

LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE EUROPEAN FORUM OF ROAD TUNNEL SAFETY OFFICERS

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The EU Directive 2004/54/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum safety requirements for tunnels in the trans-European road network introduced the Safety Officer as a new player in charge of coordinating all preventive and safeguard measures to ensure the safety of users and operational staff. During the last 2-3 years, Safety Officers were appointed throughout Europe and have started to perform their tasks to improve road tunnel safety. While a number of questions are not completely answered regarding this new position and the related activities, few exchanges of experience have been possible yet, due to the dispersal of the Safety Officers and the lack of appropriate means, apart from a few national groups.

This is the reason why the Committee on Operational Safety of Underground Facilities (COSUF) of the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA), in cooperation with the Technical Committee on Road Tunnel Operation (C4) of the World Road Association (PIARC) decided to organise a European Forum of Road Tunnel Safety Officers. This event took place in Lyon on 4 and 5 November 2009; it gathered Safety Officers from all Europe to share questions and exchange experience.

This event was intended and reserved for Safety Officers, who were welcome to propose topics for discussion and contributions they wished to present. It also in-

cluded a few outside presentations according to the main topics of the agenda listed below.

Firstly, Evert Worm (Safety officer for the Dutch state-owned tunnels) gave a general introduction regarding the Safety officers “tasks and functions” (according to article 6 of Directive 2004/54/EC).

Then, some representatives of different countries attending the Forum gave their interpretation of the role of Tunnel Safety Officer and how the role and responsibilities are being developed in EU member states (including general and organisational aspects, and the work of existing safety officers working groups if any, main topic discussed, etc.).

During the second part of the Forum, several presentations were given regarding the topics listed below:

- Developing a common understanding of what is meant by "coordination with emergency services" (André Stein, Safety officer for Luxembourg state-owned tunnels)
- How to undertake the "verification of training and maintenance"? (Gilles Arnaudet, Safety Officer for the ESCOTA tunnels)
- Establishing a common understanding of the term Significant Incident (Les Fielding, MIFireE, MIFSM Fire Safety and Planning Advisor, Safety officer)
- Legal aspects: “Independence” and responsibilities (Arnold Dix, Scientist & Lawyer, Professor of Engineering & Medicine, Australia)
- How to ensure that the safety documentation is updated by the Tunnel Manager and how to get the right information from the tunnel manager and from emergency services? (Andrea Mordasini, Lombardi SA, Switzerland, Safety officer for the Mont Blanc and Frejus tunnels)

In conclusion, Didier Lacroix, COSUF vice-chairman, gave a brief summary of the main topics discussed during the forum and proposed possible further actions arising from the meeting.

This Forum was organised by Alain Picard, Evert Worm, Les Fielding, Didier Lacroix and Marc Tesson (Head of the safety department at CETU). On behalf of this group, Marc Tesson made a presentation during the Spanish committee of PIARC symposium hold in Bilbao on 24-25 and 26 February 2010. This presentation gave a general overview of the main lessons learnt from this forum; it was focussed on the issues mentioned below:

- General information regarding the attendance to the Forum
- Reminder of the EU Directive (JP.Repussard - Directorate General Energy and Transport, Unit E3 - Road Safety - European Commission) in his introductory speech
- Keywords of Safety Officers' tasks and functions, possible need for clarification
- Transposition of the EI directive, situation in Europe (diversity of context from country to country)
- Experience with the independence of the Safety Officers, discussion on “coordination” activities, on “verification” activities, on methodology to give opinions, etc
- Presentation of existing national Safety Officers' working groups (including relevant feedback from experience)
- Significant incident
- Legal aspects
- Possible further actions.