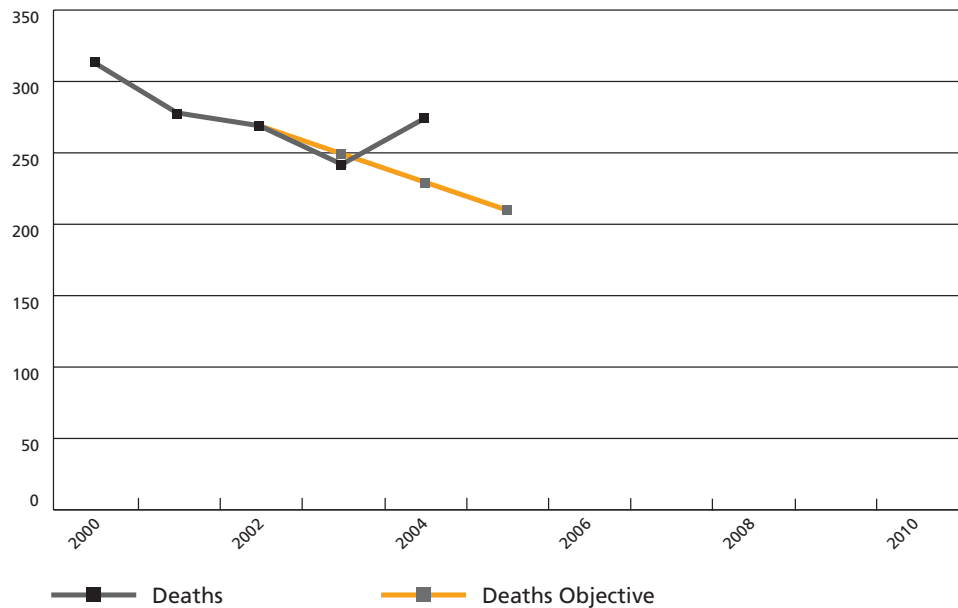


6.2.2 SLOVENIA



General Road Safety: Slovenia's road death record was decreasing but suffered an increase back to 274 in 2004. Its average fatality rate in 2004 was 137, per million above the average EU rate. The first National Road Safety Programme was drawn up by the four relevant ministries, the National Council for Prevention and Education in Road Traffic. It was approved by the National Assembly in 2002. It stressed the need for the different actors to work together to meet the target to "have no more than 210 deaths on Slovenian roads in 2005". The second Programme is under preparation.

Slovenia's Road Traffic Section of the Ministry of Interior prepares an annual police road safety operational plan with specific targets and measures in the areas of drink driving, speeding and seat belt use. The plan is drawn up annually with input from regional and local police sections to ensure its operability and implementation. The police's database enables them to track and analyse road traffic collisions every quarter, this is linked to the planning of enforcement efforts to high risk areas and meeting the set targets.

At a local level, Road Safety Councils exist in Slovenia's 200 communities. They are made up of local police, council, roads administration and school representatives and also organise road safety awareness activities. Legislation stipulates that 7% of all traffic enforcement time be dedicated to enforcing in areas identified by local communities as problem areas.

Speed: A further improvement in the area of speed enforcement is expected with the new Road Safety Act. This includes a stricter application of penalty points and an increase in sanctions for speeding. It is the top priority for the police who focus their speeding enforcement activities on related accident sites, stretches of roads where speeding occurs as well as on times when speeding occurs. A further decrease in speeds is expected with the installation of more fixed cameras, as well as empty boxes. They will be placed at sites where speeding occurs such as at the entrance to tunnels along the motorways.

Alcohol: A 0.0 BAC mg/ml alcohol level already in force for professional drivers has been introduced also for other specific groups such as drivers transporting children. The legal limit for all other drivers remains at 0.5 BAC mg/ml. Alcohol checks are undertaken at random and on suspicion as well as following every road traffic violation and collision. They typically consist of two breath tests: a screening test at the roadside and an evidential test carried out at the road side or at the police station.

Drink driving checks are run along the lines of the “Promil” methodology where high visibility alcohol checks are undertaken at road blocks. This is done by either blocking off one road and checking everyone, or blocking one road and also checking on parallel roads, or by blocking an entire town.

Seat belts: In 2003 Slovenia introduced a seat belt enforcement campaign entitled: “Buckle Up Slovenia!” which consists of intensive high visibility enforcement linked to media work. The two week long action, carried out three times a year consists of preventative work which is then followed up by enforcement of non-compliance with the issuing of fines. Civil observers check all cars passing through a cordon and give information to a police check point further up the road of all those who are not belted up to be stopped and sanctioned. Combined seat belt and drink driving enforcement campaigns are held, where police issue warnings via the media that they will breath test all drivers who were not wearing their seat belts. All drivers and passengers who have been involved in an accident are also checked.

Follow-up of offences: In the case of automated speed enforcement, the owner is responsible and they must prove in court if they were not driving at the time. A new act on minor violations also came into force at the start of 2005. This empowers the police to give on the spot fines for minor offences and withdraw penalty points from drivers. Non seat belt use if detected in other enforcement contexts is always followed up. Courts face a backlog of cases. Traffic offences are classed as ‘minor offences’ and thus not prioritised for action.

Information: Nationwide campaigns on drink driving, speeding and seat belt use are conducted by the National Council for Prevention and Education in Road Traffic in conjunction with the police force. Special police enforcement actions, including their results, are well-publicised in the media. Local authorities may also conduct their own campaigns targeting particular priorities in their area.

In conclusion, speeding related deaths increased between 2003 and 2004 but fewer speeding offenders were stopped. Drink driving tests have more than doubled from between 1998 and 2004. The number of detected violations have been dropping. In 2004 31,740 offences were detected. Deaths caused by drink driving increased however between 2003 and 2004. Seat belt wearing rates have significantly increased from a low of 35% in 1994 in the front seat to an average of 83% in 2003. Seat belt offences have also increased between 2003 and 2004 to 127,578.

Recommendations:

- Introduce an automatic speed enforcement system including cameras to complement mobile speed enforcement.
- Continue high levels of drink driving enforcement linked to public campaigns.
- Focus seat belt wearing enforcement on rear seats.
- Clear backlog in the courts and speed up dealing with traffic law infringements.