



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **European Tunnel Assessment Program (EuroTAP) finds worst results in tunnels in five years**

EuroTAP 2008 inspectors came home with the worst results in five years. After testing 31 tunnels in eleven countries it was found that every third tunnel failed to make the grade. Leading the poor results in 2008 are Norway and Italy, but this comes as no surprise as these countries also led the worst results for the past three years. Norway recorded disastrous results with all of the three tunnels tested receiving a rating of "Very Poor": the Eikefet, Jernfjell and Matreberg tunnels. In Italy's case, out of the five tunnels tested three are on the losing end: the Breva, Cernobbio and surprisingly the newly built Marinasco tunnel. The biggest loser placed at the bottom of the list is the 2.4 kilometre-long Cernobbio tunnel built in 1983 in the city of the same name at Lake Como.

Sharing the losers podium were also the Belgian Waasland tunnel in Antwerp, the Spanish Pando tunnel (AP 66 near Pola de Lena) and the German Universität Düsseldorf tunnel (in Düsseldorf).

Despite the bad publicity Norway has received in the past for its tunnels, it appears authorities are not taking matters seriously and proceeding with substantial measures to improve the safety of their tunnels. Norway's Road Administration has responded to criticism by referring to the fact that Norway's numerous tunnels experience low-traffic volumes and that there have hardly been any tunnel accidents. But given that traffic has been growing at a rate of between three and four percent annually, it is only a matter of time before a catastrophe happens.

"The Tunnel Safety Directive was adopted in 2004 and remarkably public authorities and operators still fail to fulfil our recommendations towards the improvement of tunnel safety disparities across Europe", said Professor Reinhard Rack, MEP commenting on this year's results. Rack was 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).

Not all is bad news; this year did see positive ratings in Austria and Switzerland: all of the nine tunnels tested received positive ratings. Italy also reached positive results in the Serrone Tondo tunnel (A 3 near Contursi Terme), opened in 2007 and the Valsassina tunnel (SS 36 near Lecco). At the top of the list is the winning tunnel the 1.3 kilometre long Pont Pla tunnel, opened in 2006, in Andorra la Vella, the capital city of the tiny state of Andorra in the eastern Pyrenees between Spain and France.





That the positive trend of recent years came to a sudden stop this year may require further examination. 2008's negative results may be just a coincidence or due to the choice of tunnels but many new tunnels were tested this year. "The fact of the matter is that there are still many tunnels in Europe which need to be upgraded and refurbished in order to fulfil the minimum standards of the EU Directive on safety in road tunnels" said Caroline Ofoegbu of the FIA European Bureau.

New motoring clubs have joined EuroTAP 2008: ACL (Luxembourg), ACP (Portugal), AL (Finland), FDM (Denmark), FFAC (France), FIB (Iceland) and M (Sweden). Although tunnels in these countries were not tested this year, the participation of the new motoring clubs brings added-value to the project: they bring in expertise and contribute to further dissemination of the tunnel test results. "FIB's membership to EuroTAP is extremely valuable. Given our country's number of 7 tunnels we hope that our participation in the project will raise awareness in Iceland towards the need to improve safety in national tunnels, especially in the current tunnels, that have never been inspected. More importantly the ones now being planned and built need to fulfil all standards right from the drawing board." said Olafur Gudmundsson, Vice-President of FIB - Icelandic Automobile Association.

EuroTAP partners have been dedicated to improving tunnel safety both in their own countries and internationally since 1999. Improvements in recent years are certainly due to the motoring clubs endless efforts. This year's results show that more work is needed. "We will continue to test tunnels and to exert public pressure via the media. The people in charge will respond with investment and tunnel refurbishment. The consequences are safe tunnels and ultimately this will benefit everybody" said Robert Sauter, EuroTAP Chairman from the German Automobile club ADAC.

*For more information about EuroTAP's tunnel results 2008 visit [www.eurotap.eu](http://www.eurotap.eu)*

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## Notes for Editors

1. Club testing began in the disaster year of 1999 (The year of the Mont Blanc and Tauern Tunnel accidents). The tunnel testing celebrates an anniversary this year: for the tenth consecutive time experts have tested European tunnels. Since 2005, tests have been conducted under the brand name EuroTAP (European Tunnel Assessment Programme). The programme is operated by 19 national motoring organizations, all members of the Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) from 18 countries including Croatia (HAK), Iceland (FIB), Switzerland (TCS) and Norway (NAF) from outside the EU. Participating EU clubs include the AA (United Kingdom), ACI (Italy), ACL (Luxembourg), ACP (Portugal), ADAC (Germany), AL (Finland), AMZS (Slovenia), ANWB (Netherlands), FDM (Denmark), AC (France), M (Sweden), NAF (Norway), OAMTC (Austria), RACC (Spain), RACE (Spain) and Touring (Belgium). Together with the FIA in Brussels, these automobile clubs represent some 34 million road users in Europe.

2. The 4.5 million euro "EuroTAP 2005-2007" programme was project-led by ADAC and received EC funding. EuroTAP 2008 is supported by the FIA Foundation. The EuroTAP principle of testing, assessing, informing and improving has been repeatedly successful, and not just when it comes to improving individual tunnels. Following disappointing ratings, governments have also responded with targeted nationwide investments.



3. In total, since 2005 EuroTAP has inspected 183 tunnels in 18 countries. This represents approximately 412 km of tunnel tubes. In 2008, 31 tunnels were tested in eleven countries. One in five of all tunnels tested have failed the EuroTAP inspection that takes on board the minimum standards set by the European Directive on minimum safety standards for tunnels on the Trans European Road Network (2004/54/EC).

4. The EuroTAP methodology comprises more than 200 criteria classed in eight categories. They examine the preventative, mitigating and remedial features of a tunnel as well as its risk and safety potentials. Additionally, a so-called knock-out criteria leads to any tunnel with a single serious defect automatically having its score downgraded.

5. Aside from systematic testing of Europe's most important road tunnels EuroTAP has produced user friendly information and educational campaigns. The aim is to boost awareness of tunnel safety among those in authority, to achieve transparent tunnel standards and to thus improve these standards along with motorists' behaviour in tunnels.

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