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## REPORT

on European Road Safety Action Programme - mid-term review  
(2006/2112(INI))

Committee on Transport and Tourism

Rapporteur: Ewa Hedkvist Petersen

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### on European Road Safety Action Programme - mid-term review (2006/2112(INI))

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission White Paper 'European transport policy for 2010: time to decide' (COM(2001)0370), and its resolution of 12 February 2003 thereon<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to the Commission communication 'Information and Communications Technologies for Safe and Intelligent Vehicles' (COM(2003)0542),
  - having regard to the Commission communication 'European Road Safety Action Programme: Halving the number of road accident victims in the European Union by 2010: A shared responsibility' (COM(2003)0311), and its resolution of 29 September 2005 thereon<sup>2</sup>, and more recently its publication "Saving 20 000 lives on our roads" of October 2004,
  - having regard to Commission Recommendation 2004/345/EC of 6 April 2004 on enforcement in the field of road safety<sup>3</sup>,
  - having regard to the Verona Declaration of 5 December 2003 as well as the conclusions on the Second Verona Conference of 2004 and the subsequent commitment given by EU transport ministers to regard road safety as a priority,
  - having regard to the European Road Safety Charter of 29 January 2004,
  - having regard to the communication from the Commission 'European road safety action programme - mid-term review' (COM(2006)0074),
  - having regard to the announcement by the US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that electronic stability systems (ESP/ESC) will become mandatory standard equipment for all new cars with effect from September 2011,
  - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Transport and Tourism (A6-0449/2006),
- A. whereas more than 40 000 deaths are caused by road traffic accidents in the European Union, the direct and indirect costs of which are estimated at 180 billion euro, or 2% of EU GDP,
- B. whereas the target of halving the number of road fatalities in the EU by 2010, remains a priority; aware of and concerned at the failure to make the necessary progress towards

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 43 E, 19.2.2004, p. 250.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 227 E, 21.9.2006, p. 609.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 111, 17.4.2004, p. 75.

reaching that figure,

- C. whereas insufficient progress is being made to achieve this target across the EU,
  - D. whereas WHO Europe has highlighted the scale of the health problem that road death and injury presents and views as priorities the need to engage the health sector in road safety and reducing speeding, a matter which falls within the Member States' sphere of competence, however,
  - E. whereas the disparity between those Member States with a poor road safety record and those with a better record continues to widen,
  - F. whereas road safety has a horizontal dimension and in order to meet the target of increasing it to the greatest possible extent, it is now necessary to concentrate on, as areas of the greatest priority, a number of policies which aim to achieve more effective implementation of legislation (seat belts, speed limits, observance of the Highway Code), improved driving standards (driving licences, driver behaviour, respect for pedestrians), improved infrastructure (quality of motorways and road networks, traffic lanes, traffic signs), improved vehicles (periodic checks, models) and sharing of best practice,
  - G. whereas improving standards of driving across the EU will be most effectively facilitated in the short term through the enforcement of Member States' traffic laws, particularly as regards speeding and drink-driving offences and the requirement to use seat-belts and child-restraint systems,
  - H. whereas vehicles are now four times safer than in 1970,
  - I. whereas a rising number of motorcyclists are killed as a proportion of total road deaths,
  - J. whereas road-centre barriers significantly reduce the number of road deaths,
  - K. whereas in October the Commission initiated the 4-year Druid project to investigate driving under the influence of drugs,
  - L. whereas, in connection with the introduction of life-saving safety systems, Europe should be no less ambitious than other countries,
1. Calls for a higher level of political commitment in all Member States and EU institutions to road safety across the European Union by all Member States, by regional and local authorities and EU institutions, and by industry, organisations and individuals;
  2. Considers that only an integrated systems approach involving all road users and stakeholders, on the basis of efforts to promote public transport and more effective lawmaking in the Member States, combined with adequate monitoring of road users in the Member States (driving licence checks, breathalyser tests, etc.), can lead to significant and sustainable reductions in the number of serious road accidents;
  3. Recalls that the ambitious objectives that the Union has set out cannot be attained without taking into account the essential character of education and enforcement of present legislation in Member States; thus urges the Member States to further stress and generalise

their information policies and public awareness to road safety for all users, of all ages; also calls on the Member States to fully apply, without exception, the present legislation the respect of which by users will allow a great improvement in road safety;

4. Welcomes the Commission's two recent proposals for directives on road infrastructure safety management - which could reduce fatalities by 12 to 16% - and the use of blind-spot mirrors;
5. Calls on the Commission to submit as soon as possible its promised proposals such as cross-border enforcement, daytime-running lights, application of the existing measures and regulations in the field of road safety the use of rear reflector strips to indicate the outlines of lorries and the use of installed and retro-fitted blind-spot mirrors and/or new systems to monitor the blind spot;
6. Considers it particularly important, with a view to combating cross-border driving offences, that it should be possible to enforce the law on speeding, failure to wear a seat belt and drink-driving in an effective manner so that such significant penalties are imposed irrespective of whether the offence is committed in the offender's own country or in another Member State;
7. Reminds the Commission of its intention to consider the provision of user-friendly and up-to-date information about the traffic signing systems used in the Member States via an internet website available in all official EU languages;
8. Emphasises the need to harmonise road traffic rules and signs, since, for example, differing priority rules at roundabouts can cause accidents;
9. Since unclear or inconsistent road signs cause unnecessary risks for the road safety and considering the provisions of the Vienna Convention, calls on the Commission to come up with a study on harmonization of road signs in Europe as a means to improve road safety;
10. Calls on the Commission, considering the high number of accidents and deaths at road work zones, to develop common guidelines on the requirements for safe road work zones based on identification and exchange of best practices;
11. Considers that the Commission should promote EU-funded twinning projects between new and old Member States with a view to speeding up positive developments in road safety;
12. Considers that the Commission should encourage the presence of participants from both 'new' and 'old' Member States in its working parties;
13. Calls on the Commission to evaluate the European Road Safety Charter;
14. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to actively compare and co-ordinate the results achieved in the Member States in the field of road safety so that, by following best practice, they can pass on the benefits of good experience to all Member States and thus hasten positive developments in this area;

15. Calls upon the Commission to recognise the importance of independent pan-European benchmarking assessment programmes in supporting a more uniform application of EU legislation affecting road safety, which stimulates competition among stakeholders responsible for ensuring a safe road environment (i.e. EuroTAP, EuroNCAP);
16. Calls on the Member States to consider introducing a zero alcohol limit for new drivers and professional commercial vehicle and bus drivers involved in passenger transport and, for example, for transport of hazardous goods;
17. Draws attention to the possibility of laying down minimum active and passive security requirements for all vehicles and harmonising the technical road safety rules throughout the Union;
18. Considers that driving under the influence of drugs is a serious problem which needs to be combated and that the Member States and the Commission should invest more resources in researching and combating such offences;
19. Calls on the Member States to make the use of hands-free mobile telephone systems compulsory for car drivers and professional bus and commercial-vehicle drivers;
20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to step up their efforts to ensure that the use of seat belts is increased in all vehicles, especially buses;
21. Calls on the Commission to impose a general ban on overtaking for vehicles weighing in excess of 12 tonnes on one- and two-lane roads;
22. Invites the Commission to recommend the Member States to establish and maintain adequate rest facilities which respond to the criteria of the European social partners in order to ensure safer infrastructure facilities for break driving;
23. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to create incentives for purchasers or leasers of fleets of vehicles to buy or lease the best vehicles the market has to offer in terms of safety and environmental impact and that car producers develop vehicles that are safer and environmentally more efficient;
24. Is convinced that insurance companies can play a crucial role in upholding road safety legislation and labour legislation in the road transport sector, e.g. by setting differential premiums;
25. Calls on the Member States to ensure that incentives are not confined to the latest technologies for reducing emissions, but also cover significant safety features (emergency brake assistants, lane departure warning systems, adaptive cruise control systems, shock absorber control systems, etc.);
26. Calls on the Commission to investigate the effects of tiredness and exhaustion on drivers so as to reduce the frequency of accidents they cause, both among private motorists and – from a health and safety at work perspective – for those who use vehicles in their work;
27. Calls on the Commission to start an information campaign at a European level against

tiredness on drivers so as to promote, as already done in several Member States, the need for the drivers to stop driving each two hours in any journey;

28. Is of the view that out of the huge selection of technologies the following solutions should receive particular attention: seat belt reminders and advanced restraint systems, Electronic Stability Control (ESC), speed limitation systems, alcohol interlocks, predictive safety systems (emergency brake assistant, adaptive cruise control, lane departure warning system, ultrasound blind-spot monitor, shock absorber control system) and eCall;
29. Calls on the Member States to sign the joint statement of intent concerning the eCall system by June 2007;
30. Considers that ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) should be adapted for older drivers;
31. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage EuroNCAP to introduce tests for whiplash protection and for active technical systems such as ESP/ESC emergency braking, driver support (e.g. alcohol interlocks), adaptive cruise control and lane departure warning;
32. Calls on the Commission to explicitly include the safety of motorcyclists in infrastructure guidelines, especially regarding motorcycle friendly crash barriers on European roads;
33. Considers that one important measure the Commission should examine is the creation of a common minimum standard for driving instructors with test and certification;
34. Calls on the Member States to draw up an action plan for training and education in road safety, to be applied throughout the school curriculum (from age 3 to 18) and in all schools in the Union; also advocates the drawing-up of standards for the training and security measures that are needed if there is to be guided practice for intending drivers from age 16;
35. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to introduce uniform rules valid throughout the EU governing compulsory, regular technical safety checks of all motor vehicles;
36. Invites the Commission and the Member States to propose measures based on an evaluation of the awareness of the single European emergency call number 112 and implementation of E112 by all Member States in order to improve the situation in the European Union;
37. Stresses that the eCall system has the potential to reduce the accident response time by about 40% in urban areas and about 50% in rural areas and calls on all the Member States to promote its implementation as soon as possible;
38. Calls on the Commission to work towards a European system for the investigation of road accidents, so as to facilitate comparisons and make it possible to work more effectively to prevent them occurring;
39. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and their regional authorities to pay

particular attention to the protection and safety of vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists;

40. Stresses that the Member States should systematically take account of the safety of all drivers (of cars, motorcycles, bicycles, heavy vehicles, etc.) and of accident prevention when designing, building and maintaining roads and other infrastructure measures;
41. Calls on the Commission to encourage the use of backward-facing child seats for children up to the ages of 3-4<sup>1</sup>;
42. Calls on the Commission, and in particular the Member States, to investigate the road safety situation for people with disabilities; considers it important for professional passenger drivers taxi drivers, for example, to be properly trained in securing wheelchairs, etc.;
43. Calls on the Commission to analyse the needs of people with disabilities as regards their active, independent participation in road transport and to lay down rules which ensure that people with disabilities do not suffer discrimination when applying for a driving licence;
44. Considers that technologies such as telematics offer, in the long term, the possibility of eliminating fatal accidents to a very large extent; calls, therefore, for intensive research and co-operation between all stakeholders in order to promote the speedy introduction of the most promising technologies, without, however, neglecting road safety education;
45. Considers that the use of information and communication technologies in connection with road infrastructure is bringing considerable improvements in the management of the trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) and road safety; calls on the Commission and the Member States to continue their action in this area by setting up a European programme for the deployment of intelligent road traffic management systems;
46. Calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the technical safety of vehicles; before 2010, consideration must be given to further developing the relevant legislation; in that connection, the testing of electronic vehicle safety systems (e-safety systems), a uniform system of annual checks on vehicles over eight years old and special checks on vehicles which have been involved in serious accidents have a particularly important role to play in further improving safety on Europe's roads;
47. Invites the Commission and EUROSTAT to improve statistics on road accidents e.g. by
  - basing them additionally on age and gender,
  - better including real numbers of vulnerable road accidents' victims, such as pedestrians and cyclists,
  - harmonising criteria of death by road accident, based on periods of survival after the accident;
48. Calls on the Commission to develop a long-term road safety strategy going beyond 2010

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<sup>1</sup> Child Safety In Cars, VTI rapport 489A.



and setting out the steps required for the avoidance of all fatalities and serious injuries caused by road accidents ('zero vision');

49. Calls on the Member States to acknowledge the dangers inherent in driving vehicles (in particular commercial vehicles) with snow and ice on their roofs and, on that basis, to draw up recommendations for the establishment of a comprehensive network of 'snow removal areas'; technical alternatives should be considered and/or supported;
50. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and Commission and to the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

## **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

### **1. Road safety within the EU**

The mid-term review of the Road Safety Action Programme highlights the progress which has been made in tackling the problem of the number of deaths and injuries on our roads. It is true that traffic on the roads has trebled in the last three decades (1970-2000) while the number of fatal accidents has halved, but the review stresses that much more still needs to be done if we are to achieve the Community's objective of halving the number of fatal accidents by 2010, since there are still 40 000 registered road fatalities every year. Moreover, the policy measures taken in the field of road safety cannot compare either in number or in effectiveness with those taken to protect citizens in other policy areas. The European Community has taken significant steps to combat a long list of threats to the health and well-being of citizens, but in the field of road safety there is still much room for improvement. Road accidents are still the biggest single killer of children, young people and young adults, while persons aged over 65 are over-represented among the pedestrians killed in road accidents. Our fellow-citizens are thus still exposed to greater risks in road traffic than in any other aspect of our everyday lives.

The mid-term review also stresses that the situation is far from uniform within the EU. Indeed, the gap between the Member States with more favourable statistics and those with the biggest problems is growing. In order to help those countries which are lagging behind in terms of road safety work to catch up, it is essential for Member States to learn from each other through best practice and comparisons in various areas. Twinning projects between new and old Member States are an excellent way of learning from one another. The report stresses that there is a need for political will to alter this situation and that there is still much room for political measures which can help greatly improve the protection of our citizens on the road.

### **2. Rising to the challenges**

In the past the debate on how to improve road safety was concluded in terms of national and local measures versus EU legislation. The Third Action Programme on Road Safety therefore brought a welcome change, since it stresses that road safety is a common responsibility for all decision-makers. Unfortunately, there is still a lack of political will among many decision-takers to bear their part of the responsibility, even following the adoption of the Action Programme.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has also recognised the importance of preventing people from being killed and injured on the roads, and devoted its World Health Day to this issue in 2005. On that day the WHO's European region published its own report on how to tackle the specific road safety challenges which Europe faces. The report comes to the conclusion that the health sector should play a greater role in road safety, and that the issue of speed limits on roads must be made a priority.

All political leaders should redouble their efforts and see what they can do to improve protection for our citizens on the roads through national measures. There is also a need for more creative decision-making, seeking to devise policies which facilitate changes, whether

via the market or through the purchasing decisions of public authorities. The Commission, which is the EU institution with the right of initiative under the Treaty, must take its own responsibility by devising proposals for measures which Parliament and the Commission can then debate and adopt. The Commission should also evaluate the European Road Safety Charter. In that context, opportunities should be created for the cross-border prosecution of traffic offences. If a citizen of one country breaks the law of another country, it is important that they should be able to be sentenced and that the consequences of their offence – such as the withdrawal of their driving licence – should follow them across borders with other Member States. One way to go might be the introduction of a points system applicable to offences throughout the whole EU.

### **3. Priority areas for action**

To improve road safety there is a need for measures in each of the three “road safety areas”: training, quality of the vehicles on the road and quality of the road infrastructure they use. The measures also should complement each other, both within each road safety area and in the context of other policy measures and objectives, as well as in terms of environmental protection and the Lisbon Strategy. This calls for an integrated strategy. It is now equally important to achieve the objectives set, so rapid measures are now needed within the areas in which major progress in road safety is most likely to be achieved. It is these measures which now need to be prioritised. One important measure is for the European Road Safety Agency to be given a clear legal basis for its work.

The application of good practice in the enforcement of traffic legislation should therefore also be a special priority, particularly as regards speed limits, drink-driving and the use of seat belts. Currently we have European legislation which states, for example, that seat belts, when fitted, must be used by all occupants of all vehicles. The Commission and the Member States should make a vigorous effort to ensure increased compliance. In buses, for example, there is still much to be done. It is important to create a habit among users of bus services, for example, of automatically fastening the seat belt just as they do in their own cars. A common minimum blood alcohol level of 0.5‰ is important in order to deal with drink-driving. To achieve sustainable results from these measures, an ongoing commitment will be required from all authorities affected, as will significant investments of both human and financial resources. The EU's policy in this area should therefore contribute to facilitating both the use of good practice in the enforcement of legislation and the increased use of technology in vehicles to reduce the cost burdens arising from stricter enforcement of policies.

Among these technologies, alcohol interlocks, intelligent seat belt reminders and intelligent speed limitation systems are particularly important. Efforts at EU level should promote the rapid introduction of this kind of technology in as many vehicles as possible. These efforts should include a framework to enable Member States to apply tax incentives or to introduce technical specifications for the purchasers of vehicle fleets. If public authorities use these specifications, this will help create a large market for such technology, which will in turn encourage producers to enter this potentially profitable field.

### **4. All decision-makers should be made to accept their responsibilities**

Common responsibility for road safety implies that many different authorities at different

levels bear responsibility for the current high levels of risk on our roads. All these different authorities, from EU authorities to those at national and local level, should accept their responsibilities, but in order for them to do this, leadership is needed. One key element of the Community's action is to show strong leadership so as to give all those responsible for road safety the opportunity to take action. Political leadership is called for particularly in areas where the responsibilities of differing authorities overlap, such as in cross-border enforcement. The Community should take on a strong leadership role to enable authorities and Member States to use innovative instruments, such as public procurement procedures, so that their decisions can help improve road safety. Insurance companies too are key actors which can influence road safety, e.g. by setting differentiated premiums.

A vehicle is often a mobile place of work. More and more people use a car in their daily work. Many people who work in fields such as home nursing, cleaning, sports clubs or the arts use their cars to travel between clients. The car and the road become a part of their working environment and should be treated as such. Rules on health and safety at work should therefore also apply to these situations. Consequently a systematic approach to road use is a new and important concept which should be taken into account in a road safety context.

Health and safety at work rules should be applied in the procurement of transport services. Road safety should be taken into account in undertakings' health and safety policy. The vehicles used for school bus services are often old and sometimes downright dangerous. The Commission should adopt guidelines for good practice and public procurement rules for school transport to ensure that schoolchildren can travel more safely.

People with disabilities should enjoy the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. It is therefore important for taxi drivers, for example, to be properly trained in securing wheelchairs, so as to ensure the mobility of this group of people.

Vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and cyclists should be given better protection in the traffic environment. This must be taken very seriously at all levels, from the EU to national and local authorities.

Sweden has a significantly better record in terms of children surviving road accidents (95%) than the rest of Europe (60-70%). Studies have shown that survival rates for children up to the age of 4 increase significantly when they are in backward-facing child car seats. To improve safety for this group of children, who have no influence on their own road safety, the EU should show that it is taking children's safety seriously and make an effort to ensure that backward-facing child car seats are required for children up to the ages of 3 or 4.

Whiplash injuries which occur as a result of road accidents are hard to diagnose and hard to treat. Consumer tests influence the speed with which whiplash protection is introduced and the motor industry is adapting gradually. To increase the speed with which it does so, the Commission and the Member States should make an effort to ensure that EuroNCAP includes whiplash protection in its tests. Active systems such as driver support (e.g. alcohol interlocks) and lane departure warning systems are also among the new systems which should be included in EuroNCAP's tests.

We have seen innumerable campaigns aimed at increasing road safety awareness among road

users in the EU. This is good, but it is important to inculcate road safety awareness well before the age at which the driving test is taken. Schools should provide more road safety teaching, preferably in cooperation with the police. One important measure which the Commission should investigate is the creation of a common minimum standard, with a test and certification, for driving instructors. Young drivers, particularly young men, are a group with a very high accident risk. A long course to prepare for the driving test reduces the risk of accidents by up to 30% for young drivers. In Sweden, for example, driving practice is permitted from the age of 16, two years before the age for obtaining a driving licence.

Exhaustion and tiredness are often a major contributory factor in road accidents. The significance of this problem, and how to tackle it, ought to be studied in greater depth. In this connection the Commission, in cooperation with the European Road Safety Agency, should create a system for investigating road accidents. This would on the one hand make it easier to carry out comparisons between the Member States, and on the other hand facilitate preventive work. Vehicles which have been involved in road accidents should also be investigated. Wire road-centre barriers are increasingly common, and a European standard for such barriers is desirable from a road safety perspective, taking all road users into account. Awareness of the international emergency call number 112 should be raised still further in all Member States.

## **5. After the 2010 objective: a vision of safety for the future**

The target date for the Third Road Safety Action Programme will soon be passed, and it is therefore important to ensure that the next programmes do not suffer the same fate as this one, which experienced delays both in drafting and adoption. It is now time to consider what vision the EU has for the future of road safety. It is important to launch a debate on the EU's vision for the future of road safety now, so that the Commission can draw up its Fourth Road Safety Action Programme in good time.

The aim of this vision should be to bring the risks to which our citizens are exposed in road transport down to a level comparable to risks in other areas in which the Community and the Member States have a common responsibility to take action. The opportunity offered by telematics to reduce the number of fatal accidents in the long term must be considered, and large-scale investment into research in this area is required if we are to benefit from all its advantages. The importance of mobility in general and road transport as a daily activity in particular means that the risk levels associated with road use must be reduced. Those bearing political responsibility for the road safety network must reduce the risks by making the system as 'forgiving' as possible.

## PROCEDURE

<b>Title</b>	European Road Safety Action Programme - mid-term review			
<b>Procedure number</b>	2006/2112(INI)			
<b>Committee responsible</b> Date authorisation announced in plenary	TRAN 18.5.2006			
<b>Committee(s) asked for opinion(s)</b> Date announced in plenary	ITRE 18.5.2006	ENVI 18.5.2006		
<b>Not delivering opinion(s)</b> Date of decision	ITRE 30.5.2006	ENVI 14.5.2006		
<b>Enhanced cooperation</b> Date announced in plenary				
<b>Rapporteur(s)</b> Date appointed	Ewa Hedkvist Petersen 21.3.2006			
<b>Previous rapporteur(s)</b>				
<b>Discussed in committee</b>	20.6.2006	14.9.2006	10.10.2006	21.11.2006
<b>Date adopted</b>	22.11.2006			
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ 38 - 8 0 0			
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Gabriele Albertini, Margrete Auken, Etelka Barsi-Pataky, Philip Bradbourn, Paolo Costa, Michael Cramer, Arūnas Degutis, Christine De Veyrac, Petr Duchoň, Saïd El Khadraoui, Roland Gewalt, Mathieu Grosch, Ewa Hedkvist Petersen, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Stanisław Jałowiecki, Georg Jarzembowski, Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, Jaromír Kohlíček, Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou, Jörg Leichtfried, Fernand Le Rachinel, Bogusław Liberadzki, Eva Lichtenberger, Robert Navarro, Josu Ortuondo Larrea, Willi Piecyk, Luís Queiró, Reinhard Rack, Luca Romagnoli, Gilles Savary, Renate Sommer, Ulrich Stockmann, Georgios Toussas, Marta Vincenzi, Corien Wortmann-Kool			
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Johannes Blokland, Markus Ferber, Zita Gurmai, Anne E. Jensen, Sepp Kustatscher, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Helmuth Markov, Francesco Musotto, Aldo Patriciello, Ari Vatanen			
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Brian Simpson			
<b>Date tabled</b>	5.12.2006			
<b>Comments</b> (available in one language only)				