

IHT on EuroRAP

EuroRAP is an acronym for the European Road Assessment Programme. It is an independent organisation and constitutes a sister programme to the highly-regarded EuroNCAP vehicle crash testing programme. The organisation was founded by motoring organisations and other authorities.

The stated formal objectives of **EuroRAP** include, the reduction of death and serious injury on European roads through a programme of systematic testing of risk that identifies major safety shortcomings which can be addressed by practical road improvement measures, to ensure assessment of risk lies at the heart of strategic decisions on route improvements, crash protection and standards of route management and to forge partnerships between those responsible for a safe road system.

EuroRAP literature identifies four main types of collision that account for the majority of serious and fatal road injuries in Europe: head-on collisions; collisions with unfenced roadside objects; side impacts at junctions and collisions with pedestrians and cyclists.

The publication of **EuroRAP** risk ratings lists those main road sections that are 'most improved' and those that are consistently higher risk. Although **EuroRAP** results always stress the efforts of road authorities to improve infrastructure and reduce crashes, release of the results has become something of an annual media event, possibly regarded with trepidation in some quarters.

IHT is a position that has allowed it to view both the benefits and criticisms of **EuroRAP**

The strengths of **EuroRAP** include:

- Raising the profile of road safety issues and emphasising the relationship between vehicle, environment and road user.
- Engaging the road-user as a 'consumer' of roads and highlighting the importance of road safety investment.
- Raising awareness of the variable risks faced by road users over different routes and as they move from one road section to the next.
- Providing a focus for road safety problems and network safety upgrading, especially on longer routes that cross authority borders.
- Providing a consistent methodology for quickly evaluating road safety risk on long routes.

The criticisms of EuroRAP include:

- It tends to focus on rural areas, where the majority of road deaths occur.
- It takes a 'macro-safety' approach to the road environment, emphasising network safety improvements. This can undervalue the significant amounts of 'micro-safety' work that a local authority may have carried out in its area.
- Much of the data used in **EuroRAP** is not new, but re-formatted data from other sources.

IHT comment:

The news media tends to latch on to the 'killer roads' that have been deemed to merit a 'black' rating under the **EuroRAP** system of risk ratings, often giving local authority officers and elected members a hard time in the process. IHT was made aware of at least one major shire county that was forced to re-prioritise its road safety engineering programme when it was revealed that two long lengths of road in the area were rated as 'black'. This kind of pressure has led to an uneasy relationship with **EuroRAP** for many road safety professionals.

EuroRAP is primarily a useful product that helps to highlight the issue of road safety whilst providing a comparative scoring system.

At a time when the UK's position as a "world leader in road safety and casualty reduction" is becoming open to question, the IHT would encourage the UK Government and Local Authorities to consider the benefits of

providing a forgiving roadscape on high-speed roads. A mass action or route treatment approach with passive safety products could raise the current standard and could help reduce the severity on those roads where casualty reduction is more difficult to achieve.

Notes to editors

IHT, founded in 1930, has over 11,000 members concerned with the design, construction, maintenance and operation of transport systems and infrastructure across all transport modes in both the public and private sectors. The IHT promotes excellence in transport systems and infrastructure.

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