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TISPOL Bulletin, Tuesday 11 February 2014

A few days ago I received a copy of the 'Drink Drive Monitor' from our colleagues at the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC). It contained a link to a most tragic alcohol-related occurrence in which a young man, over the drink-drive limit, drove his car into a crowd of people, killing six.

It's even more tragic to consider that alcohol is linked to around 6,500 deaths each year on European roads. And, as ETSC points out, while progress has been made in recent years, the figures are still far too high. Especially so considering that drink-driving is a risk factor that is totally avoidable.

Do take time to read a compelling piece on the subject by ETSC Executive Director Antonio Avenoso. [Take a look now.](#)

There is a new TISPOL video to look at, too. We had the chance to speak to UK Council member Suzette Davenport. We spoke to her about how police should not only react to – but also reflect on – an unfortunate spate of fatal collisions. [Watch the video now.](#)

TISPOL has been running its Twitter account for some months now. May I use this message to encourage you to follow us on Twitter if you don't already do so, and to encourage your colleagues and contacts to follow us as well. When I last checked, we had amassed a very creditable 993 followers, but we would like that to grow during 2014.

Twitter is built into our communication strategy, so that when we send a press release, put something new on our website or publish a document we would like to share, then we will tweet about it. We are also very happy to retweet your messages, and are regularly looking for opportunities to do this.

Do [check out](#) our Twitter page and take a moment to follow us. Thank you!

Ian Hamill, TISPOL General Secretary

Poland: drink drive tragedy prompts Government action

The Polish government is cracking down on drink driving after a recent tragedy sparked national attention. A 26-year-old man allegedly

caused the deaths of six pedestrians, including a child, when his car veered onto a pavement on New Year's Day. A week later, Prime Minister Donald Tusk announced that courts would now issue fines of up to 5,000 zloty (EUR 1200) for causing accidents while driving drunk, licenses would be confiscated for three years and there would be less use of suspended sentences.

Switzerland: tougher drink drive measures

The Swiss government has adopted new measures to tackle drink driving. As of 1 January, novice drivers are subject to a zero alcohol limit for their first three years behind the wheel. The same restriction applies to all professional drivers.

Portugal: blood alcohol limit reduced for novices

Portugal has lowered its blood alcohol limit for novice drivers and some categories of professional drivers to 0.2g/l, down from the standard 0.5g/l limit.

Belgium: first use of alcohol interlocks

Four years after a new law came into force, judges in Belgium have finally begun requiring convicted drink drivers to install alcohol interlocks in their vehicles. Since August 2013, seven drivers have begun rehabilitation programmes with the Belgian Institute for Road Safety (IBSR), which is also responsible for installing the interlocks.

France: new video clip on drink drive risks



The french actor and director Guillaume Canet has made a short film on the risks of drink driving. The clip, which has been viewed a million times on YouTube, was shown in cinemas across France in December. Entitled 'Intoxication', it shows moments in the lives of a

young couple before an evening out ends in tragedy.

[Watch the clip on Youtube](#)

CASE STUDY: Operation Surround in Ireland



Police officers in Ireland used social media to raise awareness, and remind people not to drink and drive. They also made them very conscious of police enforcement of drinking and driving rules. This in turn promoted an online conversation.

The action was one in a series of operations as the need to change driver behaviour is ongoing. Social media is very important as it gives the Irish police direct access to 56,000 followers. Tweets have been retweeted to more than 300,000 people. Many of the items posted are used by online media. For example, the Irish Journal attracted 40,000 views for its coverage of the drink-drive operation.

Challenges to social media include the requirement to provide timely information images while recognising the privacy and legal issues.

Officers say they avoid publishing registration numbers. Interaction online does require monitoring of Twitter and Facebook, as well as and compiling responses. All types and sorts of questions arise and in order to support the good name of the organisation, the responses must be accurate. Linking back to other documents is a simple way to provide comprehensive replies.

Ensuring the website has as much information about enforcements and Mandatory Alcohol Testing checkpoints facilitates a great number of responses to questions, and clearly raises awareness regarding enforcement. Social media requires a different tone and approach; less formal but it must be part of the communication strategy. Social media is merely another tool to be used in conjunction with tradition media.

Feedback is very quickly obtained, in respect of new road layouts, road signage etc. Recently, police covered on Twitter the new 'bus corridor' in Dublin city centre. This showed enforcement and was a reminder to the public regarding the new road layout. It also permitted us to obtain feedback in relation to signage and the need for more advanced signage as drivers were committed to a route traffic lane before encountering the signs.

Members of the public like the interaction and are thankful of the response, even if the police message does not resolve the issue fully in all cases.

VIDEO: UK Council member Suzette Davenport



CC Suzette Davenport is the TISPOL UK Council member. We spoke to her about how police should not only react to – but also reflect on – an unforeseen and unfortunate spate of fatal collisions. [Watch the video on Youtube now.](#)

UK: health experts give their support to a car smoking ban



More than 700 doctors and other health experts have put their names to a letter urging MPs to back a ban in England on smoking in cars with children present. The signatories to the letter in the British Medical Journal say the move is needed "to protect the well-being of children now and in the future". They include nurses, doctors and surgeons working across the NHS. The letter argues that

second-hand smoke exposure is a "major cause of ill-health in children", particularly among the most disadvantaged groups.

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