

Italian EU presidency: together to curb road accidents

"A united Europe on road safety. Working together for a common strategy" is the title of the European Workshop which is taking place today at the Police Academy in Rome. The meeting, organized by the Central Directorate for Road, Railway, Communications Police and the Police Special Units, is part of the events planned by the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Europe makes an effort to team up and develop a common strategy aimed at reducing the road mortality rate to zero. The EU countries intend to meet this target by encouraging the improvement of road infrastructure, by resorting to technical progress and, more importantly, by generating a higher awareness among road users about a responsible behaviour.

The event is open to institutions and representatives of the public and private sector working in the field of road safety. They are expected to explain how to achieve the ultimate goal of reducing traffic fatalities to zero by sharing best practices and strategies.

Addressing the meeting, Police Chief Alessandro Pansa said that "road safety has become essential to the progress of our countries" - and stressed that "traffic police need a simple and easily enforceable regulatory framework". Prefect Pansa also mentioned "the need to make a wider use of new technologies. Highway control with the Tutor speed camera system resulted in a reduction of road fatalities by 50%. Therefore, the use of new technologies should not only be limited to speed controls but rather extended to other traffic offences. Nowadays, we can remotely detect other potentially dangerous violations such as riding a bike without a helmet or insurance cover, driving a vehicle without a current MOT, overloading a TIR-truck or using a vehicle under seizure."

According to Interior Minister Angelino Alfano "the high negative value and people's reaction to every death incident on the roads is such that the time has come to introduce a specific criminal offence. If you take drugs or drink alcohol even though you know that you are going to drive, a charge of vehicular homicide should be considered".

The 10-year action plan for road safety 2011-2020 shows that EU Member countries have developed a heightened sense of awareness of road accidents, which cause around 1,200,000 deaths and over 50 million injuries a year, with Europe registering 28,126 deaths and 1,432,235 injuries in 2012.

Among the speakers also the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport Maurizio Lupi and the Director of Road, Railway, Communications Police and the Police Special Units Roberto Sgalla.

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