



Association Européenne des Concessionnaires
d'Autoroutes et d'Ouvrages à Péage

**An ASECAP reflection paper
on
the Consultation presented by the *inland transport services
of the Directorate General for Energy and Transport of the
European Commission* about the Road Infrastructure Safety
Management in the TENS**



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Table of contents

1- ASECAP, general Mission and specific role in road safety

2- ASECAP members

3- The ASECAP reflection and answers

1- ASECAP, general Mission and specific role in road safety

ASECAP (*Association européenne des Concessionnaires d'Autoroutes et d'Ouvrages à Péage*) is the European professional Association of Operators of Tolloed Road Infrastructures. It gathers and represents 126 organisations that manage a toll network of over 25,000 km in 16 countries.

ASECAP mission

ASECAP mission is to promote toll as the most efficient tool to finance the construction, operation and maintenance of motorways and other major road infrastructure.

ASECAP and its members are committed to:

- Exchanging information and experience, participating in research programmes and further developing and enhancing the direct “user payer” toll system as an instrument of a sustainable, safe and environmentally friendly transport policy;
- Strengthening the efficiency of their networks and permanently improving the level of service provided to the European citizens, by keeping up with the latest technology developments and the best operational practises.

ASECAP for Road Safety:

Safety is the main priority for Operators of the European toll infrastructures. They are committed to assist in achieving the goal fixed by the European Union to save 25.000 lives (ASECAP is signatory of the European Road Safety Charter) and to this end, make important efforts on investments and day-by-day motorway management. Since the planning and the design level, specific safety criteria are taken into account, respecting the most up-to-date requirements, in order to ensure high quality standards and excellent levels of service of the infrastructures.

Moreover, ASECAP members apply suitable maintenance services and procedures to preserve and maintain every motorway element in high-performance condition. To monitor and manage motorways and traffic flows, state-of-the-art technologies are implemented, improving road safety and efficiency.

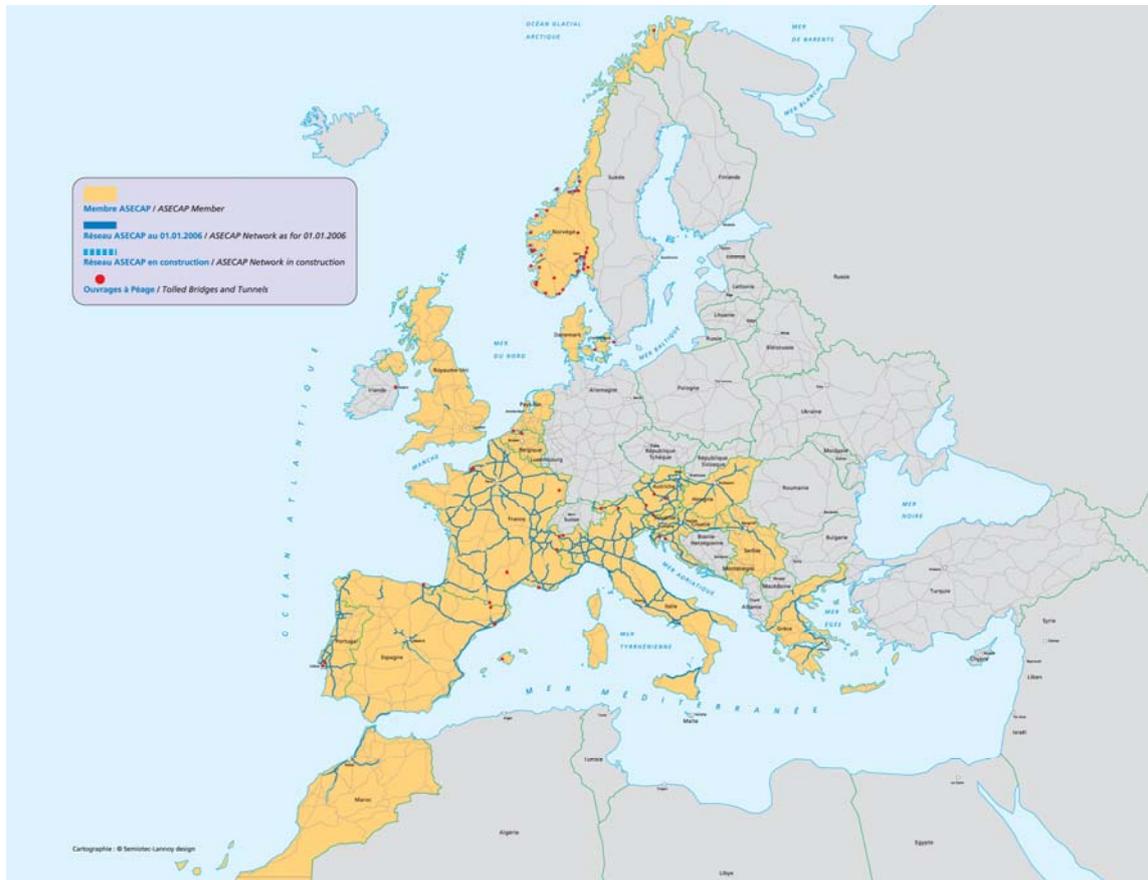
All these elements make toll motorways safer than any other type of road, thanks also to the constant engagement of all the operators. Finally, the engagement of ASECAP members goes further and it regards continuous and considerable funding for road safety research and for the projects of new and more efficient systems to preserve citizens' life.

2- ASECAP members

Country	Member	Companies	km
Austria	 ASFINAG Asfinag Autobahnen - und Schnellstraßen Finanzierungs - Aktiengesellschaft	3	2.035,0
Belgium	 N.V. Tunnel Liefkenshoek	1	1,4
Croatia	 HUKA Huka Hrvatska Udruga Koncesionara za Autoceste s naplatom cestarine	4	1.020,5
Denmark	 Sund & Bælt Sund & Bælt Holding A/S	2	34,0
Spain	 Aseta - Asociación de Sociedades Españolas Concesionarias de Autopistas, Túneles, Puentes y Vías de Peaje	30	2.842,3
France	 ASFA - Association des Sociétés Françaises d'Autoroutes et d'Ouvrages à péage	13	8.295,0
Greece	 Teo Fonds Routier National Hellenique	1	916,5
Hungary	 Aka Alföld Koncessziós Autópálya Zrt.	2	644,0
Italy	 Aiscat Associazione Italiana Società Concessionarie Autostrade e Trafori	23	5.637,8
Norway	 Norvegfinans Norske Vegfinansieringsselskapers Forening	37	787,6
The Netherlands	 N.V. Westerscheldetunnel	1	18,0
Portugal	 APCAP Associação Portuguesa das Sociedades Concessionárias de Auto-Estradas ou Pontes com Portagens	5	1.401,1
United Kingdom	 M6 TOLL Midland Expressway Ltd Operations Centre	1	42,0
Serbia	 Public Company Roads of Serbia	1	603,3
Slovenia	 DARS d.d. Druž'ba za Avtoceste v Republiki Sloveniji d.d.	1	453,0
Morocco	 ADM Société Nationale des Autoroutes du Maroc	1	611,0
Total		126	25.342,5

Data as for 01.01.2006

ASECAP Toll Motorways Network



as for 01.01.2006

3- The ASECAP reflection and answers

3.1 General considerations

ASECAP's understanding is that the SAFETY POLICY constitutes a full component of the Transport policy.

The occurrence of a road accident indicates a failure by the road user, the vehicle, the road and its environment, or any combination of the three. The probability of the occurrence of such a failure is directly related to the amount of travel. Studies and surveys have shown that while the amount of road travel (expressed in vehicle-kilometres) has been increasing, the accident rates (expressed in accidents per vehicle-kilometre) have been decreasing.

In absolute terms, while it is true that the fatality rate per unit of travel is steadily decreasing, a corresponding increase in travel counterbalances this increased safety.

Comparing and managing the above two rates should lead the policy makers to a road safety action plan – affecting the three accident factors, vehicle, road, driver - leading to substantial decrease in the absolute numbers of accidents and their effects – fatalities, injuries, damages-.

Better and safer roads, modern and safer vehicles, more skilled and responsible drivers constitute what we can call “a mature transportation system”.

However

- the complexity of the situation
- the variety of the factors involved
- the lack of proper accident reporting and
- the lack of analysis tools

do not allow the real contribution of each of the accident factors to be properly attributed.

The Consultation focuses on one specific factor, i.e. infrastructures characteristics, where their role in accidents causation could depend on (e.g.) poor geometric characteristics (narrow lanes and shoulders, reduced width of medians, poor intersection layout, small radii of horizontal and vertical alignment), poor construction standards (reduced skid resistance of pavements, poor drainage), improper design, location and construction of road sight features (guardrails, trees, embankments, curbs, ditches), poor organisation of traffic flows (lack of proper signing, poor control of accesses), poor management of work zones.

By the way, the presence of a combination of these factors could lead to a so-called “black spot”.

But, though it is always interesting to analyse separately the specific safety characteristics of roads, it should be remembered that basically “safety” is a

behavioural concept of managing the traffic flows of the various vehicles and the various drivers in the given road infrastructure and its environment.

In this complex environment motorways constitute a rather specific component, due to their characteristics, both in terms of structures and management.

In the following answers to the Consultation questions some of the main characteristics will be depicted

3.2 The Consultation specific questions

Question 1: Do you agree with the definition and assessment of the problem?

Answer: In general terms, we agree with the definition and assessment of the problem; however we would like also to point out the importance and responsibility of drivers behaviour in reducing accidents and number of fatalities.

Actually, daily experience shows that a proper driving behaviour, according to road infrastructure characteristics and traffic conditions, represents the major feature to reach the goal fixed by the European Road Safety Charter. The progress already made in number of death's decrease will not be enforced without the contribution of road users and their awareness about the risk of improper behaviour and non-respect of the rules, whatever infrastructural intervention may be done.

Question 2: Do you agree with the policy options defined, and assessed?

Answer: In our opinion, option 2) represents the most reasonable and suitable one, in order to reach the envisaged objectives and we agree on the list of the positive impacts identified and included in the document.

Question 3: What is your opinion on the measures/instruments described in point 4? What other measures could be taken?

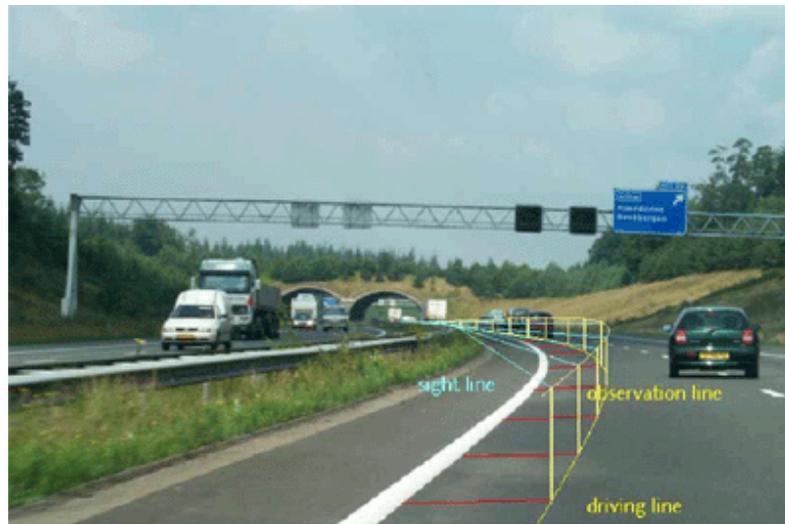
Answer: The measures/instruments described are certainly acceptable in principle, but we have to distinguish the role and the position of toll motorways.

Safety is one of the main priority for Operators of the European toll infrastructures; they make important efforts on investments and day-by-day motorway management.

Motorways are infrastructure specially designed and built for motor traffic and for consistent vehicle classes, according to the highest quality, technological standards and most up-to-date

regulations, in order to guarantee to all the users the best safety conditions and high levels of service. Actually, their design takes into account a large number of features (geometrical and structural ones, etc.) which has to ensure a suitable capacity, to avoid collisions between conflicting traffic flows, to maintain along the whole length of the motorway specific sight distances (i.e. sufficient visibility in order to give drivers the necessary time to carry out any manoeuvre in safety) and to prevent optical misguidance (as illustrated in the picture below).

All the above mentioned elements characterize motorways, making the difference between them and the other types of road. Every section of the infrastructure respects prescribed standards, since planning and design levels, and this is the reason why it is inaccurate to talk about “black spots” as usually defined.



In addition to that, a particular attention is paid to pavements (with the use of drainage pavements) and to road equipment adhering to regulation (safety barriers, energy absorption systems, fences, road signs,...), always maintained in excellent conditions.

Moreover, ASECAP members apply suitable maintenance services and procedures to preserve and maintain every motorway element in high-performance condition, and to face any situation, both in a preventive way and in case of specific emergency events (related to bad weather conditions, dangerous goods treatment, casualties with vehicle removals, etc.).

To monitor and manage motorways and traffic flows, state-of-the-art technologies are implemented (monitoring cameras, Traffic detectors, weather monitoring devices, Variable Message Signs and other ITS elements), improving road safety and efficiency.

All these elements make toll motorways safer than any other type of road, thanks also to the constant engagement of all the operators, that comprehends continuous and considerable

funding for road safety research and for the projects of new and more efficient systems to preserve citizens' life. This is also confirmed by statistical data that relate the number of casualties with the traffic flows (representing the most correct and proper way to judge and classify road safety characteristics).

Moreover, toll motorways are usually subject to specific and detailed audits and "inspections" by "Owner" Entities and granting Bodies, in order to verify the respect of appropriate standards of service.

Question 4: Do you have specific comments on the costs and the benefits of the different instruments/measures?

Answer: We don't have any specific comment, since the Consultation Paper contents are essentially consistent with Operators' daily work and with the agreement between motorway companies and granting Bodies (which define and regulate rights and responsibilities of the parties, in order to guarantee the proper operation of the infrastructure)

Question 5: Is there any comment you would wish to make?

Answer: We would like to put in evidence two elements:

1. Nowadays, at European level, there is not any common and appropriate shared tool for road safety analysis. Concerning specifically network analysis, it would be better to define the general terms, than to detail operational specific procedures which have to be discussed and determined with a common agreement at EU level.
2. The lack of appropriate traffic data available for the different types of road (with the exception of toll motorways), cannot constitute a good reason to build statistical analysis, based only on the number of deaths. Actually, this number cannot be representative of road characteristics and it cannot describe the real situation. Only a more scientific approach and a suitable methodological review (according to the International Bodies already existing) can describe it in a complete and proper way, capable to provide the right solutions.