ACTION WITHIN THE COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE CHILD ROAD SAFETY

THE VERONA CONFERENCE

**WITH THE SUPPORT OF
THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
AND THE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE OF
THE EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY CHARTER**

LAUNCHES

THE FIRST VERONA CONFERENCE COMPETITION FOR PILOT SCHEMES TO IMPROVE CHILD ROAD SAFETY

PRINCIPLES, CRITERIA, PARAMETERS AND CONTENTS OF THE COMPETITION

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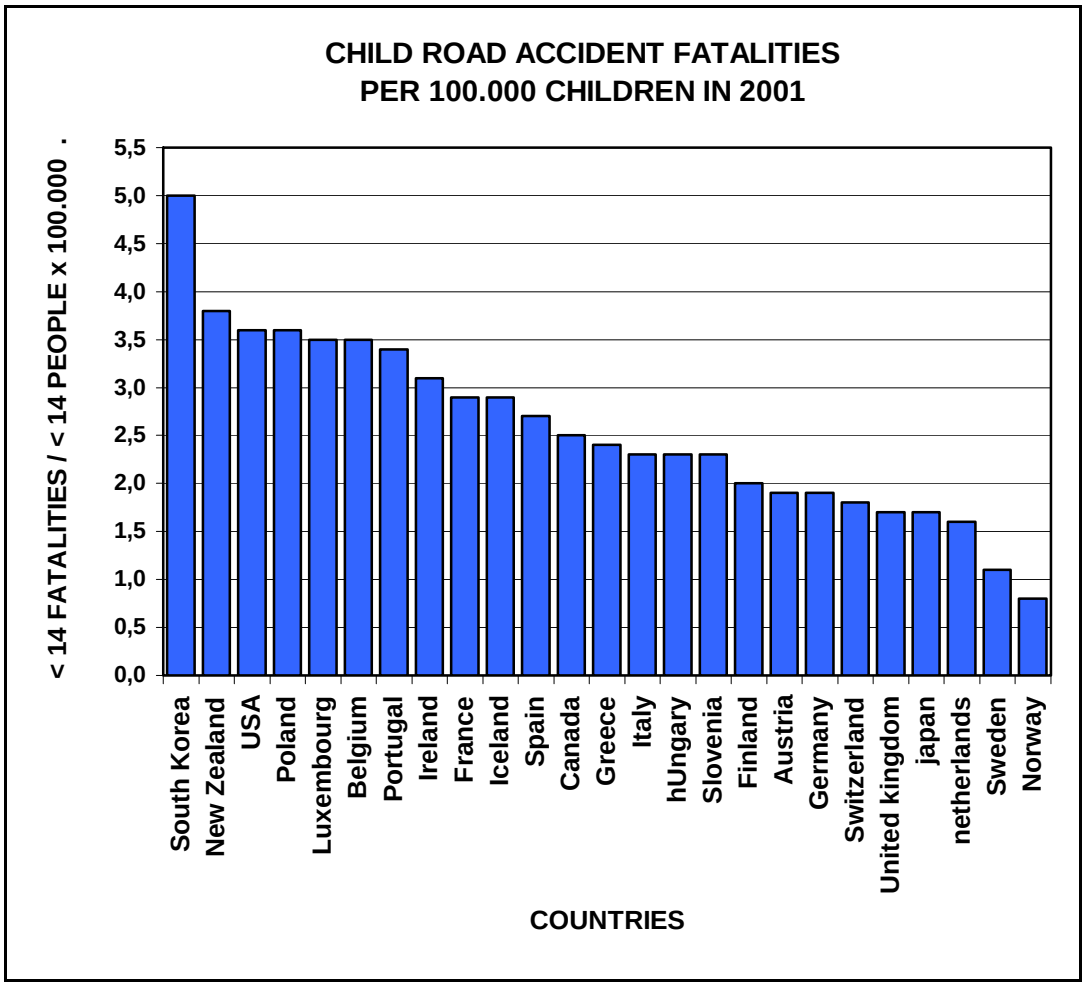
1 PILOT SCHEMES

1.1 CHILD ROAD ACCIDENT VICTIMS

In 2002 road accidents claimed 1 800 lives among under-14s in the 31 Verona Conference countries.[1] This figure suggests two opposite lines of thought.

First, Europe's youngest citizens are generally "more protected" than average since they have the lowest specific fatality rate (number of victims in one specific population band compared to the number of people in the same band) of all age groups. Nevertheless, the figure is not entirely satisfactory because this age group is on the move less than adults and, therefore, has a very much lower risk exposure and also because for this population band it seems right to aim for levels of protection and safety that do not allow thousands of fatalities every year.



[1] The 25 EU countries, the candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey) and two EFTA countries (Norway and Switzerland).

CHILD ROAD ACCIDENT FATALITIES PER 100 000 CHILDREN IN 2001 (CHILD = < 14 PEOPLE)

COUNTRY	FATALITY RATE	COUNTRY	FATALITY RATE
SOUTH KOREA	5.0	ITALY	2.3
NEW ZEALAND	3.8	HUNGARY	2.3
USA	3.6	SLOVENIA	2.3
POLAND	3.6	FINLAND	2.0
LUXEMBOURG	3.5	AUSTRIA	1.9
BELGIUM	3.5	GERMANY	1.9
PORTUGAL	3.4	SWITZERLAND	1.8
IRELAND	3.1	UNITED KINGDOM	1.7
FRANCE	2.9	JAPAN	1.7
ICELAND	2.9	NETHERLANDS	1.6
SPAIN	2.7	SWEDEN	1.1
CANADA	2.5	NORWAY	0.8
GREECE	2.4		

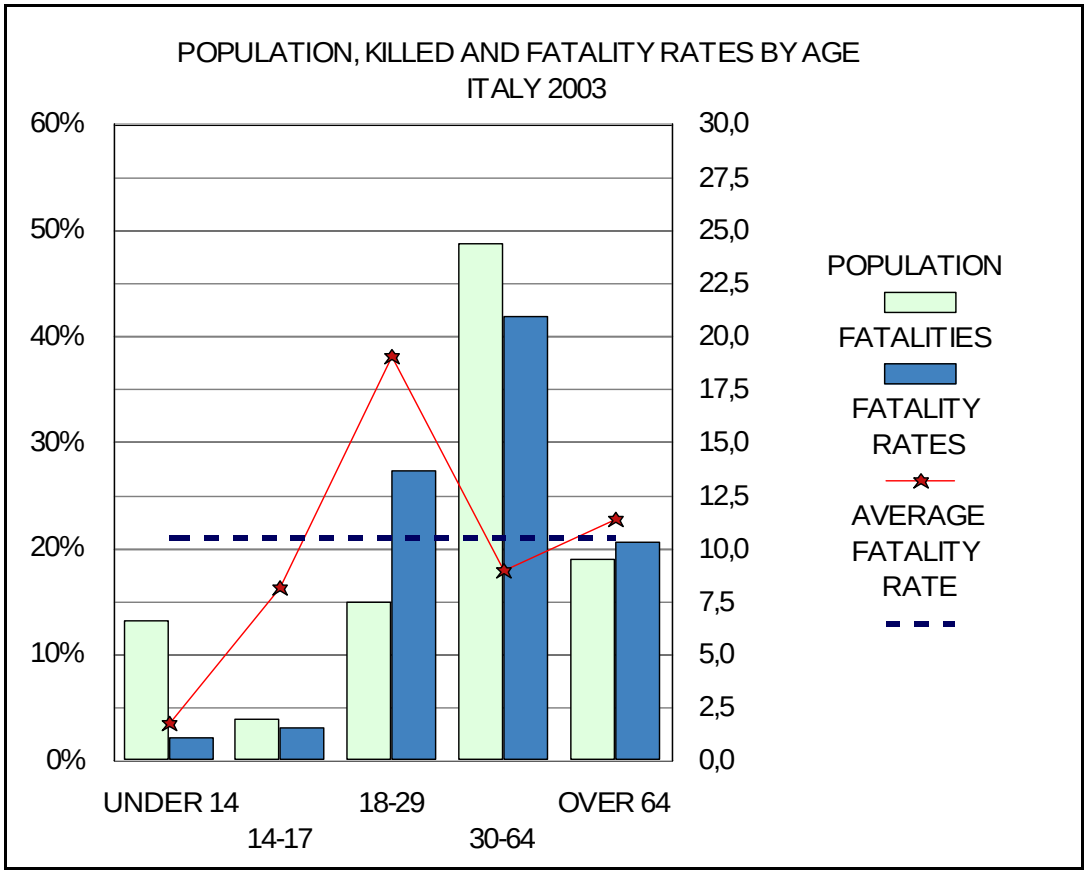
Second, the low fatality rate is due to severe limitation of children's autonomous mobility. In practice, children's mobility is managed by parents and other adults: children do not find their own way to school or to leisure or sports centres, etc.; they are taken there by adults. They do not move but are transported. But there is a risk that the care taken to make child mobility safer - to dispossess children and teenagers of autonomous management of their own mobility - could prove an unsatisfactory solution for three reasons:

1) This extra protection has not put an end to child fatalities caused by road accidents. From this point of view the results are very poor.
2) This expropriation of autonomous mobility is an undesirable limitation of children's growth process and restricts their ability to drive safely when they reach the age for mopeds, motorcycles or cars.
3) This over-protection cannot last for ever. Sooner or later these children with a very low level of autonomous mobility and a high level of passive mobility will turn abruptly from passengers into moped- and motorcycle-riders and, subsequently, car-drivers with disastrous results. In Italy the 2003 fatality rate leaps from 2 children (less than 15) killed per 100.000 less than 15 people to 19 young people (18-29) killed per 100 000 young people (18-29), almost ten times higher than in the younger age band.

In other words, the greater protection given to children, if not accompanied by effective education on safe and sustainable mobility, becomes a tragic weakness when this protection can no longer be applied systematically and pervasively. In this delicate transition phase children and teenagers suddenly migrate from the passenger seats of their parents' car to the

saddle of their moped or motorcycle, possibly the most dangerous means of transport in absolute terms. The effect of this strategy can be seen from the figures on road accident fatalities among teenagers: from 88 for each year of age for under-14s, road accident fatalities in the 14-17 age group soar to 390 for each year - 4.8 times higher.

N.B. Between the "Under 14" and "14-17" age groups the fatality rate becomes 4.6 times higher, and between "14-17" and "18-29" the fatality rate more than doubles (2,3 times). In Italy the minimum age to drive mopeds is 14 and the minimum age to drive cars is 18.



1.2 PILOT SCHEMES TO IMPROVE CHILD ROAD SAFETY

Obviously the solution is not to deprive children of their mobility. The idea is to hone children's abilities to become autonomous road users who are aware of the potential dangers of road traffic and capable of coping with them according to their mobility needs. In the long term, children who have

learned this lesson will also develop a different attitude towards road traffic once they become drivers of mopeds, motorcycles and cars.

Autonomous child mobility is closely linked to children's everyday environment and their usual mobility needs, e.g. the way from home to school and back. But children also gradually make other journeys on their own, e.g. to their friends' homes, to sports clubs, public libraries, swimming pools, etc. Usually most journeys children make are in their immediate neighbourhood, in their municipality or city. This makes cities and municipalities an important player in ensuring safe child mobility. However, not only cities and municipalities have a role to play, but also the various groups making up civil society: schools, sports clubs, shops, public transport providers, etc.

Consequently, a variety of stakeholders have a role to play in improving child road safety. And in order to improve road safety while respecting children's needs for autonomous mobility, there are a variety of solutions that need the creativity, commitment and involvement of the maximum number of stakeholders.

Creativity, commitment and involvement in safe and autonomous child mobility are the factors that will be addressed in this competition. The idea is for the pilot schemes to identify safer ways for child, e.g. home-school mobility. The objective is to make child mobility safer on selected routes but the primary aim is to establish a complete learning process gradually building children's autonomous mobility.

Such action can be taken locally, with small steps and modest financial and material resources. There is no need for big projects, traffic simulation models and expensive works to create the conditions for autonomous and safe child mobility. All that is needed is for the head-teacher, mayor or competent councillor, the municipal technical departments, local police, parents and many more to join forces to decide:

- where to put into action safe ways for child mobility;
- how to secure the level of road safety sought;
- What kind and what level of control must be exerted over the mobility of our youngest citizens.

In other words, it is time to make a quantum leap in safety culture. In particular, it is necessary to imagine parts of the city where roads are not thought out and managed primarily for motor vehicles and to strike a better balance between motorised and pedestrian use of some roads, particularly roads used by children, also taking into consideration the quality of the road environment that children encounter every day on their journeys. The

priorities between vehicles and pedestrians, within this specific perimeter, can be revised.

Above all, ways must be found to put these ideas into action, with the aid of effective, practical collaboration between the municipal technical departments, local police, schools, parents' associations, etc., in the form of the road schemes necessary to raise safety standards to build autonomous and safe child mobility.

Finally, following the same logic, building autonomous and safer child mobility becomes a training ground not only for children but even more so for the adults called on to imagine, cooperate in and implement specific improvements to road safety in their own environment.

1.3 KEY PRINCIPLES OF THE PILOT SCHEMES

Taking into account the points made in the previous paragraphs, pilot schemes should cover the following aspects:

a) identification of a system of sheltered routes or, more frequently, of routes which can be made safer through traffic regulation and road reorganisation to minimize all the risks to child mobility (e.g. on journeys between home and school) according to the capabilities of the target age-group;

b) definition of the assistance, protection and enforcement measures taken by the local police or by others who, through voluntary agreements, formally take on responsibility for providing appropriate assistance to children using the sheltered routes;

c) information to raise the awareness of parents and of all involved in building safer and autonomous child mobility in any specific situation; verification of the general scheme and membership drive;

d) Technical design and implementation of the schemes on the roads involved. Road safety audits of the resultant sheltered routes - with specific emphasis on child road safety requirements - and formal certification of the safety of the children's routes, specifying any possible restrictions and requirements (kind of police assistance needed, new traffic rules, etc.). Without such verification (which may not be performed by the same stakeholder who designed or implemented the schemes or who manages this specific mobility scheme) the routes should not be considered safe enough for autonomous child mobility;

e) training and education of signatories of voluntary agreements who are engaged in assisting child mobility on the sheltered routes in order to be

certain that they will be able to provide specialist assistance and to deal with every possible unexpected situation;

f) second information campaign to raise parents' awareness of how their children may use the sheltered routes, building safe and autonomous child mobility, of how to cooperate with the relevant stakeholders and of who to contact about possible defects or potential improvements, etc.;

g) start of the scheme to begin building autonomous and safe child mobility and monitoring - by the local authorities - of progress on the scheme and of the results achieved;

h) Regular checks on progress on the scheme and of the results. Identification of potential improvements to the scheme or to implementation thereof.

1.4 TOOLS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PILOT SCHEMES

Building autonomous and safe child mobility involves not only taking measures on the roads but also:

- monitoring the safety level achieved;
- managing the sheltered routes and child mobility;
- Monitoring and checking the effectiveness of sheltered routes and management thereof.

The pilot schemes should therefore be defined, implemented, managed and enforced by a dedicated technical department of the local government.

This technical body must be able both to activate the necessary safety checks (with reference to road safety audit methods) and to monitor progress on the project and the results.

Another fundamental aspect is to check how implementation of the pilot schemes changes attitudes to road safety on the part of the children, of the parents and also of the technicians and politicians involved (local government technicians and decision-makers, school teachers, police officers, etc.). Monitoring this side is crucial considering that the pilot schemes are intended to change the attitudes, behaviour and value systems not only of children but also of adults.

2 COMPETITION

2.1 HOW TO PARTICIPATE

PARTICIPANTS

The competition is primarily targeted at municipalities, cities, counties and regions, i.e. bodies that have, to one extent or another, wide-ranging responsibilities at local level for road safety, traffic management, road safety education and awareness campaigns, and infrastructure. Since one of the main criteria for this competition is the involvement of a wide variety of other stakeholders at local level, e.g. schools, the police, sports clubs, parishes or the media, it is essential to find such partners for any pilot scheme in this competition.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Entries for the first Verona Conference competition must be submitted to the European Charter Team in electronic form (see Annex 1) by 15 September 2006. The entry form must be duly completed, keeping within the limits stated in the form concerning the number of characters. Additional information, e.g. brochures or statistics, should be kept to the minimum and must also be submitted in electronic form.

Pilot schemes which are ongoing or are about to be launched within two months after the deadline for submission of entries are eligible.

In order to be eligible, the main target group of the pilot schemes must be all or part of the under-15 age group.

SELECTION CRITERIA

From the eligible applications, schemes which comply with the following criteria will be accepted to compete for the award:

- The pilot scheme must be constantly monitored. This must include a comprehensive description of the starting point (road safety situation for the targeted group or in the targeted area before the pilot scheme), identification of relevant performance indicators (e.g. road accidents involving children in the targeted area or age group), targets (e.g. 20% reduction in the number of accidents involving children within two years) and monitoring (in the case of pilot schemes not yet launched, please specify milestones and describe the measures to achieve them).
- The application must be submitted by a municipality, a city, a county or a region. It must be clear from the entry form that other local stakeholders are involved in the pilot scheme. Applicants must therefore submit a list of stakeholders involved, with a short description of their commitment (e.g. local police, speed checks on sheltered school routes during the going-to-school-hours every morning).

AWARD CRITERIA

The applications selected will be awarded points based on the following weighted criteria:

- Innovation/Creativity (20%)
  The scheme might consist of various components at different levels and using different approaches. The creativity and innovation of these components and approaches will be assessed.
- Objective (20%)
  An assessment will be made of whether the objectives of the scheme are ambitious and to what extent they have been achieved or seem achievable.
- Visibility of the pilot scheme (20%)
  The pilot scheme is not only intended to improve the specific road safety situation for the target group or in the targeted area. It also aims at raising public awareness of autonomous and safe mobility for children. An assessment will therefore be made of how and to what extent the scheme is promoted and publicised and to what extent this campaign could lead to a change of attitude among citizens. Implementation of a method of measuring these effects would be an advantage.
- Commitment and involvement of local stakeholders (30%)
  Although the target group is limited to children, the objective of "autonomous and safe mobility for children" can be achieved only if various stakeholders are involved. An assessment will be made of the extent to which the scheme creates ownership with the other stakeholders and leaves room for their commitment.
- Presentation (10%)
  The application should be comprehensive and concise. Extra points will be awarded for clear presentation of the scheme.

2.2 TIMETABLE

The Verona Conference competition will be announced at the informal meeting of the Council of Ministers on Road Safety on 2-3 March 2006 in Bregenz (an alternative would be the Council meeting on 27-28 March 2006, but it would certainly make more sense to announce the competition in Bregenz if possible).

The necessary documents (press release on the competition, press release on the Council, this document, entry form) will be available on the European Road Safety Charter website from the beginning of March.

The competition will be promoted by the Ministers who will publicise the award in their countries. The deadline for submission of entries for the competition is 15 September 2006.

The prize will be awarded during the 3rd Verona Conference in November 2006.

2.3 EVALUATION AND AWARD

The entries will be pre-assessed by Commission staff in the light of the abovementioned criteria. The top 15 proposals will be short listed and submitted to an evaluation committee consisting of a representative of the Finnish Presidency, plus one each from the past United Kingdom Presidency, the Italian Government and the European Commission. This committee will select three winners from the shortlist. The winners of the competition will be invited to the Verona Conference in November 2006 where the prizes will be awarded in the presence of the members of the EU Transport Ministers Council.

The winners proposal will be published on European Commission – DG TREN web site.

2.4 EUROPEAN ROAD SAFETY CHARTER

All entrants in this competition who have not yet signed the European Road Safety Charter are invited to sign it with a commitment on safe and autonomous child mobility. They will be contacted by the European Road Safety Charter Team.

3 ENTRY FORM

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Applicant (region, county, city, municipality, etc.)

_____

1.1.1. Represented by (name of the official representative of the applicant)

_____

1.1.2. Contact person responsible for the application

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

1.2 **Partners** (local stakeholders who have agreed actively to support the scheme). Please indicate the type of stakeholder as follows: local/regional government = LG; school = SC; police = PL; companies/firms = CM; associations, clubs, etc. = AS; shops and traders = SH; non-governmental organisations = NGO; others = OT.
List them here (maximum 25)

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18. …

1.3. Timing

1.3.1. Start date (YY:MM:DD): __ __ / __ __ / __ __

1.3.2. Duration: _____ months

1.4. Participants

1.4.1. Estimated number of children covered by/involved in the scheme: _____

1.4.2. Age of the children covered by/involved in the scheme: from ___ to_____

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1. Description of the situation before the scheme (maximum 3000 characters, including spaces)

2.2. Description of the scheme (maximum 6000 characters, including spaces)

2.3. Targets and objectives (maximum 3000 characters, including spaces)

2.4. Performance indicators, milestones and monitoring (maximum 3000 characters, including spaces)

2.5. Local stakeholders involved in the scheme and their commitment (maximum 500 characters per stakeholder)

1. …
2. …
3. …
4. …
5. …

3. OUTCOME

3.1. How is ownership of the scheme by the participants created? How is the commitment of participants stimulated? (maximum 3000 characters, including spaces)

3.2. How is the scheme being promoted and publicised? Are results published and shared with other municipalities? (maximum 3000 characters, including spaces)

3.3. Is the scheme ambitious and, if so, in which way?

3.4. Are innovative and creative methods, tools or means used or are new approaches applied? What lessons would be learned from this? Have best practices from elsewhere been implemented? (maximum 4000 characters, including spaces)

3.5. Is there anything else you wish to add? (maximum 3000 characters, including spaces)

3.6. How much did/will the scheme cost? How was it/will it be financed?

LIST OF ISSUES WHICH COULD BE MENTIONED:

1) Measures on the roads (please specify if separate lanes, barriers, particular pedestrian crossings, new signals, surveillance cameras, etc. have been introduced).
2) New traffic regulation to create sheltered routes for building autonomous and safe child mobility.
3) Information and awareness-raising campaigns (please state how many, the main contents, the results, etc.).
4) Management of home-school routes (please state whether an accompanying or controlling police unit or other form of mobility management has been established and describe their characteristics, i.e. the period, timetable, possible costs, parties involved, etc.).
5) Any helpdesks set up (please state whether agreements have been reached with associations, traders, etc. to set up helpdesks for children).
6) Offices and tools for monitoring the scheme and its results (please state who and how).
7) The least and the most satisfactory aspects of the scheme and of its results.

If you wish to submit additional documents, please attach an electronic version to the entry form. Please remember that the evaluators have to read through all the documents submitted, so try to be as concise and comprehensive as possible.