on Integrated Road Safety Policies.

Consideration has since been given to the construction of new roads and motorways, the improvement of the existing network and specific operational measures developed to cater for the increase in traffic, cope with its irregularities and manage peak periods more efficiently (daily, weekly or seasonal), with a view to increasing the capacity of roads and ensuring the smooth flow of traffic, while at the same time increasing the comfort of users and maintaining, or preferably raising, the standard of safety.

### *An example of diversification*

Road safety improvements are to be found not only in relation to the road itself, since the three main spheres in which action is to be taken to establish an effective policy relate to road, vehicle and driver.

For the sake of simplicity, and to avoid making a tiresome list which might not be exhaustive in any event, a few examples will show the very broad range covered by diversification:

- In the road sector, the construction of new and safer infrastructures and of alternative routes, the equipment of roads with safety devices, the elimination of “black spots”, the provision of both vertical and horizontal road signs, signals and markings.
- As regards vehicles, – to consider only the car – greater resistance in collisions, the fitting of safety devices, vehicle maintenance, driving aids.
- As regards the driver and road user in general, improved driver training, better education and information, a more efficient policy of enforcement and penalties to ensure better compliance with regulations, the development of preventive measures together with more appropriate regulations.

The downtrend in numbers of accidents and casualties, which was then recorded over a number of years, was followed in almost all countries by some levelling-off in the results, so some fresh impetus was then called for. The major legislative measures of the early 1970s had borne fruit. Even though endeavours had to be maintained or even stepped up to ensure better compliance with these regulations, and although the measures taken in the various above-mentioned fields had not as yet taken full effect since their impact could only be felt in the medium to long term, the various actors needed to be re-motivated, the policies renewed and the machinery modified.

Though to varying degrees, everybody seemed to agree at the time that, while infrastructures should continue to be developed and roads and vehicles be improved, attention had to be focused primarily on the behaviour of the driver with a view to changing the behaviour of all road users.

Given these factors, road safety policies in most countries then began to develop along three other lines.

**I** — First, towards greater **diversification** of measures taken by central government which, while pursuing its programme of improvements to its own road network, – often with a dual aim of fluidity and safety and the establishment of standards for more reliable vehicles in collaboration with manufacturers – and continuing to implement legislation on road traffic and behaviour, developed the action it was taking with respect to education, training, information and communications, as well as carrying out its responsibilities as regards the enforcement of regulations and the imposition of penalties.

The essential target of the various measures was the road user, the aim being to change his behaviour which all agreed played an important and usually major role in accidents.

In this phase, however, as pointed out in the ECMT “Report on ways of influencing human behaviour with a view to improving road safety”, all these measures were essentially carried out, or in some cases called for, by the public authorities at national level, with little being asked from the other partners who did not have an integral role in this policy.

It must not be concluded that there were no other partners or that the partners took no action. However, such action was very often only sporadic, focused on very limited targets or subjects on an individual basis with no formal consultation among the partners.

This problem has to be qualified, however, since the situation described is characteristic of highly centralised countries, such as France at that time, whereas the participation of regional and local authorities and associations was already considerably advanced in varying degrees according to the country in light of their individual responsibilities. For example, the responsibility for enforcement policy of the German *länder* and Swiss cantons or responsibility for education. In decentralised countries, while the main lines of approach were laid down by central government, often in the form of regulations, regional or local authorities were responsible for implementing the measures and took considerable initiative in defining the action to be taken.

**II** — This diversification of measures was accompanied by an **increase in the number of actors** and greater **decentralisation** of the action taken.

The second fundamental stage in the evolution of road safety policies involved the participation and mobilisation of local authorities representing central government at the various levels of the administrative structure which were closer to the public, the road users, and directly responsible at their own level for taking such action as law enforcement and the imposition of penalties.

Such participation was often prompted by or delegated by the national authorities. It proved effective in varying degrees according to the government department concerned and the sphere of action and according to the resources employed to promote it.

These resources took various forms:

- Manuals prepared for local authorities and giving a list of possible measures, such as “The Improvement of Traffic Safety in Built-up Areas” published in 1980 by the central government, or “Measures to Ensure the Safety of the Elderly” in Finland, or “The Road Safety Code of Good Practice” drawn up by the co-ordinated associations for the regional offices of the Department of Transport in the United Kingdom.
- Funds allocated under contracts between the central government and local partners: the “10% reduction aim” contacts with local authorities, towns or departments in France, or the “30 km zone” experiment and the “25% reduction” contract in the Netherlands.
- The establishment of road safety organisations, commissions or boards at local or intermediate level, such as the agencies set up in each county in Denmark or the regional road safety organisations in each province in the Netherlands.

In other countries this decentralisation of action and the relevant incentive measures were based on existing administrative units: municipal authorities in Portugal, municipal or departmental authorities in France, regional authorities in the United Kingdom.

**III** — The third stage in the development of decentralised policies involves the participation of all the public and private sector partners in a **concerted action programme**.

In many of the most decentralised countries, action by associations has always been better recognised and integrated than in the more centralised countries where central government seemed to have the main role. The decentralisation of road safety measures also provided the opportunity to involve all the partners in carrying through a programme that had been jointly established and recognised by all, thus promoting the development of combined efforts calculated to improve the overall efficiency of the action.

Associations of both users and enterprises with local elected representatives and central government representatives at local level in all the spheres relating to road safety: road engineers and technicians, doctors, police, magistrates, teachers, etc. were able to draw up a programme together and develop measures to which they all assigned priority with a view to improving road safety in their own particular spheres and so participate in the achievement of the national objective.

This collaboration was developed on two levels:

- Either on a specific subject whereby all the partners worked together to prepare a particular action for which the procedures were jointly determined. Germany offers one example relating to the safety of children on the journey to and from school: a list of possible measures was drawn up with a view to providing practical information for those responsible.
- Or by drawing up an action programme, usually on an annual basis, for an authority or administrative unit and integrating the whole range of diverse fields relating to road safety: infrastructure, education, enforcement, etc. which was funded jointly and monitored by each partner according to specific responsibilities. An example of this format comprehensive collaboration is to be found in the departmental road safety action programmes developed in France since 1988.

It was clearly seen at that time that road safety was not the exclusive responsibility of central government but that, in order to reach the general public of road users, the information and measures provided by central government had to be passed on to and developed by all the partners, especially locally elected representatives and the associations closest to the general public, each in accordance with his individual characteristics, spirit and objectives, but in a joint action to ensure greater clarity and effectiveness.

In providing for the participation of all concerned, this third stage – which can be considered to mark the starting point of current decentralised policies – makes it possible to increase each person's awareness of his share in the responsibility for the endeavours to prevent road accidents and also to broaden the range of measures to cover every field, even those that seemed to play a secondary or minor role in terms of lives saved.

## **2. Brief assessment of decentralised policies**

This decentralisation of action in the sphere of road safety, accompanied by diversification and collaboration among the various partners, provided the necessary fresh impetus whose initial results are clearly encouraging in the light of the pattern of development in the ECMT countries over the past ten years, since the fall in the number of accidents and casualties, while not as spectacular as that in the 1970s, is nonetheless substantial.

However, the value of these policies does not lie exclusively in the favourable results achieved, even if such results are of course the major objective.

The ways in which these policies have been put into practice have given rise to procedures which not only provide benefits today but will do so in the future.

**The development of the individual action** of very limited local scope, which could not have been conceived of or carried out at national level, is facilitated by this system, while the increasing number and diversity of such measures offers a by no means negligible advantage overall in that new ideas are generated. Initiatives and proposals no longer move solely from national level down to local level since it is also **easier for the results of experience to be conveyed upwards from the local level and be disseminated more widely**. The fact that ongoing exchanges of ideas have been established at all levels will certainly help to improve the road safety results during the coming years.

The collaboration among the various partners, coming to work together from very different spheres and areas of concern, has developed **reciprocal training** by means of a better mutual understanding of motivations and technical know-how, thus **decompartmentalising the ideas and enabling each partner to acquire a broader knowledge** of all aspects of road safety. This process of self-training combined with **exchanges of views** which are conducive to a more fruitful and constructive dialogue helps to generate new ideas, making it possible to establish priorities and plan major measures which are better geared to requirements and therefore more effective.

It should also be noted that the development of these decentralised policies provided the opportunity to carry out specific training programmes for a large number of people who were subsequently able to assume responsibility for road safety problems in a particular area and pass on their knowledge to others.

Accordingly, **the motivation of all concerned is often increased**, as is necessary for the continuity of any action that is to be productive in the years to come.

This exchange of experience is organised around networks consisting of specialists or those in charge in a particular field, thus facilitating the **transfer of information** from national to local level, but also in the opposite direction, as well as between the various local levels, so as to ensure the **consistency of action** that is essential if a policy is to be effective.

In short, as pointed out in a German report, these policies have made it possible to:

- Establish co-operation among the various government departments and also between elected representatives and the private sector.
- Approach problems from different angles.
- Prevent a short-sighted approach to one's own organisation.
- Reduce the risk of poor decisions.
- Adopt an objective approach to the arguments.

All these attainments should be of even greater value in the years to come, thus leading to even more effective action and greater safety on the roads.

To conclude this brief review of the trend of road safety policies over the past twenty years, it may be said that, after adopting what was essentially a national and legislative policy during the 1970s, all countries are now pursuing diversified, decentralised and concerted action policies which involve all the partners concerned at every level.

On the basis of the above examples it would seem that, while the prime objective of all current policies – qualified local or decentralised according to the country – is certainly to mobilise all agents in the field of road safety at national or local levels, from government departments to private enterprises – by integrating elected representatives and associations, each according to its responsibilities, area of competence and type of contact with and nearness to the public, the actors in the field of road safety – that objective cannot be achieved by means of a universal plan. Both the administrative organisation and the position of the associations determine the structure that must give shape to the decentralised policies. It follows that an efficient system that has proved successful in one country cannot be transferred to another country with a different structure. Accordingly, it would seem to be difficult to promote a single plan within ECMT, and the aim should be rather to set out the means or instruments needed to mobilise each actor with due regard to his position in the structure.

### **3. Established instruments**

Among the instruments, consideration will be given in turn to the specification of objectives as a factor in the process of mobilisation, the establishment of appropriate bodies and provision of financial incentives, although it is not claimed that every aspect is covered here in full.

#### **3.1. Specification of objectives**

Any action of whatever kind is carried out with a view to attaining an objective, clear-cut or otherwise. Road safety measures are of course no exception, their ultimate aim being to reduce the number of traffic accidents and especially the number of casualties, thus contributing to the achievement of the essential task of central government which is to ensure mobility and traffic safety.

##### *3.1.1 Specification of objectives at national level*

The various policies followed over the past 25 years have often involved the establishment of precise objectives, thus reflecting the resolve of policymakers to take active steps to make the roads safer.

Two types of objective were adopted, qualitative and quantitative, each for different reasons with a view to gaining maximum acceptance by the public for which the policies were designed.

##### **3.1.1.1 Quantitative objectives**

The quantitative objectives may be either in absolute terms (x fewer deaths per year), relative terms (x per cent fewer deaths) or yet again be expressed in terms of a reduction of risk, e.g. a lower fatality rate (deaths per kilometre up to a given value).

#### ***Establishment of a maximum for the number of casualties***

- In France, the gravity of the lack of safety on the roads had become quite unacceptable with a total of 16 000 killed per year, so a maximum figure of 15 000 deaths was taken as the first objective for the period 1970-1975.

- In Finland, a parliamentary Committee recently set as objective to reduce by 50% as compared with 1989 the number of killed by the year 2000.
- In Spain, a maximum of 6 200 deaths was established in the context of the first national road safety plan in 1980.

### *Estimation of a rate of reduction in the number of casualties*

In the early 1970s Canada decided to reduce the rate of fatalities by 15% over the period 1974-1978 and, in 1978, revised the rate to 17% over the period 1979-1983.

In 1973, Norway presented a list of priority safety measures to be implemented and, in 1980, replaced these by a quantitative objective designed to reduce the risk during the 1980s to the level existing in the preceding decade by implementing the measures announced in 1973. An additional individual objective for Oslo was to reduce the number of accidents by 30% by 1990.

A number of governments have more recently established very ambitious specific objectives.

In 1986, the Netherlands announced that it was to reduce the number of casualties by 25% by the year 2000.

In 1987, the United Kingdom announced that it wished to reduce casualties by one-third by the year 2000.

In 1989, Denmark set an even more ambitious objective of reducing the number of road casualties by 40%.

Sweden set the objective of reducing the number of killed to 600 by the year 2000.

In 1981 France had also adopted such an approach and, in backing up all the measures decided by an interministerial commission on road safety, was aiming to reduce road traffic risks by one-third over five years.

As the results of the first two years did not come up to expectations, this objective was abandoned after two years and replaced at the end of the 1980s by the aim to bring the number of deaths below the fateful figure of 10 000.

These quantitative objectives are accompanied by a list of specific measures which are themselves qualitative objectives.

#### 3.1.1.2 Qualitative objectives

For reasons that will be given below, a number of countries (more particularly Belgium, and Switzerland) did not want to adopt quantitative objectives but referred directly to “qualitative” objectives, specifying the content of the proposed policies, the aim being to reduce the risks by appropriate means as long as the problems exist.

The scale of these objectives and the lines of approach adopted differ from one country to another according to the types of problem or in the light of the main accident parameters (user group, place and characteristics, types of accident, etc.). The aim may be to improve the safety of particular road user categories (pedestrians, the elderly, riders of two-wheelers), or else the focus may be on highly specific

areas (speed, alcohol, seatbelts, night-time traffic, improvements to the road network, etc.), examples being:

- In Ireland, compliance by young drivers with the laws on drink/driving and the wearing of seatbelts.
- In Belgium, compliance with regulations on speed limits, the wearing of seatbelts and helmets and drink/driving.
- In Sweden, earlier objectives have been to reduce the risk in very particular conditions, such as night-time driving, travelling at high speeds, or drink/driving.

These qualitative objectives can also be quantified as follows, for example:

- The endeavours to combat drink/driving can be expressed in terms of a number of checks to be carried out or a specific reduction in the percentage of checks found to be positive.
- Greater compliance with speed limits by a reduction in the percentage of drivers exceeding the limit.
- The wearing of seatbelts by trying to get a given percentage of drivers to wear belts.

### 3.1.2 *A choice between qualitative and quantitative objectives*

A quantitative objective is usually established in order to show that the political will exists to combat road accidents. Such an objective serves as a reference and for the purpose of communication, but is also a tool for the management and assessment of road safety programmes.

As an instrument of communication, a quantitative objective must be ambitious, since it would hardly be credible to try to reduce the number of road casualties by 3% or even 10%.

The establishment of a figure implies that the present results are recognised to be unacceptable but also suggest that the proposed figure to be attained is itself acceptable, either at an initial stage or once and for all. It is therefore a way of recognising that the freedom to travel on the roads is accompanied by a risk that cannot be reduced to zero, just as this is accepted for other means of transport (air, sea or rail) or for sports and recreational activities.

The objective might be to lower the level of risk on the roads to that existing for other modes of transport, which is not to say that the level attained for rail or air travel is acceptable and that nothing has to be done to reduce it still further.

The fact that users accept the existence of a minimum risk, which takes the form of a number of casualties which cannot be reduced although this number cannot be evaluated precisely, is of educational value. That might seem shocking but can also lead to an awareness by the user and even according to some specialists, promote a better acceptance of the measures taken to reduce the level of risk.

The establishment of a quantitative objective may also have several drawbacks. If it is not achieved or, on the contrary, is substantially exceeded, the programme manager must explain the error of assessment, which is seen as particularly serious since human lives are involved.

For example, the 15% reduction in the rate of fatalities established in Canada for the period 1974 to 1978 was improved upon to the extent of 33%, although not all the improvement could be attributed to the road safety programme implemented. A good part of this improvement may perhaps be explained by other factors such as the way in which the 1973 crisis affected traffic.

The achievement of the 17% reduction planned in the subsequent programme – based on an 80% rate for the wearing of seatbelts whereas the rate was in fact 45% – was also difficult to explain and did not make the task of determining further objectives any easier for the authorities.

In France, however, the objective established in 1981 whereby road accidents were to be cut by one-third had to be abandoned because the results of the following two years made it impossible to achieve. The abandonment of the reference objective is by no means to say that the programme is abandoned, since it is then either revised or continued.

The difficulty of establishing a quantitative objective is largely attributable to the difficulty of assessing the impact of measures taken, especially those relating to education or information. Present methods of assessment do not allow for any certainty but only an estimate of the foreseeable benefits.

Moreover, the closely interrelated nature of the measures in existing road safety programmes means that effects are difficult to measure accurately, while the system is further disrupted by unforeseeable or imponderable external events.

It is largely for these reasons that a number of countries do not quantify their objectives but use the “qualitative” method, an approach that clearly shows the difficulty of accurately assessing a programme’s effectiveness in advance, although it also takes account of the need to work unceasingly to improve road safety.

### *3.1.3 The establishment of objectives at local level or partial objectives*

In the context of decentralised, integrated and concerted action programmes, the action taken by each partner contributes to the attainment of the overall objective.

Each can therefore set himself an objective in relation to the type of action he takes, an objective that will likewise be quantitative or qualitative.

This partial objective may be the same as that determined at national level but relate to a given geographical area, or it may be quite different.

Different quantitative or qualitative solutions are possible:

A quantitative objective may be established with reference to a specific action relating to a particular category of user (pedestrians, cyclists, the elderly or children, etc.) or a certain type of improvement designed to avoid particular types of accident (accidents at intersections, crashes against trees, etc.) or infrastructure characteristics (motorways, built-up areas).

Other partial objectives may be designed to modify certain types of deviant or dangerous behaviour by means of appropriate measures and to improve the results in terms of offences recorded with respect to speeding, seatbelt wearing, drink/driving, etc.

The diversity of these partial objectives can enable each actor to identify his action, calculate its efficiency and feel fully involved in the attainment of the overall objective insofar as he focuses on the achievement of one objective that is more readily within his grasp.

In the last analysis, it is up to each country to select the approach best suited to it. In any event, it would seem that the specification of objectives, whether quantified or not, makes it possible to develop a coherent set of safety measures and serves as a catalyst by gathering together at the planning stage all the actors to be responsible for implementing the measures. Moreover, the establishment of a programme based on objectives provides for the rational and co-ordinated management of road safety work at all levels of responsibility. Lastly, it is important to be able to disaggregate a set of objectives so as to ensure the decentralisation of the different types of action to be taken by the partners concerned.

As pointed out in the above-mentioned OECD report “... there is no magic formula to apply in determining safety goals and safety programmes”. However, various factors have to be taken into account, such as the involvement of the various partners of different origin, the use of decision-making criteria and, lastly, sound judgement whereby one can determine the most important objectives and the most appropriate resources and means for achieving them.

#### 3.1.4 *Specification of an objective for ECMT*

Even if it is not given formal expression, a specific objective is clearly established by any actor in the field of road safety when he determines the action to be taken. To set the objective out clearly often amounts to a commitment, a kind of moral contract between the actor and the community which gives value to the action that he proposes to take.

As already pointed out, this approach is more a reflection of his concern to show his commitment to prevent road accidents than it is the outcome of a reliable mathematical calculation of the foreseeable benefits from carrying out the action planned.

What is already difficult for any individual country is even more so for a number of countries. Would it be possible, for example, to establish a quantitative objective for the reduction of accidents or casualties for all ECMT countries by the year 2000?

The response may be positive if the aim is simply to publicise the ECMT’s resolve to combat the lack of safety on the roads and thus lend weight to the recommendations that it has been drawing up for a number of years and, of course, those to be drafted today and in the future.

Owing to the differences in the situations of the various ECMT Member countries, two difficulties arise which can be set out in the form of questions:

- What figure or what percentage reduction is to be selected?
- Does each individual country have to adopt for itself the objective set by ECMT?

Account has to be taken of a number of factors in order to answer these questions.

In contrast with those countries in which car ownership is growing and road infrastructure has not as yet developed to the full, countries that have for many years been unsparing in their efforts in this connection no longer have the resources needed to take major regulatory measures or even to construct the infrastructure that would enable them to improve their results to any appreciable degree.

A number of countries can hope to reduce the number of casualties by 20% within a short period, while for others it would seem impossible to achieve this objective and it will already be very difficult to progress by a few percentage points.

In order to be effective and develop policies geared to a country's situation, it would seem reasonable for each country to determine its own attainable objective since, as indicated above, failure here is difficult to handle.

Countries which have had effective policies at an earlier stage and whose considerable efforts have enabled them to establish road risk levels well below those in other countries, and therefore more difficult to reduce still further, will find themselves penalised insofar as they might set an unduly high objective that will not be attained or set a low one which might seem fairly unambitious.

However, countries that can expect to reduce the risk considerably by taking measures that have already proven successful elsewhere – provided they are suitable for local conditions – and by constructing infrastructure, for example, are experiencing funding problems which do not allow them to make rapid progress.

Accordingly, the results achieved by any of these countries are not necessarily commensurate with the efforts made. Any rapid comparison of the results based on the figures might well be unfair and have disastrous effects from the standpoint of the impact on the public.

In short, it would seem difficult to establish a common objective for all ECMT Member countries, and it would also be somewhat problematical to set an individual objective for each country as a contribution towards the attainment of the overall objective.

The establishment of an overall objective for ECMT, while perhaps introducing an additional motivation for each country and enhancing the ECMT's action in this field, may have harmful effects on the public in these countries which would be of far greater importance than any benefits to be expected.

These considerations prompted the ECMT Secretary-General to set a qualitative rather than quantitative objective, that is to say to pursue, develop and step up the endeavours to combat the lack of safety on the roads by very broadly promoting international co-operation, the harmonisation of legislation and exchanges of information and experience, as well as by recommending that the various Member countries take specific measures on a co-ordinated basis.

It should be noted that in a report to the Commission of the European Communities, a group of experts chaired by Mr. Gerondeau proposes that the Community should establish an objective of reducing the number of road accidents throughout the Community by 25 to 30% over the next ten years, and it sets out a list of measures to be taken jointly.

### ***3.2. The establishment of appropriate bodies***

Once the problems of road safety became a matter of concern in the early 1970s, the shaping of policy was accompanied by the establishment of a suitable administrative structure to carry out that policy effectively. Such a structure was of particular importance in that the diversified policy involved a number of ministries with responsibilities and functions as different as those of the Ministries of Education and Justice.

It was found that co-ordination of the action taken by each was essential to the administration and success of the policy.

This co-ordination was in many cases ensured by bodies set up for this purpose, such as:

### 3.2.1 *At national level*

- In Portugal in 1989, a commission consisting of the Ministries for Justice, Interior, Health, Public Works, Transport and Communications.
- In France, an Interministerial Road Safety Delegation attached to the Prime Minister's office.
- In Spain, a Higher Council for Traffic and Road Safety set up in 1976 under the Minister for the Interior to draw up integrated road safety programmes. Under the Road Safety Act of 1990 this became the Higher Council for Traffic and the Safety of Road Traffic with extended responsibilities, including the preparation of policy, counselling and the co-ordination and promotion of road safety measures.
- In Sweden, the Swedish Road Safety Office within which a Road Safety Board brings together several bodies concerned with road safety, such as the Federation of county councils and the association of local authorities, which is also responsible for submitting proposals to the government. Since 1986 the Board has also been responsible for laying down the main lines of local policy and developing and co-ordinating local measures.
- In the Netherlands, a Higher Council for Road Safety.
- In Belgium, establishment of the Belgian Institute for Road Safety.

The Swiss Road Safety Board is another example of this type of body and is an association set up under private law in which the Confederation, Cantons, Communes, private associations and institutions and enterprises are represented. The Board is responsible for promoting and strengthening all measures designed to improve road safety. More particularly, it draws up and conducts the information campaigns conducted at national level each year.

In Federal countries, road safety policies are primarily co-ordinated by means of existing administrative structures and the institutional procedures for consultation between national and regional authorities and all concerned with road safety.

### 3.2.2 *At local level*

During the process of developing decentralised policies a number of countries also decided to set up a regional body – as the Netherlands has done in each province – with its own budget to develop and co-ordinate the various types of action at local level, initially confined to road infrastructure but extended to all road safety spheres since 1989: information, training, enforcement.

Another example is to be found in Switzerland where, with a view to ensuring a fairly consistent approach and uniform application of the law (which comes within the competence of the cantons), the cantonal authorities consult within intercantonal associations such as the Association des Services des automobiles, the Commission intercantonale de la circulation routière, and the Conference des Officiers de Police.

Less formally, the departmental programmes for action in the field of road safety, introduced in France in 1988, can be regarded as an instrument or even a structure for co-ordination geared to the approach adopted in the context of decentralised policies.

The above are but a few examples since a full list cannot be given, but they do show the need to set up appropriate structures or bodies so as to monitor the policies being implemented.

### **3.3. *Financial incentives***

As shown in the report, the source of decentralised road safety measures is often at central level or in a central body in the form of contracts which include financial incentives.

Measures such as the improvement of infrastructure, elimination of black spots or multiple accident areas and the creation of reduced speed areas (such as the 30 km/h zones) in the Netherlands in 1975 were covered by the first types of contract between the central government department responsible for road safety and the local authorities in those countries with a centralised system.

As from the early 1980s, however, many countries developed other types of contracts with regional and local bodies for other forms of action than that related to infrastructure. Programmes such as REAGIR, launched in France in 1983, and those in the Netherlands in 1989 included measures that covered areas such as information, education, enforcement and communications campaigns.

This financial participation by central government was sometimes in the form of a budget entirely at the disposal of local authorities, part funding of a highly specific measure (joint action with the municipal authorities in Finland), or an incentive to take action by the provision of a sum proportional to the number of inhabitants (25% reduction programme in the Netherlands or the - 10% contract in France) or, more rarely, the award of a bonus for success by payment of a sum proportional to the number of lives saved (10% reduction contract in France).

These funds are allocated by central government in all cases.

Another example is the Fonds Suisse de Sécurité Routière (FSR), an institution set up under public law and under the supervision of the Federal Council, which primarily funds research, education courses and means for road safety training, information campaigns and other forms of action carried out by various bodies or road-user associations. The FSR obtains its capital from an annual contribution paid by each vehicle owner which amounts to 0.75% of the net premium for third-party insurance.

These financial contributions provide a means of developing action in the field of road safety by all the partners concerned, but they also serve to initiate such action, confer the right of inspection and a counselling role, and strengthen the collaboration among the various partners.

### **Conclusion**

The decentralised policies now conducted in the various countries should be pursued in the future and be further refined so as to ensure the even broader mobilisation of all those who have some contribution to make – however limited in scope – to the endeavours to combat the lack of safety on the roads, and also to ensure closer collaboration among all concerned.

Nation-wide legislative measures still need to be taken, even if the stringent application of each of them does not in itself reduce the number or gravity of road accidents to any great extent, since the

combination of a number of minor measures can no doubt produce significant results. The experience acquired at local level should also lead to new proposals.

The results obtained are sufficiently representative to establish the efficiency of these diverse policies and, accordingly, provide a basis for recommendations.