



EuroTAP Audit Report key findings

EuroTAP (www.eurotap.eu) kicked off in 2005. EuroTAP received the financial backing of the European Commission. EuroTAP inspectors travelled more than 150,000 kilometres over three years in 18 countries. This is the equivalent of travelling around the world over three times. The 152 tunnel tests revealed that:

- 60 percent of Europe's most important road tunnels demonstrated a high level of safety and achieved a rating of "good" or "very good".
- 21 percent of tunnels failed to meet the minimum standards. That is, 12 tunnels were rated "poor" and a further 19 scored "very poor".
- There is still urgent need for action, especially in older tunnels.

Europe's best tunnels on stage in Brussels

In the world of tunnel operators and national road ministries, the European Tunnel Assessment Programme (EuroTAP) is a feared testing stone, separating the bad from the good.

No doubt the reputation of EuroTAP amongst tunnel operators and national transport ministries was reason enough to bring together, on 22 January, a high-level crowd of ministers, diplomats, members of Parliament, officials and journalists. But participants at the 2008 EuroTAP event were also in Brussels to praise the four winners of its European tunnel awards from the Ottsdorf Tunnel (Austria), the Markusberg Tunnel (Luxembourg), the M-12 Tunnel (Spain), and the Brinje Tunnel (Croatia). The four tunnels were identified in newly launched EuroTAP Audit Report as being the best in Europe.

Master of Ceremonies was Professor Reinhard Rack, member of the European Parliament. Rack was also author of the Parliament's 2004 report on the now adopted Directive on minimum Standards for Tunnel Safety (due to be fully effective by 2014 for most member states and 2019 for a few exceptions). "EuroTAP has created an instrument which effectively means that the EU's tunnel safety laws do not become mere paper laws, but are put into practice," said Rack. Testing, assessing, informing and improving are the four key elements of the EuroTAP formula for effecting changes to make road tunnels across Europe safer and better. Bad publicity and harsh criticism as a result of poor tunnel assessment ratings have triggered remedial actions on numerous occasions. For Zoltan Kazatsay, Commission Deputy Director General for Energy & Transport, safety is top on the agenda for all forms of transport. "Bearing this in mind, it is important that we do not to forget the important work that EuroTAP has done during the past few years on tunnel safety," said Kazatsay.



After the San Juan tunnel in Spain was rated the worst tunnel in Europe, the government invested €4 million. In 2005, the San Juan Tunnel was rated "good". Vicente Vilanova, from Spain's Ministry of Infrastructure, thus thanked EuroTAP for its valuable input. He sees the EuroTAP award as a confirmation that Spain is now going in the right direction as regards tunnel safety. Another example is the Kappelberg tunnel, near Stuttgart, Germany. Refurbished at a cost of €12 million following failings identified by EuroTAP, the Kappelberg tunnel was then rated "very good" in 2006.

Luxembourg's Minister for Public Works Claude Wiseler outlined the difficult choice faced by politicians between the high expenditure on tunnel infrastructure and tight public budgets. "The EuroTAP award means that the technical, financial and, at times, political choices made were right. Such an award encourages an administration to continue its works," said Wiseler. For Croatia's Deputy Transport and Tourism Minister Mate Jurišić, the EuroTAP award is also proof of how Croatian tunnel safety policy is now on the right track. "We were not very good in previous tests," he admitted. "But we have improved. We see ourselves as a tourist country. That is another reason why EuroTAP is very important for us," said Jurišić.

The targeted goals of EuroTAP were threefold: increased tunnel safety awareness among decision makers; greater tunnel standards transparency; and improved tunnel driving behaviour. Robert Sauter, EuroTAP Chair, who led the EuroTAP project in cooperation with 11 other European automobile clubs and the FIA European Bureau, also stressed the continuing work for raising awareness done by clubs, notably under the "Safe Tunnels" awareness campaign. Finally, Werner Kraus, Chairman of the FIA Region I and ADAC President Peter Meyer took the floor to put EuroTAP in to the context of the road safety work done generally by FIA clubs and ADAC across many spheres. "Our work is being taken seriously," said Meyer. "This motivates us to continue on the same track."