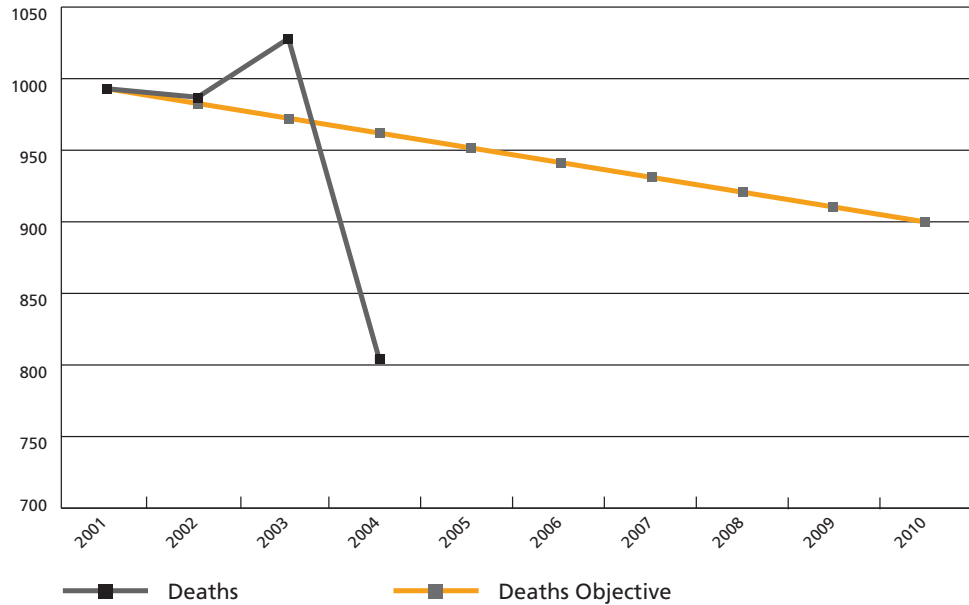


6.18 NETHERLANDS



General Road Safety: Road Safety has been a major priority for a long time in the Netherlands. The current National Transport Plan of 2001 adopted the target to decrease the number of deaths to no more than 750 by 2010. Due to a slight increase of deaths in the recent years, in 2004 this target was changed to 900 deaths.

Enforcement is done on a large scale, with many road users checked and punished every year. An impressive system has been set up to deal with as many offences as possible and sanctions are generally mild. The public accepts this system because it is seen as fair and the dangers are well understood. This does not mean, however, that compliance with road safety rules is so much better than elsewhere. Enforcement is carried out by the police, which is financed and co-ordinated by the Ministry of the Interior. Between 2000 and 2003, special traffic enforcement teams (so-called "Spee teams") were set up in all 25 police regions. This means that about 20-25 traffic police teams were included in the regional forces, which are paid by the Ministry of Justice. The 26th police force is KLPD responsible for motorways, railways etc. The road traffic police is one of the specialised teams within KLPD. There are yearly regional policing plans for all 25 police regions (which do not coincide with the provinces).

Speed: The Netherlands are a forerunner in automated speed enforcement. There are 9.54 fixed cameras installed per 1000 km road network, which is by far the highest rate in Europe. Mobile devices are also used. But their exact number isn't available. Fixed cameras are usually announced by traffic signs and visible, whereas mobile checks are always hidden.

In 2004, fewer persons were sanctioned for speeding than in 2003. This was achieved even though the number of vehicles checked was raised through new section control systems and increased speed checks on high risk sites. Section Control Systems operate on various motorways.

Alcohol: The Netherlands are planning to introduce a new BAC limit of 0.2 mg/ml for novice drivers (during their first five years) in 2006. The Dutch Institute for Road Safety SWOV has calculated that the safety benefit would be a reduction of 12 deaths and 100 serious injuries each year.

Both random and suspicious checks are undertaken. Random checks are organised nationwide about 4-5 times a year in the same day. All drivers are stopped. About 2-3% of drivers are found to be over the limit in those tests. Professional drivers (truck and bus drivers) face higher sanctions than normal drivers.

Seat belts: The fixed fine for the non use of seat belts is 45 €. Intensified checks are carried out. There is no follow-up of repeat offences.

Follow-Up of offences: About 90% of all traffic violations and crimes registered are processed under the Mulder Law (administrative procedures). Penalties are collected by the Central Judicial Collecting Agency, a division of the Public Prosecutors office. For speeding, there is a total owner responsibility, i.e. the owner has to pay the fine no matter who was actually driving the car. A penalty point system does not exist at the moment.

Information. There is a campaign calendar for national actions. Regarding actions at regional level, information is sent to the local press by the police press services.

Recommendations:

- Introduce a penalty point system.