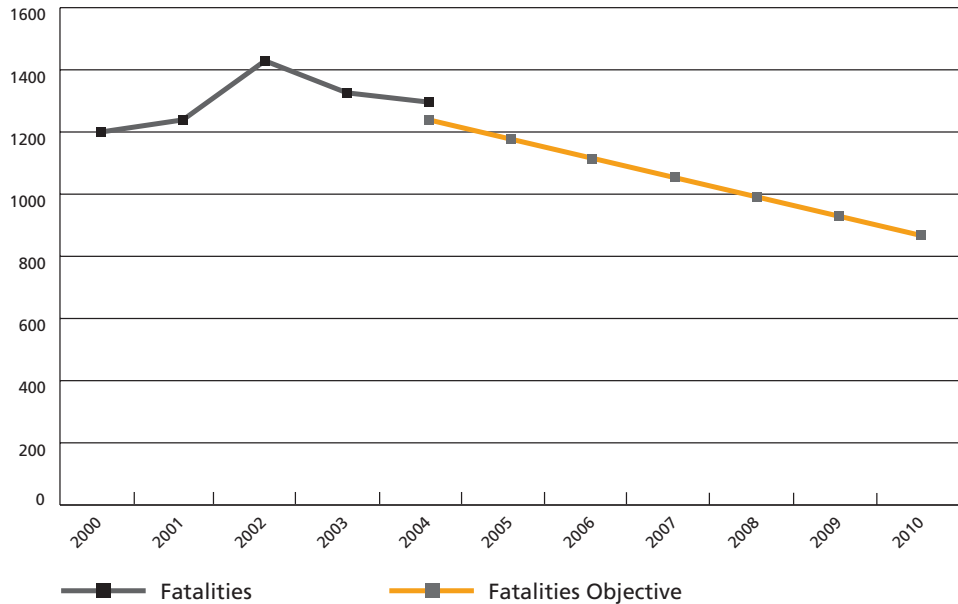


6.11 HUNGARY



General road safety. Road safety in Hungary was a success story in the 1990s when the number of road deaths dropped by more than 50% in ten years time, from 2,432 in 1990 to 1,200 in the year 2000. Recently however, progress has stalled and the Hungarian road safety situation has even deteriorated since 2000. While the number of deaths has dropped again after reaching a peak in 2002, the number of personal injury accidents has continued to rise.

In 2004, Hungary adopted the target to reduce the 2001 number of deaths by 30% by the year 2010. A new road safety programme is still in progress. In the meantime, yearly action plans are elaborated. Enforcement of traffic laws by the police has been strengthened; however, an important problem persists: the general absence of awareness of the road safety risk among the public.

Speed: Speed enforcement is carried out on roads with heavy traffic and an increased risk of accidents. About 100 mobile speed measurement devices are used in Hungary, including laser and radar devices. Automated equipment is not yet in use but experiments started in 2005. The adaptation of legal framework for the use of fully automated speed enforcement is currently in progress.

In Hungary, the number of speed-related accidents has increased sharply since the speed limits on all types of road outside built-up areas were increased by 10 km/h in May 2001. In 2003, 40% of fatal crashes were caused by excess and inappropriate speed, and this figure has still risen to 41% in 2004.

Alcohol. In Hungary, the legal blood alcohol level is 0.0 mg/ml. In practice, however, offences start at 0.2 ‰ because lower levels cannot be detected. The number of breath tests has been increased over the last years. In 2003, 1.1 million screening tests were carried out and about 3% were positive. If the screening test results in a BAC of 0.51 mg/ml or more, evidential breath testing is carried out at the nearest police station.

In Hungary, bringing down drink driving has been a priority and drink driving has contributed to no more than 11-12% of all accidents over the last years. In 2004, the number of injury accidents caused by drunk drivers went however up by nearly 20%, compared with 2003, and drink driving contributed to more than 15% of fatal accidents.



Seat belts. Seat belt checks are always carried out in combination with other checks. Since the year 2000, seat belt wearing rates have increased and, in 2004, 59% of front seat occupants used their seat belt. Following a major campaign in 2005, wearing rates went up significantly especially for passengers and the combined rate for the front seat was 65.0%.

Better protection through seat belts is taken to be one of the reasons why the number of car occupant deaths has dropped from 640 in 2003 to 606 in 2004. However, more than half of all people who died in traffic in 2004 were unbelted car occupants.

Follow-up of offences. Hungary has had a penalty point system since 2001 to discourage repeat offenders. The system, though not effective in the beginning, was substantially improved in April 2004. Under the new rules, drivers can receive up to three instead of only one point for traffic offences. The non-wearing of safety belts has also been included in the list of offences carrying penalty points.

Information. Information on speed checks is made available through the media and the Internet. Centrally organised alcohol enforcement is always preceded by publicity campaigns. National accident prevention campaigns on all three subjects are run by the National Committee for Accident Prevention (OBB) of the national police headquarters.

Recommendations:

- Increase speed enforcement linked to education.
- Continue successful anti-drink driving policy.
- Further improve the penalty point system.