



MINISTRY FOR PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS
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SPEECH MADE BY HIS EXCELLENCY

**THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT AND
COMMUNICATIONS**

Eng. Mário Lino

at the

III INTERPARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE IN LISBON

**A EUROPEAN POLICY FOR ROAD SAFETY:
HARMONISATION OF CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES**

Lisbon, 29 September 2008

(the version as read shall be valid)

Mr President of the Permanent Commission for Public Works, Transport and Communications of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic,

Mr Vice-President of the European Parliamentary Commission for Transport,

Mr President of the Conference,

Congresswomen and Congressmen,

First of all, I would like to extend a warm welcome to all Members of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic and also of the Parliaments of the other member states, who are present here at the **III Interparliamentary Conference on Road Safety in Europe**, and I would also like to congratulate the Permanent Commission for Public Works, Transport and Communications of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic, for the initiative shown in promoting this Conference.

I would also like to express my most sincere satisfaction in taking part in this Conference of Lisbon, which addresses an issue which is very important and current -



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Road Safety - to which the Portuguese Government in general, and my Ministry in particular, have dedicated their utmost attention.

As you well know, in the White Paper of 12 September 2001, “**European Transport Policy for 2010: Time to Decide**”, the European Commission established the target of reducing, by 2010, the number of deaths on Community roads by 50 %. For this reason, we must continue to make every effort so that this target may be achieved.

At this point, please let me remind everyone that last June I had the pleasure of receiving, in Brussels, on behalf of the Portuguese Government, the **Road Safety PIN Award**, which was awarded to Portugal by the **European Transport Safety Council**, in recognition of the following facts:

- The fact that we are the country in the EU to have had the second largest reduction in the number of deaths on the roads between 2001 and 2007: 42 %, compared with an EU average of 22 %;
- The prospect that Portugal shall be one of the few countries to reach the target as set in the White Paper;
- Our continuous effort to make our roads safer and safer.

As I mentioned on this occasion, “*The Portuguese government is proud of this result, yet it did not come about by chance. It is the outcome of a serious and co-ordinated effort between several players, united by the same goal: to save lives on Portuguese roads. This positive result and this Award which we have now received only provide a stronger incentive to the Portuguese government to work harder with the same ultimate target.*”

We must also mention that this positive result obtained here in Portugal was achieved within a scenario of a steady increase in traffic volume, the number of vehicles on the roads and also the size of the road network.

Over 20 years, from 1987 to 2007, the flow of traffic increased more than fourfold, currently standing at more than 90 thousand million vehicles per kilometre; the total absolute number of vehicles stands at 5.6 million.

If back in 1995 Portugal was the country in the EU with the highest number of road deaths per million inhabitants, by 2007 it had moved close to the average for the EU-25.

Several important steps have been taken to achieve this result.



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In 2000, the Government adopted a National Plan for Road Accident Prevention, whose goals and objectives were easily met.

This same year, we started to implement a new **National Road Plan**, including the definition of the quality of service levels for each type of road. This Plan envisages the construction of thousands of kilometres of new roads, including motorways, the renewal and reconstruction of existing roads and the implementation of cutting-edge systems for traffic management, support services and emergency services. So far, we have built 2,600 kilometres of motorways and 1,000 kilometres of other main roads.

We are now in the process of implementing a new **National Strategy for Road Safety**, which should be applied between 2008 and 2015. The main objective here is to place Portugal among the ten European Union Member States with the best results concerning road safety.

However, we have taken up a new **Highway Code**, so as to encourage better behaviour when driving, together with strict compliance with the application thereof.

The improvement of the infrastructure of the roads, together with the improvement in the behaviour of car drivers and the increase in safety devices installed in vehicles largely explain the results that have been obtained in Portugal.

But, as I said earlier on, we are still not satisfied with the results we have obtained. They just encourage the Portuguese Government to continue their efforts to further improve safety on the roads. For us, just one victim is already unacceptable, and every loss of life is intolerable.

In Portugal, the main responsibility for this matter lies within the scope of competences of the **Ministry for Internal Administration** and the **Ministry for Public Works, Transport and Communications**.

For this reason, I would like to highlight some of the most important measures that we have been adopting, or that we shall be taking up in the near future, within the scope of my Ministry.

The European Commission, in their 2001 informative bulletin "**European Road Safety Action Programme: Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility**", the infrastructure of the road system was identified as being the third pillar that props up the road safety policy, and which should



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make an important contribution towards the Community target of reducing the number of casualties.

In this context, we have proceeded with a significant restructuring of the road infrastructure segment, through the implementation of the **New Management and Financing Model**, which shall make it possible for this sector to become self-sustainable and also more equitable from the generation standpoint.

There was a change in paradigm regarding the relationship between the State and the road sector, based on the selection of the company *EP - Estradas de Portugal, SA* – (*EP, SA*) (Roads of Portugal), as the general concession holder for the national road network. In the concession contract signed between EP, SA and the State, objectives were agreed with regard to the quality of the service provided by national roads, the reduction of the number of road casualties, and the penalisation for the environmental effects of the segment. Thus, penalties and prizes are established according to the casualty rates.

There was also the constitution of a new institute, the *Instituto das Infra-estruturas Rodoviárias (InIR, IP)* (**Institute for Road Infrastructure**), which represents the State as a conceding body, as well as regulating and inspecting the road infrastructure segment, and also supervising the execution, upkeep, management and exploitation of road infrastructure.

This Model is a fundamental instrument in providing the State with conditions to continue with the sustained compliance with the **National Road Plan**, with all that it brings in terms of economic and social development, together with the reduction in the casualty rate.

In order to reach these goals, important road infrastructure work, as awarded by the Government, is currently under way.

Here, we must mention that, in 2005, the execution rate of the National Road Plan stood at about 51 %. Three and a half years on, this value rose to 61 %. During this period of three and a half years, we opened 590 km of new roads, of which 546 km were of motorway status.

Even though we well know that the reduction in road casualties does not depend only on infrastructure, but also on the behaviour shown by drivers and vehicles, we must not ignore the fundamental contribution that has been made by the construction of new



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roadways, towards the excellent results that Portugal has obtained in the reduction of road casualties.

With the programme of new concessions which has recently been launched by the Government, as well as other ventures currently under way, soon the execution rate of the National Highway Plan shall get up to 76 %.

These new concessions involve 2359 km of roadways, of which 1316 km of newly built roads; out of this total, 612 km have motorway status. All these investments are very important. We all know that better roads play a decisive role in bringing down the road casualty rate.

We are also working to respond to the publication, expected for the near future, of the **European Directive on Management of Road Infrastructure Safety**.

This Directive is one of the instruments of harmonisation of concepts and principles regarding road safety issues, especially with regard to infrastructure, as there are already uniform European rules in force regarding vehicles and also human behaviour.

Its purpose is to establish the safety of infrastructure at all phases, right from the planning stage, through the design and project stage, up to exploitation - together with economic rationality and the protection of the environment.

With a view to the implementation of this Directive, the *Instituto das Infra-estruturas Rodoviárias* (Institute for Road Infrastructure) is already carrying out a lot of work, specifically in the following areas:

- **Safety Audits for Road Infrastructure** – preparation of an updated manual, specific training courses and a model for continuous training actions, for all roads within the National Road Network. These audits should be mandatory and shall progressively extend, by co-ordination with the Municipalities, to the municipal roads and also to urban areas.
- **Safety Inspections for Road Infrastructure** – preparation of a manual on inspections, the regulation of the execution of such inspections, and a model for continuous training actions.
- **Management of Areas Adjacent to the Lanes** – preparation of a manual on the application of road restraint systems, and a manual on safety aspects to be



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addressed in the project and preservation of the area adjacent to the lane on the roads covered by the National Road Network.

- **Self-Explanatory Road: Adaptation of the Road to its Hierarchy and Function** – review of Path Standards, drawing up of technical provisions and recommendations, publication of a manual with the concept and sizing of roundabouts, concept of 2+1 roads: rehabilitation of existing roads (recommended applications).
- **Risk Indicators** – calculation of the risk indicator for the network and also for the project, for Main Routes and Complementary Routes.
- **Studies of Impact on Safety** – preparation of recommendations for assessment of the impact on safety, resulting from interventions made to the National Road Network.
- **Defence and Protection of the Roads and Surrounding Areas concerning Safety** – review of the National Road Statute, technical training for the agents in the application of the Statute, definition of the road hierarchy, road identification and demarcation, restructuring of access points.

This Directive does not apply to the tunnels of the trans-European network, which are the object of **Directive 2004/54/EC, of 29 April**, which indicates the minimum safety requirements for these structures and which has already been transferred into the national legislation.

We are also working on other areas, namely improving the **behaviour of vehicles and drivers**, in order to promote road safety. In this context, a special role is that of the **Mobility and Land Transport Institute** (*Instituto da Mobilidade e dos Transportes Terrestres (IMTT, IP)*) which has the mission of regulating, inspecting, and coordinating and planning the land transport sector, as well as being responsible for the supervision and regulation of the activities of this sector, having the task of promoting safety, quality and also the rights of the users of land transport services.

One of the main areas of activity of the Institute concerns the inspection of road vehicles, which is done according to **Directive 96/96/EC, of 22 December**. This inspection has increased steadily over the last 5 years: in this period, the number of regular inspections increased more than 15 %, in 2007 reaching a figure of more than 5 million.



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At this moment, there is a review of the **legal regime of the Vehicle Inspection Centres** under way, with a view to making this activity more efficient and stricter, with the **widening of the scope of this inspection to include vehicles on 2 and 3 wheels as well as quadricycles, the review of the classification of defect, the study of monitoring systems for the control of the technical activities of the Vehicle Technical Inspection Centres, and the review of the procedures for emission control.**

We are also preparing a legislative package with regard to **electronic registration**, which is a technological upgrade of the traditional registration process, allowing a move from the visual identification system of vehicles to another more advanced method, based on the electronic detection and identification thereof.

The electronic registration device, on allowing automatic inspection procedures, shall be a fundamental instrument for the increase in Road Safety, both preventive and reactive, and shall contribute towards trailing a successful path in tackling the problem of road casualties.

This device shall also be an added value for the identification of vehicles that have disappeared or been involved in accidents, and also for the improved management of traffic and the monitoring thereof, providing essential information to back up the planning of road infrastructure.

Among the users of this system, I would like to mention the police forces, who have access to the same information as today, the only difference being that now they can identify cars electronically, whereas in the past this had to be done through visual observation of registrations.

Seeking to improve human behaviour, the European Commission is now working on 4 main initiatives:

- **Regulation of conditions for issuing driving licences;**
- **Co-operation, co-ordination and co-financing of road safety campaigns;**
- **Skills training and education;**
- **Inspection of compliance with the rules of the road.**



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Regarding vehicles, there has been some progress made thanks to the legislation of the European Union about certification, and also through the effort made by the industry, among which we highlight the example of **Euro NCAP** (*New Car Assessment Programme*), which rates all new passenger vehicles in terms of safety, based on real-scale crash tests.

Several cutting-edge technologies, which have been developed, demonstrated and applied within the scope of the *e-safety* initiative, have allowed the conception of active safety devices, seeking to avoid accidents, and allowing communication between vehicles and also with the infrastructure.

Other advanced systems are to be implemented in the European Union, seeking to make emergency actions faster and more efficient, when accidents do occur, as in the case of the *e-Call* project.

Over the last few years, several European Directives have been published regarding specific issues of importance to road safety, as several projects regarding vehicle safety, driver support, characteristics of protection helmets for motorcycle drivers and the interface between driver and machine have also been financed by the European Commission.

On another front, the **European Road Safety Observatory** co-ordinates all activities of collection and analysis of data regarding road accidents and the victims thereof, thus being an appropriate forum for exchange of information about the best practices in the different Member States.

Portugal participates actively and attentively in all this work, carried out within the scope of the European Union, and is totally involved in the application and implementation of this work.

Indeed, we therefore wish, together with all Member States, to make an active contribution so that the EU may be an ever-safer region on the roads.

I am sure that this Conference shall be a relevant contributing factor to the attainment of this ultimate objective.

Thank you very much.